THE RISING TUN

Autumn 2026 Issue 141

Remember Archers Brewery?



Magazine of the Swindon & North Wilts.
and Devizes Branches of CAMRA



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From the Editor...

Welcome to issue 141 of the Rising Tun, the joint newsletter of Swindon & North Wilts. and Devizes branches.

Our cover picture features some pump clips from Archers brewery. The brewery was founded in June 1979 by ex-RAF pilot Mark Wallington in part of the former Great Western Railway works in Swindon. After establishing a reputation for brewing good quality real ales such as Golden and Head Banger the brewery moved to the former works locomotive weighbridge. This was a prestige site and gave Archers greater brewing capacity.

Archers had several pubs including the Glue Pot in the Swindon Railway village and the Carters Rest in Wroughton. Archers was purchased by Burns Leisure in 2000 when Mark Wallington retired. The brewery made a feature of brewing railway themed beers, but sadly closed in March 2009. The site became the Weighbridge Brewhouse and more recently Harper's Steakhouse.

So why feature Archers Brewery in this edition? Two reasons; firstly Archers was always linked with the former Railway works in Swindon and this year marks 40 years since the works closed. Secondly we were contacted by Kate Reed who suggested we run a 'brewer spotlight' type feature talking to local brewers. Sadly it is too late to speak to Mark Wallington who passed away in 2021, but let us know if you would like to see a feature on local brewers and what sort of questions you would like to put to them?

In this issue you can also read about the origins of your pint glass, a cider event in Devizes, Swindon Beer Festival, a 130th anniversary as well as the usual pub, club and other news.

We hope you enjoy the Rising Tun and we would like to thank everyone who has contributed to this issue, especially Dave Woodman.

If you have any comments or feedback on things you see in the Rising Tun please let us know. Also if you have suggestions for things you would like to see covered. Our contact details are below.

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THE RISING TUN
Previous edition's available online

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Magazine published on behalf of Swindon & North Wiltshire CAMRA by: Neil Richards MBE at Paper Red Media
01536 358670 / 07710 281381
n.richards@btinternet.com or
paperredmedia@outlook.com
www.paperredmedia.weebly.com

Printed by **Zenith Media,** Units 9-13,
Pontyfelin Industrial Estate, New Inn, Pontypool. NP40DQ
www.zenithprintgroup.com

Local Trading Standards

From time to time, drinkers receiving poor standards of service or poor quality products may wish to raise the matter with Trading Standards. You now need to do this through Citizens Advice, an organisation which provides free, confidential and impartial advice on consumer issues.

To contact Citizens Advice Consumer Service call 03454 04 05 06 or visit **www.citizensadvice.org.uk** and click on Consumer.

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Swindon Branch News

As we go to press preparations are in the final stages for our beer festival at the STEAM Museum from 22nd to 24th October.

Copies of the latest edition of CAMRA's Good Beer Guide are now on sale.

Judging has now finished in the South Central region and this year it is the **Bell** from Waltham St Lawrence in the Berkshire branch that has won through to the last 16 in the national finals for CAMRA's pub of the year.

Locally we have a number of vacancies on our Swindon & North Wilts. branch committee. If you would be interested in getting involved, or just having a chat about what the committee does, please e-mail **contact@swindon.camra.org.uk**

Devizes Branch News

HORTON

Having initially closed in mid-June, the **Bridge Inn** on the Horton Road re-opened in mid-July under the management of Clive and Kinga, who are also the tenants of the **Fox and Hounds** in Nursteed, which itself only re-opened in January 2026. It is understood that this is for an initial 4-month period and will be reviewed in October 2026.

ERLESTOKE

Planning permission has been refused for the conversion into 5 flats of the **George and Dragon** in Erlestoke. The pub is listed as an asset to the community. The Chaffinch Group, which owns the pub, say efforts to sell the business have failed with only limited interest over the past 18 months.

DEVIZES

Congratulations to the **Pour House** in Devizes for reaching the final six in the 14th Annual National Entrepreneurs Local Business Awards presentation held on 7 September 2026 at ICC Birmingham.

On August Bank holiday the **British Lion** held its popular annual Black Rat Monday charity event in aid of Dorothy House. This featured several real ales and ciders, plus BBQ and live music. In total, over £837 was raised for Dorothy House, plus £264 for other charitable causes.

POTTERN

Repairs to the fire damaged thatched roof of the **George and Dragon** have been completed and the independent pub remains open for business.



Branch Pub & Club News

As we go to press we believe the following to be accurate.

CLUB NEWS

SWINDON

The Ashford celebrates its 130th anniversary this year and they are raising money for MND. Please see the feature in this magazine.

PUB NEWS

CENTRAL SWINDON

Swindon Culture Collective is holding a public meeting about the currently closed Rolleston Arms and Level 3 music venue. The community group is keen to explore “a sustainable way of bringing the building back into use”.

The Merlin in Drove Road is under new management and has Hop Kettle beers as a regular feature.

CHARLTON, NR. MINETY

The Horse & Groom Inn is under new ownership.

CHILTON FOLIAT

Some extra facilities are available at the Wheatsheaf which now has 3 office spaces available to let in addition to their seven bedrooms.

OGBOURNE ST. ANDREW

The Silks has reopened and is now under new management.

SHALBOURNE

The Plough has undergone a refurbishment and has a new chef.

SOUTH MARSTON

The Carriers Arms has reopened after a period of closure and a major refurbishment. They currently have Doom Bar available on cask.

The nearby Carpenters Arms will now reopen in 2028 rather than 2027.

SWANBOROUGH, NR. HIGHWORTH

The Freke Arms has reopened and is under new management.

TOOTHILL, SWINDON

The Hub @ Toothill has opened as a community hub in the building that once housed The Toot and Whistle and The Village Tavern. Those involved in the community note that: “Although the building used to be a pub, it’s no longer a pub - we’re a community space that happens to have the facilities of a bar!”. Cask ale will be available shortly.

WANBOROUGH

The Harrow is currently closed.





Tickets are now on sale for the 38th Swindon Beer Festival which will be held from Thursday 22nd to Saturday 24th October 2026 at the STEAM Museum.

We will be featuring 80 Real ales, plus a selection of Ciders/Perries. There will be music on Thursday night and Saturday afternoon. We will also have a quiz on Saturday afternoon.

This year we will only have 3 sessions, including an all day Friday session for the first time:

DAY	DATE	TIMES	ADVANCED TICKETS		PAY ON THE DOOR	
			General	CAMRA	General	CAMRA
Thursday	22nd Oct	17:00 to 22:00	£20	£13	£20	£15
Friday	23rd Oct	12:00 to 22:00	£20	£13	£20	£15
Saturday	24th Oct	12:00 to 19:00	£15	£10	£15	£10

All admission prices include a glass, programme and £10 of tokens.

Please note the new opening and closing times.

TICKETS

Electronic Tickets are on sale on now for all sessions from **https://tckty.camra.org.uk/e/568/38th-swindon-beer-festival?ref=RisingTun**, or just scan the QR code.

For each session you can also pay at the door.

Please note CAMRA members will get a cheaper admission with advance tickets on Thursday and Friday. On Saturday CAMRA members effectively get in free as they get £10 of tokens for their £10 admission fee.

THE ASHFORD VISIT TO RAMSBURY BREWERY

In early August the Ashford arranged a visit to Ramsbury Brewery. I think the thing that impressed me the most, other than great tasting Farmers Best and Ramsbury Gold, was the way the business has grown in a relatively short period of time, and the planning that must have gone into their set up was truly impressive.



(from left to right) - Clive Loveday (Ashford President), George Loughlin – (Ashford Member), Peter Carr (Ashford Member and previously Club Treasurer)

So many of their ingredients being from their own land, farmed themselves and the sustainability of their operation, from the re-use of the brewers spent grain to the water reed bed system and the biomass boiler system which uses wood from their own land.

Our members who attended the tour each donated £10 to The Prospect Hospice, so we raised £160 for a great cause too.

I can't recommend the visit highly enough. Barry knows his stuff! And it's clear to see from his enthusiasm and knowledge and fronting Ramsbury Brewery to visitors, why everyone leaves very happy!

Finally a huge thank you to Tony for helping to organise this great visit.

Jenny Brownley

THE ASHFORD'S 130TH ANNIVERSARY

This year marks the 130th anniversary of the Ashford Club!



130th Pin Badge Logo

To mark the occasion special pin badges have been commissioned. These are available at the club for £2.50 each with 100% of profits going to MND Association which fights Motor Neurone Disease. The Ashford would welcome anyone to purchase a pin badge and help us to support this brilliant charity in our 130th year.

Jenny Brownley

Raise your glasses

Part 1

Have you ever sat and considered whether you were drinking your refreshment of choice from the correct glass, jug or tumbler?

Before the late 1600s fine table glass in Britain was the exclusive preserve of the rich upper classes importing items from the continent, especially Venice and the Low Countries. Glass manufacture was not unknown in Britain as archaeological evidence proves the Romans, could make window glass, drinking vessels and scent phials. However, the fragility of soda glass and costly transport placed such wares beyond the reach and pocket of the working man. For the home and tavern, it was wood, pewter, leather, horn or salt-glazed mugs and bowls that were used.



From the 1570s, efforts were made in the founding of new glassworks in London to improve the quantity and quality of glass to the extent that the increased production resulted in a royal proclamation of 1613 banning the use of wood as fuel in both the glass and iron industries. Within two years a patent was secured to make fine drinking glasses in a coal-fired furnace. Thus, new furnaces were built in London and Newcastle and other sites which lead to the introduction of a new type of glass in 1673 by George Ravencroft. This had a high lead content and gained the name 'lead crystal' or 'flint glass'. This was much heavier and brighter than the old soda glass, it was more fluid when molten and set slower and became perfectly suitable for cutting and engraving. Over time other centres of manufacturing evolved in Newcastle, Bristol and Stourbridge.



By the end of the century lead glass was being used for high quality drinking vessels for the social elite and people of high status. Ravencroft's price list to retailers quoted one shilling for a claret glass, rising to 1s 6d or 1s 8d for a much heavier beer glass. By the close of the C17th the wholesale price of wine glasses had fallen to 6s (6 shillings) per dozen.

Ale for higher society was a much stronger drink, not unlike a barley wine at 10% – 12% abv and was served in a glass holding about 4 fluid

ounces capacity, compared to the 2-3 ounces of the wine glasses. The early Ale glasses were made with a decorative effect in keeping with the old Venetian influence including 'winged or pincered' knops, plus the 'flammiform gadrooning' (flame-like drapery) on a wrythen bowl, which was supported on a very short stem, hence the term 'dwarf ale'. The heavy ribbing of the Venetian decoration on the short stem and bowl provided a better grip and thus less breakage for the tavern landlord. Dwarf, short and normal ale glasses continued throughout the C18th but without the earlier decorative features.

Most readers will appreciate the distinction between ale and beer in that the former is made from malt, water and yeast, while beer has from the mid-C15th the added ingredient of hops, both as a flavouring and preservative. By the C18th the distinction was probably based more on colour or quality as the term ale continued to be used to describe dark-coloured brews and beer for paler types regardless of their strength. The term 'ale glass' is now used for drinking either ale or beer, although predominately the latter. Weaker brews, known as 'small beer', were drunk in greater quantity from tankards made of glass, pewter and occasionally silver!

Dave Woodman



ROBINSONS CIDER AT THE POUR HOUSE

Many of you will recognize the name Robinsons and immediately think of Robinsons Golden or Silver Shred marmalade or, the Robinsons Barley Water squash (often associated with the tennis at Wimbledon). So, on 25th June 2026, a very hot and sticky evening, the Pour House in Devizes opened its doors and welcomed Robinsons Cider from Hereford to showcase two of their real cider brands 'Flagon' and '0.0%'.

Back in the 1780s, Robert Robinson began making cider for "The Bay Horse" in Tenbury Wells, the first in several local pubs to be owned over the generations by the family. A succession of Robert Robinson built a commercial business founded on their 'Crown Cider' up to the 1950s when the cider business fell dormant as other business interests in mineral water, fruit juice and bottling became successful. In part this could be attributed to the cross-border licensing laws in Wales and temperance influence of the times (who can remember the closed pubs on a Sunday in Wales).

However, the cider making gene surfaced again in 2005 when 5th generation Robert Robinson dusted off the heirloom cider press and began making cider from local apples harvested in the surrounding orchards and used by past generations.



Sixth generation son Angus Robinson, who joined his father as cider maker in 2019, explained that the company obtain traditional tannic apples from unsprayed, low intensity, standard trees sourced from 20 farms and estates in Hereford and the Teme Valley. The varieties are predominantly Dabinett, Yarlington Mill, Brown Snout, Harry Masters Jersey, Foxwelper, Tom Smith and Kingston Black. No eating or cooking apples are used.

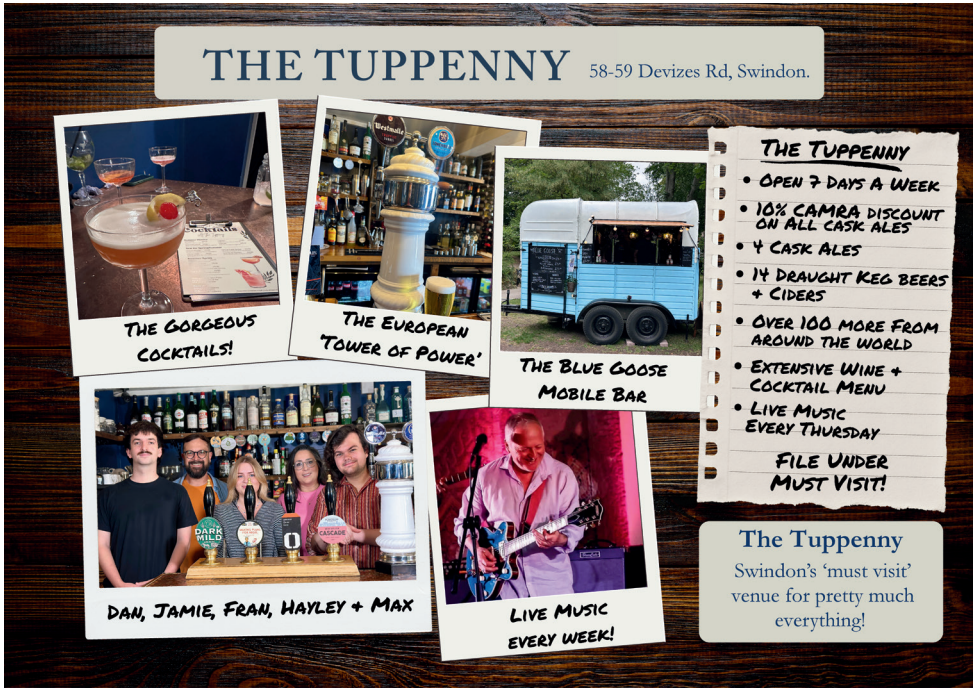
Pressed, fermented, blended in the traditional way Robinsons produce some 300 hectolitres (about 528,000 pints) of delicious fruit character. This places Robinsons about third largest in size comparison to other producers in Herefordshire.



Angus Robinson and Jo Forrester at the Pour House

The 'Flagon' medium 4.5% is available on draught, whilst their cold-filtered 4.5% Orchard Reserve, and 6% Fine Dry Vintage are supplied in 500ml bottles. Most surprising to many that evening was the bright and sparkling 0.0% medium cider (heading to medium dry) with a natural apple aroma. It was light and crisp, with a tart balance of bitter sharp apples. It also drew favorable comments from others, including how well it would pair with pork or oily fish dishes.

Robinsons sales director, Jo Forrester (formerly from Malmesbury) who accompanied Angus, explained that the company are well founded in pubs and bottle shops throughout Herefordshire and cross-border westward towards Builth Wells, then southwest to Monmouth and northwards into Shropshire. Whilst they have an outpost in Cheltenham this leaves much of Gloucestershire and the whole of Wiltshire vacant. Jo therefore thanked Sarah Watts and the Pour House team, for this opportunity to showcase cider, which was probably new to many drinkers in Devizes and beyond.



AN UPDATE ON THE THE VALE HOTEL *Cricklade*



In the previous edition of the Rising Tun we carried a fascinating article on the history of the Vale Hotel in Cricklade. Owners Mark and Helen Ingle were delighted with the history of their hotel, but asked that we point out that they were the winners of Channel 4 TV's 'Four in a Bed' in 2024, not 2004 as we put in the article.

After speaking to Mark we took the opportunity to visit the Vale Hotel. As well as a hotel there are two bars open to the public. In addition to the established 'Bar 32' they have just created a basement bar offering a cosy environment that should be popular as the night's draw in.

The hotel's own Jambo Namaste Fusion restaurant is complimented by the separate Jicsaw Thai restaurant behind the Vale. Mark & Helen have other plans to develop the Vale Hotel and we wish them luck.





THE GLUE POT

01793 497420
5 Emlyn Square, Swindon, Wiltshire, SN1 5BP

Situated in the heart of Brunel's railway village, the Glue Pot is a fantastic small traditional pub.
The pub is named for the glue pots nearby coachbuilders would bring into the pub at lunchtime and place on the central stove to keep warm.

gluepot@hopback.co.uk
gluepotswindon
gluepothopback

5 Regular ales
and 2 changing ales

Opening Times

Monday:
4.30pm to 11pm

Tues-Thurs:
12 noon to 11pm

Fri and Sat:
11.30am to 11pm

Sunday:
12noon to 10.30pm



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SOME BEER FESTIVAL DATES

OCTOBER

Fri 2nd – Sat 3rd:
Ascot Beer Festival
Fri 2nd – Sun 4th:
Carter's Rest, Beer Festival. In aid of the Wroughton Silver Band
Wed 7th – Sun 18th:
Wetherspoons Autumn Beer Festival
Sat 10th:
Ramsbury Brewery Oktoberfest from 7pm. Lagers from Field Theory Brewing Co.
Fri 9th – Sun 11th:
Kings Arms, Wantage Oktoberfest
Fri 16th – Sat 17th:
Weymouth Octoberfest
Thu 22nd – Sat 24th:
Swindon Beer Festival at STEAM
Fri 30th – Sat 31st:
Poole Beer Festival

NOVEMBER

Fri 6th – Sat 7th:
The Three Kings, Hanley Castle, Upton on Severn
Wed 11th – Sat 14th:
Egham USC 50th Beer Festival
Thu 12th – Sat 14th:
Kidderminster Beer & Cider Festival
Thu 26th – Sun 28th:
Dudley Winter Ales Fayre

DECEMBER

Tue 1st – Sat 5th:
42nd Pig's Ear Beer Festival
Sat 12th:
Haddenham, Aylesbury Beer Festival
Tue 15th – Sun 20th:
Drink Valley, Swindon Beer Festival

JANUARY 2027

Fri 8th – Sat 9th:
Westy Beer Festival in Aldershot
Thu 14th – Sat 16th:
Exeter Beer Festival

SWINDON SCOOPGEN

If you like to be kept up to date with beer offerings / festivals from various places, please consider joining the Swindon Scoopgen group on Facebook.

As member you will be most welcome to post beers seen, pictures of pump clips, reports or festival information.

SWINDON BRANCH DIARY DATES

All Meetings begin at 8.00pm.

OCTOBER

Monday 12th:
Business Meeting – The Merlin, Swindon

NOVEMBER

Tuesday 10th:
Business Meeting – The Hop Inn, Swindon

DECEMBER

Monday 7th:
Christmas Social – The Beehive, Swindon

2027

Monday 11th January:
Business Meeting – The Goddard Arms, Swindon

DEVIZES BRANCH DIARY DATES

OCTOBER

Thurs 22nd – Sat 24th:
Business and Social - Swindon Beer Festival

NOVEMBER

Thursday 26th:
DBCF Planning Committee - White Bear

DECEMBER

Saturday 12th:
Christmas Tour
Thursday 17th:
DBCF Planning Committee - White Bear

JANUARY 2027

Thursday 28th:
Business and Social - TBC

All dates and locations are provisional and subject to change.



Regular Events:

Thursday	Meat Draw at 9.30pm
Saturday	Live Entertainment
Sunday	Bingo at 8.00pm

- New members and their families welcome -

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8 ft dropdown screen in the back bar and
4 large screens in front bar.

Check out the website to see what's on

www.haydonwickclub.co.uk

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Room Hire: Full catering facilities available for up to 200

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Enquiries and correspondence to:

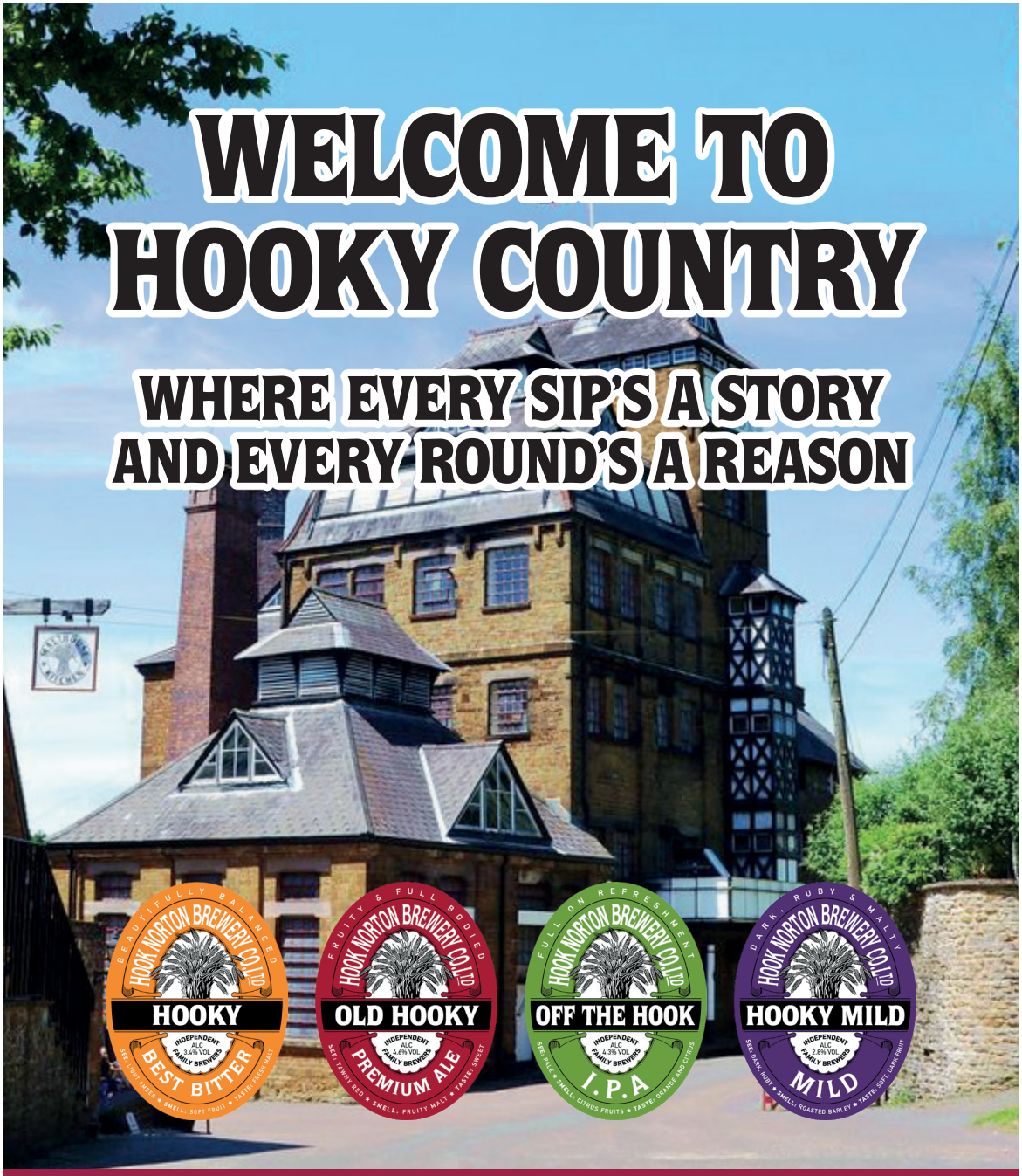
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Haydon Wick Club

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