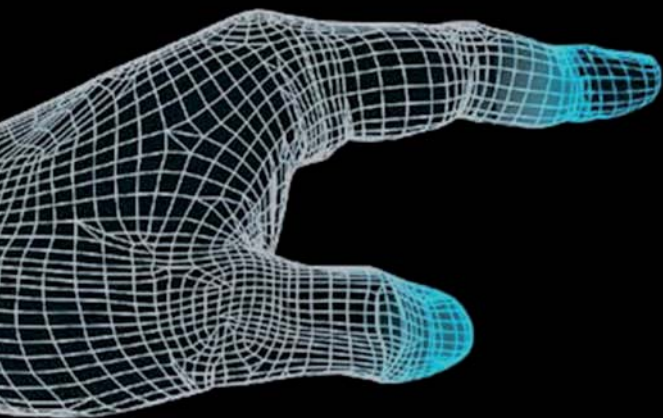


THE RISING TUN

Summer 2017 | Issue 118



INSIDE:

- Who Remembers The Mechanics?
- Detecting Inspector Morse
- Get to know Steve at The Blunsdon



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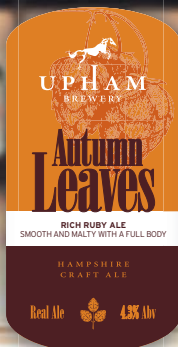
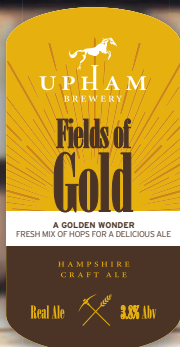
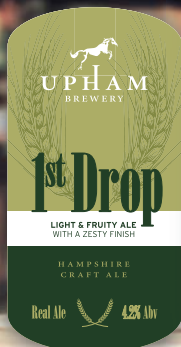
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From the Editor...

I've just returned from a long weekend in the North of England. In Grantham we stayed at the Ramada Hotel and were stunned to see Black Sheep bitter on "cream flow". Needless to say this epitome of the north country brewer's art, was entirely ruined. Where does the taste disappear to?

On to Yorkshire and lots of super micro pubs in old station waiting rooms, but for sheer choice nothing rivalled York. Inside the walled City, literally almost every other building is a pub and they all enthusiastically promote real ale. Pricing is a bit higher than Swindon but the choice is phenomenal. Tasty Leeds Brewery beers were staples in the CAMRA Pub of the year 'the Eagle and Child' in High Petergate. Just around the corner was the Bluebell and the chalk board outside said it all. "A proper pub for proper pub people"... strict rules, no music, no mobile phones, no games machines, no food, no children, just a lot of conversation (in yorkshire) and some excellent beer!

On the way back we called into Wetherspoon's in Huddersfield and sampled an incredible mild flavoured with toffee... Yes - I know, sounds dreadful, but was actually a decent drink brewed by Naylor's in Keighley, just along from the famous Timothy Taylor brewery in the same town. I think we miss out a bit with mild not so common here in the south. One final complaint though: watch out for the sparkler nozzles, EVERY pub uses them... they will take them off but are not that keen as it increases the liquid content!

JOHN STOOKE
Editor

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editor@swindoncamra.org.uk

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS:

I'd like to thank Richard James, Chris James, Barry Hillier, Paul Arrondale, Vince Chilcott, Paul New, Keith Dickson, Gill White and Alex Harkness for their invaluable help in compiling this issue. If your pub would like copies for the bar, do get in touch.

THE RISING TUN

'THE RISING TUN' is the magazine of Swindon and North Wiltshire branch of CAMRA (Campaign for Real Ale)

THE LOCAL DIARY

All meetings and social events are relaxed and friendly. Why not come along and join us? Members and non members are equally welcome to attend. Check the website before setting out in case of any last minute changes. Meetings usually begin at 8.00pm. Upcoming dates are:

Tues 8th August

The Green Dragon, 12-13 High Street,
Marlborough SN8 1AA

Tues 12th September

The Merlin, Drove Road, Swindon, SN1 3AF

Tues 10th October

The Pig on the Hill, 8 Devizes Road,
Swindon SN1 4BH

Mon 13th November

The Conservative Club, 20 Bath Rd,
Swindon SN1 4BA



Howard wants to invite you to the **Great Pie Fest at The Sun in Lydiard** over the Bank Holiday Weekend Sat 26th Aug – Mon 28th Aug. Music, Ales, Cider and stuff for the kids!

JOKes

Was in my local library last week and I asked if they had the new book of advice for the less well endowed gentleman. The librarian said "I'm not sure if it's in yet?"... I said "Yes, that's the one"....

Walk This Way.....



The Bathurst Arms

The Bathurst Arms

Tel 01285 832150

This is a relatively strenuous 6 mile walk and you will need OS Landranger 163, Cheltenham and Cirencester (GR 020079).

Getting there is via the Stagecoach service 51 to Cheltenham which can be caught at the Bus Station but also stops in Gorse Hill and Penhill. Check the timetable for last return (15.30?) but it is approx two hourly and stops right opposite the pub. You can drive also of course.

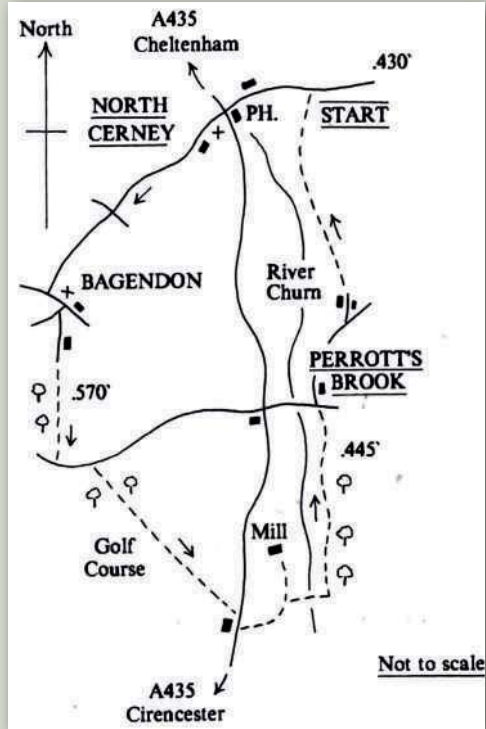
The Walk

Cross the road in front of the Bathurst Arms and follow the lane opposite signed Bagendon. Continue up the hill out of North Cerney, passing the entrance to Cerney House on your right. At a crossroads, continue across, and in ½ mile you will find yourself at a junction on the edge of the village with the war memorial on your right. Turn left and in a short distance you will reach the centre of the village and the tiny Church. Turn right alongside the Church and follow the cul-de-sac lane immediately on your left for ¼ mile to an isolated cottage. Beyond the cottage an enclosed footpath continues to the right of a garage. Eventually this path becomes an open field where you track the right hand boundary alongside woodland to a gate in the field's right hand corner. Beyond the gate, join

the Daglingworth to Perrot's Brook road. Turn left, and in just 10 yards, cross a stone stile on the right hand side into a field. Bear half left across this field following a line of three visible stiles toward an avenue of trees in the distance. Almost to the end of this avenue, cross a second stone stile and follow an enclosed path through the trees. In the next field, stick to the left hand boundary alongside woodland to the corner of this field and the stile. Cross to the opposite side of the next field to an upright marker post and a stile 50 yards from the right hand corner of the fence ahead. Beyond this stile, head half right in the next field to a track and to a second marker post and stile. Over this stile, head down to the right hand edge of the next two fields to a stile which leads into the grounds of Cirencester Golf Club... watch out for stray shots!! Pass to the left of the clubhouse and meet the main A435 road. Across the road from the clubhouse, follow an unmetalled lane until you see an old mill. At this point turn right on to a footpath which crosses the mill stream via a wooden footbridge. This path enters an open field. Cross to a gateway on the far side beyond which you cross a stream and then turn left almost immediately on to a well-defined bridle path. This path follows a distinct route to the right of the stream for several 100

yards before entering a field. Pass through the handgate ahead and continue along the bridle path, initially along the foot of the field and then through woodland. At the end of the woodland you reach the road at Perrotts Brook. Cross over and follow the lane past several large houses and just beyond the houses, as the overhead pylons appear, turn left on to an unmetaled drive that leads down to some farm buildings. Follow a sort of bridle path, past these buildings and on past several cottages. The path passes to the right of the last cottage before meeting open country and the last mile back to North Cerney. After an enclosed section that runs for approx 200 yards, the path follows the bottom edge of an arable field with the fence to your left. At the end of this field bear left into the next field and continue in the same direction but this time with the fence to the right. This open meadow gives you a decent view of the River Churn to

your left. Some way across pass through a gate on your right and continue following this field boundary northwards. Just as you approach North Cerney you will see a large cottage on the left across the river. At this point leave the valley bottom and bear uphill to the right and to a stile in the wall ahead. Beyond is the road where you turn left to return to North Cerney and the Bathurst Arms. In the centre of the village you will pass the green and the Inn is it just a few yards down on the left hand side. Normally there is an excellent pint of Butcombes awaiting you. Don't miss the bus back!
www.thebathurstarms.co.uk



JOKes

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DISAPPEARED PUBS



... A regular column which looks back at long forgotten Swindon Ale Houses.

This month we feature the Mechanics Arms in Cheltenham Street

In 1865 Daniel Gooch persuaded the GWR directors to sell Great Culverly Field for private housing for essential employees and by 1869 new houses, including shops and a pub were being offered to members of the Swindon Permanent Building Society.

This area became Cheltenham Street, Gloucester Street, Weymouth Street and the top end of Wellington Street and was named after towns on the GWR network... except Wellington which was of course named after the Duke.



No clue where they were off to, or why the guy to the left is sporting a rather splendid uniform? ... Answers on a postcard!

On April 17, 1872 John Arkell bought two plots of land from Joseph Armstrong and Richard Strange to enable them to begin to build the Mechanics Arms beer house. The initial smaller building was extended in 1878.

The pub faced sideways on to Weymouth Street, and the garden extended almost to the banks of the canal... with Albion Terrace on the opposite canal bank. The frontage and main entrance was on Cheltenham Street and the jug and bottle on the corner.

The first landlord listed in the licensing records was John Easter in 1885 but probably the best known landlords were F W Gill and family who were in residence from the mid 1930s through the Second World War.

It first opened as an off licence and an on licence was not granted until October 1877 when the licence from the White Hart Pub, (opposite the then Red Lion on The Street in Moredon) was closed by Arkells. Remarkably a full spirit licence was not granted until 1960 and the following year the pub was bought by Swindon Borough Council who had placed compulsory purchase order on all of Cheltenham Street, including the pub, all of Gloucester Street, Weymouth Street,

Milford Street and Wellington Street for future development.

The Mechanics was a pub much favoured by railwaymen and was well known for regular Saturday family sing songs hosted by pianist, Olive Hedges.

As the site is now buried beneath the present bus station is hard to be precise about the location, but using the line of The Parade and the line from the remainder of Cheltenham Street (now Beales Close) I believe it would have sat on the green area on the opposite side of Fleming Way to the Debenhams Store.

JOKes

I put my old TV Set on EBAY last night ...
checked today and there is already 23
people watching it



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FESTIVALS ROUND UP

8/12TH AUGUST

Olympia, Great British Beer Festival
www.GBBF.org.uk

18/20TH AUGUST

Ale & Steam Weekend, Glos and
Warwick Railway
www.northcotswoldcamra.org.uk

25/28TH AUGUST

Beer and Cider Weekend, Check Inn at
Wroughton - Facebook has all details

25/26TH AUGUST

Frocester Beer Festival, Near Dursley
www.soglos.com

8/9TH SEPTEMBER

Moreton in the Marsh Beer Festival
www.cheltenhamcamra.org.uk

19/21ST OCTOBER

Maidenhead Beer Festival,
Magnet Leisure Club
www.mbcf.camra.org.uk

26/28TH OCTOBER

Birmingham Beer Festival, The Custard Factory
www.birminghambeerfestival.org.uk

24/25TH NOVEMBER

Bath CAMRA Winter Fest, Widcombe
www.bathandborderscamra.org.uk

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Our very own Great Swindon and NW
Beer Fest at STEAM

**26th/27th/28th OCTOBER ...
SEE YOU THERE!**



*Called into the Goddards Arms recently and was
blown away by the ale selection .. worth a visit*

Brewery News

ARKELLS, SWINDON: the brewery is extremely busy; they are on the lookout for more fermentation capacity. They've also just invested £20K in new casks to cope with demand. Their Wimbledon beer Strawberries N' Cream (4.5% abv) went well with the strawberry flavours came through nicely according to head brewer Alex Arkell. They have also brewed 'Loaf of Bread' beer, and Rugbeer since the last Tun, and cooperated with 15 other brewers to produce a charity beer, 'The Great Get Together' in memory of the late Jo Cox MP. Lot going on!



Alex Arkell's latest creation for Wimbledon Week .. yes Strawberries and Cream Beer.. 3B's and Strawberries? A bit of a stretch surely....

HOP KETTLE, SWINDON: a successful Tap Room launch of the new Swindon brewery at Hawkesworth was held on Saturday 22nd July.

RAMSBURY: have a new beer to be brewed all year round - Ramsbury Pale Ale or RPA (4% abv). They will have Silver Pig Stout (4.7% abv) at Great British Beer Festival (GBBF) this year. Look out also for MM (4.8% abv) celebrating their 2000th Brew and featuring Citra and Azzaca hops. It will be presented in cask and bottles.

THREE CASTLES, PEWSEY: Anthony and Ian created a seasonal beer for the Devizes Beer Festival, King Alfred's Gold (4.6% abv) ... a well hopped light golden ale with a delicate, sweet and spicy flavour with hints of a citrus aroma. Another seasonal ale selling well is Stoned a speciality ale (4.4% abv) ... a straw coloured well hopped beer with bitter overtones and intense citrus flavour, which lingers to the end, an excellent and refreshing summer ale. They will have Vale Ale (4.3% abv) at the GBBF, who have ordered 3 x 18 gallon casks.

WEIGHBRIDGE, SWINDON: have now resolved the licence transfer issue following the takeover by Upham and are now back in full production with their regular range of beers.

WORLDS END, PEWSEY: are now brewing Bitterus Magnus (4.2% abv) and brewed Lions Blonde (4.2% abv) for the recent Lions tour. Their Kiwi Blonde (4.2% abv) was at the Devizes festival. The Summer Solstice Beer Festival featured beers from Oxfordshire and went well.

SHED ALES, PEWSEY: Forkin Ale (4.2% abv) is now available in the Shed Ale House.

The most natural thing under the sun..



Real Ale ... the finest health food money can buy ... and don't just take my word for it...

Rupert Ponsonby, a founder of the Beer Academy "There's no fat in beer and no cholesterol either, and it's ridiculously low in calories and carbs, If it gives you a spare tyre it's almost certainly due to the pork scratchings consumed alongside your pint!"

Beer is natural, healthy, non-fattening and, when drunk in moderation, good for you. It won't put weight on, although the accompanying chip butties might and it's also our national drink. With nearly all real ale being made right here in the UK, it also helps the balance of trade.

Beer is a rich source of soluble fibre, with just two glasses providing more than 30 per cent of our required daily intake; it is full of easily absorbed antioxidants, rich in all sorts of vitamin B and high in potassium. Half a pint of ale has just 95 calories compared to 193 for a large glass of wine or 171 for a double G & T. It is also, when you think about it, a low alcohol drink (95 per cent of it is water), around a third the strength of a hearty California Zinfandel.

A trend in fine dining is to treat beer rather like wine ... drink it out of small glasses rather than pints and have different beers with different dishes.

Instead of a white wine with a first course you might instead choose a crisp, clean Oakham Citra; in place of a red with the main it might be Innis & Gunn Original or if beef why not an award winning Bingham's Vanilla Stout?

Cut out the crisps and just watch the weight fall off! Ed.

BEERY BITS

A News Round Up In Brief

Heineken is offering to sell 33 pubs to allay concerns over its £403 million deal to buy 1,895 Punch Tavern pubs. The Competition and Markets Authority say the proposal by Heineken, which already has 1,100 UK pubs "may be acceptable"..... Very strange.

Marstons have bought the Charles Wells Bedford brewery (founded in 1876) for £55 million. The deal includes a majority of the Charles Wells brands such as Bombadier, Courage and McEwens but excludes the medium sized Charles Wells pub/hotels business. Charles Wells will continue to brew on a small scale to support its retained pubs business. This is the largest acquisition made by Marstons to date. In 2015 they acquired Thwaites beers (Wainright) for £25 million. Whilst this dominance is alarming, so far Marstons have a record of keeping small brewers where they are to preserve the unique tastes of the regional offers... but soon some 'business school whizz kid' is quite likely to say "I know... let's put them all on one site!" PLEASE NO!

Wickwar Wessex Brewing Company (famous for BOB and started by our great friend Ray Penny (now at the Ramsbury Crown and Anchor) has acquired Moles Ales brands and the Cascade pub estate. The Wiltshire-based Moles Ales brands have been bought from Tolchards Drinks, which had previously acquired the drinks business of the Cascade Group. This acquisition will increase Wickwar's pub operation by 60% to a total of 16 pubs.

JOKes

I used to play in a Rock Band called "Sold Out"... the posters always looked great, but no one turned up to the gigs...

BEER AND THE CREATIVE ARTS ...

Inspector Morse was a great fan of real ale. Interestingly John Thaw was not at all keen and following a long battle with alcohol, gave up drinking completely in 1995.

His creator, Colin Dexter, on the other hand was a huge fan. He wrote his first Morse novel 'Last Bus to Woodstock' during a beery, rainy holiday. Dexter was a crossword compiler and frequently destroyed the Times crossword in 10 minutes! The UK crossword championship was won by Sir Jeremy Morse, Chairman of Lloyds Bank, on five occasions. Another finalist, a Mrs B Lewis, then unknowingly supplied the nametag for Morse's number two.



Colin's favourite brew was the sadly departed Morrells, and he frequently wrote on his nightly visits to the pub. Toward the end diabetes became so bad he had to give up and left the planet on 21st March this year aged 86.

My daughter Kelly interviewed him around 2000 and bagged me a signed copy of 'The Remorseful Day'. She recalled that although extremely deaf, he was very charming and she was surprised to actually sit in Morse's living room ... as Dexter allowed the programme makers to use his house in the series.

By the time he finished this 30th novel, 80 people had met a fictional end in the City of Spires and he had appeared as cameo in all but three Morse dramas. He had a somewhat radical view on the benefits of real ale "the mind becomes lucid after beer ... if I've got to think I've got to drink" Well I can subscribe to this!

Ed



PUB NEWS...

Swindon and North Wiltshire Branch

The White Horse at Winterbourne Bassett is being sold by Wadworths. The locals fear that it will be closed and lost so they are seeking listing as an Asset of Community Value and looking at the community acquiring it. **The Wellington Arms in Marlborough** is now part of the Bermondsey Pub Co Group and features Pieminister pies on the menu. **The Carter's Rest in Wroughton** is now being managed by former landlord Kevin's nephew Josh, as part of a mini-pub group which includes the Patriot's Arms. They can get SIBA beers as well as the Punch Inns range.... unclear about a possible food offer at the time of going to press. Temp hosts Owen and Debbie proved popular and wanted to stay but the Punch lease was too onerous ... maybe should be quietly ringing alarm bells for the new regime? ... also a paint job is promised. **The Barrington Arms in Shrivenham**, dating from 1760 is on the market with a whopping £850,000 sought for the freehold. Arkells are seeking new tenants for **The Tavern at Kemble** and for **The Volunteer Inn at Great Somerford**. Wadworths would like to hear from parties interested in taking **The Langley Tap in Langley Burrell** whilst Punch plan big refurbishments and a very low ingoing of £8,000 or so for **The Queens Head in Marlborough**. Largely a wet led pub up until now, Punch feel a food offer could do big things for profitability. No further news on **The Brown Jack at Wroughton** where the landlord plans to retire. **The Sun Inn at Coate** has a new manager ... finally a quick update on **The Red Lion at Baydon**. The group seeking to buy the pub for the community are getting a good response and the Inland Revenue have agreed that the scheme can qualify under EIS criteria which means that for every pound you invest you will receive 30% back as a tax rebate, shares of minimum £100 are still available, go to www.savebaydonlion.uk

Beer At Home

Today, hundreds of bottled ales vie for space on supermarket shelves and thousands more don't get shelf space. While it's self evident you can't reproduce properly kept and dispensed real ale in a bottle, this feature scours the country to search out taste and flavour. The views here are entirely those of the editor who apologises in advance if your taste is not his!

The Pump House Pale Ale

Duncan Sambook left his job with Deloittes in the City in 2008 aiming to start up his own brewery.... and it what a success it's been! I was pleased



to visit the brewery tap in Battersea recently and test some of the latest brew.



This chosen beer is named after the iconic pump house in Battersea Park. A golden coloured ale, it is 4.2, decently hopped and presents a sharp marmalade taste and a spicy, slightly citrusy aroma. Duncan tells us it's good for spicy food or general quaffing! I can't say it was over gassed but despite leaving it to settle for 15 minutes, it still tasted nothing like the Pump House ale you

can see me pulling on the recent brewery visit. Availability is also not straightforward. Whilst advertised on some 'beer by mail order' sites it has to be requested specifically and then within a mixed pack of ales.

The Brewery Tap in Battersea is open Thursdays and Fridays 5.00pm til 10.00pm... Regular brewery tours are available at £15.00 which includes a glass and free beer. Once there, it's easy to buy a variety of recipes in bottles at reasonable prices.

www.sambrooksbrewery.co.uk

Your Local Host ... Get to Know Them

The Blunsdon Arms opposite Asda Walmart is without doubt a pub of the future. Part of the Ember Inns group, it boasts good food at reasonable prices, regular music gigs and 8 yes 8 real ales, always changing and because of the turnover, always fresh... And on Monday's all at a low price of £2.49. I caught up with landlord Steve Williams to get to know him a little better and understand what makes this well oiled machine work so well.



When did you start out in business and why?

Believe it or not as a 15 year old glass collector in Plymouth. I grew up there and my elder sister was in the business. After a computing science degree and a year travelling in Australia, I still didn't really know what I wanted to do with my life. Following different incarnations in pub kitchens, and then even as a waiter, I was hired as Assistant Manager to the White Lion in Bristol and my relationship with Ember Inns began.

Tell me about you're typical day.

This is a late pub and I'm not the greatest in the mornings. There is usually two or three hours of admin, although I have a brilliant staff team who take care of a lot of the ordering. I sort of share family duties with wife Sam. She operates usually behind the scenes but we take turns with family responsibility, normally a day about. When I'm on it's a bit of everything. I'll wait tables, collect glasses, keep an eye on the cellars (keeping the real ale at a constant 11°) serve if we are busy, bits of DIY. I rarely knock off before 1.00AM and weekends it's usually 3.00AM. On top of all that the two boys need taking to kickboxing twice a week and football once as well as dropping off and collecting from school every day.

What's been your biggest achievement to date?

I have won Manager of the Year award... but I think that the recent music festival we ran here generated the largest single daily sales of any pub in Ember, ever... can't tell you how much though!

Are you into sport? Do you have a favourite team?

Back in the day I was pretty good at football and played semi pro in Plymouth. Now it's watching. I'm a devoted Liverpool fan, but a bit concerned this year about lots of talk and not lots of action (so far)

Do you have a favourite film?

Not really. I watch anything that's on. If it's good I can switch off business for a bit.

Which is your favourite restaurant? (Not your own)

Miller and Carter Steakhouse ... the Swindon one has just opened in Drove Road and this is not because it's a group company. If you're a meat sort of person it's really worth a visit, but not so good for veggies!

What is your most regrettable habit (that you can tell me about!)

Others tell me this, so it's probably true. I often carry on three conversations at the same time and lose track of every thread. The team are always ribbing me about it... just call me over enthusiastic.

How about cars? Bit of a petrol head?

Sorry, really boring family cars these days or perhaps I should say family taxi which at the moment is a Mondeo. Any reasonably sized saloon will be fine.

If you didn't live here where would you live and why?

Not really much of an international traveller any more. Australia would be great if you could transport family and friends... but no I think probably Plymouth. When you grow up somewhere it never stops feeling like home. We will be going on a foreign holiday this year however, first time in seven years.

What would you never leave home without?

My iPhone of course. It's a computer and keeps me in touch with everything that is going on, sorry, (as he checks incoming messages for the third time!)

What's the best thing that happened to you recently?

That's the easy question. Sam and I got married in October. It was a fun, memorable day and so far is definitely one of our better decisions!

If I gave you a soapbox outside the Town Hall what would you rant on about?

To be honest I'm a pretty chilled guy. I don't know much about Politics. My excuses I'm just too busy but I do think Politicians of all shades may well get into it for the right reasons but then find they can't possibly deliver what they promise which just makes everybody that bit more cynical.

If you could invite any character from history to your next dinner party who would it be?

I'm a great music fan. Saw Kings of Leon recently and of course wouldn't miss Glastonbury. But even though my all-time favourite band is the Killers, this time Brandon Flowers would have to stand aside for Freddie Mercury. He was a legend... bet he would be terrific fun to get wrecked with.

What tips would you give anyone starting out in business?

Firstly you have to love the business, build trust and motivate a good team who will work hard. You can't do everything. Treat people as individuals. Different strategies get the best out of people ...the secret is understanding that... Oh and you can always do with a dose of luck

What makes the Blunsdon Arms such a good business?

Ember are a great company to work for. They believe in promoting from within. I have 20 staff here and three assistant managers. I see it my job to train and promote them and recently one moved on to take over their own pub. I did 3 years at the Beaufort Arms and 5 years at the Three Brooks in Bradley Stoke before I got the Blunsdon. If people feel they can get on in a business they always put in that extra bit of effort

The talk took a little longer than planned as he had to rush off to Catherine Wayte to pick up the boys. Combining a dynamic, high profile business demanding 15/18 hour days with being good parents, is no mean feat. Steve seems to understand delegation and that his business works best with motivated well-trained staff taking responsibility. Mark ran a great pub here and I for one was sceptical when he retired as to whether the business would continue to thrive. I should not have worried. It's in good hands.



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You perhaps pick up the 'Tun' occasionally, or maybe this is your first time, and you get to this last bit and think ... Why should I bother to join? What's the offer ... terrific fresh real ale, chance to get away and chat, the company of warm, welcoming, like minded friends, and knowing you play a part in one of the biggest and

most successful pressure groups in UK history. We meet monthly on a Wednesday and organise lots of social events. Give it some serious thought. If you are still not quite sure, why not call Richard on Swindon 618921 and chat it over. We'd love to welcome you to our next get together in September.

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The Red Lion

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www.theredlioncricklade.co.uk

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