

Guide raises a glass to Test Valley pubs

PUBS in and around Romsey are featured in Camra's Good Beer Guide 2011.

They include for the first time the town's Bishops Blaize, along with regulars, the Abbey Hotel and the Old House at Home. The Black Horse, West Tytherley, The Royal Oak, at Fritham and the Newport Inn, Braishfield, are also featured.

Guide editor, Roger Protz, said: "The real ale revolution goes on, in spite of all the problems facing the brewery industry, such as the often anti-competitive behaviour of the large pub companies, the heavy and continuing rise in tax on beer, grossly unfair competition from supermarkets and the smoking ban.

"Yet, against all the odds, craft breweries continue to sprout like mushrooms at dawn.

He said 10 new breweries had opened in the region in the last 12 months, including Flack Manor in Romsey.

Wayne Jacobs, who runs the Bishops Blaize with his wife, said: "This is our first pub and we're pleased to be in the guide. We missed out by just one vote last year.

He said the pub's main beer was Ringwood Best, but it also offered four or five

By Andy Simmonds

guest beers a week.

"Lots of people do try the real ales. There's a real curiosity value, not like lager, when you know what it's going to taste like," said Wayne.

Sarah Edom, who runs Romsey's Old House at Home with husband, Mike, said: "We've been in the guide for the last seven years and we're extremely proud of it.

"It's definitely an accolade to be featured in the book. Mike works really hard on getting a good pint and all his work has paid off."

Landlady of the Newport Inn, at Braishfield, Janet Cook, said she was delighted her traditional pub was still featured in the publication.

Janet, 77, said: "We've been in it for donkeys' years. We don't do any fancy food - just ploughman's lunches, sandwiches and traditional ales.

"I grew up in the pub trade. My father, Alex Cottle, had the pub before my late husband, Bernard and I took it over in 1970. We are stuck in a time warp here and we are going to stay that way. We've not got a TV, no computers, or electronic tills and no jukebox. Our only music is Saturday night sing-songs."

David Gower to re-open Wheatsheaf

FORMER England cricketer, David Gower, will officially open Braishfield's new-look Wheatsheaf pub. Mr Gower will cut the ribbon at the refurbished hostelry next Thursday evening. The Enterprise Inn pub has a new landlord, Carl Pearce, who is also in charge of the Swan Inn, at Stoford, near Salisbury, which he runs with wife, Maris.

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