



THAT WAS THE YEAR THAT WAS!

30th December 2024

Hi Friend,

As 2024 draws to a close, this Special Edition Newsletter looks back and we celebrate another great year at The Swan: not just a pub, but the heart of the community, with LOTS going on!

January - March



January began with new food offerings from the kitchen. Janny Angkana brought her popular Thai cuisine to our tables on Thursday evenings, whilst Louise brought traditional Sunday roasts back to The Swan. Later in the month, The Friends of The Swan's traditional Burns Night Supper was a roaring success. Volunteers fed and entertained over 60 people, with the Haggis piped in and Burns' ode read over a three-course meal and a wee dram. We were shortlisted for the Local CAMRA Pub of the Year and The Cowshed got lighter with all the original wall lights from the pub being installed free of charge by our friends at First Light Electrical.



In **February** our new community chosen charity was announced as Windsor Old Peoples' Welfare Association, who operate the popular King George VI Daycare Centre and Lunch Club. The first Coffee Morning on their behalf was attended by their trustees

who provided an amazing cake and began a year of enthusiastic teamwork to raise funds for this much-loved local resource. Our kitchen takeovers continued, with 'The Secret Chef' providing a menu of dishes representing the Six Nations and a wonderful Caribbean evening by the lovely Ren. But the month was tinged with sadness as we said a final goodbye to two Swan legends: our self-declared "oldest regular" Rene Lowe, who finally let go of her perch at the grand age of 102; and Bill Sinclair, one of our most "regular regulars" and avid collector of our loyalty cards (112 of them to be precise!) who left us far too soon after a battle with cancer.



In **March**, our food offerings continued to expand with Ian's Saturday Kitchen providing good, simple weekend pub grub. Mothering Sunday was a busy one with not only a great celebratory roast dinner, but potted primroses and bunches of tulips presented to mothers and grandmothers. Our Community Open Forum was opened up to all our customers and friends for the first time, run by the CIC Directors who presented some detail of our financial performance and plans in the pipeline, before listening to your feedback. With the home nations' rugby matches on the pub's TVs we saw lots of community sport-lovers enjoying a pint or two and at Easter we enjoyed a long-awaited Bank Holiday to celebrate the lighter evenings and another busy Sunday Roast with traditional lamb.

April - June



Our Warhammer group celebrated their first birthday in **April**, whilst WCH attended the Sharing Spaces event in The Great Park and Chef Peter McConkey cooked up a storm at our first fine dining weekend! Sunday roasts kept flying out of Lou's kitchen and Bingo had 40 players dabbing and singing along. Queen Elizabeth I graciously attended our St. George's Day event, along with Voci Chamber Choir and helped raise £750 for the Renovation Fund. Unfortunately, April showers impacted our spring market, but our monthly interactive movie nights launched with The Rocky Horror Picture

Show, bringing out some seldom-seen Clewer residents!



In **May**, Mirella and the Chatty Café Gang braved the elements for a sponsored walk and raised over £500 for the Renovation Fund, whilst Star Wars characters usually seen on Tatooine were spotted in the courtyard on May the 4th (be with you)! It was trophies galore with a presentation to the winners of our first Fantasy Football League and the inaugural Swan Golf Tournament at Royal Ascot Golf Club. We also celebrated the life of Rene Lowe, Karaoke Saturdays kicked off and some dubious looking nuns attended The Sound of Music movie night!



It was time for a spruce up in **June**, with the Gardening Team making an impressive job of this year's courtyard flowers and gaining us a Bronze Award in the Wildlife Gardens Awards, plus the bar got a new look just in time for the Euros to start. Our Charity Coffee Morning went international as Jane from Philadelphia joined us with her lemon and whisky cake, after reading about us during her stay nearby! All of our regular quiz, bingo, movie and karaoke nights events continued at pace.

July - September



In **July** Micky was interviewed by BBC local radio – the first of 5 times this year! – and Richard Allan appeared on the BBC TV Breakfast show! Datchet Border Morris came for a dance out and as it was the fifth birthday of re-opening The Swan and we took the opportunity to celebrate with a great community party in the sunshine! Our annual Christmas in July is unique within Windsor, and we were privileged to have Santa to pop in to the pub during his holidays.



August is the time of our annual Swanfest, and we had another super weekend filled with unforgettable moments, laughter and indulgence! With great company, delicious food and drink, Guinness World Record attempts and an exciting raffle, Swanfest 2024 was truly epic and raised £1,400 for the Renovation

Fund. Two new clubs started: Conversational French and the Windsor Town Funrunners, who now base themselves at The Swan each week. We also had an unannounced visit of the Great British Pub Awards head judge, who spent 2 hours asking questions and touring the site. Mirella found time on Bank Holiday Monday to organise a sponsored walk in aid of our 2024 charity, the King George VI Day Centre.



The highlight in **September** was The Swan being chosen as Best Community Pub at the Great British Pub Awards 2024, broadcast live into The Swan from the gala ceremony in Manchester. Heralded as the Oscars of the industry, pubs from across Britain compete for one of the industry's most sought-after accolades. The trophy was presented live on stage to Micky and now sits proudly in the bar. The month ended with Oktoberfest, our now annual celebration of German bier & food.

October - December



Early in **October** we were able to announce that, for the fifth consecutive year, The Swan was included in The Good Beer Guide 2025, CAMRA'S most prestigious publication. Barman Harry took over the kitchen, with his delicious homemade burgers going down a treat! The GRC students got to handle a real-life Oscar statuette when Swan Elder Nina Hartstone visited to talk about her career in Film and TV. As winter started to draw in, Quiz and Bingo nights became even more popular, and the Windsor Town Funrunners got into the spirit of Halloween by dressing up for their weekly run.



November started with our annual Community Bonfire Night, with mulled wine, sparklers and chilli, accompanied by the fabulous BackTrak. Accompanied by our very own Windsor Ukulele Band, a packed pub sang their hearts out at our first ever Uke-Oke: a brilliant and unique evening which will be bound to be repeated. And to kick off the festive season we held Santa's Jolly Jaunt – a collaborative walk, run and ride involving members of Chatty Café, Windsor Town

Funrunners and Windsor Cycle Hub respectively. Everyone had a ball, and our intrepid Santas raised over £450 for the Renovation Fund.



And finally, in **December** we have packed in: GRC's Winter Fayre, with a Windsor and Eton Living Advent Calendar performance from students and staff; The Friend's German inspired Christmas Market, with bratwurst, gluhwein and lots of festive gift stalls; a fabulous community Carol Singing evening; and busy Christmas Eve and Christmas Day sessions where you, the special Swan Community, gathered to share the most wonderful time of the year together at Britain's Best Community Pub! And there's still tomorrow night's New Year's Eve Party to go...!! Stay tuned for a full report in the first of 2025's regular newsletters on Friday 3rd Jan!

Phew...! That was a lot crammed in to a fun packed year at The Swan! And there's a lot more besides - to read more about all our events, regular clubs and community news over the year in our website's comprehensive Events Diary with many more great photos, just click the button below:

[Our Events Diary 2024](#)

All of us at The Swan thank you for your custom and for being part of our amazing community during the year, and send our very best wishes for a happy and healthy 2025!

Warm regards,

The Friends of The Swan



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