

## THE 9<sup>TH</sup> OTLEY PARISH CHURCH BEER FESTIVAL 2009

To our surprise and delight, this year's festival was once again held at Otley Civic Centre and was, once again, a great success both as a social event and as a way of raising several thousand pounds for the Parish Church and for the local charities we were supporting. It is also nice to be able to report that, as usual, hundreds of people were able to enjoy sampling different local beers without any trouble or unpleasantness at all.

1,611 people were counted through the doors over the two days of the Festival, not including helpers and entertainers, and the pattern of attendance was much the same as at previous Festivals. We had a very quiet Friday afternoon but it got very busy from Friday 6-00pm. We were again busy throughout the day Saturday and people were still enjoying the beers at 11-00 when we had to close.

Several of the 63 beers on offer were either November specials or beers brewed specially for the festival. All the cask ales came from Yorkshire except our regular and welcome visitor from across the Pennines and a kilderkin from the Otley Brewery in Wales and most came from the old West Riding. There was also a wide selection of global bottled beers, a range of ciders and perries and some delicious hot food. The general opinion of the drinkers was that the beers were in excellent condition and provided an interesting range of different styles and flavours. An innovation this year was to colour code the beers by type and this was very well received by both drinkers and helpers. Although the first beer ran out late Friday evening - Saltaire's Raspberry Blonde - it was pleasing that there was still a range of 14 beers to choose from at 10-00 on Saturday night, a better selection than in any pub in Otley! It was also pleasing, however, that there was relatively little beer left over on the Sunday. We hate to have to throw it away! The beer voted Beer of the Festival was a Saltaire Brewery beer for the second year running - Madagascan Ale, 'a blonde ale infused with flavours of guava'.

Entertainment was provided free of charge by a number of local groups including regulars such as GMC Jazz, Timeless Swing Band and Wayze goose.

The festival received very generous sponsorship. Ilkley Brewery, Daleside Brewery and Waitrose took on the role of main sponsors this year and we had a record number of cask sponsors. These included not only Otley firms and Otley people but also friends of the Festival from further afield. We also had generous donations of casks of beer from John Rowe of the Grove Pub in Leeds and from Old Bear, Tetley's and Thwaites Breweries. Once again Andy Peckham organised a tombola and we were very grateful to the many organisations which donated prizes including Betty's of Harrogate.

The festival was also a financial success. The accounts are not yet finalised but we will be making donations to the Parish Church of £3,500; to the WASP Club, a social and recreational club for people aged 14 and over with profound and/or multiple disabilities, of £1,000; to Second Otley Scouts,

who are seeking to develop their scout hut, of £1,250; and to the Weston Lane Sports and Social Club, who are seeking to develop their premises on Weston Drive as a community centre, of £1,500. We are also pleased that we were able to give £172-80 to the charity 'Help for Heroes'. This represented the proceeds from the sale of a barrel of beer donated by Old Bear Brewery in memory of Stewart Frank Ankin.

Many people, including friends, family and members of the Church, turned up to help at the festival and worked hard. Many helpers are now regulars and knew what to do but newcomers learnt fast! Many visitors to the festival commented on the friendliness of the helpers and helpers seem to have had a pleasant and enjoyable experience.

Beer lovers, sponsors, entertainers and helpers all make a huge contribution to the success of the festival, but it would not happen without the tireless efforts of the organising committee - Allan Boddy, Paul Briscoe, Mike Forster, Stuart King, Andy Peckham, Alan Raw, Mark Rothery and Jeff Utley - and the support of the Vicar of Otley, Graham Buttanshaw. The work is hard but essentially it is a labour of love.

With the refurbishment of the Civic Centre due to start next year we are not sure when and where the 2010 Festival will be held but there definitely will be one! Why not keep in touch by logging on to our website - [www.otleybeerfestival.co.uk](http://www.otleybeerfestival.co.uk). We hope very much that you will be able to join us next year whether as a worker, a sponsor or a drinker.