

CROOKHAM TRAVEL

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RAIL ALE RAMBLE No. 186

“Beer in the Community”

Saturday 28th July 2018

Our next Rail Ale Ramble is to Oxfordshire when we will be visiting a number of mainly community-owned pubs in the county. The theme of this different day out was suggested by our friend Dave Richardson (he wrote the recent article about Crookham Travel in the April 2018 Railway Magazine, the brochure for the CT@40 weekend plus a number of articles about us that have appeared in various local CAMRA magazines). The five pubs we're visiting are all attractive in their own right but are particularly interesting and worth supporting because they all have been bought from their original owners and are now the centre of their community – virtually all would have otherwise been closed.

We have three pick-up points – Feltham (09:00 outside the SWR station), Hatton Cross (09:10 from the bus stop adjacent to the LT station) and Didcot Parkway (10:20 by the GWR station). From one of these we'll pick up our private coach operated by Royal European who will speed us into deepest Oxfordshire.

We will start at the **Plough** in the attractive village of West Hanney. This picturesque, friendly, 16th Century thatched pub is located opposite the church. It was sold in 2015 by Punch Taverns to a local community group and has since been refurbished and now serves four changing beers, often from local breweries.

Our second stop is at the **Red Lion**, Northmoor which is a traditional village inn with whitewashed stone walls, heavy oak beams, real fires and a large garden. In 2014 it was bought by the local community from Greene King and since then has gone from strength to strength. You will be able to select from a well chosen selection of four local beers served from their small bar.

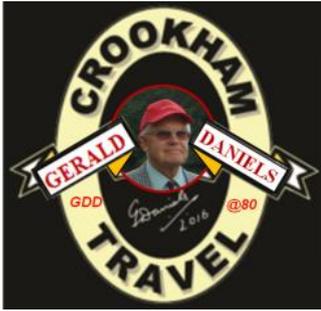
Next, we're visiting the **Plough** in Long Wittenham which is a very traditional and friendly 17th Century Grade II-listed pub. Their large garden stretches down to the River Thames and has ample outdoor seating. This is where we're having our included lunch which will not just consist of a round of sandwiches but also includes a portion of quiche and a home-made sausage roll (vegetarian options available – please indicate on the booking form). They have a range of three real ales.

We have a visit to the marvellous and very British **Pendon Museum** which is also in the attractive village of Long Wittenham. Through the medium of railway modelling, it provides a unique glimpse of English rural life around 1930 through extraordinary dioramas featuring railways, villages and landscapes. It has a number of permanent exhibitions including the *Vale Scene* (an ambitious model of the countryside of the Vale of White Horse as it was in the 1930s), the *Dartmoor Scene* (part of an imaginary Great Western branch line meandering from South Devon into Cornwall), the *Seawall* (a representation of the famous stretch of Great Western Railway main line running from Dawlish to Teignmouth) and the *Madder Valley Railway* (a famous, pioneering layout built in the 1930s on permanent display).

Our next visit is to the **Seven Stars** at Marsh Baldon, known as the village with the largest Village green in Europe (surely that alone would make you want to visit!). This is a 400-year-old coaching inn that has been rescued from closure and possible redevelopment by the local community. Closed in November 2012 (the fourth time in 10 years), a committee was rapidly formed, shares bought, locals engaged and the pub re-opened in March 2013. Since re-opening the facilities at the pub have been improved and it is now at the heart of the local community. Four cask ales, a couple of which will be local, will be available to enjoy.

Our final stop is to the (virtually) uniquely-named **Plum Pudding** in the village of Milton – the name comes from the Oxford Sandy & Black pig, a local breed affectionately known as the Plum Pudding Pig. The pub was previously a Greene King tenancy called The Admiral Benbow but has now been purchased as a freehouse and the facilities will be improved over the next couple of years. This pub with four real ales, mainly local, is a fine place to finish a splendid day out!

Our coach will then return you to your departure point – Didcot Parkway 19:15, Hatton Cross 20:00 and Feltham 20:10. And how much will this different day out cost? Including five pub visits, a pint of cask ale at each, entrance to the Pendon Museum, lunch and all transport from your chosen pick-up point, this will cost just £60. Booking formally closes on Saturday 14th July but as places are limited you are recommended to book as soon as possible. Please make payments to our bank account electronically (or cash) into via Santander, to Crookham Travel's Santander account 87825884, sort code 09-01-27 quoting ref RAR186 – please also return the booking form below by e-mail to tony.foxgriffith@btinternet.com. Alternatively, you can send the booking form below together with your cheque, payable to Crookham Travel (plus a 9x4" stamped addressed envelope if you want a paper copy of the joining instructions) to Tony Fox-Griffith, 72 Station Road, Wraysbury TW19 5NH, telephone 01784 482186.



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To: **CROOKHAM TRAVEL**

c/o 72 Station Road, Wraysbury TW19 5NH

From: _____

Address: _____

Postcode: _____

Telephone Number: _____

e-mail: (if used): _____

Please book: ____ places on this tour at £60 per person

Please supply: ____ vegetarian portions for lunch *

I will be joining this tour at: **

- Feltham
- Hatton Cross
- Didcot Parkway

I enclose a cheque for: £_____, payable to Crookham Travel, **plus 9"x4" SAE if requiring the ticket letter by post**
(Note that if no SAE is enclosed, we will send the joining details by e-mail only). *

I have used an open Credit Note for: £_____, Credit Note Reference: _____ *

I have paid via bank transfer: _____ **

* Delete as appropriate

** Tick as appropriate.