10 Heathermount,

Harmanswater,

Bracknell,

Berkshire,

RG12 9 QF

24th February 2014

Reference as to the character of Geoff and Jackie Noquet

To whom it may concern.

Jackie Noquet has asked me, as a friend of over twenty years standing, to provide a character reference for her husband Geoff and herself and I am delighted to do so.

I first met Jackie about thirty years ago when she became a member of the bar staff at The Blue Lion, Bracknell, which was my local at that time. Although we didn’t become personal friends until later I can certainly vouch for Jackie’s friendly open nature and capacity for hard work during her time at The Blue Lion, as it was, for a while, a very busy public house.

In the early nineties, following changes of management and management style at The Blue Lion, I decided to look for another local and as I had been to The Royal Oak a few times and knew some people who frequented it I decided to try it out as a potential regular haunt. As Geoff and Jackie had recently taken on the tenancy I became reacquainted with Jackie and met Geoff for the first time. I did indeed become a regular at The Royal Oak, as did several other ex-Blue Lion regulars, and after a while a personal friend of Geoff and Jackie and remain so to this day.

Word soon spread that The Royal Oak was now under dynamic management and it became the ‘in’ place to drink in Bracknell, so much so that Geoff and Jackie built a large extension to cope with the increased clientele and business.

What was it that attracted the customers? Many things, good service from friendly, competent staff, (many of whom lived in the local neighbourhood), a vibrant atmosphere with regular quiz nights, discos, Karaoke events, birthday parties and even some wedding receptions and christening breakfasts. New ales and lagers were introduced to add variety to the products on offer. Sport also attracted more custom: Geoff and Jackie introduced televised sport to The Royal Oak and Euro 96 in particular is still remembered for how incredibly busy it was in The Royal Oak throughout the tournament. The pub hosted and supported R.O.G.S. (Royal Oak Golf Society) which played monthly, over a number of years, on local courses and as far afield as The Belfry in Sutton Coldfield. Geoff and Jackie also hosted, on more than one occasion, ROGS members, when on a golfing holiday, at their villa on the Cost Del Sol. Boxing was also a favourite of the locals and The Royal Oak’s connection with, and support of, a local boxer also boosted custom, especially when celebrating his victories.

In summary Geoff and Jackie built and ran a very successful business at The Royal Oak founded on professionalism, good service and fairness; they put a great amount into the business and deserved their success.

On a personal front Geoff and Jackie remain good friends not only with me but also with many other Royal Oak regulars and we continue to meet up from time to time.

Richard Pittam.