

## Branch Diary

### Forthcoming Events

- 20-22 July **26<sup>th</sup> Kent Beer Festival**  
*The Cowshed, Merton Farm, Canterbury.*  
 Free bus from C'bury Bus Station.
- 29 July **Minibus Trip.** Meet 11.00 at *The Mogul*
- 7 Aug **Pub of the Year Presentation**  
*The Mogul* 8pm. Plus 2001 Festival meeting.
- 28 Aug **Mystery Walk**  
 Meet *Eight Bells* 10am. May involve a bus trip.
- 2 Sept **Skittles & Ale Evening.**  
 DHB Social Club, Old Park 7pm.

### Branch Meetings

(All start at 8pm):

- 17 July **Saracen's Head**, Deal  
 21 Aug **Blakes**, Dover  
 18 Sept **Crispin Inn**, Sandwich

The branch *normally* meets on the third Monday of each month. Please consult 'What's Brewing' to confirm venues if travelling.

## Pub Events

5-7 Oct **Sandgate Ale Festival**  
*Chichester Hall*, Sandgate

29-30 July **Hoy Beer Festival**  
*Deal Hoy, Duke St Deal.*  
*See advert inside this issue!*

Items for the Pub Diary section will be accepted from Pubs/Clubs that adhere to the spirit of the Campaign. Please check directly with the venue before travelling / visiting. CAMRA / *Channel Draught* will not accept any liability for any errors or omissions.

*Channel Draught* is Published and © 2000 by the Deal Dover Sandwich & District Branch of the Campaign for Real Ale. The Branch supports the campaign to retain Real Ale in pubs in White Cliffs Country.

Please drink sensibly!



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# Channel Draught



The Newsletter of the Deal Dover Sandwich & District  
 branch of the Campaign for Real Ale

Issue 4 Summer 2000

## The Admiral Penn Free House

This tastefully Dutch Style decorated Pub  
 Can be found on the Seafront of Deal

While enjoying your Heineken, Amstel and Grolsch Lagers  
 There are also

Traditional Real English Ales on sale  
Bombardier, Bass and London Pride

Specials are Dutch Kopstoot and Jagermeister cold from  
 the fridge

Open Monday - Saturday 6 PM - 11 PM

Closed on Sunday (Gone to the Pub)

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 ART, LINDA & NATALIE OUWERSLOOT

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79 BEACH STREET  
 DEAL  
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**Channel Draught** is the Newsletter of the Deal Dover Sandwich & District Branch of CAMRA.

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(please contact Martin Atkins for details)

**3"x3" box** - £12

**Full Page** - £30 – **½ Page** - £16

(other rates on application).

front page +50% / back + 30%

Format: Microsoft Word/Publisher or any common graphics format plus printed copy.

Copy by 10/09/00 for Autumn issue.

## In this Issue



Welcome to the fourth issue of Channel Draught.

Issue 3 was a great success and almost 1000 copies were distributed. Many thanks to everyone for the generous comments!!

Congratulations to Charlie and Frank at **The Mogul** for winning the 2000 Branch Pub of the Year. The presentation is on 7<sup>th</sup> August at 8pm at **The Mogul**. The pub now goes on to the East Kent finals of the competition.

In this issue of Channel Draught we have crawls on foot and by bike, a detailed look at what is happening in the national ale business, a report from the Beery Boaters, a few diversions plus all the local ale news.

*Topsy*  
Editor

## The Cabin English Restaurant

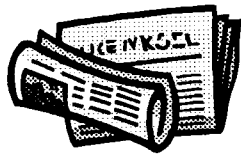
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# The Local News

As always there is plenty going on around the district – here's a summary of what we know. Any further information gladly received. So if you know of any recent changes (owners, beer range, etc.) then please tell us in time for Issue 5. Use any means from a quick word over a pint to e-mail.

## **Yew Tree, Barfreton**

Closed for two years but now sold to a local company which trades as River Caterers but is best known for its Nu-Age nightclub. Given a full pub licence this could operate in the same way as many other country pubs but with the added bonus of a reputation which brought in trade from all round the area. Hopefully the new owners see it that way and we look forward to its reopening. If the Nu-Age owners need any encouragement to sell real ales then they should pay a visit to the nearest pub just up the street to see the demand. Prior to closure the beers on offer included Landlord from Tim Taylor in Yorkshire and Greene King plus guest ales and real cider.

## **Carriers Arms, Tower Hamlets**

Renamed back from "Battle of Britain" with renewed frontage. Now owned by the same company as The Archer in Whitfield. Sadly no real ale as yet. Next time you visit them ask at the bar when the pumps are due to be used again. Open all day.

## **Dew Drop, Tower Hamlets**

The "Ales of Kent" from Chatham is a permanent feature. Currently "Defiance" @ 4.1 % ABV & £1.50 a pint. Usually open all day (see notices outside).

## **Fox Inn, Temple Ewell**

Now reopened after major alterations. The bay window and fireplace and still there but the rest has changed with the rear of the bar area opening out to the garden. The emphasis here is very much on home-cooked meals but there are real ales – Spitfire and London Pride are regulars.

## **Pickwicks, Kearsney**

The "Kentish Fare" promotion continues with one or two local brews most days. Recent ales have been "Silver Knight" from Chatham and "Kentish Pride" from Swale, both priced at about the same as Interbrew's Flowers OB. Although a Whitbread Wayside Inn, food is prepared by their own chef rather than the standard menu associated with so many of their managed houses.

## **Mogul, Dover**

The recently installed auto-tilt stillions now take up to six ales with normally three available at any one time and the others waiting their turn. The lower strength beer is quite often a dark mild whilst the choice of ales can be influenced by regulars (so you know who to blame or praise!). The real cider is cooled - £2.30 a pint but stronger than the keg versions found elsewhere.

One new sideline might interest serious party hosts. Polypins (mini plastic casks) of 10 or 20 litres (16/18 or 34/36 pints) from Rother Valley brewery can be ordered and

collected here given a week or two warning. These are ready-racked so there is no sediment to worry about. Voted pub of the year 2000 by local CAMRA members.

## **Priory Hotel, Dover Priory**

Real ale reinstated at last! Being a Whitbread house, Flowers OB. Also seen recently is "Farmhouse Cider" on the other pump – tasted like Bulmers but name not advertised. The bar is as lively as ever.

## **Red Lion, Charlton Green**

Lease advertised in trade press. Whitbread tenancy with Flowers OB and Boddingtons.

## **Cullins Yard, De Bradelei Wharf**

The former DHB engineering workshops. Upmarket bistro style with veranda. High prices! Beer from East Anglia- Adnams - very good but £1.30 per half. (Do they sell by the pint?)

## **Endeavour, Wootton**

Free house – believed still up for sale (trade press). Beer range unknown at present (has anyone tried it lately?).

## **Cliffe Tavern Hotel, St.Margarets**

Reopened at the end of June by the owners of the Royal Hotel (Deal). The décor is very much aimed at an old fashioned alehouse with bare wooden floors. Although handpumps are installed in both bars the beers are served straight from the casks on stillage behind the bar. From day one there was Master Brew, Spitfire and Goldings from Shepherd Neame with a possibility of guest ales. Once again we have a choice (or stroll) of four good pubs within a few yards of each other.

## **THE MOGUL**



Chapel Place, Dover Tel. 01304 205072

Award winning Pub.  
Constantly changing range of  
Real Ales. Real Cider.

Sandwiches, Ploughmans and  
Cream Teas available daily.  
Sunday Lunch to Order.

**Winner – Pub of the Year 2000**

## THE ROYAL OAK



**CAPEL-LE-FERNE**

**01303 244787**

**SELECTION OF 3 ALES  
FRIENDLY ATMOSPHERE  
FOOD AVAILABLE  
G.B.G. ENTRY FOR 10 YEARS**

### Lighthouse, Capel-le-Ferne

Having sold Greene King IPA & Abbot almost exclusively for a while, a guest ale has appeared recently. Everards Tiger @ £2.10 a pint.

### Royal Oak, Capel-le-Ferne

As always a guest beer or two on sale here. Pump clips can vary from plain to exotic but one of the more eye-catching was for Miss Whiplash (Batemans, Lincs) which certainly commanded the attention. Local beer from Rother Valley (Sussex) appears on occasion. Pints between £1.80 and £2.00.

### Admiral Penn, Deal Pier

Draught Bass, London Pride and Wells Bombardier are as good as ever. "..... the one fixed point in a changing age ....." (Holmes referring to Watson). Three classic English ales complemented by an esoteric collection of continental liqueurs. Open evenings only (6-11) Mon-Sat.

### Ravens, Tilmanstone

Recent ales have included some from the Cottage Brewery based in the West Country. The names recall the lost days of old steam railways, e.g. Southern, Golden Arrow, etc. Take a gentle stroll past the former colliery at Eythorne and meet up with real trains run by the East Kent Light Railway. Do please visit this pub sooner rather than later. The owners have confirmed their intention to close down and have submitted detailed plans to convert it to a private residence. Permission for change of use has already been given after objections to closure were overturned on appeal.

### Flagship, Dover Port

This is now a very different prospect to the old York House. Continental style folding doors at the front leading out onto patio tables so you can see craft moving in and out (at least at high tide). Greene King IPA is the standard bitter but during June there was Smiles Best from the Bristol area. A good smooth drinking beer which is everything that the so-called "smooth" nitro-fizz beers are not.

### Valiant Sailor, Folkestone

Just over the border between Dover and Shepway. Whitbread have rebadged this one and for a time it was a Berni Inn. Currently selling beer from Brakspear whose Henley-on-Thames brewery was threatened with closure some years ago but now thrives not just with its supply deal with Interbrew but also into the free trade. With the Battle of Britain memorial nearby then maybe the beer should be Spitfire?

### Antwerp, Deal Pier

Due to reopen at the start of July after a fortnight's refit. Previously sold two or three ales at budget prices. These had included Adnams from Southwold, a genuine East Anglian ale which proudly displays its origins unlike another product (East Kent Brewery EKB) from the same county. Another regular beer was Grimsdale. The Good Beer Guide locates the brewery in Ashford but sadly this is in error and it actually comes from the Midlands. At the time of press (01-July) the range of ales was not yet known.

Finally, for those eligible to join, news of a club. The Dover Harbour Board Sports & social Club (or just DHB!) at Old Park, Whitfield normally has 2 or 3 ales on tap. It has even had its own beer mini-festival with 5 or 6 genuine guest ales including Taylor's Landlord (Yorkshire) and Badger Tanglefoot (West Country) perched invitingly behind the bar. If you a Port worker then you might enquire about signing up. Associate memberships for ordinary 'town' folk are also available. The club is on the evening bus routes from the town centre.

## Dave Routh & Martin Atkins



*The 'local news' relies on readers of Channel Draught letting Dave Routh or Martin Atkins know anything that is new, unusual or worrying about a pub you've been to.*

*We particularly want to know more about pubs in Deal, Sandwich and the villages in White Cliffs Country.*

*Contact numbers are in the front of Channel Draught.*

## Country Pub Walks No.1

Walmer Station □ The Plough at Ripple □ Church Path □ Deal Station

Over the next few months I hope to be writing some walk descriptions to some of our best country pubs. You don't always have to drive. Some may be more accessible by foot than you might think!

By car Ripple is only accessible by narrow lanes, not recommended for walking, especially at night! But it is easy to reach across the fields about 40 minutes easy stroll from Walmer and 65 minutes from Deal.

From Walmer Station follow the Station Drive to cross the road passing the Railway' on your right. (For those exhausted by the 50 metre walk, this opens all day and serves Masterbrew though no food) Go forward along Mayers Road to the end, and by the last houses through to the field ahead. Take the path half right to the trees ahead, and on through the kissing gate between fences, with the railway on your right. (This path is prone to be blocked by growth, in which case you would need to improvise by heading towards the left hand corner of the field and passing through the gap towards the lane.) Cross the railway by the level crossing.

Over the tracks take the path left by the red brick wall and follow across field, later passing the end of a line of trees on your right. At vandalised wooden footpath post, ignore path to your right and continue along path, which then goes diagonally right across field to trees ahead. Note the spire only of Ripple Church visible on the skyline to your right. There is at the time of writing a clear view of Richborough Towers in the distance away to the right, but for how long? Pass through the gap by line of trees left and continue ahead, diagonally across the field to the house in the distance. Carry on through the gap in the hedge and on past the garden hedge on the right. Continue along the drive to the road. Turn right past the post box and along the road a little way. After passing 'The Cottage' on the right you will see the 'Plough' which is the white building ahead.

Opening times 11 to 4 and 6 to 11, Sats and Suns open all day. Food served daily from 12 to 1.45 except Thursdays. Suns booking essential. Food available every evening except Suns, from 7 to 8.45. Beer range: Masterbrew, London Pride, ESB and Landlord.

Leaving the Plough the walk to Deal is *almost* straight ahead all the way. Turn left along the lane, passing Ripple Church, and straight ahead by Ripple House. Turn left by gate to Church Farm, and a few metres further on go right by wooden post indicating 'Deal Walk 10' Follow track to stile ahead. The way is now almost straight ahead to Deal town centre. Mongeham Church is visible away to the left. Cross stile at field end keeping ahead with hedge to your right. At the end of this field the path switches to the

other side of the hedge so maintain your direction ahead now with the hedge on your left. Houses on the outskirts of Deal are visible ahead. Cross road (Ellens Road) and continue along bridleway still with the hedge on your left.

On reaching main St Richards Road, straight across into Rectory Road. Follow this road past St Leonard's Church to Manor Road, Upper Deal. Take your life in your hands, people have been campaigning for a crossing here for decades, and cross the road to the 'Admiral Keppel' Opening times Mon -Thurs 11 to 3 and 6 to 11. Fri, Sat and Sun open all day. No food served. Beer range: Bass, Flowers, Pedigree.

Now take Church Path on the right hand side of the Keppel with 'your back to the wall' and you will soon reach London Road and the 'Magnet'. Opening times Mon - Sat 11 to 3. Suns 12 to 4. All evenings 7 to 11. Beer range: Masterbrew, Spitfire, Goldings.

From the Magnet cross London Road and follow Church Path ahead to the town centre. You pass the 'Bowling Green Tavern' on your left (Open all day, food available) At the end of Church Path cross over Albert Road ahead to the path to the right of 'Stone Epps'. Then turn right along a road and along a footpath to the main road. Turn left and Deal Station is a few metres to the left.

*John Pitcher*

## The Plough Inn

Church Lane, Ripple

Tel: 01304 360209

Your hosts Lyn & Brian



**Real Ales, Country Wines**

**Full weekday menu plus traditional Sunday lunches**

**Two en-suite Twin Rooms available**

*Ales usually available are: Fullers ESB &  
London Pride, Shepherd Neame Master Brew &  
Spitfire plus Guest Ales*

**Listed in the 2000 CAMRA  
Good Beer Guide**



## BOATING AND BEERING.

The Beery Boaters inflicted themselves upon the formerly placid inland waterways of England and Wales in 1981. This followed some time after a session at the Salutation in Dover

(a pub so successful that Whitbread soon converted it into a Pizza Hut which closed down in six months through lack of trade!) during which the person who subsequently became Hon Commodore (unelected) of the Beery Boaters, also organiser, navigator, ship's engineer, ship's diver, general scapegoat and writer of this piece (in other words, Pooh—Bah) was asked to come up with an idea for a Branch Holiday for the Deal, Dover and Sandwich lads. He hit upon the idea of a one-off canal trip.

Thus it was that, towards the end of the following April, eight Branch members met around mid—day at the Crossroads Inn at Weedon, in Northamptonshire. One of the company knew someone who knew a hire boat firm just up the road, so we had arranged to hire a boat from them and to take it a little way along the Grand Union Canal and then down the Oxford Canal. Whilst we were supping a pint or two some observant type noticed that lorries coming south had snow on their roofs. The rest of us paid little attention.

To start with, things went well. The following evening we had got to Cropredy in Oxfordshire. It was a typical, rather damp, Spring evening. We had supped well at the Red Lion and the Brasenose Inn (and, I think, walked about a mile to the Bell at Great Bourton), thus we slept well that night. When we woke up it had become an untypical, very white, Winter morning! The blizzard was still raging! Undismayed, we carried on, negotiating bridges which we could only just get under due to all the water in the canal, fallen trees and power lines across the cut and pubs with no food or electric lights because of a general power cut lasting a few days. Good job the pubs had hand pumps and not electric dispense! On the way back, after the snow had vanished as quickly as it had arrived, passing a working boat tied up, we were asked by the boatman where we had moored during the blizzard. "Silly Booggers!", was the retort when we told him that we had just carried on!

Anyway, we enjoyed ourselves so much that we agreed to go again next year. And we have been doing it once or twice every year since. An irregular newsletter was soon produced (Pooh—Bah, alias 'Uncle Rubbish' became editor of course), then a lapel badge (the symbol of a boot came from the oft-heard lament, "The pub's open! Come on, give it wellie!") followed by a club tie, with the CAMRA motif being slightly altered to suggest the 'Buckby' water can seen on the cabin tops of commercial narrow boats. Members moved from the area but still kept coming and bought their friends. Others that we knew, in particular from the Hants and Surrey Borders Branch of CAMRA joined us. At one time our numbers went as high as 16 on two boats, but at present we are back to one boat with about 10 joining us on the April trip.

We have had all sorts of weather over the past 20 years, from arctic blizzards to tropical monsoons. Even heat waves! Very many hilarious and almost unbelievable incidents. In fact, we reckon that if we condensed them all into one trip we would have enough material for an Ealing Comedy entitled 'Carry on up the Cut'! There was only one year which almost caused the premature demise of The Beery Boaters. This was 1987 and, after a trip up the Llangollen Canal which was full of disasters, the worst being someone carted off to hospital after falling over the side and going under the propeller, I almost called it a day. But I was persuaded to carry on, and, fortunately, everything has gone well since.

But I have always fought shy of returning to the Llangollen Canal. And it came as some surprise when, asking for ideas for our 20th Canal Trip the majority were in favour of the Llangollen Canal, including the person who made an involuntary early departure in 1987 (incidentally, he's never missed a single canal trip since. Canal water in the bloodstream?). And, he insisted, on the same boat that he fell off!

So it was on April 15th 2000 that the nine participants in this year's trip met in the Cheshire Cheese at Middlewich for a few pints of Cain's before boarding our 70ft narrow boat 'Oak' and heading up the Middlewich Branch of the Shropshire Union Canal towards the Llangollen Canal. There are not many pubs within a short walking distance from the Middlewich Branch. For the Saturday evening we chose the Verdin Arms at Minshull Vernon, a Robinson's house and a short stroll through a farmyard from, apparently, the middle of nowhere.

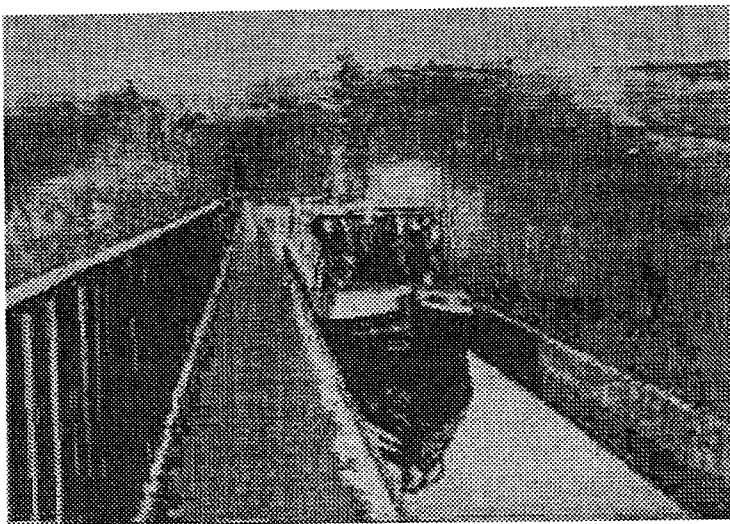
By the middle of the next morning we had arrived at the Llangollen Canal which leaves the Shropshire Union Canal at Hurleston Junction near Nantwich. After a flight of four locks by Hurleston Reservoir the canal rises more gently towards Wrenbury, where the Dusty Miller is a converted warehouse by the canal lift bridge and sells Robinson's beers and the nearby Cotton Arms sells Greenalls. We, however, opted to moor a little before Wrenbury and walk to Aston, where is the Bhurtpore Inn, the current Cheshire Pub of the Year, with Hanby and up to 10 guest beers and 2 ciders on tap! An excellent pub, and the food is good as well.

The evening found us moored above Willemoor Lock where the canal side pub, also called the Willemoor Lock, is a current Good Beer Guide entry with Theakston and guest beers. We chose, however, to take a footpath to nearby Tushingham to find the Bluebell, also in the GBG for more Hanby and guest beers and again, good food. The person who told me about this pub said, "What a gem!" I agree! We walked back to the boat in steady rain!

Monday lunchtime in Ellesmere for a bit of shopping and normal town pubs. The Montgomery Canal leaves the Llangollen Canal just after Ellesmere and has been restored as far as Queens Head, where there is a pub of that name. We were planning on going there for the Monday evening, but were thwarted by restricted times of lock opening, so we pressed on to Chirk Bank on the border of Wales where the Bridge, selling Bank's beers, is 'the last pub in England'.

Away on Tuesday morning in fine weather across Chirk Aqueduct and through Chirk and Whitehouse Tunnels. We paused briefly at the spot where we lost our errant crew member in 1987 and demanded that he give a repeat performance to try to find his coveted Beery Boater's lapel badge which he lost together with his jacket on that occasion. Following an ungracious refusal, we cast a few flowers on the waters and carried on.

We crossed the mighty Pontcysyllte Aqueduct, one of the 'seven wonders of the waterways', high above the River Dee, in bright sunshine, turning sharp left at the far end for the final,



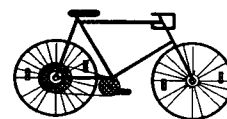
narrow, spectacular, four miles into Llangollen. In 1987 we never got that far as the canal was too shallow following emergency repairs, but this time we did. Space to moor was a problem. What do they do in the tourist season? In the afternoon we took the steam railway to Carrog and spent a pleasant hour or two drinking Lees at the Grouse Inn. The evening found us in residence at the Sun Hotel in Llangollen which has Plassey as the regular beer and also guest beers.

On the way back, on Wednesday morning, we looked in at the Narrowboat Inn at Welsh Frankton. It's in the current GBG, but it seemed a bit too much of a restaurant than a pub for our liking. For the evening we moved on a few miles to Ellesmere and spent the evening drinking Marston's beer at the White Hart. Thursday lunchtime it was back to the Blue Bell at Tushingham (although we did look in at the Willey Moor as well this time) and in the evening the Bhurtpore Inn at Aston (well, if you know good pubs, use them!).

As we had a bit of time in hand, on the Friday morning we turned right at the junction of the Llangollen Canal with the Shropshire Union Canal and spent the lunchtime in Nantwich. This town has several good pubs. We chose the Black Lion which has Titanic and Weetwood beers and is also in the latest GBG.

In the evening, back on the Middlewich Arm, we stopped at Church Minshull and went to the Badger. It's a pretty village, just a pity that the choice of beer in the pub is not that inspiring. Perhaps we have been spoilt for choice (for a change) on this trip. Back to Middlewich on Saturday morning. Roll on next April (Bradford-on-Avon to Bristol, we hope) or, in the case of some of us, the coming September for a trip from Selby to Sheffield!

*Jim Green*



## CYCLING IN SEARCH OF REAL ALE

A brace of cyclists alighted from a train at Bekesbourne, and cycled along the country lanes to the pretty village of Fordwich. The Fordwich Arms welcomed us with four hand pumps: East Kent Brewery Best Bitter (refreshing and full of flavour), Wadsworth 6X (a decent pint), Flowers Original and Shepherd Neame Masterbrew, at reasonable prices. The pub was full of charm and parquet floors. We took our beers to a secluded garden overlooked by an ancient church, and a river running by with boats bobbing at their moorings.

A good lunch could be had judging by the kitchen smells and it was hard to leave, but we supped up and safely navigated our way to the next watering hole - The Rose Inn at Wickhambreaux. An idyllic village pub complete with roses around the door. Slightly more expensive, but a very good pint of Youngs Special and Greene King IPA. We washed a ploughman's lunch down outside in the warm spring sunshine, and it was onwards to the Black Pig at Staple to slake our thirst with Hop Back Summer Lightning and Greene King IPA - a good combination of ABVs and very tasty.

A warm welcome from the landlord, garden, and good menu made this another pub very difficult to leave, but a thirst for adventure and more ale made us press on to the Fitzwalter Arms at Goodnestone. A Shepherd Neame pub with Spitfire and Masterbrew, in a very quaint village. The beer was very acceptable, as was the price and the friendly atmosphere.

Where to now, oh yes, the Griffins Head at Chillenden, once again a Shepherd Neame pub, but always has four hand pumps on ranging from Best Bitter to Bishops Finger. A slightly more up-market and expensive pub, but full of character and a superb garden, normally with a barbecue on the go all day on Sundays.

As we cycled home to Dover, we reflected on the lovely day we had enjoyed, the glorious countryside, and the satisfaction that our English country village pubs are still alive and kicking. To end a wonderful day, we could not resist stopping off at our favourite local - The Mogul in Dover - where the well kept, never ending choice of ale cannot be beaten, and it's on our doorstep - perfect!

Some of our other favourite country pubs that we often cycle to, but could not fit in today are:

- ✓ The Ravens at Tilmanstone - good home cooking, and always three handpumps on offering a variety of excellently kept real ales.
- ✓ The Moon and Seven Stars at Preston - two handpumps, food, garden.
- ✓ The Wayout Inn at Westmarsh - normally a good East Kent Brewery pint, and reasonable meals.
- ✓ The Old Lantern Inn at Martin - normally two or three handpumps, good food, more expensive than most, but charming pub and garden.

Happy cycling and supping.

*Sue and Peter.*

# BRAVE NEW

**2000** - a new century, and for the British brewing industry at least, a new era. Within the last few months both Bass and Whitbread have made their long anticipated exit from brewing while Scottish and Newcastle, the now single major British brewer and pub owner, have acquired France's Kronenbourg, to make them a major player in the European industry. Meanwhile Wolverhampton and Dudley have completed their takeovers of Marston and Mansfield, to become the Midland's single large regional brewer, and the ever expanding Greene King appear to be doing likewise in the South East. Pub chains such as Punch Taverns or Pubmaster (now joined by Bass and Whitbread) each with several thousand pubs, and the purchasing clout to go with it, are now a prime force in the industry. A very different world from that at the time of the beer orders in the late eighties and total unrecognisable from the "cosy" world of the big six and their enormous tied estates when CAMRA started in the early seventies.

**So**, is this brave new world to be welcomed as a bonus to the drinker, or should we be justifiably suspicious of an industry which on track record often pays scant regard to the interests of the individual or to what they regard as old fashioned, out of date or not easily marketed? To be honest, for most discerning drinkers the disappearance of the large British brewers is no great loss, for they seem some time ago to have lost interest in producing anything original, and of late, with one or two exceptions, their output has been, to put it politely, uninspiring. At the other end of the scale the micros appear as healthy and full of life as ever, producing generally excellent choice and quality; their limited production runs and choice of outlet being an ideal platform for experimenting with different brews and styles.

# WORLD ??

**For** the local and regional brewers, however, the situation is rather different and somewhat worrying. These long established and, often, family run businesses, once the backbone of quality real ale brewing in Britain, now find themselves competing with brewers of international size in a market increasingly dominated by large pub chains looking for large contracts at large discounts. Already some have given up the struggle, either merging with those more confident and aggressive or getting out of brewing altogether (e.g. Morells, Mitchells and Ushers) to concentrate on the more lucrative area of running pubs.

**For** those that remain the temptation to go down the path of high profile image and heavy advertising for a handful of "flagship brands" must be very great, and to judge by recent editions of *WHAT'S BREWING* some are already quite a way along it - note Adnams' axing of prizewinning Extra to make way for a cool ale (as if ale can or should be cool) or Hall and Woodhouses's replacement of Dorset Best with something "more easily drinkable". From the evidence of recent history this route leads to blandness and unoriginality at the expense of quality and taste.

**It** would be a disaster, for both the industry and the beer drinker, if our traditional smaller brewers were squeezed into the same marketing straightjacket which has already so damaged the larger producers. With pub chains rapidly becoming as monopolistic as the large brewers in the days of the big six it is therefore vital that the Government extends the beer orders to include pub ownership as well as pub owning breweries, especially as the original orders were carefully constructed to protect the smaller parts of the industry. After all what does a pub in a large chain offer that a privately owned freehouse or small brewery tied house does not? The answer of course is nothing, and the beer in the last two is probably better as well.

*Martin Atkins*



# EXIT TWO BREWERS!

## Bass & Whitbread sell out to Stella

Within the space of a single month two of Britain's biggest and oldest brewers have confirmed all recent expectations and predictions by pulling out of the brewing industry in order to concentrate on their retail leisure operations (hotels, restaurants, etc.). However the real surprise is they are likely to end up with same buyer.

Both companies had been actively seeking a buyer for the remaining breweries for some time. *South African Breweries*, which produces Lion lager; *Carlsberg*, which took over Tetley and others from the former Allied group; and *Heineken* with its close association with Whitbread which brews both versions of its lager under licence from the Dutch owners.

In the event it was a fourth bidder, also with close Whitbread ties, which has closed the deal(s). *Interbrew*, a privately owned Belgian company, may not be well known in the UK except for its main product – none other than *Stella Artois*. Whitbread sold out in an agreed bid of £400 M in May. Then in June Bass agreed to no less than £ 2300 M. The big difference in price is mainly due to relative size. Bass is truly international with 3 breweries in the Czech Republic as well as 6 here compared to just 3 with Whitbread.



### So What Next.....

The Whitbread take-over is "Fait Accompli". Within days its Beer Company had become known as Interbrew UK but as yet nothing else has changed and there are no immediate plans to alter the beer range (which is what its company reps will gladly tell us). This gives rise to a curious situation with its lager production whereby *Heineken Export* is still being brewed under long-term contract from the Dutch owners in direct competition with its own *Stella* brand !

Of course CAMRA's concern is over the future of its real ales. Whitbread had almost eliminated the myriad of pump clips which it once had and was down to just two main brands, with *Flowers* moving in with *Boddingtons* at Manchester. Incidentally did you notice that the "*Strangeways*" tag was quietly but expensively dropped a year or two back? At first we feared the worst (ie

impending closure) but it seems to be more of a public image move, especially after events on the roof of another large building nearby!

Its other real ales are bought in from various regionals like *Fullers* (Chiswick, London) and *Marstons* (Burton-on-Trent). Recently questions have been asked about the future of the *Wadworth* contract, perhaps because its 6X ale is quite similar to *Flowers OB*, but just before the take-over we were assured of its future as part of the range. So in the meantime keep those handpumps busy !

### .....and if the Bass deal goes through.....



It could be blocked by American-style anti-trust rules at the European Commission (which also has powers to refer it back to the UK Office of Fair Trading as the host country). The heavyweight newspapers (I quote from the "*Independent*" of 15 June) said that there is one likely option, one which would certainly affect drinkers, that is to order disposal of some of Interbrew's beer brands. This argument cuts both ways. One the negative side two competing brews, say *Flowers OB* and *Draught Bass*, could lead to one being axed to give the other a clear run; on the positive side some brands could be sold to another brewing company which has happened before.

Either way, Interbrew is now just ahead of *Heineken* as the world's second largest brewer. US giant *Anheuser-Busch*, best known for the US/UK version of *Budweiser*, is in top position being almost as big as those two put together. Interbrew would have around a third of the UK market although some estimates put it as high as 40 %.

### And what happens in White Cliffs Country .....

Everyone knows that Whitbread is synonymous with beer around here which is hardly surprising given the number of breweries which it took over and shut down, the biggest being *Fremlins* (gone ten years now) along with others including *Mackeson* down at Hythe.

30 years ago it had an effective monopoly in most of East Kent, and especially so in Dover as well as Canterbury & Whitstable amongst others. Even though most of its pubs have been sold off many still its beer. In some cases this is voluntary, in others for financial or contractual reasons.

In Deal the dominant force was Thompsons of Walmer which was closed by Bass Charrington in the 1960s. Over the years almost all of its pubs have either closed or been sold off but Bass still supplies much of the beer.

These two control so much of the local trade that between them they still hold an effective monopoly. Any further reduction in beer range would be against the public interest so CAMRA will definitely be fighting against any attempt to axe brews altogether. However the marketing wallahs who decide these things are usually more subtle. They just starve unwanted brands of investment and advertising and make them hard to get, let alone sell.

By the time issue 5 of *Channel Draught* is due into production later this year we might start to get some pointers about the likely future, although if Brussels gets involved then it could take ages to sort out. So far the pundits reckon that a cash-rich Bass minus its breweries would on the prowl for a take-over target, say a US-based hotel chain. One reported rumour has it that Whitbread's own leisure business would a target but the same newspaper quotes analysts as dismissing this as "wide of the mark".

So once again – watch this space !

*Dave Routh*



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## Whitbread Breweries 1742 – 2000

It is hard to believe that around the time that CAMRA was formed in the early 1970s that the number of breweries owned by Whitbread ran well into double figures. By last year it had got down to just three and only one of those (Manchester) producing any traditional ales.

The company dominated the pub scene in most of East Kent. This is hardly surprising given the number of breweries taken over along with their tied houses. The same applies in any number of locations around the country. To list even a fraction of these would fill much of this magazine however Whitbread tried its best by brazenly producing posters showing a life history of take-overs complete with names, dates and copies of bottle labels of long-lost local favourites. They even did T-shirts with prints of pump clips but to be fair at least they gave them away to anyone who could sink a few pints.

Locally you can still see mementoes in pubs, including windows, of Gardners (Ash), East Kent Brewery, Mackeson, Tomson & Wotton, Cobbs plus any number of others. In Dover there are few remnants of the breweries themselves, a notable exception being the offices off Castle Street (now a private club). For a total contrast try Faversham. The granddaddy of all the closures (1990), latterly Fremfils, in Court Street still faces the opposition but forlornly empty – Tesco took part of the site, but sadly any hopes that Shepherd Neame might expand across the street were wishful thinking.

Whitbread has sold (or closed) the vast majority of its pubs in order to concentrate on larger businesses like Brewers Fayre and Travel Inns. Some pubs went to private owners but others have ended up in recently established pub chains and many still keep the same supply line open.

Its old HQ was at Chiswell Street in central London but it is now used a showcase for the company – and its former brews? Even here you can get beers bought in from regional brewers. Just as well really.

*Dave Routh*



## Bass Brewers 1777 – 2000

So the greatest name in British brewing has finally abandoned its heritage along with its famous product. Sad? Twist my arm and I might just agree being old enough to remember what Draught Bass used to taste like. Anyone only a few years over the magic 18 could be forgiven for wondering all the fuss is about.

The fact is that Bass had a product which was not just first-rate but literally Number One – they still do a Barley Wine called “No.1”. So a bit of history to explain things.

Back in the Middle Ages hardly anyone outside the aristocracy or clergy could read or write so any sort of notice had to be done by way of pictures, marks or symbols. Which is why pubs, along with all the other trades like barbers and potters, had signs to indicate their line of business. But there were “trade marks” too to indicate quality or type which explains why beers can still be known as 6X, AK, XX, etc.

The accepted sign for quality was a red triangle and was used for centuries but as the Industrial Revolution got going entrepreneurs saw the need to register their own marks in connexion with whatever trade they were in. The ancestors of the present Bass company got in first and had the red triangle registered as the first ever trademark so that no-one else could use it to advertise their beer. So to this day it appears pride of place on Bass pump clips.

Until a few years ago it used to brew Bass by the “Burton Union” system in which the yeast was continually passing through the fermenting vessels and resulted in a unique taste which is virtually impossible to replicate. This age-old process was finally deemed too expensive or difficult to retain and was abandoned. Now they don’t even bother to put a handful of dry hops in each cask to give that telltale aroma which we should all expect from a quality beer. Sure enough the beer changed drastically and the result is what we have today. No wonder our Good Beer Guide Editor reckons that “the Rolls Royce of cask beer is now a Ford Fiesta”.

They also did a bottled version of a classic Burton pale ale called Worthington White Shield which threw a pretty alarming sediment so you had to pour it carefully (or not in which case you closed your eyes before draining the glass).

This too was deemed uneconomic and it got the chop. Thankfully CAMRA had enough support amongst devotees to force a rethink and it reappeared being brewed under contract by King & Barnes at Horsham. It is once again a fine bottle but the sediment is a lot easier to control (and quicker to pour). Alarming it is also available in giant 500ml bottles for those with a steady hand.

Locally Bass traded as Charrington and their beers were to found mainly in and around the Deal area as well as on the Isle of Thanet. Their Crown bitter came from East Anglia whereas the IPA was an Eastender before its brewery closure forced a move up to Birmingham. As sales fell, IPA production ceased but for a couple of years it was contracted out to Shepherd Neame before eventually going the same way as almost every other long-established beer.

Thankfully lost ales have been replaced by those bought in, notably Wells Bombardier from Bedford which is a good well-balanced medium bitter. If you see it on sale then you are almost certainly in a house supplied by Bass.

Whatever comes out of the Interbrew take-over the result is the removal of a cornerstone of British industrial and brewing industry.

*Dave Routh*

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## Lost Pubs of Dover

From the Prince of Wales to the Buckland Brewery

*In the latest of his occasional articles on the Lost Pubs of Dover, Jim Green continues his journey from the Green Man (which closed in 1967) at the corner of Erith Street and George Street.*

The nearest pub to the Green Man was the Prince of Wales. This was in George Street, on the junction with Shooters Hill, which is the steep little hill leading down to what was then the Sea Cadet Hall, previously a Methodist church and latterly a bingo hall, on the terrace parallel to London Road. Again Fremlins, but with beer from Maidstone, being a former Leney's house. Demolition took place just before the Green Man closed, probably in 1966, the then Landlord, Arthur Salmon, moving to the Hare and Hounds in Folkestone Road, Maxton. This, of course, is still a pub, but it was then a Fremlins house, and not Shepherd Neame as today.

Proceeding down Erith Street to the junction with London Road brings us, just to the left, to the Fountain, currently the Sportsman. It has recently re-opened after a brief period of closure. Apparently it was sometime previously another Prince of Wales, but the name was changed to avoid confusion with the above pub. Our group didn't use it much as it was at that time a Gardner's house and we didn't appreciate their beer much! But I have occasionally played skittles there on the seemingly uphill alley at the rear.

Also still in existence, and very much open, is the Cherry Tree on the opposite side of London Road. But very different from today. It was, at the start of the 1960's, a dark, comfortable pub with several bars. An elderly Landlady, Mrs Curd, kept good order and dispensed a good drop of Fremlins. Despite its current appearance the Cherry Tree is a very old pub and it has been said that, in 1801, it was the only building in London Road between the Black Horse (where the Eagle or Old Irish Times now stands) and what is now the Bull at Buckland Bridge. Certainly cock fighting was recorded there in 1785, and sawdust was still being used on the floor in 1960!

Which way from here? Left or right? Well, as the next pub away from Dover became my regular watering hole after the Green Man (in about 1965), we'll visit the Old Endeavour. Despite the obvious conclusion, this was not named after Captain Cook's boat, but a local privateer of about 1746 (which is one reason I doubt the solitary reputation of the Cherry Tree). Now, of course, a Shepherd Neame house it was Fremlins before Whitbread took over and shed some of the local pubs in a round of area-wide exchanges. Apart from the beer, the Old Endeavour has changed remarkably little in the past thirty years since Phil Cook was Landlord. The two bars have been knocked into one and the back room (then a hotbed of bar billiards and darts) enlarged, but not much else has altered.

There were, in my lifetime, two more pubs between the Old Endeavour and the Bull at Buckland Bridge. The New Endeavour was a few doors further on, on the same side of the road, the beers coming from Gardner's of Ash before that brewery passed to Whitbread. This establishment probably closed in 1968. Almost opposite was the Duke of Wellington which finally shut its doors around 1971.

Incidentally, retracing our footsteps on this side of the road to the junction with Coombe Valley Road (formerly Union Road), we come across the site of one of the old Dover breweries. Where Kingsford Court now stands there was, from 1829 to sometime around or shortly after 1871, the Buckland Brewery, established by a gentleman rejoicing in the name of Flavius Ignatius Kingsford. It's nice to know that the present block of sheltered housing apartments perpetuates his memory.

*Jim Green*

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## Local Information

If you have a dispute concerning ale bought in Dover, Deal or Sandwich, please bring it to the attention of Martin Atkins or Dave Routh, telephone numbers under Branch Contacts. You may want to take the matter up yourself and we advise you to contact any (or all) of the following:

Trading Standards Office (East Kent)	01843 223380
Gwyn Prosser MP (Dover)	01304 201199
Dr. Steven Ladyman MP (Thanet South)	01843 850315

## Useful numbers

Dover Tourist Info	01304 205108
Train times (Connex)	08457 484950
Buses (Stagecoach)	0870 2433711
	01304 240024
KCC Bus/Train line	08457 3696996

Kent Police	01304 240055
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Dover Taxi Firms:	
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