

The Coastguard

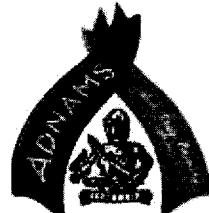
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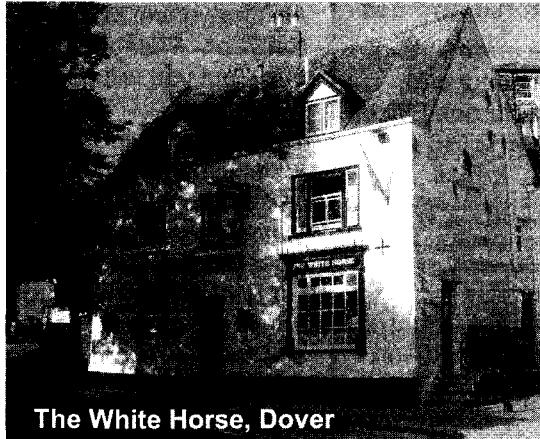
Issue 26
Winter
2005/06

CHANNEL DRAUGHT

INSIDE

PUB
PROFILE

The White
Horse
Dover



The White Horse, Dover

RING A
RING
OF
LONDON
WITH THE
BEERY
BOATERS

WINTER ALE TIME
AGAIN!
The White Cliffs Festival
of Winter Ales

Channel Draught
is the Newsletter
of the Deal Dover
Sandwich &
District Branch of
the Campaign for
Real Ale.

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Channel Draught
is Published and
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Sandwich & District
Branch of the
Campaign for Real
Ale.

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Please drink
sensibly!

CHANNEL DRAUGHT

ISSUE 26
Winter 2005/06

Welcome to 2006 and the Winter edition of *Channel Draught*. With Christmas out of the way most people can look forward to, a less hectic couple of months. No such respite, though, for your local CAMRA branch who some years ago took the perhaps foolhardy decision of running a winter ales festival, and have been doing so annually ever since. This year will be our 13th and, keeping fingers firmly crossed, is set for the Friday and Saturday the 3rd and 4th of February. We've made a few alterations this year, particularly to try and avoid having to turn so many people away as we did last year (see page 26). As always we would welcome any assistance, especially on Friday night which is always particularly busy, but you will need to be a CAMRA member.

The survey of local real cider pubs in our last edition seems inadvertently to have left a few sore heads and several pubs felt they had been left out. However, the survey was just confined to our branch area, so any cider pubs in the adjoining areas who receive *Channel Draught* were not included. We did mention this in the article but obviously not clearly enough. Our apologies and for the record then, real cider is also available at the Red Lion, Stodmarsh, and in Folkestone at Chambers and the East Cliff Tavern. If there are any others please let us know.

As always our newsletter tries to provide an accurate picture of real ale and pubs locally and nationally, and we hope that it is interesting and informative. If, however, you feel there are areas we have neglected, or you have any comments on anything we have published we would be pleased to hear from you. We always welcome any correspondence or contributions and will publish all we can.

Martin Atkins (Editor)

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EVENTS DIARY

Friday 3rd & Saturday 4th February

WHITE CLIFFS FESTIVAL OF WINTER ALES,
Town Hall (Maison Dieu), Dover.
Friday 3pm to 11pm, Saturday 10.30am to 11pm
(or until the beer runs out, whichever is the sooner)

Saturday 18th February **Walmer Walkabout.** Details from John Pitcher on Dover 214153 or e-mail john.pitcher@ic24.net.

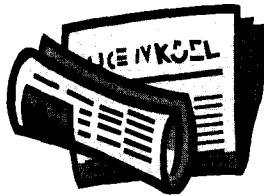
Monday 20th February **White Horse, St. James Street, Dover - Branch Meeting & Beer Festival Wash-Up Discussion.**

Monday 20th March **Royal Oak, Capel le Ferne - Branch Meeting.**

Monday 10th April **Royal Cinque Ports Yacht Club - ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING** followed by Branch Meeting.

Branch Meetings start at 7.30pm

The branch *normally* meets on the third Monday of each month.
If you are interested in joining CAMRA please come along to one of our meetings!



The Local News

Contributors - Martin Atkins, Anne Mcilroy, Roger Marples, John Pitcher, Tony Wells, etc.

DOVER

Blakes, Castle Street: Once again Blakes leads the news in Dover. Peter and Katheryn, who took over the pub last spring, took the decision just before Christmas to completely ban keg. Now all their draught beer and cider is either on stillage or handpump. Peter had calculated that keg had fallen to about 2% of sales and it wasn't worth the bother of continuing with it. Guinness and lager are available in bottles for those who want them and Thatcher's cider is always on handpump. However, they have been helped in their new approach by Goacher's decision to start delivering directly to our area (see Kent Small Brewery News), and whose Crown Imperial Stout is more than a substitute for draught Guinness. So far it has proved tremendously successful and sales have exceeded Peter's expectations – of four firkins of stout delivered in mid-December, three had gone in nine days. And Blakes has been concentrating on Kentish brews in general of late with other beers from Goacher's as well as Hopdaemon, Gadds and Whitstable all making regular appearances. Admittedly, this has not been without grumblings from some of the regulars who prefer a broader selection.

The Castle, Russell Street: Just round the corner from Blakes the

Castle is having another go with real ale. A handpump was reinstalled in the autumn, and has been providing draught Bass. Management too has changed and seems to be making a determined effort to move away from the alcopop/lager market which seemingly held sway for so many years in this pub, and which seems more than adequately catered for across the town anyway. However, a return to the glory days of Richard and Opal Crocker is perhaps somewhat over-optimistic. While speaking of our former hosts, those of us who were hoping they would get back into the business and take one of our local pubs will be disappointed. They are back in the business, but in Sevenoaks as managers of the Compasses. Although a Greene King pub it does provide guest ales and Harveys is a regular. It's also, dare I say, Cask Marque, but Richard assures me he will be able to keep the beer at a decent temperature.

The Flotilla, Bench Street: As reported in last issue the Flotilla has been offering a revised ale range for the last few months with new additions Greene King IPA, Bombardier and Adnams Broadside appearing regularly. The Broadside was in excellent form just before Christmas.

The Eagle, London Road: Closed since late summer the pub re-

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opened just before Christmas. At present no real ale but there is talk of putting on one of the more widely available bitters such as Greene King IPA.

The White Horse, St James' St: Good selection of real ales including regularly Landlord and Ringwood Fortyniner, and quite often Brakspear Special. In December Brakspear Bitter also made an appearance, seemingly every bit as good as the Special and, from what I can recall, both are pretty good representations of the brews from the original Henley brewery. Other frequently represented breweries are Hopback, Dark Star and Titanic. Jack, though, is still having problems with one of his major suppliers, Interbrew. Last issue we reported on its habit of supplying late date casks. This time the problem is no casks at all. Having ordered several special beers for a birthday celebration they did not turn up with the preceding week's delivery, as they should have, and Jack had insufficient time to order afresh. Luckily the beer held out but our choice was much restricted. (See also Pub Profile.)

DEAL

The Ship, Middle St: As usual pleasing reports from this ever-popular pub – a true local as one of our members put it. Beer range much as before; Master Brew, Summer Lightning, Ship Ale and two from Gadds – on a recent visit No 7 and No 3. The Summer Lightning was in particularly spectacular form in late November.

The Prince Albert, Alfred Square: Along the road from the Ship more excellent real ales at the Prince Albert, where a continuingly changing range is on offer. One of our members was particularly impressed by the Wolf Coyote in November, although he is (understandably) a fan of Wolf beers. Another visitor found a delicious Burton Bridge Dark Mild, Gale's Trafalgar Celebration and Young's 7.2% Old Nick. The total of different ales is now approaching 300 and there is talk of installing a fourth handpump.

The Saracen's Head, Alfred Square: New tenants now at this busy Shepherd Neame local – John and Mary-Anne from King's Lynn. A recent visit found Master Brew and Late Red in good condition, though the latter at £2.70 seemed somewhat pricey. However, it was the same price under the previous tenants and, from observation, is very much par for the course for Shep's seasonal brew in its tied pubs. We wish outgoing tenants Pam and Kevin the very best for the future.

The Five Ringers, Middle Deal Road: The threatened redevelopment reported in previous issues seems now to be well under way, if not complete, and the pub is no more, with the site occupied by three houses. Admittedly, no one can remember it selling real ale but while the pub remains so does the possibility.

The Three Horse Shoes, Great Mongeham: A good community local

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run by Wendy and Martin with regular music, and a range of events in support of charities – See www.threehorseshoesmongeham.co.uk for details. When we were there in November we found a warm welcome, Gadds' No 5 and Greene King IPA, and a promise of Gadds' porter in December.

The Walmer Castle, South Street: No longer selling real ale – apparently no demand, although all the other pubs in the vicinity sell it. Admittedly it always felt like a bit of an afterthought, but the quality was good and the pub was handy for the bus.

The Bohemian, Beach Street: A good and interesting range of real

ale normally available at this seafront pub; regularly Deuchar's, Woodforde's and Adnam's, plus a variety of guests – including during October O'Hanlon Royal Oak, Bath Ales Barnstormer and several from Cottage. Weston's cider is often available as well.

The Telegraph, Telegraph Road: A new discovery to two of our members, who found three Shep's hand-pumps on offer – two of Master Brew and one of Porter. A warm welcome and friendly service came from the landlady and her staff at this traditional, corner local.

The Stag, The Strand: A second discovery for the same two members, with very good quality Bass



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plus a second handpump (Greene King IPA) at this busy local opposite the seafront.

The Lifeboat, The Strand: Apparently still closed despite rumours of being re-opened as a restaurant and bar. Any news welcome.

SANDWICH & RURAL

The Admiral Owen, High Street: Greene King IPA and Abbot are regulars in this Greene King owned timber framed pub, although there is normally a guest as well – sometimes GK, sometimes not. An open plan pub with long tables and benches and the bar tucked away behind the fireplace. A visit in November found Ruddles Orchard, in good condition but with an appley flavour not to everyone's taste.

The Charity, Woodnesborough: After a recent visit one of our members commented, "It's been a while since I visited this pub but it should really be on my 'pubs to visit on a regular basis list'. A good selection of real ale, including mild and a very friendly welcome." The mild, usually Ansell's (as it was on this occasion), is a permanent feature, the Charity being one of the very few pubs locally to always offer a cask conditioned mild. Also on pump that day Bass, Greene King IPA and Ruddles Best Bitter. The pub also provides good quality, no-frills meals at very keen prices.

Fleur de Lis, Sandwich: Two real ales of the national variety, currently Greene King IPA and Wadworth 6X, plus an ever changing guest. In the

past locals Gadds and Whitstable have both featured, while from further afield the choice has often been Archers. A pint of its IPA was a notable hit with one of our members in October, and he was on course for a second when his wife arrived to take him and his drinking companions home. Clear and refreshing with a tangy long-lasting after taste was his description – the beer that is, of course.

The Jackdaw, Denton: One of the few remaining pubs in this neck of the woods with the Chequers at Selsted and Endeavour at Wootton both closed, and the Three Bells, Swingfield converted to a house. Well worth a visit, and don't be put off by the heavy investment in the restaurant side, the pub regularly carries five real ales, which always seem in cracking form. Standard beers are Shepherd Neame Spitfire and Ringwood Best but the others could be anything from anywhere. In late November these were Bombardier, Black Sheep and Gadds No 5, and were accompanied by an exemplary welcome from the staff.

The Royal Oak, Capel: Keen pricing and a warm welcome at this cosy little pub (it needs to be warm and cosy on that bit of coast) with its views over the Channel to France, fog permitting. Landlord Paul has been regularly selling one beer at £1.60 a pint – among others the excellent England Expects from Nelson in October and Worthington Cask in late November – and the Master Brew is only £2 a pint. Beer range



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The Marquis of Granby, Alkham: A brief visit in November found an interesting range of beers, including McMullen County Best Bitter, which to the best of our knowledge has never, ever been seen locally before; spoilt somewhat by a rather offhand welcome..

The Crown, Finglesham: The usual and varied range of ales over recent months, with many from both Kentish independents (such as Whitstable East India Pale Ale and Hopdaemon Golden Braid on draught, and both Hopdaemon Leviathan and Skrimshander in bottles) as well as from further afield – most recently including several seasonal beers (Santa's Steaming Ale, Rosey Nosey, etc) and, happily for a few of our members, a bonus from Australia in the form of bottled Cooper's Pale Ale, left over from the last Crown Inn Beer Club meeting.

Hare & Hounds, Northbourne: another bastion of real ale out in the villages, with the usual line-up being Master Brew, Spitfire, Fuller's ESB, and Harvey's Best – while the regular guest is often Timothy Taylor Landlord or something from another great stable such as Hopback.

The Chequers, West Hougham: The Thai connection, we understand, is no

more and its back to traditional British food, which on our visit at the end of year seemed to be going down well. One real ale on at the time, London Pride, in very good condition.

The King's Head, Kingsdown: Another regular outlet for Goacher's since the brewery started delivering directly to the area - the Fine Light having proved particularly popular. Archers beers have also been making regular appearances and your correspondent enjoyed an excellent glass of IPA recently.

The Yew Tree, Barfrestone: A visit one Sunday afternoon in the new year found an eclectic selection of ales: Fuller's ESB, Incubus, Robinson's Old Tom, Black Cat Mild and

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The Fox, Temple Ewell: Four ales always available at our 2005 Pub of the Year. Various beers from Young's and Archer's have been particularly prominent of late and Deucher's is standard. Due to appear shortly, at the time of writing, is Ward's bitter, hopefully a recreation by Robinson's of the original Sheffield beer that disappeared, along with the brewery, some years ago. Apparently Robinson's own the original recipe and Steve, who comes from Sheffield, is curious to see what they make of it.

The Mermaid, Bishopsbourne: limited alterations in the offing to improve the front bar. Regular beers are Master Brew and Shepherd Neames seasonal ale.

Still closed to the best of our knowledge are the **Butchers Arms**, Ashley and the **Endeavour** at Wootton, and we would be interested in any news on the **Way Out Inn**, Westmarsh which seemed very shut last time anyone visited it.

FOLKESTONE

The Happy Frenchman: Still offering two real ales, usually Adnams Broadside plus another - old peculiar quite frequently. Refurbishment is still in the offing but the staff weren't sure when.

Harveys, Sandgate Road: Excellent atmosphere early one Saturday night in January. Bass, Tiger and two from Archers - Golden and IPA; the latter in fine condition, and only £1.95 a pint, though spoilt for my taste by being too cold.

The Clifton: Just around the corner from Harvey's the Clifton still maintains its reputation for a good pint of Bass, as can be vouched for by those from Blakes who attended the Maddy Prior concert before Chrismas.

The Guildhall: One of the seemingly few pubs to take

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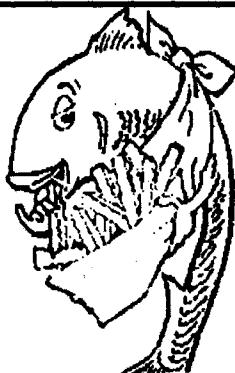
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advantage of the new licensing regulations, the Guildhall now closes at midnight on Friday and Saturday. In early January a visitor would have had a choice of Bass, Greene King IPA, Young's Winter Warmer and Bombardier.

Chambers: Currently offering a choice of five real ales, including recently three particular favourites, Skrimshander, Old Thumper and Dogbolter, plus two ciders. For Easter another festival is lined up (see advert).

The Lifeboat: Beers from Greene King and Brains feature regularly - Rev. James being the pub's current best seller. Harvey's Sussex Bitter appears every couple of weeks and

recent notable brews have been a 4.5% beer from Okells, Isle of Man and Green King Fireside. Particularly successful over Christmas/New Year was Shepherd Neame Porter. Kevin took two tubs one of which was finished in hours and the other in a couple of days.

The East Cliff Tavern: Just a few streets away this very traditional pub offers two or three real ales plus cider. Mostly from small breweries, locals, Hopdaemon and Gadds appear regularly. Recent visits found the very drinkable Twelve Days from Hook Norton and the rarely seen Shires from Wychwood. Richard now shuts at midnight but doesn't open Monday to Thursday until late afternoon.

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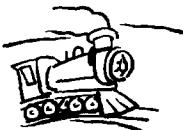
Hall & Woodhouse Badger Best
Woodforde's Nelson's Revenge
Hall & Woodhouse Tanglefoot
Thatchers Draught Scrumpy
Pawley Farm Vintage Cider
Itchen Valley Godfathers
Timothy Taylor Landlord
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Greene King Abbot Ale
Wychwood Best Crop Circle
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Hop Back Crop Circle
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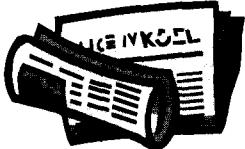
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The National News

By Martin Atkins

Lost in the Smoke

It seems that a total ban on smoking in public houses is now on the cards, following the Government's decision to allow Labour MPs a free vote. Undoubtedly a ban will see a fall in trade, pubs will close and jobs will be lost. Obviously our legislators feel this is a worthwhile sacrifice, although it's unlikely that any of *their* locals will disappear. Curiously there seems no great demand for a ban from those it's designed to protect – non-smoking bar staff and regular pub users. Neither does there seem much, if any, statistical evidence demonstrating the dangers of passive smoking in pubs. While passive smoking kills about 1000 people a year in the UK, most of these are people living with heavy smokers. The danger from illness contracted from other sources, including smokers in pubs, seems to be largely speculation and conjecture.

Ironically, many of the MPs who forced the Government's change of mind, are those who rebelled against the 90 day terrorist detention proposals in the autumn. Whereas their opposition then, centred on the Government's inability to provide evidence that it was necessary, a similar lack of evidence over the dangers of passive smoking seems to cause them no problem.

Community Care

Meanwhile, seemingly unaware of the paradox, the All-Party Parliamentary Beer Group has launched an inquiry into the threat's facing Britain's community pubs, following constant complaints from constituents over the disappearance of viable locals. Their particular interest will be the effect of ever increasing regulation and the challenge posed by rising house values. CAMRA's submission to the inquiry will recommend extending discretionary rate relief to urban pubs, re-invigorating High Streets to attract not just the young in the evening and encouraging pubs to diversify into other business's such as shops or post offices. It will also be calling for better public transport, guest beer rights and simplification of licensing and regulation. However, if MPs are determined to ban smoking in pubs, thereby adding to their woes, a start to improving matters might be specific financial help (rate reductions or such like) by way of compensation.

Punch Up

Despite all the suggested alternatives the inevitable happened and the 1,800 strong PubCo Spirit Group returned to its family home, Punch, from whom it had split in 2002. This will take Punch to 10,000



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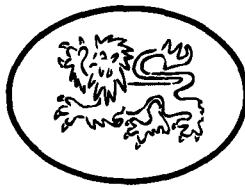
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pubs, making it the largest operator in the country, and 1,000 plus pubs larger than its major rival Enterprise. However, it is likely that this total will rapidly be slimmed down. With all its recent purchases has come considerable debt and a sale of up to 1,000 pubs is quite on the cards. Once again neither the Government nor its competition watchdog, the Office of Fair Trading, appear concerned. As usual there has been considerable interest in the press's business pages, and articles charting Punch's irresistible rise. How this further consolidation might affect licensees or the ordinary drinker is cheerfully ignored. However, judging from experiences elsewhere, it will likely mean at the very least reduced choice.

Enterprise Culture

By comparison, Enterprise is a model of enlightenment. When it acquired the pubco Unique, Enterprise allowed the existing Society of Independent Brewers (SIBA) Direct Delivery Scheme to continue on a trial basis. This allowed SIBA members to target pubs directly and deliver beer to them rather than go through the pub company's own delivery system. Enterprise has been very pleased with the efficiency of the system which allows local brewers to supply local pubs, and has decided to extend the scheme to all its tenants and leaseholders. This will give them a choice of more than 600 ales from 120 breweries. As well as giving customers greater choice, initial

results suggest that it increases beer sales as well.

Blow at Gale's

The steady disappearance of family owned breweries continues. Having seen Jennings, Belhaven and Ridleys already swallowed up last year, the start of November found another casualty in the shape of Gale's of Horndean, who has agreed to a takeover from Fuller's of Chiswick. Apparently, secret negotiations had been underway for three months. Initially Fuller's made no statements about the future of Gale's beers or of the Horndean brewery, other than that it is all under review and that "a number of well respected brands" would remain. Gale's current output of 23,000 barrels a year could easily be accommodated at Chiswick, and there has been considerably pessimism locally in Horndean itself. Subsequently though there have been indications that the brewery at least might be retained if only in the short term.



Kent Small Brewery News



The breweries that appear in this report are the Kent micros that actually deliver beers to the public houses that are in the area covered by Channel Draught. If you are a licensee, why not try the beers from one of these small craft breweries, who brew their beers to a high standard using natural ingredients.

Nelson Brewing Company 01634 832828 – Chatham Contact: Lorraine St John.

Lorraine St John has joined the company as General Manager, in place of Andrew Purcell. She is a former Management Consultant who was previously involved with the Chatham Historic Dockyard. Lorraine is very keen to provide a more efficient service to the brewery's customers. In the New Year she plans to have small test batches of different brews, in polypins, for tastings in public houses. Ivana, the Czech brewer, will be developing new recipes. Michael Roper, the principle owner, will now be taking more of a 'back seat'.

Nelson will be brewing a special beer for our festival, in February. It will most likely be a hoppy, copper coloured bitter of 5.5%. Do not miss this at Dover Town Hall on 3/4th. February.

Hopdæmon Brewery 01795 892078 – Newnham Contact: Tonie Prins

The brewery is busy brewing beer for Messrs. Wetherspoon. commendably Wetherspoon now has a policy of supporting a "regional" brewery and has chosen Hopdæmon for eleven of its outlets in Kent. Many will feel that this will bring a good quality Kentish real ale to such places as Ashford and Faversham town centres for the first time for a few years, on a regular basis. Tonie has also reached an agreement with Thresher to supply bottled Skrimshander in its Kent shops.

P & D Goacher 01622 682112 – Maidstone Contact: Phillip Goacher

It is with great pleasure that we welcome Kent's oldest surviving micro-brewer to Kent Small Brewery News. We must, in part, thank Peter Garstin of Blakes, in Dover, for this welcome move. It was he who talked Phil into delivering outside the Goacher's established trading area. Due to the demise of East-West ales (beer wholesales) who hitherto stocked Goacher's beers, it was not so easy to have these excellent beers delivered to darkest East Kent. Mild, Fine Light, Dark, Crown Imperial Stout and Gold Star, with the seasonal Porter and 1066, will now be available to the enterprising licensees who wish to sell them. If the editor permits me, I would like to recommend a personal favourite for those who like an exceptionally bitter, dry, black stout – Goacher's Crown Imperial Stout.

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Blakes is a good place to try these beers and Peter put in a large order to see him over the festive period. However, I understand that the Goacher have already supplied to the King's Head at Kingsdown and the Coastguard at St Margaret's, and once the seasonal rush has died down at the brewery, Phil hopes to expand supply to other outlets in the area.

Whitstable Brewery 01622 851007 – Crafty Green Contact: Rafik Abidi

The new beer from Whitstable is Smack Ale at 5.5% and this is described as 'tasting of orangey cloves and bittered with traditional hops'. Smack Ale has recently been supplied to Blakes of Dover and The Rose and Crown at Perry Wood. Whitstable will also be producing a stronger version of its Oyster Stout, which is normally 4.5%, for our winter ales festival. Julian Hetherington, the erstwhile Head Brewer of Shepherd Neame, is also employed at Whitstable as a part time Brewing Consultant.

The Ramsgate Brewery 01843 580037 Contact: Eddie Gadd

Despite increasing capacity, production at the brewery seems to have already increased to fill this. The seasonal Dogbolter is selling particularly well, especially at Chambers in Folkestone, and Eddie produced a bottled version for Christmas, but this quickly sold out. Gadd's No.7 seems to keep growing in popularity, especially in The Ship in Deal. However unfortunately, for Gadd's drinkers at least, there will be no Christmas beer this year as time and lack of capacity did not permit this. The Mild will be in production in time for Spring.

Roger Marples

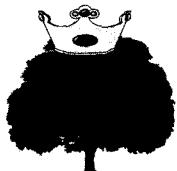
Pub News E-Mail Address

If you have any news about a pub in your area – new beers or different beer range, alterations to the pub, beer festivals or anything that may be of interest to our readers . Please e-mail

channeldraught.pubnews@virgin.net

We are, of course, equally pleased to hear from Landlords with news about their pub.

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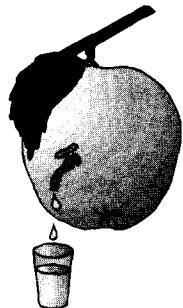


DEAL, DOVER & SANDWICH CAMRA BRANCH
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CIDER MATTERS

So, things have moved along since our special cider issue last time around. It's no longer Cider & Perry Month, so has public awareness been raised?

Well, for starters, the 20% increase in cider sales hasn't changed overnight, so there is certainly more demand out there. Supply is still a tricky issue, for, although a pub chain like Wetherspoon can demand a large discount for stocking certain brands, individual pubs cannot. Also, if they are just testing the waters, they certainly won't want to commit a large amount of money for an experiment. I'm a big fan of cider, but I'm with the publicans on this one. After all, if they all start losing money, where are we all going to drink? Anyway, the number of outlets is slowly growing, which is probably a good thing for us cider drinkers, rather than just about every pub stocking it, and then giving it up as a bad job. This way, as the number of outlets grows, and the demand matches the supply, it can be seen as a good business move. It's easy to fall into the trap of seeing your local as a sort of social club, so don't forget that it still has to make money to survive.

Another boost to cider's image came when Prince William revealed that he prefers the taste of cider to beer. A local supplier made enquiries about sending him some, but there is quite a process to go through, so let's hope that he had acquired a taste for natural cider, and not the industrial stuff.

By the time you read this, the Wassailing season will be over, and cider makers and drinkers can go back to more mainstream pursuits, such as drinking cider. I don't suppose there was much wassailing going on in our neck of the woods, but it's more of an accepted thing in the West Country. Still, if any local orchard owners are interested, I'm sure we could set something up for next winter. I expect the local media would be interested, so free publicity might well be included, especially if the emphasis were on traditions and a family evening rather than a drinking event.

As the harvest season finished a long time ago, talk on the UKCider Group has turned to other matters. Some of them are technical, relating to pasteurisation and so on, but there was an interesting discussion of how to sweeten cider that is too dry. If the cider has not been pasteurised, adding sugar will cause it to start fermenting again. That's not a problem if you are just sweetening up a glassful ready to drink, but if you are bottling it could cause all sorts of problems. In any case, adding ordinary sugar to cider will add all sorts of flavours,

but someone suggested adding apple juice, which probably adds a more natural sweetness. I prefer dry cider, so I won't be trying it myself, but it could be worth trying if you prefer your cider sweet. Of course, adding pear juice to perry could be a problem, so you might need to stick to sugar for that.

There has been much discussion of CAMRA's *Good Cider Guide*, which was eventually published a few months ago. As with any guide, the delay from submission to publication always causes problems, but this guide was further delayed by a change of editor. Given this "double whammy", it's hardly surprising that the guide isn't quite as CAMRA might have wanted it. However, combined with the online pub guide in the UKCider wiki, you will probably have excellent coverage for wherever you happen to be, except for the parts of the country where the lack of cider means a guide would be of no use. Still, if cider sales keep increasing as they have been, it might even start to reach the "deserts". That can only be good news for everyone!

Wassail!

Apple Jack

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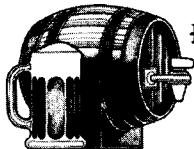


The Chambers

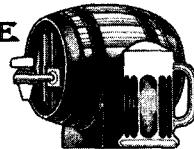
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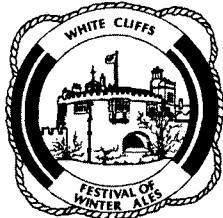
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WHITE CLIFFS FESTIVAL OF WINTER ALES 2006

The first weekend of February is approaching fast, and in Dover at least that means the White Cliffs Festival of Winter Ales. This year will be our thirteenth and as usual preparations have been under way for several months, with initial discussions starting back in mid-summer. We do seem to be a victim of our own success, in that the number of people wishing to attend (particularly on Friday night) seems to increase every year, and we can't fit them all in. It is unfortunate that this excellent venue cannot hold more people, however as this is the case we have done what we can to avoid overcrowding, and limit the number we have to disappoint because of space constraints.

For this and other reasons, and after much thought and debate, we have decided to make one or two changes this year. The Festival will open earlier at 3pm on Friday and there will be no music on Friday evening, which we hope will allow greater consideration of the interesting, and often rarely seen, beers available at the event. We have also reluctantly had to increase the admission on Friday to £5 to non-members – unfortunately rising costs dictated that this was necessary. However, we have been able to hold the price of all beers at £2 a pint, which at 5% plus makes them even more of a bargain if you are a CAMRA member. If you are not, you will be able to receive a full refund of your admission if you join during the Festival – there is a membership stand in the Connaught Hall, and our Membership Secretary will be there to answer any questions.

We are providing at least one beer from each of the micro-breweries in Kent, with the exception of Millis who does not brew a strong winter ale, as well as beers from all over the country – very many of which will be appearing in Dover for the first time. If you find them to your liking (and we are sure at least some will be), why not see if your landlord can get hold of some for you?

Thanet Leisureforce, from whom we hire the hall, provides a range of hot and cold food, and soft drinks. It has tried to tailor the range of food to suit the event and, judging from the favourable comments that we received at last year's festival, has been successful. There is no reason for anyone to bring in their own food or drink, and Thanet requests that **no food or drink is brought**

into the premises by festival attendees – a rule it will strictly enforce. Should you have any views or advice on how this festival is run we should be pleased to hear them, and there is a tear-off form in the festival programme that asks for your comments. Please put completed forms in one of the boxes in the hall. In addition volunteers will be in both halls to canvass individual views on specific questions.

We hope that as many of you as can, will be able to attend, and that you will have an excellent time. For your diary the Festival is set for Friday 3rd February from 3pm until 11pm, and Saturday 4th February from 10.30am until 11pm or sooner if we've no beer left; and please bear in mind that if your are coming on Friday come early or risk not being able to get in. In conclusion, please remember that we are all unpaid volunteers and this might be the first festival at which some have worked, so please be gentle with us.

Roger Marples

WHITE CLIFFS FESTIVAL OF WINTER ALES 2006

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3pm to 11pm
&**

**SATURDAY
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CHANNEL VIEW

With the anti-smoking lobby anticipating at least partial victory in its campaign to see the end of smoking in public houses, those who feel it their business to be concerned about the nation's unhealthy lifestyles will no doubt be turning their attention elsewhere and lining up other targets. Top of the list of will be the old enemy, alcohol, and while there have been some high profile cases and certain problem areas (increased rates of cirrhosis and with the young), in a civilised society those who drink responsibly should be able to do so without interference. Of course there can be no argument against good health. We should all be aware of the health risks confronting us, and sensible people will take due note of them. However we are a free society and the choice should be left with us as individuals.

Unfortunately, there is a worrying tendency by the Government and those who advise it, to move from information and advice, to coercion and legislation, often accompanied by a selective use of facts, of the kind more usually associated with the advertising industry, and which the media rarely appears to question. Non-smokers, for example, are regularly assumed to be in favour of smoking restrictions, whether or not that is the case, while any statistical assessment of the risk arising from

passive smoking in public houses is notable by its absence. We are informed that alcohol has never been cheaper, and fuels much anti-social behaviour, but not necessarily that this relates largely to wines, spirits and supermarket beer, and that, as any regular pub user will tell you, the price of the traditional pint has well kept up with the rate of inflation. Nor is it generally known that almost one pub a day is closing for good – the media interest lies with the large number of new licences granted for problem town centre sites. Language too is stretched and contorted to suit the argument. In a news item on alcohol abuse, a BBC reporter informed us that to consume more than four glasses of wine a day, categorised one as a heavy drinker (with due respect to the recently departed, how then should George Best's habit be described?); and many will be intrigued to know that more than four pints (8 units of alcohol) in an evening designates them as binge drinkers, likely to run amok and cause public disorder.

What affect this all has on the large part of the population who rarely or never uses pubs, but whose votes count at election time, can only be guessed at. However it's not inconceivable that in the popular imagination, the traditional image of the cosy local at the end of the street

(idealised perhaps, but harmless), is being replaced by one of riotous disorder and ridiculously cheap booze – not harmless, and fertile ground for those looking to further restrict our activities. We already have the grim example of certain parts of Scandinavia where bars are few and far between and alcohol horrendously expensive. And the controversy surrounding the new licensing arrangements and smoking controls, does not inspire confidence about the Government's perception of the industry. There has long been a suspicion that the "24 hour drinking" proposals had more to do with introducing continental café style culture to the country, than improving the choices of the ordinary British drinker.

Ted Tuppin, chairman of Enterprise Inns, who controls some 15% of the country's pubs, has commented that the British pub is one of the World's great brands, a sentiment with which many would fully agree. Whether the Government see it in that way is perhaps doubtful. Despite more enlightened approaches, such as the Prince of Wales' community orientated "Pub is the Hub" organisation, or the Chancellor's specific help for rural pubs and small breweries, the impression persists that the official mind does not really understand either the traditional British pub or traditional British beer. The concept of a place where people meet just to talk and drink good ale, both valued for their own intrinsic qualities, and to enjoy simple straightforward pastimes, does not find much room in a

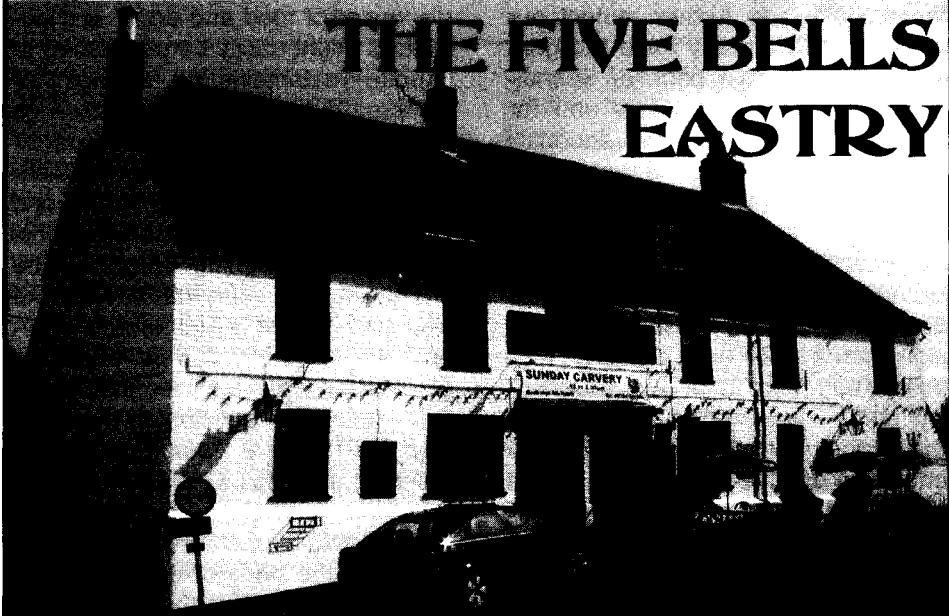
world of big politics, powerful pressure groups and global companies.

If the pub is seen as no more than a dispenser of food and drink, our legislators might easily be persuaded to impose restrictions on strength or increase duty levels. It has taken us the best part of a century to throw off the limited hours and reduced alcohol levels imposed in the First World War. Having just been liberalised it is unlikely that opening hours will be interfered with, but the strength of beer and its cost is a different matter; and if you think this is sounding alarmist, who ten, or even five, years ago would have anticipated that we'd now be facing a complete ban on smoking in pubs? CAMRA needs to make it very clear that whatever might have happened elsewhere in the trade the price of the pint in the pub, in real terms, is much the same as it was thirty or forty years ago, and that a return to a choice of just 3-4% mild and bitter is not on. The anti-smoking lobby is well on the way to forcing through restrictions on smoking despite the absence of support from many, if not a majority, of regular pub users. We must ensure the same does not happen to the price and quality of real ale.



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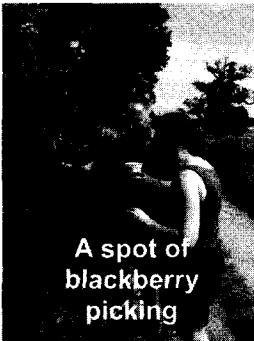
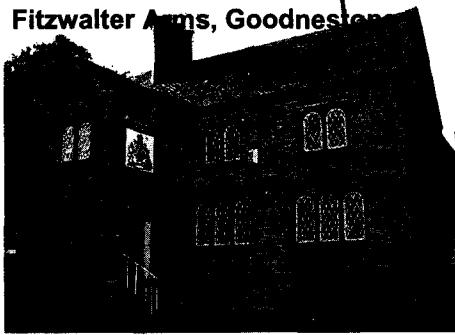
A TALE OF TWO WALKS

Last year John, the local CAMRA branch Membership Secretary, was been busy organising walks for branch members. This is a tale of two of them.

The first walk saw the Fingleham Contingent arriving by car at Aylesham railway station to meet the rest of the walkers who were making their way by train from Dover, which turned out to be just John himself; and I suspect that if we hadn't been there he would have got the next train back to Dover.

From the station we headed north-west to reach, after a mile or so, a bridleway that would lead us to our first stop, the Fitzwalter Arms at Goodnestone. Suddenly John stopped and, drawing a couple of plastic pots from his rucksack, practically threw himself at the brambles - he was after ripe blackberries. Chopsticks on the last walk and now plastic pots - you don't half meet a rum lot on these walks. We helped John for a while before tearing him away from picking by reminding him of what we were really here for, and that the first pub lay just a few minutes away.

Fitzwalter Arms, Goodnestone

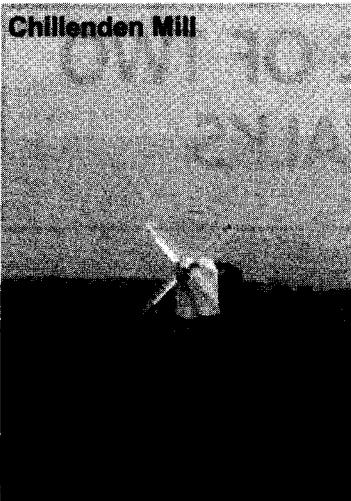


A spot of
blackberry
picking

The Fitzwalter Arms is a rambling old Shep's pub with three bars and a genuine cosy feel about it, and the welcome is always friendly. On tap were Master Brew and Goldings. We ordered beer, sandwiches and a vegetarian pasta dish (all of which turned out to be excellent) and retired to the garden, which is much in keeping with the pub, to enjoy them in the sunny although windy day. Having enjoyed a refill we got on our way before getting too comfortable.

Turning left and then right we picked up a footpath heading south-west through woods and fields, with distant views of the recently renovated and resurrected Chillenden windmill, which after about a mile and a half deposited us in Chillenden itself and our next stop, the Griffin's Head. Here only Master Brew and Spitfire were available although the pump clips indicated that the range was

Chillenden Mill



often more extensive, including the not so common Best. The pub has something of an old-world charm to it with large heavy wooden tables and flagstone floors, but was let down by a not particularly welcoming reception. We took our drinks out to the garden, on the other side of the car park, where the remains of a bat and trap pitch could be seen.

Our next destination was the Royal Oak, Nonington and John directed us to a bridleway on the far side of the road. The path, fairly straight to begin with, took on a more winding route around the back of the Beech Grove Bruderhof Christian Community. Set up in 1995, in the old Nonington Sports College, it forms part of the Bruderhof,

which is an international group of Christian communities located in North America, Europe and Australia. Returning to the road we thought we now had an easy stroll but John had other ideas involving paths around the back of the Parish Hall.

Eventually we arrived at the pub, which immediately went up in our estimation as it was showing the Ashes on big-screen TV. I am not a big fan of big-screen

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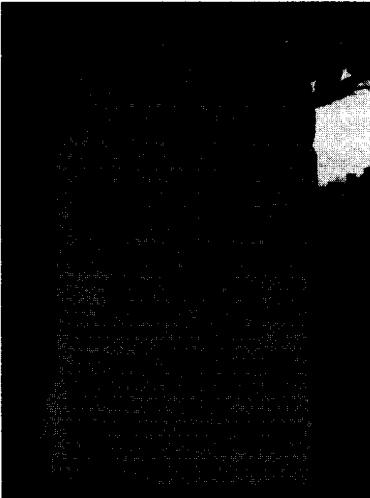
Listed in the 2005 CAMRA Good Beer Guide

TV but on this occasion I was willing to make an exception. The Royal Oak normally sells Master Brew and Timothy Taylor Landlord, but it had run out of the latter and we all drank Master Brew: a good day for the Shep's profit line, as someone pointed out. It was at this point that we discovered John's counting abilities leave something to be desired. It was his round and for some reason he bought four drinks for the five of us. Having quickly put things right we settled down to watch the cricket, listening, would you believe it, to "Bread of Heaven". Trisha, my wife, however, now decided to go on strike and let us finish the walk by ourselves, then collect her on the way home in the car.

So off we set for the last leg. We turned left out of the Royal Oak and headed up and past the church where a footpath to our left took us back to Aylesham station, the car and home. It had been a perfect day. Good weather, companionship, a bit of exercise and a few pints of real ale. What more could a man, or woman (sorry Anne!) wish for?

The second walk also started at a railway station, in this case Sandwich. As well as the Finglesham Contingent and John we were joined by a couple of other people, including an American who was on extended holiday in Sandwich with his wife and had seen the walk advertised in *Channel Draught*.

We headed out on the main road towards Deal, and then took old Dover Road (now a no-through road to vehicles), crossed the round-about by South East Water Gardens and passed through an old metal gate. This took us onto a bridleway that runs through orchards to Felderland, and then in a westerly direction towards Eastry. Passing the local sewage works, we crossed over the bypass on the footpath which eventually brought us into Eastry by the church, and shortly afterwards to the Five Bells. The pub is split into two bars, a lounge bar and public bar, and usually offers a wide range of beers, including some from local breweries. Today we were offered Greene King IPA, Hopdaemon Incubus, Archer's Farmers Boy and Old Speckled Hen (Gadds No 5 had just finished).



Feeling peckish we asked about food, and while the pub didn't serve any, they were quite happy for us to buy fish and chips from the shop just 20 yards away and eat it outside. The landlady even bought us a tray of condiments and napkins. Now this was customer service of the first degree, from someone who knows how to make people very welcome.

Dick, the American, raised a couple of questions about Eastry, which we could-

n't answer but perhaps you, the reader, can. Why is the crossroads junction at the north of Eastry called "Poison Cross", and what is the origin of the name Gore, which is an area in the village? If you can help please write or email me and I'll forward the details on. Addresses are at the front.

At this point the day took a slightly surreal turn. While we were sat there a car stopped and asked us the way to the Blazing Donkey. From the way the occupants were dressed they could only be going to a wedding, and we duly directed them down Brook Street to the pub. It became apparent that this was the direction a lot of cars were going in and we had great fun in first of all identifying these cars in advance and then pointing them in the right direction before they even knew they were lost.

We had a second pint then headed off towards the Bull, Eastry's other pub. It has gone through some major renovations recently and the bar is now a large open area albeit with comfy armchairs and sofas. Although there were pumps for Greene King IPA and 6X, neither was available so we drank Guinness instead. We left the Bull and turned down Brook Street in the direction of the Blazing Donkey, and the wedding party. A footpath at the bottom of the hill took us up through woods and across the bypass, and after about a mile a left turn brought us out opposite the pub.

The Blazing Donkey advertises itself as a country hotel, and has a number of open-plan rooms set around the bar and reception area. Today they were serving Greene King IPA, Courage Directors and Gadds No 7. We all ordered Gadds, and sat down in the reception area to enjoy them and be entertained by a five-year old demonstrating firstly his furniture removing skills and secondly his barman skills. It was at this point that John found himself with a slight problem. His original intention had been to head in the direction of Worth then back to Sandwich. However, the Finglesham Contingent knew of an extremely good and well-stocked beer festival not two miles from where we sat and from where it would be easy to get a bus back to Dover. Presented with these irrefutable facts and knowing how disappointed we would be if we didn't make the necessary change to our itinerary we headed towards Finglesham, passing through West Street.

The beer festival, being held at our local The Crown, didn't let us down, presenting us with a wide range of beers including Gadds No 3, No 5 and Seasider; Hopdaemon Skrimshander and Golden Braid; Oyster stout and East India Pale Ale from the Whitstable brewery; plus four other beers as well as Bidden Bushels cider, which pleased Trisha immensely.

What a great way to end the walk and the day.

Tony Wells

BEER ACROSS THE BORDER

Oh dear – this is starting to look like something of a habit. Anyone would think I spend a lot of time at beer festivals! This time, a few reports from two more festivals – the first just across the CAMRA border in Canterbury, Herne Bay & Whitstable branch, and the second from further afield in Surrey/Hampshire Borders branch.

Between Canterbury's bustling city centre and Kent County Cricket Club's lovely St Lawrence Ground lies The Phoenix, at 67 Old Dover Road. This is a traditional pub and, with six hand pumps at any one time, is a great bastion of real ale – but a special treat lies in store come the first weekend in each December, and their annual beer festival! This was the pub's fifth, but was the first we'd managed to get to – and it was well worth the effort.

The Phoenix is an unspoilt pub with a warm welcome from both sides of the bar. Linda and Keith do a great job of looking after the cellar, pub and patrons, while the locals are equally welcoming to non-regulars such as us (on this occasion, three quarters of the Finglesham Contingent). Not only that, but when we perched on a few bar stools at the end of a friendly table, the people we were sharing with turned out to be from Ashford Folkestone & Romney Marsh branch, and remembered us from one of John Pitcher's DDS branch pub strolls!

Back to the festival beers, and with 25 options on the list we were spoilt for choice. Being driver, I only had two – a half pint each of the two weakest, which were Robinson's Old Stock Port (a play on the town name of Stockport, home to Robinson's brewery) at 3.5% and Smiles Blond (still Smiles by name, but the Bristol brewery is currently closed and beers are being brewed by Highgate, Walsall) at 3.7%. Of the two, my favourite was the Old Stock Port – not least because we have been fans of Robinson's beers for many years and it is quite unusual to see them this far south.

My Finglesham chums managed to get through eight other pints from the beer list, ranging from Cottage Full Stream Ahead (4.2%) through to the strongest beer on offer, Black Sheep Rigwelter (5.9%). The highest votes from the boys went equally to Skinner's Figgy Brew (4.5%) and Ringwood Porter (4.7%). All beers we tried were in great condition and, for cider drinkers, it should also be noted that the pub had put on a local cider specially brewed for the festival by Honeyhole Farm called Firebird (6%) – so there's one to try next time!

Sadly, all good things come to an end and it was time to head back home to Finglesham. Next year, we intend catching the bus for the Saturday day session in order to do justice to the occasion. Shortly before we left, someone who

seemed to be a regular came in and ordered his tipple. The bell was rung and Linda called out "lager drinker!" – now that gives you an idea of the ratio of beer drinkers to lager drinkers! Quite apart from the excellent beer festival, this is truly a great pub.

And as to the cactus plant sign in the ladies' loo? Well, you'll just have to go there to see for yourself!

(The Phoenix website is found at <http://www.thephoenix-canterbury.co.uk/.>)

From a personal perspective, the other Autumn festival we attended was entirely different. We lived for several years in Hawley, Hampshire (Surrey/Hampshire Borders branch), where our favourite local was the Prince of Wales in Farnborough North. Always a real ale Mecca, our only regret was that the pub was just beyond easily walkable distance of home – thus we didn't get there quite as often as we would have liked (though cycling in the warmer months was popular!). So – imagine our delight when good friends of the other Finglesham Contingent half invited the four of us to Hampshire for a beer festival weekend, which turned out to be at our old local! Fortunately, the Prince of Wales hadn't changed a dot since our Hampshire days – a rare thing in that part of the world. Still a traditional pub separated into three distinct areas, the pub retains its several hand pumps inside while the bar for the festival had been set up in an old brick-built outbuilding between the pub and car park.

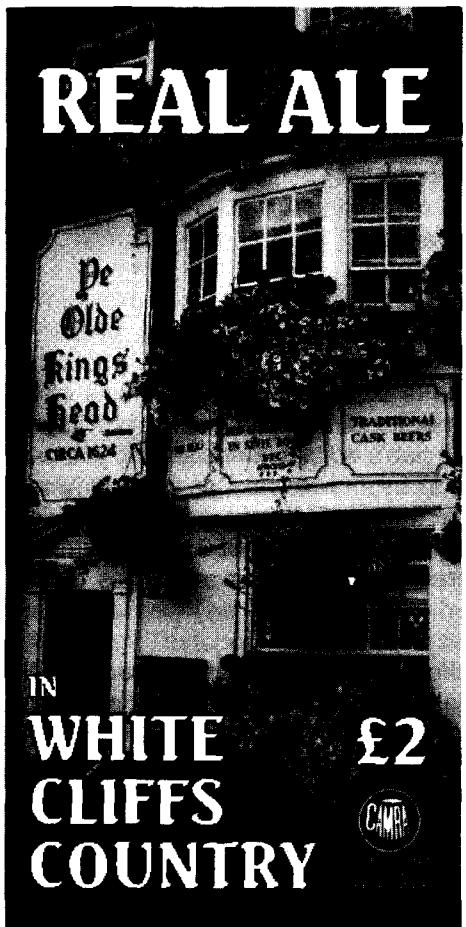
There were 48 beers and four real ciders listed in the pub's "Go South Ale Festival 2005" programme. Between six of us we managed a good sampling of all varieties, from Itchen Valley Godfather (3.5%) to Ballards Wassail (6%), and the equally strong Weltons Red X – the latter of which was marking its 10th anniversary and had put on a special brew. Our favourite was a toss-up between the two Surrey Hills beers (Ranmore Ale at 3.8% and Shere Drop at 4.2%) and Stumpys Hop a Doodle Doo (4%) – all three of which rated equally well in our joint scoring system.

This festival was truly a celebration of southern brewers and cider-makers, and it's great to see such support for regional products – particularly in such a traditional pub environment. So, if you haven't ventured to this part of the Surrey/Hants border area but appreciate a good pint, do look out the Prince of Wales if you're in the vicinity – it's well worth a visit and can be found at 184 Rectory Rd, Farnborough, Hampshire.

Worryingly, perhaps, the cheery chap serving behind the bar felt we were familiar (as he was to us, along with several festival patrons) – which is saying something since our Hampshire days were some years ago and, to our shame, we were not even active branch members when we lived there!

Anne McIlroy

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Amendments as at October 2005

Butcher's Arms, Ashley - Now closed, future uncertain.

Yew Tree, Barfrestone - The family symbol  should be added. The cider available is Biddenden 8% Dry and Thatchers.

Admiral Penn, Deal - Closed.
Star & Garter, Deal - Now closed.
Eagle, Dover - No longer serves real ale.

Millers, Dover - Now renamed **Marine Court** and run as a 'Brewers Fayre' and Premier Travel Inn.

White Horse, Dover - Opening Times changed to Mon-Sat 4.00-11.00pm Sun 12.00-10.30pm.

Mogul, Dover - Closed. Converted into offices.

Crown, Finglesham - telephone number should be 01304 612555.

Hare & Hounds, Northbourne - fully no smoking .

Lifeboat, Walmer - Closed, future uncertain.

Chequers, West Hougham - Has re-opened as pub and restaurant.

Endeavour, Wootton - Closed, future uncertain.

Please note that the  in the Guide means that the landlord has indicated that the pub will admit children.

**PUB
PROFILE**

**THE WHITE HORSE
Dover**

The latest branch social was held at the friendly White Horse in St James Street, Dover, on Monday 24th October. This event was planned not just as a good excuse for a get-together in a great pub, but also to celebrate two fine traditions – the Kentish table skittles game of Daddlums and, with October being CAMRA's designated national cider month, the sampling of real cider.

The White Horse lies in a tiny pocket of local history, in what remains of the northern part of St James Street, between the Dover Leisure Centre (corner of Woolcomber St and Townwall Street) and Castle Hill. Established in 1365, the pub might well be the oldest in Dover and is adjacent to what remains of St James church, which originally dates from Saxon times (the current building is circa 12th century). If you take a look at the pub's ad in this newsletter, you can see the road layout looked quite different in bygone days. Our editor advises he can remember the historic urinal building in the middle of the junction, which he thinks was probably demolished some time in the mid 1950s. Such an elegant structure would surely be listed these days – and the aesthetics of the road are the poorer for its demise.



Flanked by the impressive façade of St James on one side and a small green on the other, the White Horse is a traditional pub with a pretty, white painted exterior. Inside is a cosy and welcoming front bar, whose walls are adorned with the start and finish times of cross channel swimmers. There is a separate room to the rear of the pub with comfy sofas, and more tables and chairs – and it was here that the Daddlums table had been set up for our evening's entertainment.

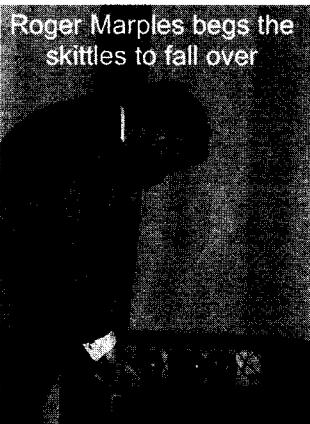
What is the game of Daddlums? Daddlums is a table skittles game believed to be unique to Kent. The table is made principally of wood and the one we used was hand built by our own Dave Green, based on a 'measuring up' visit to another Kentish pub. Dave's carpentry skills are to be admired, as his Daddlums table is a work of art. A typical table is 5½ feet long by a few feet in both width and height. Players stand around nine feet away and throw what are called a 'cheeses' (a kind of solid wooden quoit) at the nine skittles standing on the ta-

ble. In order for the knocking down of skittles to count, the cheese must make contact with the table before it strikes. Basically, whoever knocks down the highest number of skittles in a series of legs is the winner.



We had over ten people, so divided ourselves into two sides and played several legs – though it's hard to be sure exactly who won. This was nothing to do with the cider, but due to one player having to leave between sessions and a certain amount of switching between sides at various stages. What is certain is that everyone had a thoroughly enjoyable evening. This was the first time some of us had played Daddlums, and we're looking forward to its next outing – whenever that may be.

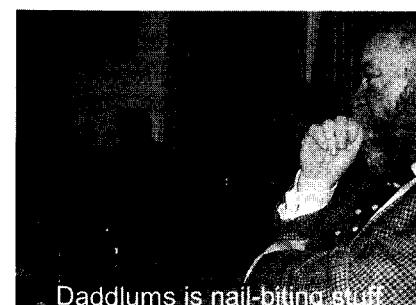
On the cider front, fellow antipodean Jack provided us with two different ciders from Pawley's Farm (near Faversham) for cider month: a dry, strong one at 8%, and a spicier one at around 6%. The latter was my favourite of the two, and was served warm – thus seeming like a cider version of a mulled wine. The pub has also been a regular stocker of Thatcher's cider. For those few weren't drinking cider, the usual good choice of four real ales was on offer, so people could enjoy the likes of Landlord (possibly the best pint of this for miles around), Ringwood Best and Fortyniner, and Hopback Odyssey.



Roger Marples begs the skittles to fall over

Jack and his team at the White Horse all looked after us extremely well. The food was exceptionally good – perfectly roasted pork with proper crackling and all the trimmings, as well as lots of bread, cheese, veggies and salad.

So – another excellent branch social, with a good time had by all. Cheers!



Daddlums is nail-biting stuff!

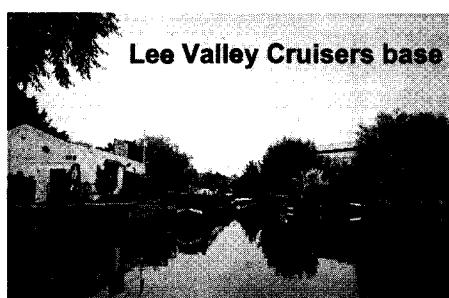
Anne McIlroy



RING A RING OF LONDON WITH THE BEERY BOATERS

It's quite a long time since the Beery Boaters did the London Ring. Most hire boat companies seem reluctant to let their hirers have a go at it. On our two earlier trips we hired boats from High Line Yachting, on the Slough Arm of the Grand Union, but it has moved and no longer hires out boats, so when we found that Lee Valley Cruisers, at Broxbourne on the River Lea (Note: the river is the Lea, but it is part of the Lee and Stort Navigation in the Lee Valley) allowed suitably experienced boaters to take this route, we couldn't resist having a go again. Oh, yes! The London Ring?

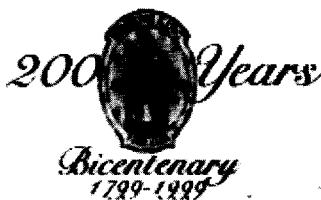
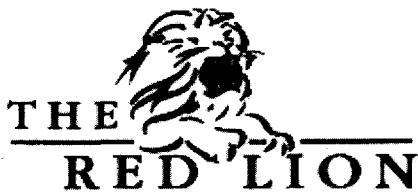
Well, it's a smallish circular route taking in the bottom end of the Grand Union Canal from Brentford to Southall, the Paddington Arm from Slough to Little Venice, and the Regents Canal from Little Venice to Limehouse Basin at Stepney; and the tidal Thames completes the ring from Stepney to Brentford.



So, on Friday 30th September, eight Beery Boaters comprising Martin Atkins, Dave and John Underdown, Giles Hadfield, Terry Easley, Chris Baxter, Dick Savage and The Commodore assembled (eventually) at Broxbourne, embarked on the 68ft narrow boat *Emily* (complete with one of the sturdiest gangplanks we'd ever come across, and which later was to prove invaluable) and headed south in intermittent rain to Waltham Abbey to tie up outside The Old English Gentleman. Nethergate is its regular beer, with a guest (on this occasion Fenland), plus Old Rosie cider. I rather like Waltham Abbey. When I drove lorries it was a favorite venue for the evening. Most of the several pubs are McMullen's and our next stop was the Welsh Harp, after which the group split up and variously went to the Sun, Angel and Crown. In the Minster churchyard, just behind the Welsh Harp, is the reputed grave of King Harold (arguably the last English monarch of England) who endowed the church, while near the Sun is a plaque on the pavement denoting the Greenwich Meridian. Being too late to get pub food, we settled for a Chinese take-away from Hing's on the way back to the boat.

Saturday was going to be an easy day, so we didn't set off until 08:00. The rain had gone, and the day started fine, and it remained so during the rest of the week. We passed under the M25, then through Ramsey Marsh and Enfield Locks, the latter adjacent to the former Enfield Small Arms works. From here the locks are paired and, with the exception of Pickett's Lock, all had one chamber completely hydraulically operated, which naturally we chose. About 13:00 we tied up outside the Princess of Wales, a Young's pub by the A104 at Clapton, for a meal and a few pints. We also availed ourselves of a special offer of four assorted bottles of beer at a fiver per pack.

We set off again at 16:20, past Hackney Marshes, and many very tame herons and very many Canada geese, through Old Ford Lock, near the proposed site of the future Olympic stadium, and took the right fork just above Bow Tidal Locks, down the Limehouse Cut to Limehouse Basin – now mainly a large yacht marina. We just managed to pip another narrow boat coming from the other side of the basin to pole position mooring for going into the Thames



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in the morning. The former lock keeper's cottage and ex-GBG Barley Mow just by the lock was now renamed the Narrow Street and sold no real ale, so we went to the nearby Grapes, reputedly a haunt of Pepys and Dickens in days past. Unable to get into the renowned seafood restaurant, we had to settle for a meal in the bar and a choice of Adnams, Taylor's Landlord and Marston Pedigree beers. To complete the day we went to the Queens Head in Flamborough Street, the Youngs pub where the late Queen Mother famously pulled and consumed a pint of Special.

Approaching Tower Bridge



On Sunday as we weren't due to go up the Thames until 11:45, when the tide was right, so I wandered down to take some pictures of the Grapes and also got one of a heron who posed on the quayside for me. Before we left, the paddle steamer *Waverley*, which had gone up to the Pool of London the previous evening, went past the lock down towards the Thames Estuary.

Bang on time the lock keeper ap-

peared and, with three other boats, we went down to the Thames. We followed *Francis*, another Lee Valley boat, up river, where to start with it was a bit choppy, and we 'shipped it green' on the odd occasion until we were under Tower Bridge with the Tower of London on one side and *HMS Belfast* on the other. Then up river, past the London Eye, the Houses of Parliament, Battersea Power Station and so forth. Around Hammersmith were several rowers and some dinghies engaged in racing, one crew almost rammed us amidships.

The two narrow boats entered the Grand Union at Brentford at 14:30 via Thames Lock, but were told by the lock keeper that, the next stretch being semi-tidal, we would be unable to proceed further for a couple of hours. So we went to the Brewery Tap instead, a Fullers pub a few yards away. It would now be impossible to get to the top of Norwood Locks as we had hoped that day, so we were in no great hurry to set off, and left eventually at 17:00, to arrive at the bottom of Hanwell Locks just as it was getting dark. The nearby Fox is a regular GBG entry and was serving, among others, Timothy Taylor and Caledonian Deuchars. We stayed here for the evening, although midway Chris, Dick and Giles went for a Thai meal.

Monday morning and we were off at 07:00. Up Hanwell and Norwood Locks by 09:30, took on water at the top, and a few miles later turned right onto the Paddington Arm. We passed Southall, Greenford and Alperton, with plenty of green open spaces until we'd gone over the North Circular Road to Park Royal

where we could see the new Wembley Stadium being constructed. At Acton Lane we moored for more Young's at the Grand Junction Arms from a particularly unwelcoming landlord, and then past Kensal Green Cemetery, to Little Venice. On through Maida Hill Tunnel, the back of Regent's Park Zoo to Camden Town, five locks down, and then through Islington Tunnel. One lock further, City Road Lock, and we tied up for the night outside the Narrowboat, opposite Wenlock Basin at 18:40, on schedule again. After a pint or two at the Narrow Boat, which served Adnam's and Fuller's, it seemed only natural that we should make our way to the Wenlock Arms to regale ourselves of its selection of beers and salt beef sandwiches – and, unlike some pubs, we were not hustled out of the door on the dot of closing time!

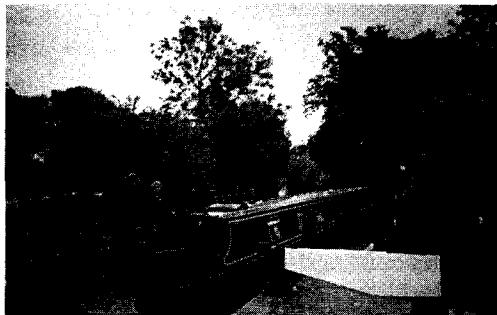
We left on Tuesday at 08:10. Dick had a party to attend that evening and left us for a couple of days. We carried on past Victoria Park (the first public park in the country), turned left into the Hertford Union Canal, where we moored for breakfast, and then left again onto the River Lea, having completed the London Ring. By 12:30 we were back at Tottenham, and moored outside another Narrowboat, only to find no real ale, so we walked the few hundred yards to the Ferry Boat for Fuller's and Adnams beers. Our evening destination being a second visit to Waltham Abbey, we set off at 15:00, but were almost thwarted by one of the bottom hydraulic gates at Enfield Lock refusing to operate. However, the stout gangplank now proved its worth and, by using it as a lever, we did it handraulically instead! (Yet another use to which a gangplank can be put.) Reaching Waltham Abbey at 18:30 we found our previous mooring space taken, but tied up at the park the other side of the bridge instead. This time the Old English Gentleman had Springfield as the guest ale, and an old Hancock's Half Hour on the radio. We visited the Welsh Harp and the Crown again, and bought another Chinese take-away on our way back to the boat.

Wednesday morning and we were up at 07:45, and enjoying an excellent breakfast in the 'greasy spoon' on the canal side behind the Old English Gentleman. Away at 08:45, past Broxbourne and right at the junction of the Rivers Lea and Stort, taking the latter to Roydon, where we tied up at 13:20 and walked up the hill to the village, and the New Inn, which sold Greene King and

Adnam:s. On the way Dave and I found some parasol mushrooms (very good to eat, and which we enjoyed for breakfast the next day!). We untied at 15:20 and, after retrieving Dick at Burnt Mill Lock, pushed on to Sawbridgeworth where we moored for the night above Shearing Mill Lock. Paus-ing on the way at the Old Bell, we spent most of the evening at the fa-



mous Gate, with its extensive selection of real ale, and independent real ale organisation.



large, and the same group with same range of beers as the Ferry at Tottenham. Most of us stayed there for the evening and played dominoes (though not for cash), while Chris and Dick walked the mile or so to have a look at Hoddesdon. And that was that! Up at 07:30, clean up the boat and back to Broxbourne. Roll on next April!

Thursday, and the last full day. We turned *Emily* without too much difficulty in the lock cut and returned to Roydon. This time we drank at the Crusader (McMullen) and the White Hart (Greene King). Pity about the beer, it's the best of the three pubs! We left at 15:15, returned to the River Lea and tied up at the Fish and Eels, Dobbs Weir (on the fringe of Hoddesdon) at 17:00. The pub is

Jim Green



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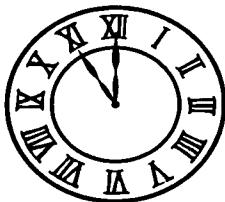
Sunday 5th March - *Trefor Williams & Friends*

Sunday 2nd April - *Charlie Connor*

EASTER DOUBLE

Sunday 16th April - *Denny Illett*

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LAST KNOCKINGS

I recently caught an interview on Radio 4's PM programme with a representative of the advertising industry – the subject being brands and branding, and the comparatively limited targeting of older age groups; and although it was about marketing in general, it is as equally applicable to beer as anything else. Apparently emphasis is placed on the adolescent and twenty-something market because those age groups were still deciding on brand preference, while the older groups had established brand loyalty, "sometimes acquired from their parents", which they were far less likely to shift. Not a picture I would have readily recognised of my own age group, most of whom appear to take great care in their choice of purchases, and are perfectly happy to switch from one product to another. The obvious comment which the interviewer oddly and frustratingly neglected to make, was that maybe we're not targeted because, having heard it all before, we've more sense than to take any notice of it.

One of the curiosities of being involved with a CAMRA newsletter is the variety of response it elicits. Visiting one of our more distant, and less frequented, outlets I dumped the usual dozen or so copies on the bar, and was about to go, when it became apparent that things had changed. Instead of the usual cheery greeting, I received a firm no thank you from two gentlemen who I assumed to be the new management. This was without asking what I was offering them, and in the kind of manner that suggested they might have thought it was dodgy cigarettes. "What am I supposed to do, read it?" said one, after I'd explained it was our local branch newsletter, and as if reading in a pub should be limited to invoices and tax returns. I was about to give up and leave when he took half a dozen. A result I suppose.

Despite the grim predictions of the *Daily Mail*, the Association of Senior Police Officers and the Conservative Party, the revised licensing laws have become part of our culture, without Armageddon seemingly enveloping our green and pleasant land. In fact the media, having terrified a large part of the country's law-abiding citizenry for the best part of the year, has now dropped the matter like the proverbial hot potato. As was becoming quite apparent, as the "24 hour era" approached, for the majority of pubs and their customers things have changed very little. Most pubs have kept their hours much the same with perhaps an extra hour or so at the end of the evening, and that often restricted to

those already in the pub. The vast majority of those applying for the full 24 hour license have been supermarkets and other retail outlets (an outcome probably not envisaged by the Government) with only a few hundred pubs across the country joining them and, in many cases, with the intention of occasional use only. As with the introduction of all day opening in the late Eighties, for most of the country the change has passed by unnoticed.

While the new licensing regulations have not had the ill effects that some had predicted, many believe that the alcohol related problems we are currently witnessing lie with the cavalier approach of the licensing authorities (no doubt following Government guidelines) over the last ten to fifteen years, and the cynicism of many brewers and pub chains, which have effectively created alcohol supermarkets in many of our town and city centres. The soon-to-retire landlord of the famous Coach and Horses in Soho spoke with feeling on the issue in a recent radio interview. His pub had seen many drunks, but normally quiet drunks. If someone was out of order they would be refused a drink or asked to leave, often with their money returned. Occasionally they might be barred for a while. From time to time the police would look in to make sure everything was all right. Contrast this with the average city centre bar designed for noise and excitement and large groups of young drinkers. It's unlikely a drunk would be identified until they fell over or assaulted someone – and the only police presence, mob handed when the inevitable trouble arrives.

At the time of writing the annual Festive Season anti drink-driving campaign is in full swing, with the emphasis this year on persuading drivers that if they drink and drive it is impossible to accurately calculate whether or not they are within the limit. Best not drink at all, is the advice – at one level, a very reasonable approach, but on another once again an example of the no discretion approach to modern living. When the breathalyser was introduced in 1967 I clearly remember that guidelines were given as to how many beers or spirits constituted the limit. However, it was made very clear that these were rough estimates and varied from person to person and according to circumstances. Sometime in the intervening years it appears that a decision was made that such information should not be provided, on the basis presumably, either of concern that such comparisons might be misleading, or of the bogeyman principal that the more unquantifiable a danger, the less likely it was to be questioned or accommodated into one's lifestyle. And there is the suspicion of connivance by the media. Certainly in recent years, on neither TV, radio, nor in the press, have I heard or seen the question raised of a safe level of consumption.

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CAMPAIGN FOR REAL ALE

CAMRA
Membership of CAMRA is open to everyone who supports the campaign to keep real ale. To join CAMRA, please complete the form below

Application Form to join CAMRA

I/We wish to join the Campaign for Real Ale and agree to abide by the Rules

Name _____

Address _____

Postcode _____

Signature _____

Date _____

I/We enclose the remittance for:

Single £18 OAP Single £10
Joint £21 Unwaged/Under
 26* £10

*Date of birth _____

Send your remittance (payable to CAMRA) to:

The membership secretary,
CAMRA,
230 Hatfield Rd, St Albans,
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Channel Draught 26

Stuart

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TV showing all Sky Sports, including Sky
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**Keep an eye out for our forthcoming refit, when
we will have good food available once again!**

Branch Contacts

If you have any queries about CAMRA, or any dispute concerning ale in White Cliffs Country then please contact **Martin Atkins** (Branch Chairman)

Martin Atkins - 01304 201870
01304 216497

You can e-mail the branch using:
branchsec@ddscamra.org.uk

The branch website is:
<http://www.ddscamra.org.uk>

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Nationally CAMRA can be
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And Finally.....

A Japanese brewery and a pub owner have teamed up to produce a tomato-based low-malt beer. Tomato Bibere combines the sweet flavour of a tomato with the bitter taste of hops. One tomato is used in the production of each 330ml bottle of reddish beer. Isamu Waki, who runs an Izakaya pub in Tokyo, has been asking other brewers to produce a tomato beer for years. Hirofumi Koda, president of Echigo Beer Co., was the first brewery operator to take him up on the idea.

Echigo Beer has produced beer from rice, pears and even green tea. "I was overwhelmed by Waki's enthusiasm for the project, so I decided to go for it," said Koda, who himself does not like tomatoes. Since tomatoes are fibrous and have a low-sugar content, filtration and fermentation were especially difficult. The first trial product, which took five months to make, was watery and barely tasted of tomatoes. Koda called it vile! Koda and Waki tasted various trial versions of the beer by altering the amount of tomatoes and by increasing the sugar content to improve the beer they finally released.

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