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



CAMPAIGN  
FOR  
REAL ALE

Issue 27  
Spring  
2006

# CHANNEL DRAUGHT



## INSIDE

### PUB PROFILE

The Red  
Lion  
Stodmarsh

## MAKE MINE A MILD

May is CAMRA's Mild Month

*Give it a try!*

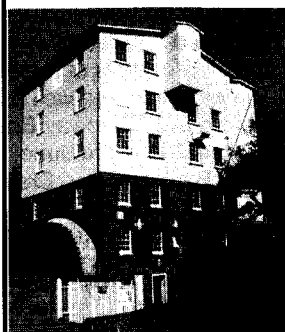


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## 1981 AND ALL THAT

A LOOK BACK 25  
YEARS WITH THE  
BEERY BOATERS



## CRABBLE MILL TO HOST IT'S SECOND FESTIVAL

26th & 27th May

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

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Campaign for Real  
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Please drink  
sensibly!

# **CHANNEL DRAUGHT**

**ISSUE 27**  
**Spring 2006**

**T**ime flies. The White Cliffs Festival of Winter Ales is already no more than a memory, and by the time you read this, Easter will have come and gone, and we'll be well into spring: and with spring of course comes CAMRA's annual promotion of that traditional but much neglected ale style, mild – May being designated Mild Month. See Anne McIlroy's article (page 26) for a history and description of the beer, and where it can be found locally.

Last spring we identified a dozen or so pubs in the Deal, Dover, Sandwich and District Branch area which had either recently closed, had the threat of closure hanging over them, or whose future seemed significantly in doubt. At the time of writing, with the exception of the Primrose, Coombe Valley Rd., there have fortunately been no additions to the list, but some have now irrevocably gone, and none of those that remain have seen uncertainty about their future removed. A summary of the present state of play can be found on page 38

This edition marks a somewhat unhappy anniversary as it was a year ago, April 23<sup>rd</sup> 2005, that we were saddened by the sudden death of Dave Routh, a long time staunch branch member, and for the last few years East Kent Area Organiser. His knowledge of beer, pubs and all manner of things was invaluable, and provided great assistance to the Branch, especially to those of us producing this newsletter, to which for many years he was a major contributor. He is greatly missed.

However, ever good spirited and optimistic, Dave would not have wished us to be downhearted, and with Spring come several local beer festivals for us to enjoy. Easter weekend was scheduled for festivals at the Royal Oak, Capel and the Chambers in Folkestone, as well as the first ever by Thanet CAMRA. Ashford and Shepway Branch's Rare Breeds Festival is set for the 2nd & 3rd June, while at the end of May, over the Spring Bank Holiday, Crabble Mill at River will hold its second festival, the first last year being a major success. (See adverts and article pages 24 & 25).

***Martin Atkins (Editor)***

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# EVENTS DIARY

Monday 15th May	<b>Yew Tree, Barfrestone - Branch Meeting</b>
Friday 2nd & Saturday 3rd June	<b>RARE BREEDS BEER FESTIVAL.</b> For details see page 40
Monday 19th June	<b>Fleur de Lis, Delf Street, Sandwich - Branch Meeting.</b>
Thursday 29th June	<b>Blakes, Castle Street, Dover.</b> Presentation of the Branch 'Pub of the Year' Certificate
Monday 17th July	<b>Red Lion, Charlton Green, Dover - Branch Meeting.</b>
Thursday 20th to Saturday 22nd July	<b>KENT BEER FESTIVAL,</b> Merton Farm, off Nackington Lane, Canterbury <a href="http://www.kentbeerfestival.co.uk/index.html">http://www.kentbeerfestival.co.uk/index.html</a>

*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

**Eagle**, London Rd: As hinted in our winter issue real ale has returned to the Eagle – beers seen so far include Greene King IPA, London Pride, Broadside, and a particularly excellent St George's Imperial Bitter from Carlsberg/Tetley, which at 4.3% ABV is presumably a renamed Tetley Imperial – it certainly appears very similar.

**White Horse**, St James Street: Ringwood Fortyniner now seems to be standard alongside Landlord on the four handpumps, and Brakspear's beers appear regularly. Interesting recent guests have included Arundel Stronghold (4.7% ABV) and Breconshire Ramblers Ruin (5% ABV), although your editor is unable to comment on the latter, as practically the whole barrel was consumed one Sunday evening before he had a chance to try it. However, he was assured it was excellent.

**Blakes**, Castle St: Continuing its association with Goacher's, Imperial Stout is now a regular on handpump alongside Thatcher's cider; Blakes now being the ever popular dark brew's biggest single outlet. Other local breweries featuring regularly include Hopdaemon, Gadds and Whitstable – of particular note from

the first two, being the ferociously strong Leviathan (6% ABV) and deceptively strong Dogbolter Porter (5.6% ABV). Otherwise expect beers from anywhere in the UK.

**Park Inn**, Park Place: A truly excellent barrel of Young's Winter Warmer was to be had here earlier in the year. At the time of writing the line up for several weeks has been Greene King IPA, Courage Best and Spitfire. However staff tell me changes are likely over the coming months

**Louis Armstrong**, Maison Dieu Rd: Dover's famous live entertainment venue maintains its strong commitment to real ale. Bass is always available, plus at least one guest drawn from the usual collection of suspects (Hopdaemon, Burton Bridge, Nelson, Cottage, Grand Union) or the odd stranger – recently, very pleasingly, Gadd's No 5..

**Cullens Yard**, Cambridge Rd: This bistro/bar occupying former marine workshops, is always worth a look. Adnams beers are regulars – Bitter plus usually Broadside, although the latter sometimes replaced by a seasonal, e.g. the Oyster Stout in winter. Also expect Wychwood Hobgoblin. In summer an extensive outside seating area overlooks the Wellington Dock.

**Britannia**, Townwall Street: Once

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Whitbread's wining and dining flagship in Dover, this early sixties pub has now taken on a new role as Dover's first lap-dancing and strippers venue. Landlady, Sarah Webb, who will be dancing herself (but not stripping), says it will be classy not sordid, and hopes to make it a bi-monthly event. Admission will be by advance membership only, and the first night is planned for April.

Elsewhere the **Renaissance**, Folkestone Rd., ever popular with CAMRA members visiting the town, normally sells one real ale, very often one of Nelson's brews from Chatham. While opposite, on the other side of the York St. roundabout at the **Golden Lion**, two or three real ales are on the handpumps. Of late these have included Greene King IPA and Abbot, Ruddles County, Wadworth 6X and Old Speckled Hen. The **Prince Albert** normally has at least three real ales, with selection recently from Hook Norton Hooky Bitter, Ruddles Best, Bateman's XXXB and Bombardier. At Charlton Green the **Red Lion** is sticking with its standard duo of London Pride and Bombardier, our Pubs Officer recently enjoying an excellent pint of the latter. And Bombardier, along with Bass, is also to be found regularly at the **Boar's Head**, Eaton Rd. Changes at the **Hare & Hounds**, Folkestone Road, where we welcome new tenants Steve and Chris.

## DEAL

**Bohemian**, Beach St: The pub was closed in early February due to li-

cence complications but all must have been quickly sorted out for the pub was open as usual by the end of the month. Beers available have included Harvey's Sussex, Woodforde's Wherry, Cottage Great Western, Landlord and Marston's Old Empire.

**Alma**, West Street: At the time of writing in early April the pub was closed and appearing empty, with some kind of refurbishment underway. Any news gratefully received.

**Ship**, Middle Street: Good reports from various sources. Ron Mears commenting particularly on excellent Summer Lightning in January and Roger Marples on the quality of Deuchar's IPA in late March, where with a group from Ashford, they all voted it top marks. Standard line-up is Master Brew, Summer Lightning, Deuchar's IPA and Gadd's Nos 3 and 7.

**Kings Head**: Another pub advertising Harvey's bitter although when our reporter visited there was none on. The pub was also in the news in March over the theft of peanuts.

Worth visiting on the Sea Front are two hotels **Dunkerleys** and the **Royal**. Both are Shepherd Neame outlets. The former is quiet and comfortable and offers Spitfire. The latter although attached to a hotel retains an independent feel. Master Brew and Spitfire were on sale when we visited it one busy Monday lunchtime.

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## SANDWICH AND RURAL

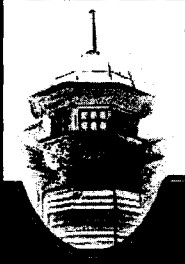
May is of course CAMRA's mild month (see page 26) and our three regular mild pubs are all village pubs – the Five Bells in Eastry, the Charity at Woodnesborough and the Yew Tree, Barfrestone.

**Five Bells, Eastry:** Mild here is Mitchell & Butlers, alongside other regulars Bass and Greene King IPA. Guest ales feature prominently, including in April, Holts Entire from Highgate, Hydes Original and Hardys & Hansons Olde Trip. Over the succeeding weeks beers are expected from among others Lees, Caledonian, Titanic, Everards, Elgoods and Jennings. The Five Bells also maintains its association with local brewer

Eddie Gadd of Ramsgate, whose Seaside appeared on the hand-pumps in early April, and who will in due course be arranging a beer festival at the pub.

**Charity, Woodnesborough:** Ansells Dark Mild is standard at the Charity together with Black Sheep bitter and Greene King IPA. A guest normally features as well, on last visit Ruddles Best. The pub is also well known for its wholesome, good value food – lunchtime and evening Tuesday to Friday and Saturday lunch, together with traditional Sunday roast.

**Yew Tree, Barfrestone:** We hear that Charlie's been turning over substantial quantities of ale. As well as taking beers from locals Hopdaemon



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(Incubus and Dominator regularly), Gadd's and Whitstable, there been brews from all over the country. Visits in March found beers from Dark Star, Cottage, Moles, Orkney, Burton Bridge and Arundel, and at the time of writing due on shortly were Bateman's Spring Goddess, White Horse Flibbertigibbet, Cottage Jack and the Dragon and 1648 St George.

**Two Sawyers**, Woolage Green: The pub's sale last April recently featured in the BBCs 'Home's Under the Hammer' series. It had been operating on a couple of days a week basis for several months and locals feared that it end up as a house. However permission for conversion would probably been viewed unfavourably by Canterbury City Council, and in the event the pub went to former pub landlady Brenda and her brother and sister in law, Tony and June. After renovation, the pub is now open again on a normal basis, with two real ales, usually Adnams and another, often Hopdaemon Golden Braid, which interestingly has found a lot of favour with younger drinkers.

**Royal Oak**, Capel: The venue for our March Branch Meeting we enjoyed and excellent evening at the cliff top pub. Landlord Paul laid on a fine selection of sandwiches, sausage rolls, etc., as well as the normal choice of four real ales at his usual low prices. Your correspondent was particularly impressed by a Cottage brew, which might or might not have been Great Western, but it was medium dark and most palatable.

**Plough Inn**, Ripple: Regular Wednesday quiz nights at this pub, where £300 has been raised to help the hard pressed village school. Real ales include Master Brew, Spitfire and the increasingly more widely seen Best from Shepherd Neame and Fuller's ESB.

**Hope**, Lydden: Redevelopment proposals for land at the rear to include repositioning of car park behind the pub, and the erection of five cottages and a block of four holiday lets. The plans show a possible new skittle alley along the western boundary. (See Tony's Tappings)

**St Crispin**, Worth: The stillage at the left hand end of the bar has now been removed and is providing extra shelf space, while all real ales are now drawn from the cellar by hand-pump. Standard range is Harvey's Sussex, Master Brew, London Pride and Broadside.

**Fox**, Temple Ewell: Steve still selling Ward's Best Bitter (now from Robinson of Stockport although Ward was originally from Steve's home town, Sheffield), along with other current regular's Deuchar's IPA and Badger Tanglefoot. Guests have included beers from Young's, Archers and Cottage.

**Mermaid**, Bishopsbourne: Alterations to the front bar are now finished, giving more space and providing an enlarged servery. A wood-burning stove has been installed and there are old photographs of the village on the walls. It's good to see



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## **FORTHCOMING EVENTS**

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Saturday 13th May.    Race Night  
Saturday 20th May.    Kevin Iverson  
Saturday 27th May.    Mike Scurfield  
Saturday 3rd June.    Blow

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Shepherd Neame resisting the temptation to knock the bars into one. Ales are Master Brew and the Shepherd Neame seasonal beer.

At Finglesham the **Crown Inn** sells bottled Skrimshander and Leviathan as well Hopdaemon's cask beers among its rotating guests, and at the nearby **Coach & Horses**, Hacklinge standard line up is Courage Directors and Weston's Organic Cider (now on handpump), with a second beer often added in summer – e.g. Tiger or Gadd's – plus a very friendly welcome. The **Sportsman**, Sholden has recently taking Gadd's No 5 with regulars Greene King IPA and Bass. One of our members found "a very busy and popular local" and wondered if this reflected its no children policy. Gadd's No 5 also at the **Three Horseshoes**, Mongeham where landlord Martin reckons to shift 2/3 nines a week.

**Marquis of Granby**, Alkham has recently featured three beers from Nelson (including mild) plus Courage Director's. In January our reporter enjoyed very good Skinner's Best and Usher's Winter Storm and a nice welcome. At West Hougham, however recent visits to the **Chequers** have found no real ale available. At Kingsdown, the **King's Head** is another pub taking beers from Goachers, recently Mild and is hoping to make their Fine Light a regular. In Sandwich the lease for the

**George & Dragon**, Fisher Street is currently on the market. Regular real ales include London Pride, Master Brew and Harvey's Sussex. The **Red Cow** is now all no smoking. Recent visit found Greene King beers plus Gadd's No 5, while at the **Greyhound** in early Feb. Old Hooky was on the handpumps.

## FOLKESTONE

**Princess Royal:** Having undergone refurbishment not much more than a year ago Shepherd Neame has now had a second bash, leaving just a single bar on two levels. Everything is shiny and glitzy with pastel blue spotlights, illuminating the pub name outside and playing on the walls in-

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side. Incongruously the bank of four handpumps remain on the bar top, but with nothing on them at last visit, and at the right hand end of what had formerly been the front bar, a TV has been installed. Whenever this correspondent has passed it, admittedly early evening, it seems empty but for the odd customer and the TV showing cartoons.

**Chambers**, Cheriton Place: As we trust you will have seen from our winter edition the 'Chilli' Chambers once again organised a beer festival for Easter weekend. Running from Thursday to Monday there were 20 real ales and 6 ciders from across the country. The pub's normal compliment is five real ales and two ciders, including strong representation

from locals Hopdaemon and Gadd's – the latter's Dogbolter having been standard for the last few months and making a fine pairing with that other heavyweight, and Chambers regular, Ringwood's Old Thumper.

**Happy Frenchman**, Christchurch Rd: Standard real ale is Adnams Broadside plus usually one other, very often Old Peculiar, a superb pint of which was enjoyed on a visit in January. In late March the new ale, Adnams Explorer (4.3% ABV), was on handpump.

**Lifeboat**: Kevin still turning over excellently conditioned beers at this long time real ale outlet. A recent visit found the most palatable Young's Kew Bridge on handpump, a couple of pints of which went down exceedingly well – all credit to Young's, whose current output and range increasingly impresses.

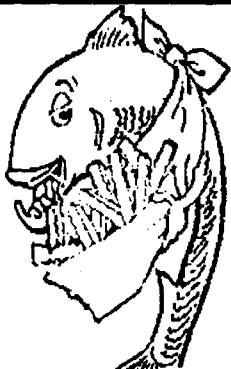
**Guildhall**, The Bayle: Taking advantage of Punch's Finest Cask Selection the Guildhall has been offering guest ales from all over the country. Late March and early April saw Elgoods Greyhound, Everards Budding, Holts Entire, Jennings Snecklifter and Adnams Explorer, alongside regular beers Bass, Greene King IPA and Bombardier.

In the Fish Market the former **Oddfellows**, that for a time was known as **Nostalgia**, is going through further metamorphosis,

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this time under the **Euphoria** name as an outlet for the Church Street operation in Dover. Work was in progress in late March. In Dover Rd the **Martello** remains closed with lease for sale.

---

### **TONY'S TAPPINGS**

*(The perambulations of our Pubs Officer, Tony Wells)*

#### **January 21<sup>st</sup>**

My first visit to the **Eight Bells** and I have to say that I was more than pleased by the range and quality of the beers on sale. Two of those that I tried were well kept indeed and just about the right temperature – this contradicts some reports about Cask Marque pubs keeping their beers on the cold side. Prices were around the £1.45 mark. No sign of Hopdaemon Incubus, however, which we heard was a regular at the pub. The Weston's organic cider was in a polypin from the fridge. In addition other bottled beers and ciders were on offer. Beers available were Marston's Burton Bitter and Pedigree, Courage Director's, Theakston's Old Peculiar and Best Bitter, White Horse Wayland Smithy, Hop Back Summer Lightning, Youngs Winter Warmer, Greene King Abbot and Old Speckled Hen, Shepherd Neame Spitfire, and Hardy and Hanson's Abstinence. This is a pub where you can go for a pub-crawl without leaving the pub!

#### **Early February**

Another first was the **Hope Inn**, Lydden. The entrance to this pub must be one of the more unusual, for as you walk into the pub you find

yourself on a raised landing looking down on the bar – a definite feeling of superiority. The Hope is what I call a tidy pub with everything in its place and well looked after. Pictures and other knick-knacks adorn the walls and shelves and there is a restaurant area beyond the bar. Flowers IPA and Shepherd Neame Spitfire are regular beers and normally these are supported by a guest, but unfortunately it had just been taken off. However, the Flowers IPA and especially the Spitfire were in good condition. A visit to the **Royal Oak**, Whitfield, is the third of this trio of firsts. Perhaps not one of the best looking pubs but the welcome was friendly and the landlord pulled through a pint before serving me – an excellent pint of Bombardier. I would have stayed for another but had another engagement to go to.

#### **February 18<sup>th</sup> – Pub Walk**

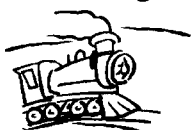
While visiting the **Berry** in Walmer on one of John's CAMRA pub strolls, landlord Chris confirmed that this was now the pub's official name, and that Greene King IPA is no longer a regular. It has been replaced with Woodforde's Wherry - which was in good condition on this visit. At the **Stag Bass** and Greene King IPA were on offer when we visited this bustling pub on Walmer's sea front. Further along we passed the **Lord Clyde** which, as in previous weeks, still appeared to have no real ale, despite the blackboard outside providing a description of Bishop's Finger. (We've subsequently learned that real ale has now returned.)

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### Late February

The **Prince Albert**, Alfred Square continues to present an excellent and varied range of guest beers. In this case, the Dark Star Over the Moon rated an immediate 5 on CAM-RA's NBSS - in other words the perfect pint. As Dark Star's web site states 'Traditional dark mild ale, fully hopped and very quaffable' and this was certainly the case with Over the Moon.

### March

Met and welcomed Ian & Christine Jameson who are the new tenants at the **Plough and Harrow** in Tilmanstone, now acquired by Shepherd Neame. They officially took over the pub on 1st March 2006, and although they have experience in

working in pubs etc, this is the first pub they have run as tenants. Their regulars will be Master Brew, Spitfire, plus Shep's seasonal. An application is going to be made to extend their license to enable them to tap into passing trade outside normal drinking hours. They were running a promotion on Shep's Porter, £2.00 a pint, to finish the barrel so they can put on Early Bird. This was the best pint of Porter I have tasted this year. *(Bear's out earlier observations that SN Porter benefits from keeping. Ignore the accountants, SN, brew it earlier and keep it in storage before sending it out - Ed.).* Best wishes for the future to outgoing hosts Keith and Tilly.

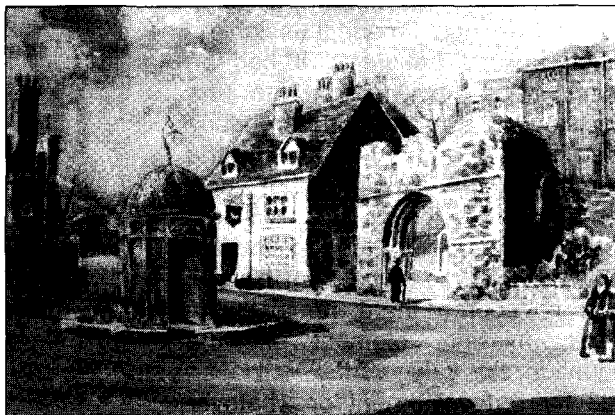
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\*\*\*

Sunday  
1.00pm - 10.30pm



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RCH East Street Cream  
Greene King Hobgoblin  
Wychwood Abbot Ale  
Hop Back Crop Circle  
Ringwood Best Bitter  
Woodforde's Wherry  
Hampshire Ironside  
Hop Back Odyssey  
White Horse Bitter  
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Exmoor Gold





# The National News

By Martin Atkins

## Gale's Blows Out

Reports in our last issue that Gale's brewery at Horndean may be reprieved have turned out to be little more than wishful thinking. Having spent the first few months of the year 'matching' various of Gale's brews at Chiswick, Fuller's closed the Horndean Brewery, which it bought in November for £92 million, on the 31<sup>st</sup> March. This is despite a petition signed by 6,000 people and a tradition of brewing stretching back over 150 years. Fuller's director John Roberts maintains that closure was never a forgone conclusion but that the necessary investment to keep the brewery going made it unviable – when Fuller's bought it, it had an open mind, but over time the decision became clear. If that means the couple of months from the purchase in early November, until the start of trial brews at Chiswick, it does not seem very long to consign 150 years to no more than history. And of course there remains the other missing element in the equation, the value of the Horndean site for redevelopment or whatever else is planned for it. Which of Gale's brews will be retained is anyone's guess (except perhaps for Fuller's marketing staff), and they are unlikely to know if Chiswick brewed beers will prove acceptable to Gale's regulars. If any brews are kept then it's probably safe to assume that the

flagship HSB will be among them, and quite possibly Prize Old Ale. Of particular interest is Gale's 4.8% ABV Festival Mild; originally brewed as a one-off special for North Hampshire CAMRA's 1996 beer festival, it proved so successful that it rapidly became a regular part of the portfolio, in both cask and bottle-conditioned versions. It will definitely be available in May for Fuller's spring festival, but beyond that no one is saying. A spokeswoman for Fuller's said it was pleased to have Gale's beers in its portfolio and hoped to bring them to a wider audience; "we have a lot of respect for these beers". However, not as much, we suspect, as it does for the bottom line. If they don't perform they'll get the chop.

## Well, Well, Well

Charles Wells of Bedford, another local brewer pursuing growth, is on the lookout for small chains it can snap up, as part of its plans to expand its estate from 251 to 300 pubs by September 2008. Perhaps it's CAMRA that's out of date, but when the campaign was founded, part of the original motivation was to support small brewers, who wished to carry on supplying a local market with the beers that it liked, against the predations of the national companies. Now it seems every other local brewer is playing the big



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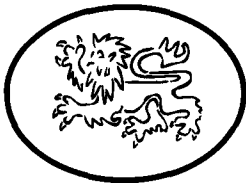
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beast in the brewing jungle, trumpeting its products up and down the country, and eagerly seeking expansion. The current philosophy was clearly spelt out by a representative of Shepherd Neame at a Kent Regional Meeting, a few years ago. Shepherd Neame had to keep on increasing sales and improving its estate or it would fall by the wayside – swallowed up no doubt by some more aggressive competitor. Last year Charles Wells only managed to buy six pubs, very possibly free houses whose customers will now only be able to drink Charles Wells' beer. Meanwhile profits are up 35% to £5.9 million, and while many might like Charles Wells' beer, many would also think that 251 pubs and £5.9 million a year was enough for anyone.

### **Caledonian buys Harviestoun**

"Consolidation" is also afoot in Scotland, with the brewers of two recent champion beers coming together under single ownership. Edinburgh's Caledonian, brewers of 2002 Champion Beer of Britain Deuchars IPA, is purchasing Harviestoun, whose Bitter and Twisted was champion a year later. Harviestoun, which has grown substantially in recent years, was becoming rather too big an operation for founders, Ken and Ingrid Brooker, and with increasing age they were happy to accept an offer from Caledonian. Caledonian will be expanding Harviestoun's plant at

Alva, Clackmannanshire, but the two businesses will be run separately. However, bearing in mind that Scottish and Newcastle owns Caledonian's Edinburgh site, and that Caledonian undertakes brewing for S&N, further rearrangements are not entirely out of the question.

### **Micros Take Off**

In its annual Brewing Industry Report the micro-brewers organisation, the Society of Independent Brewers (SIBA) claims that after a 15% increase in output last year its members now account for 20% of Britain's real ale production. Additionally the rate of new brewery start-ups is maintaining its record level. Particularly vital to this healthy position has been the national pubcos adoption of SIBA's direct delivery scheme whereby local beers are made available to their tied licensees. SIBA chairman Keith Bott, who owns Titanic, commented that there was obviously substantial demand for local beers. However, while this is great news at present, the long term is not necessarily all plain sailing. The true free trade, the traditional outlet for many micros, is steadily diminishing as pubcos and local brewers expand their estates. A survey found that over 80% of micro-brewers who responded had lost trade because of such changes in ownership. If the free trade continues to diminish, and further consolidation is allowed in brewing and pub ownership, concern for local taste might well loose out to the convenience and economic

advantages of a few large contracts. The Government should be watching – but probably isn't.

## **Wolves' on the Prowl**

Further disappointment for those with a taste for independence and choice comes from Wolverhampton and Dudley who is paying £43.6m for the 70 strong, community based pub group, Celtic Inns. Formed only four years ago it has pubs mainly in South Wales and southern England. Wolves expects to make £200,000 annual cost savings from the deal, just the most recent in a series of acquisitions over recent years. There could be yet more said finance director, Paul Inglett, 'It's quite a rapidly consolidating sector.'

## **Adnams Lays It On The Line**

East Anglian brewer, Adnams of Southwold, has warned regional breweries that real ale sales are likely to fall to a third their current level over the next ten years. The brewery is currently undertaking a £10 million modernisation programme and has just launched a radical new look for its cask range, with dramatic pump-clips and elegant glassware, designed to appeal to a broader market. Marketing director Steve Curzon stated that cask ale has to innovate to survive, was fighting toe-to-toe with other drinks, and vitally needed investment in quality. "The whole market is changing, people are changing, and they have to have a great experience

when they spend money. The challenge is to make cask beer appeal to a broad consumer base not just enthusiasts". While no doubt this is well meant, and we in CAMRA are as keen as anyone to see real ale extended to a wider audience, many real ale drinkers will be less than happy. It all smacks of the sixties, or the current approach to selling lager and nitro-keg – glitzy image taking precedence over taste and flavour. Much as it's nice to see well-designed pump clips and attractive glasses, what's in the glass should be is the critical factor. Attract too many people who care only about the peripheries and they end up as your market. Adnams is quite right to call for promotion of real ale, but it must centre on appreciation of its true qualities.

## **Glass in Glasgow**

The Glasgow Licensing Board is banning all conventional glassware from public houses in Glasgow from the end of January 2007, after which time all pubs will have to use plastic or toughened glass. While this might be reasonable for establishments with a reputation for violence, it seems an over-reaction to extend it universally. Presumably the not insubstantial cost will be borne by the publicans and their customers, many of whom also face the possibility of having to drink from plastic containers – and of course, as we know from smoking, what happens today in Scotland might well happen tomorrow in England

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# 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.*

## **P & D J Goacher 01622 682112 – Maidstone**

Contact: Phil Goacher

Beer sales seem to be steadily increasing each year; who says there is no demand for 'real ale'? The fortnightly delivery to Dover is still a success, and is continuing, at present. Recent deliveries, in addition to Blake's, which is a regular outlet for the excellent Goacher's Stout, have been made to The Coastguard, St. Margaret's Bay and The King's Head, Kingsdown. Gold Star has also been spotted in The Bohemian in Deal.

## **Hopdaemon Brewery 01795 892078 – Newnham**

Contact: Tonie Prins

The brewery is still busy, especially for this time of year. There are, as I write, still small stocks of Dominator and Leviathan, in cask, at the brewery. At present Greendaemon, in cask, is being brewed. Incubus is available in twelve local Wetherspools, including Dover and Folkestone, and bottled Skrimshander is being supplied to Tesco and Sainsbury and can also be found in Kentish branches of Threshers. Cask Greendaemon and Skrimshander will be supplied to the Thanet CAMRA Beer Festival, which will be held over the Easter Holiday.

## **Nelson Brewing Company 01634 832828 – Chatham**

Contact: Loraine St. John

The brewery is looking to increase its market share and has just taken on a sales representative. It is also open for sales of its products in bottles and polypins. Of particular interest to local attendees of our Festival of Winter ales, is that the special beer Nelson brewed for the festival, Dover Patrol, sold so well that the brewery decided to add it to their permanent range, replacing '1805', which now becomes a seasonal brew. The beer was tasted by members of the Festival Committee who suggested changes to the original recipe, which were then made, and after a second tasting the brew was perfected. The branch also suggested the name, which was then adopted by the brewery. Nelson Brewery has been asked to partake in the BBC television programme, *Bargain Hunt*, involving two competing groups of contestants, from the business community. Each is given £300 to spend on antiques, and

the one that makes the most money by re-selling its antiques, is the winner. Nelson's opponent is that well-known Kentish firm of Shepherd Neame. Nelson is considering brewing a special commemoration beer named Bargain Hunt. A steam and transport rally is planned to be held later in the year at the historic dockyard, and Nelson will be providing the beer. This would probably be a light, hoppy summer style beer.

***The Ramsgate Brewery 01843 580037 – Ramsgate***

Contact Eddie Gadd.

The brewery is due to move at the beginning of May, to "a shed at the back of Ramsgate" according to Eddie. This will bring much needed extra capacity, if not such a pleasant seafront location. Will the landlords of the existing premises change the name of their bar from The Ramsgate Brewery and Bakehouse, one wonders? Gadd's Seaside, (4.3% ABV), named after Eddie's native Blackpool (which was the venue for this year's CAMRA National AGM, and "noted for its fresh air and fun"), is to join the permanent range of beers. A bottle conditioned Gadd's No.3 is on sale at just two off licences, in Thanet: The Bottleneck in Broadstairs and Moonshine Billy's in Ramsgate.

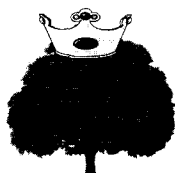
***Whitstable Brewery 01622 851007 – Grafty Green***

Contact: Rafik Abidi.

The brewery has replaced its Whitstable Bitter with Native Bitter at 3.7% ABV. Whilst the Whitstable Bitter was a light hoppy bitter, the Native is a deep amber brown, malty bitter, and is hopped with Fuggles and Goldings. The E.I.P.A., which is still the best selling beer, is to be produced in a bottle-conditioned form, in ¾ litre bottles with swing tops (similar to the old Bing bottles, for those locals old enough to remember them). A cask lager (4.9%) is being produced, and is aimed mainly at the beer festival market, but may be ordered by publicans. This summer the brewery will be opening a bar on the East Quay, in Whitstable, and it is intended that the bar will sell eight cask micro beers at any given time. This will be a totally new building and will have the memorable name of "Whitstable Brewery Bar". From 27<sup>th</sup> to 30<sup>th</sup> July the brewery will, in conjunction with the Whitstable Oyster Festival, be running a small beer festival in a marquee on the beach. There will be 36 casks of beer from a selection of micro breweries. More details will be provided in the next edition of *Channel Draught*. Recent deliveries of Whitstable beers have been made as follows: Blake's of Dover – E.I.P.A.; Fleur de Lys of Sandwich – E.I.P.A. and Native Bitter; Yew Tree of Barfrestone – E.I.P.A. and Stout; Yew Tree of Westbere – Stout; Crown Inn at Finglesham - Native Bitter, E.I.P.A., and Stout.

*Roger Marples*

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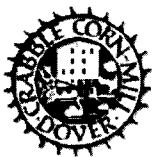
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# CRABBLE CORN MILL BEER FESTIVAL

**A**s you will see from our advert opposite Crabble Corn Mill is holding its second beer festival during the late May Bank Holiday weekend. The purpose of this short article is to let you know more about the event, but before that the organisers wish to pay tribute to all the sponsors, without whom the festival would not be happening at all. This year has seen an unprecedented level of support from local, and not so local, businesses and organisations which means that every beer & cider, and more, is sponsored!

The festival will be open **Friday 26<sup>th</sup> May (3pm to 10:30 pm) and Saturday 27<sup>th</sup> May (11m to 10:30 pm.)**, and entry costs just £3 on Friday or £2 on Saturday – with a £1 discount for card carrying members of CAMRA, available as a refund at the glass / beer token dispensary. Advance tickets will be on sale from the Mill from 1<sup>st</sup> May. All beers / cider are £2.50 (a pint) as are the 2006 Festival glasses. Food will be available in the form of BBQ, curries, sandwiches and pasties etc., and we aim to improve portion size & consistency over last year. For music Friday evening welcomes local 'guitar hero' Roger Betts (Blues / Rock), Saturday afternoon The Ramblin' Boys (Country / Folk), and Saturday evening No Limits (Pop). If you'd rather give the music a miss the mill provides plenty of quiet & sheltered corners. A festival bus service will operate from Dover Priory Railway Station direct to the Mill for most of the duration of the festival.

The festival bar will be in the basement, but in a slightly different place than last year to avoid bar staff having to constantly duck under low beams! This year the expected range is around 33 ales, and some ciders. There will be a very strong bias towards beers from Kent, with up to three beers on offer from each of Ramsgate, Hopdaemon, Westerham, and Goacher's breweries, plus two beers from Larkins and from Shepherd Neame (donated!). There should also be two or three beers from Adnams, Fullers, Hook Norton & Hop Back plus Young's, Wadworth's, Harvey's, Brakspear, Nethergate, Rebellion & Woodforde's! For those who like to seek out 'unusual' beers a cask of a 'mystery' beer, usually only supplied in a bottled version, has been pledged as a donation to the festival by a major brewer. Visitors will have to visit the festival if they want to find out more! The Cider on offer comes from Biddenden and Honeyhole Farm, which produces an astonishing variety of bottled cider.

Crabble Corn Mill is introducing a bottle-conditioned ale for the 2006 season. This will be a 4.5% ABV amber ale specially brewed by Hopdaemon and will be available only in the mill shop/bar. Also, the tea room bar will now regularly feature real ale. An ever-changing 'guest' ale should be available 3 weekends out of four and at most of the regular events held at the mill. More information about the festival, including the beer list and bus timetable will be available at [www.ccmt.org.uk](http://www.ccmt.org.uk) or obtained by calling the mill on 01304 823292.



# **Crabble Corn Mill Beer Festival 2006**

**Crabble Corn Mill  
Lower Road  
River, Near Dover,  
Kent CT17 0UY  
01304 823292**

**events@crabblecornmill.org.uk**

**www.ccmt.org.uk**

*This is a fund raising event for Crabble  
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**3:00pm to 10:30 pm. Entry £3\***

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## **OR UNTIL THE BEER RUNS OUT!!!**

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**The organisers wish to thank the many sponsors who are making this event possible.**

**Every pint drunk raises money for Crabble Corn Mill Trust.**

# MILD MONTH OF MAY

In the same way that October is CAMRA's national cider month, May is when landlords across the country are encouraged to promote the classic style of beer that is mild. The style stems from the 18<sup>th</sup> century and was the popular pint of the day, but has since been overtaken in the popularity stakes by bitter. Originally much stronger than today's version (which tends to be between 3% and 3.5%), mild was less bitter than the porters and stouts of that time. Strong modern-day versions exist in examples such as the wonderful Gale's Festival Mild (4.6%) and Sarah Hughes' Dark Ruby (6%).

The style is usually identifiable by its dark brown colour, which CAMRA describes as being due to the use of well-roasted malts or roasted barley, though there are also paler versions. The *Good Beer Guide* advises you to "Look for rich malty aromas and flavours with hints of dark fruit, chocolate, coffee and caramel and a gentle underpinning of hop bitterness." With tasting notes like these, what are you waiting for?

In Kent, we are fortunate enough to have wonderful real mild in the forms of P&D Goacher's Real Mild Ale (3.4%), Millis' Tuggies Dark Mild (3.5%), Nelson's Victory Mild (3.5%), and Ramsgate's Gadds Dark Mild (4%). Hopefully, a few landlords out there will have read Roger Marples' Kent Small Brewery News in the last edition of *Channel Draught*, and so may be thinking about taking either the Goacher or Ramsgate milds... or is that just wishful thinking on my part?

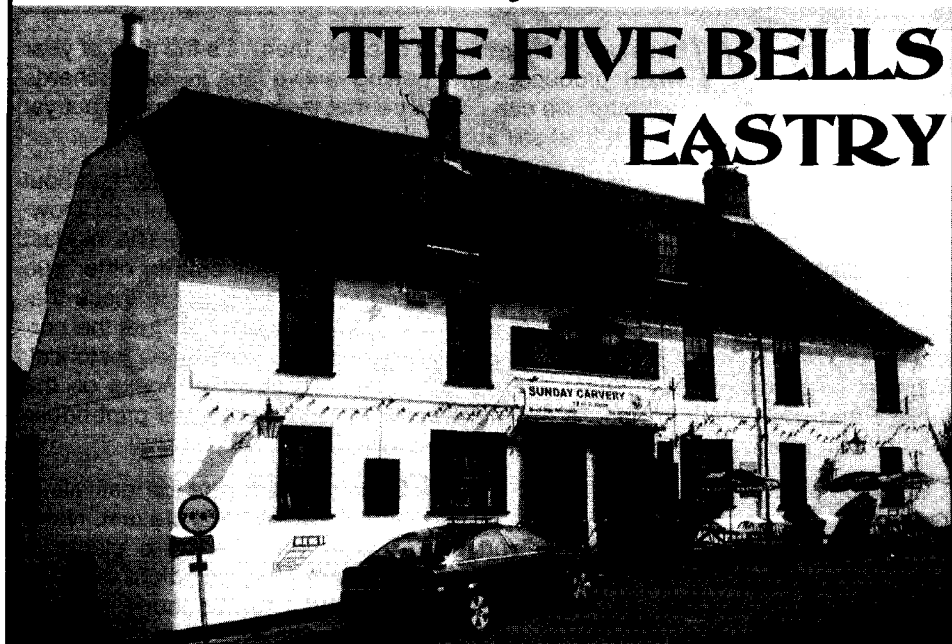
National Mild Day is on Saturday 6<sup>th</sup> May, but why not use the whole month as an excuse for getting out and about to see where you can find a pint of mild in your local area? Within this branch, you can find excellent quality mild at the Charity Inn, Woodnesborough and the Yew Tree, Barfreston, where for several years we have been fortunate enough to regularly enjoy Ansells Mild (3.4%) at the former, and Moorhouses Black Cat (also 3.4%), among others, at the latter. More recently, these have been joined by the Five Bells, Eastry with Mitchell & Butlers Mild. Blake's of Dover and the Crown Inn at Finglesham are two other outlets to take mild from time to time, and of course there may be other pubs that you are aware of and we're not, so do please let us know!

Meanwhile, try to look out for this traditional and interesting beer style at the various beer festivals taking place over the next few months, and enjoy the Mild Month of May.

*Anne McIlroy*

*Stewart and Debbie*  
*Welcome you to*

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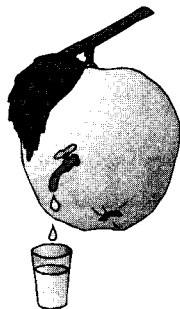
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# CIDER MATTERS

What's going on the world of cider, then? It's the time of year when producers are getting active out in the orchards again, although we can only hope that there's no blossom out yet with so much frost still about.

Some people on the Ukcider group have been asking about planting new trees, which sounds quite a challenge though the experienced growers make it sound easy – but they would, of course, wouldn't they. The biggest topic of discussion recently has been links from the cider wikipedia to other pub guides, and after lengthy discussion it was decided to limit links just to those that actually add more information than we put on the wiki. Otherwise it's just the normal topics, such as what cider you can get in supermarkets, plus a few historical, technical or geographical queries. There's considerable interest in books on the subject, and while there are books available, some of the older, out of print books can be quite rare, so tip-offs are generally well received.

A welcome sight has been the start of announcement of cider lists for festivals in the near future, with one sourcing cider from Guernsey for this year's event. News of additional suppliers is always welcome, of course, and there are plenty of "tickers" about, just as there are "beer tickers". Also, there's interest about where to get cider on holiday. Obviously, Normandy's popular, but it can be found in Spain as well. Just check out the Ukcider group archive for the details.

Locally, I'm not aware of anything new going on, but I'm always interested in hearing about pubs starting to keep cider. The way sales have grown recently, there must be more of a market out there. There are local producers (this is the Garden of England after all), and you can also get it from beer wholesalers. Suggest it to your local – as well as firkins, it's available in bottles, flagons, mini-casks, and the equivalent of wine boxes from some suppliers. Generally it doesn't take sales away from the industrial ciders. I'd much rather drink cider socially in my local, than buy it from a supermarket.

In the media, cider recently featured in a Radio 4 programme, *Open Country*, about rural Dorset, and if you missed it or want to hear it again, you can find it in the archive on the Radio 4 website. The Brogdale Trust, at Faversham, was featured in an edition of *Gardener's World* on BBC2, but although there was plenty about trees and fruit, there was no specific mention of cider or perry or their apples - maybe next time.

That's about it for this issue. Hopefully, by the time you read this, the weather will be a bit warmer and the apple blossom will be out. Just think of all the cider those apples could make.

*Apple Jack*



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		<b>Sunday</b>	12 - 10.30pm
<b>Often local</b>	<b>Evening</b>	<b>Mon-Friday</b>	5-11pm
		<b>Saturday</b>	6-11pm
		<b>Sunday</b>	12 - 10.30pm

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# CHANNEL VIEW

**A**lthough it is indisputable that the brewing industry is at present undergoing a major revolution, and many real ale drinkers will be raising their glasses to its benefits, to go as far as Wordsworth on the French Revolution, 'Bliss it was in that dawn to be alive', would be both premature and complacent. Like most revolutions there are detractions as well as advantages. While the micro-brewer's organisation, the Society of Independent Brewers (SIBA), records that its members now account for 20% of real ale production in Britain and that their share is growing, Adnams of Southwold, speaking on behalf of the longer-established family and regional brewers, warns of a collapse in the market as a whole without active promotion. (See National News page 16).

Now that the old national brewers (Allied, Bass, Courage, etc) have been absorbed into the global brewing industry, their interest in real ale appears to be evaporating fast – the beers, with a few exceptions, confined to a handful of rather similar and undistinguished low and mid-strength bitters. Generally poorly promoted, with the brewing often contracted out, they give every impression of being tired and worn out, like old horses out to pasture before being dispatched to the knackers yard. Increasingly their position as

large-scale suppliers of real ale is falling to the regional brewers who, following several decades of basking in their newfound role as the backbone of real ale brewing in Britain, have in recent years been subject to a rude awakening. Of growing commercial importance, as the old nationals have retreated, a score or so have disappeared, either taken over by rivals or leaving the industry all together – rising property values often ensuring that an old brewery is worth far more for its development potential, than as a brewer of beer. For those that remain the marketplace, dominated as it increasingly is by a few large pub companies, is pressurising them into just the kind of industrialised production and marketing that they for long stood apart from, and which we, as lovers of good real ale so applauded.

Here we come to Adnams and the recent utterances of its marketing director, Steve Curzon. I know nothing of Mr Curzon, he may well be a long time devotee of real ale, but all that comes across from his obviously heartfelt plea is a philosophy grounded in the old 20<sup>th</sup> century approach of branding, imagery and product placing. Perhaps a good real ale will survive such treatment, that it will be uncontaminated by a hard sell; however if it is successful its commercial value will be largely em-

bodied in its marketing image, not its innate qualities as a beer, obviously then at risk; while if it fails commercial rational would require that it is dispatched. Exactly the kind of attitudes that CAMRA was formed to oppose in the first place, and no doubt the hard headed approach that we can expect from the bankers and property developers who appear to run many of the pub companies.

Much has been made of the willingness of the large pub chains to adopt a more liberal approach to the supply of beer. Enterprise in particular, with its much-heralded adoption of the SIBA direct delivery scheme, ostensibly throws open its huge estate to the micros. The actuality, however, is rather different. Speak to any pubco tenant or look at what's on the hand-pumps and it soon becomes apparent that the availability of beers from small producers is often quite limited. Not necessarily unavailable but just more expensive or more difficult to come by – sufficient to deter many a hard pressed landlord from moving away from the hugely discounted and regularly supplied contracts negotiated by the pub companies with the handful of major suppliers.

Meanwhile, the micros' natural outlet - the true individually owned free houses - is currently a shrinking market, the pubcos, along with the regional brewers, forever looking to expand their estates by cherry picking the best, while the remainder are further depleted by competition for residential or other alternative uses. The 1980s and 1990s were great

times for the free trade as the major brewers slimed down their operations and placed many of their pubs on the market, eventually, following the restrictions of the Beer Orders, pulling out of pub owning altogether. However the market is now consolidating. Enterprise and Punch have probably now reached their optimum size, but other pub chains are still aggressively expanding, as are our two major regional brewers, Greene King and Wolverhampton and Dudley.

Despite such difficulties the micros now number around 500 and are still growing, and such is the dissatisfaction with much of the traditional industry, that many real ale drinkers now view them as the future.

However, unless there is Government intervention, which with this one appears unlikely, in a few years we could be back to an industry sown up by a few large companies. What then for the micros? Will they still be allowed access to the market with a quality product, or will they be forced out of it, or into lowest common denominator brewing like much of the rest of the industry? It must be CAMRA's job to ensure that this does not happen. We must stick to the principals of quality, choice and variety on which the organisation was founded. Taste must be the determining factor, and we must avoid being drawn down the beguiling but misleading path of image and glitzy marketing.





# A WALMER WINTER WALK

A cold winter morning found half of the Finglesham Contingent on a bus from Hacklinge to Upper Walmer, where we were due to meet up with other CAMRA members for the first pub walk of the year. The meeting point was The Railway, Walmer, a stone's throw from Walmer railway station itself. Here we were joined by John Pitcher, the walk organiser, and three other in-trepid souls, who had caught the train from Dover.

I haven't drunk in The Railway for over ten years, and it has significantly changed since I was there last: a U-shaped bar, dominated by a large screen TV, and darts and fruit machines. Around the back were two pool tables and an entrance to the garden. On offer were Shep's Master Brew and Best Bitter (which seems to have been renamed "Kent's Best").

We left The Railway for our next destination - The Telegraph at the bottom of, appropriately enough, Telegraph Road - another Shep's pub. This was my first time in this pub so I was interested to see what it was like. We found a warm welcome from both the landlady and locals. The pub, carpeted throughout with a bar towards the front of the property, had caricatures of the staff and locals on the wall. Master Brew and Spitfire were on offer and both were in good condition. We got chatting to the landlady and found that she was planning on retiring in April, so by the time you read this you may find The Telegraph has new tenants. We also heard rumours that the Lifeboat, on Walmer seafront, might be reopening - if anyone has any more information about this, please let us know.

John was keen to keep the pace up, so was soon cracking the whip to move us on. Our next destination would have to be a pub that offered food and, as there wasn't a real ale pub in the area that met this condition, we headed for the Cambridge Arms. And did it offer food? Their Wednesday-Saturday lunchtime menu consisted of two very good courses. I had garlic mushrooms followed by fish and chips but other dishes on offer included bacon, sausage and eggs, and lasagne, for just £2.95. Yep! £2.95. It was a real shame they didn't serve real ale.

After the Cambridge Arms we moved on along the main road, to the Stag, which is the first pub at the southern end of Walmer sea front, and was another first for me. A bustling pub, split into a number of rooms, with a central circular bar and views out over Walmer Green. Here we had a couple of decent pints of Bass and Greene King IPA.

Our next stop was inland and along Canada Road to one of my favourite pubs in the area, the Berry, recently renamed from the Green Berry (previously The Green Beret, *and at one time the Royal Arms – Ed*)) although Chris, the landlord, hasn't got around to changing the pub sign yet. The first thing I noticed when entering the pub is that the Greene King IPA pump had gone (big cheer from everyone there!) and it was replaced with Woodforde's Wherry – a welcome sight. Other beers on offer were Harvey's Sussex Best and Old and Wickwar's Rite Flanker. All the beers were in great condition, although I have to admit that the Rite Flanker didn't do much for me, having no real depth or character.

From the Berry we returned along Walmer seafront, intending to stop off at the Lord Clyde. As no beer clips were visible, again, we passed it by and headed to the recently reopened, refurbished and relicensed Bohemian. The decoration is deep red in colour with pieces of artwork stuck to the ceiling, and a wall of mirrors above the fireplace. The decoration wasn't really to my taste but the selection of beers was: Country Great Western, Woodforde's Wherry and Marston's Old Empire, which had replaced the HSB which had just gone.

All in all a great day, which for me included visiting three pubs I had never been to before.

*Tony Wells*

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# BEER ACROSS THE BORDER

Before we lived in Kent we managed to hop over the Channel every year or so for short Belgian beer breaks, and developed a love for the culture and atmosphere of Antwerp, Bruges, Brussels, and Ghent. Such trips had been sadly lacking since our move to Kent in 1999, so to put things right and celebrate a birthday, we travelled in January to the remarkably rebuilt town of Ypres, or Ieper as it is in Flemish (and “Wipers” as it was to Private Baldrick!).



Such was the scale of destruction during World War One that virtually the entire town was flattened, but then faithfully reconstructed (at least within the old town wall perimeter) according to the original town plan. Key public buildings, such as the hugely impressive Lakenhalle (cloth hall) were recreated in facsimile fashion, so that today's building looks as if it had been standing there for many centuries. The same can be said for much of what else stands

within the town walls, and it is easy to walk the length and breadth of this delightful place inside an hour.

Friends had recommended a good hotel within the town walls, and after arriving in the early evening we headed off to our first *Good Beer Guide* entry, Ter Posterie (the old post office) in Rijselsestraat, duly noting the local scenery on the way. The street front has a bottled beer shop selling all manner of interesting Belgian beers (including from the local area), while the beer café lies through an archway and across a small outside terrace. The cellar bar is looked after by a very knowledgeable woman who stocks several hundred different beers, including a wide selection from West Flanders. We knew this would be the most extensive beer list during our short visit, so we settled down for a meal of specialty local cuisine and a good sampling of various brune, blonde and lambic beers – including several from the surrounding area, and others ranging from Rochefort 8 at 9.2% to Cantillon Gueuze at 5%. After a pleasant and relaxing evening, we resolved to return in the next few days – not least to explore the bottle shop.

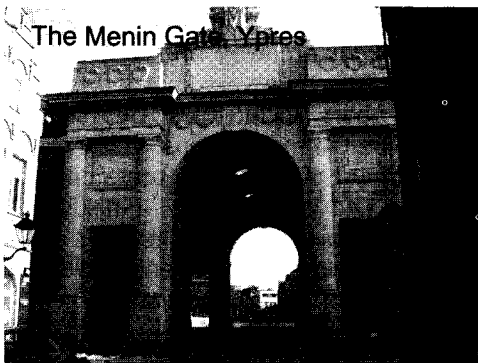
The following afternoon we had booked a World War One battlefields tour, so

enjoyed a leisurely continental breakfast followed by another quick burst around the town centre – a very pretty place, and at that time of the year particularly peaceful and quiet. We walked through the Grote Markt and along to the enormous Menenpoort (Menin gate), the huge marble Commonwealth memorial to the countless World War One soldiers never found, and where the Last Post has been sounded by buglers every night at 8pm for over eighty years. From there it was a pleasant stroll along the ramparts to quickly reconnoitre the only other GBG entry in town – 't Klein Rijsel, beside Rijselpoort (Lille gate) and the canal, at the other end of Rijselstraat from Ter Posterie. On the ramparts we were stopped by a cheerful couple who initially started speaking to us in Flemish. As in the past, we found the Belgian people friendly and welcoming, despite the obvious language barrier, and through smatterings of their English, our French, and some miming, we eventually worked out that the chap had noticed Julian's hat reflected the colours of his home football team in Bruges. He was somewhat bemused to learn that it had come all the way from South Australia, where its colours were those of the Port Power Australian Rules football team!

No such communication difficulties with our tour guide, though, who was fluent in several languages and gave our shamefully limited knowledge about World War One a thorough upgrading that afternoon. Not normally guided-tour people, we chose to go on this one for its high recommendation and our limited time – especially given the sheer number of cemeteries, memorials, museums and other instructive sites. Our guide was most informative and took us to sites large and small, from the huge Commonwealth Tyne Cot cemetery down to the small (Essex Farm Cemetery, a tiny fraction of the size). We also visited the nearby German cemetery (quite different from the Allied sites in arrangement and style), and the last privately owned trenches that are open to the public. Despite having studied World War One poetry at school, it was impossible to imagine the horrors that had taken place there, as I walked through those trenches that day.

We returned dazed and weary to the hotel, before returning to the Menin gate and the Last Post, which appeared to include a much longer period of silence in the middle than usual. It was certainly a very moving experience, shared by tourists and towns people alike. Our evening meal found us in the Restaurant De Stoove just around the corner from our hotel, brimming with locals, and with a cosy atmosphere and friendly service. Yet

The Menin Gate, Ypres



more excellent quality food was washed down with a small selection of beers, including Ypra Bier brewed by Vermeulen and Hommelbier, from nearby Poperinge. Afterwards we repaired to our hotel, where we enjoyed nightcaps of a few trusty old favourites and, in particular, Rodenbach (5%) and Orval (6.2%).

Sunday saw another leisurely breakfast and then a stroll through the town to pick up some beers from Ter Posterie's bottle shop to take home. Next stop was Poperinge, the larger of Belgium's two major hop-growing regions and home to the national hops museum, as well as our next GBG entry. We lunched at the Oud Vlaenderen in the Grote Markt, where we enjoyed Hommelbier (when in Rome!) and Zultes Oud Bruin, as well as three more well known beers – Palm (amber), Maes (blonde) and Hoegaarden (wheat) – presented in a special sample glass rack, a good way to familiarise yourself with different Belgian beer styles. After lunch, we went to Talbot House (known to many as 'Toc H') which was an important part of life away from the firing line for all soldier ranks, and visited its museum and peaceful garden before our feet eventually said "enough!" With a few more GBG entries to explore, Poperinge is definitely another place for the 'next time' list.

That night we returned to the 't Klein Rijsel beer café, another mellow brick-built building, but more intimate and pub-like inside than Ter Posterie. It had another very good beer list and we sat doing crosswords while enjoying Grimbergen Blonde (6.7%), Hapkin (a blond at 8.5%), Palm Speciale (5.1%) and Vredesbier (a 6% abbey remembrance beer whose name means Peace Beer). For a light evening meal we revisited Ter Posterie, where we enjoyed delicious soup and a few more offerings from the extensive beer list, including more Hapkin and two of our all-time favourites – Rodenbach Grand Cru (a 6.5% bruin) and Rochefort Dix (11.3%).



Sadly, this was the last night of our short break, but an appropriate way to wind down from the weekend's events and our first trip to Ypres. Such a fascinating area and history, with so much still to learn about its troubled past – we will certainly be back!

*Anne McIlroy*

# PUBS AT RISK

## UPDATE

In our Spring issue last year we reported on pubs in the branch area of Deal, Dover, Sandwich and District CAMRA that were either closed or at risk of closing. Here is an update of the situation.

### DOVER

**The Mogul**, Chapel Place: Closed since August 2004 with permission for conversion to manager's accommodation and office for the adjoining sheltered housing; work appeared to start last summer, when the toilet block was demolished, and at the time of writing is still underway.

**The Westbury Hotel**, Westbury Road: Unused a year ago, it has remained so, looking increasingly dilapidated and with permission now for conversion to eight flats – as far as we know no work carried out yet.

**The Orange Tree**, Folkestone Road: No great distance away The Orange Tree was boarded up at the start of February. Permission was granted in 2005 for demolition and erection of flats, but more recently permission was given for conversion to flats. Lately a skip has appeared outside.

**The Gate**, Crabble Hill: Just below the railway bridge, this former pub is now a well-established Chinese takeaway.

**The Primrose**, Coombe Valley Road: Closed and re-opened several times in recent years, it was open at the time of last year's survey. The pub is now boarded up again, with a 'To Let' notice. In April an application was submitted to replace the pub with 11 houses and 7 flats.

### DEAL

**The Five Ringers**, Middle Deal Road: Now demolished and replaced by three houses.

**The Admiral Penn**, Beach Street: A very contentious closure with considerable correspondence in the local press. Conversion to two flats and a small shop unit (currently selling trinkets) now appears complete. We understand that the former proprietors occupy one of the flats.

**The Star & Garter**, Beach Street: Conversion work to create four houses now seems finished, with at least one property occupied.

**The Lifeboat**, The Strand, Walmer: Still closed although a licence application was made under the new licensing regulations in 2005. Rumour has hinted at possible re-opening as restaurant and bar.

## RURAL

**The Lion Hotel**, Ash: Still apparently functioning as an Indian restaurant.

**The Endeavour**, Wootton: Still closed with gate and fence erected across the car park entrance and various stories of internal works carried out. No planning applications, other than for the gate and fence, and no knowledge of owner's future intentions.

**The Way Out Inn**, Westmarsh: Closed at the start of 2005 it re-opened in late spring after considerable refurbishment, but subsequently closed again later in the year. A visit in early April found it still closed and the only sign of life a number of geese around the letting accommodation at the rear.

**The Butcher's Arms**, Ashley: Closed April 2005, the owner maintaining there was insufficient local support to keep it a viable operation. However, much local opinion vociferously disagrees, with meetings called to discuss its future well attended. An application submitted by the owner and former landlord last summer for change of use to a dwelling attracted substantial objections, and was subsequently refused by the Dover District Council on the grounds that its un-viability as a pub had not been established. A second application, along similar lines to the first, was turned down by the Council on the same grounds earlier this year. Again there were substantial local objections.

Steve & Jackie welcome you to

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## Pub News E-Mail Address

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[channel draught.pubnews@virgin.net](mailto:channel draught.pubnews@virgin.net)

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



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## **Real Ale in White Cliffs Country**

**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. Converted to flats.

**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 RED LION**

## **Stodmarsh**

In today's world, where so many pubs appear designed to a formula it is especially pleasing to find one that creates its own original and unique character. One such is the Red Lion at Stodmarsh. Turn left off the Grove Ferry Rd as it curves round out of Wickham-breaux and you soon find the mono-culture landscape giving way to a countryside of well wooded



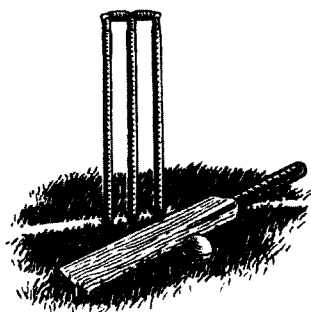
valleys, small fields and streams. A few turns, right, left and right again, and ahead of you at the bottom of a short hill lie the handful of houses that form the village of Stodmarsh, its small church, with a tiny wood and tile clad belfry, at the far end where the road bends sharp right, and, in summer, the verges full of hollyhocks.

Effectively a cul-de-sac lying on the edge of the Stour valley marshes, passing trade is non-existent and few arrive here by chance. The Red Lion, therefore, needs to be a bit special - although a stranger would be unlikely to gain such an impression from the outside. At the front two wings, red/brown brick below, tiled and weather boarded above, jut towards the road with the entrance set between them, and not much to indicate a pub, other than signs for Greene King ales and Les Routiers beside the door. However, step inside, and you enter a different world. Opposite, a bar counter, festooned with hops and set about with jars of what appear to be mysterious looking preserves, fronts a dimly lit central serving area containing a row of barrels with champagne buckets for trip trays, while around the walls and seemingly in every spare corner a wealth of pictures and other assorted oddments suggest a cross between a well lived-in home and a long established second-hand shop. Just one short stretch of wall sports a disused aircraft propeller, an old mangle, various books, jars and bottles, two bedpans, a wooden duck, and a pike in a glass case. Similar collections decorate the rest of the pub, along with upended barrels and milk churns which double as additional seating; while candlelight and pre-war music recall a more relaxed, leisurely age. Set about are a number of good sized plain wooden tables laid for eating, but pleasingly avoiding that commonly found "non-eaters will be trespassing" aura; while such is the arrangement of doorways and other sub-divisions that each table seems cosily separate and secluded from the others.

The pub is owned and run by Robert and Hettie Wigham and their daughter Charlotte, with help from two fat cats who liberally indulge from the slops. Real ale is served by gravity from stillage acquired from a now defunct cricket club, and has traditionally been largely provided by Greene King (IPA and Speckled Hen). However, Robert is anticipating expanding the range to include beers such as Brakespear, Hopdaemon and Ruddles. For the warmer weather draught Biddenden cider appears but a delicious spiced bottled cider from the same producer is available all the time; and a new choice, Addelstones keg, is due to arrive shortly. Food is home cooked and as much as possible locally sourced; both beef and lamb come from local farms, the latter from the long established Birts family. And, to take away, the pub also sells locally produced marmalades, jams and chutneys, and fresh eggs.

Behind the pub a garden supports a collection of ducks, and is used for bat and trap, boule and croquet. At one end stands the king of all barbecues in the shape of the old forge from Littlebourne, rescued when no longer of commercial use. It will see particularly good use in late July when the Red Lion hosts a mid-summer beer festival. Set for Saturday and Sunday, July 29 and 30, seven real ales will be available with folk music Saturday afternoon and sea shanties Sunday afternoon. However, there's no need to wait until July to visit the pub. Its open all day, every day and an excellent destination for a spring or summer drive.

*Martin Atkins*



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## THE 1981 BEERY BOATER'S CANAL TRIP "Who ate all the pie?" Jim Green looks back 25 years

**O**n the Friday before the last week in April 1981, eight stalwart members of Deal, Dover, Sandwich & District CAMRA Branch assembled at the Crossroads Hotel, Weedon, for a pint or two of Litchfield beer. They were yours truly Jim Green (Hon Commodore), Dave Green (my brother and Skipper), Mike Green (his son and volunteer for cook), Ray Crane, Dave Routh, Roger Melbourne (Dodger), John Willcocks (landlord of the Carriers Arms at St Margaret's) and Phil Simpson. After further pints of Charles Wells at the nearby Narrowboat the gallant party set off for Weltonfield Narrowboats on the Leicestershire Arm of the Grand Union Canal to collect the 70ft narrow boat 'Olympus'. Someone remarked that the lorries coming south on the A5 had snow on their roofs. No one thought that this had any significance for us!

The first afternoon was fine and uneventful. We negotiated Braunston Tunnel (2042 yds), descended the six locks of the Braunston Flight (for most our first experience of locks) and carefully navigated through the mass of boats moored at the bottom to reach Braunston Turn and the Oxford Canal, and the five rather uninteresting miles to Napton Junction, where the Grand Union Canal proper parts company towards Birmingham. Shortly afterwards we arrived at our first overnight stop, the Napton Bridge Inn, an excellent canal side pub, then owned by the independent Davenport brewery. I had been here a couple of years earlier in high summer, whilst returning from a motorcycle rally and had enjoyed my beer sitting on the canal side with my feet dangling in the water. Now, on a rather chilly spring evening, we drank inside, and enjoyed the excellent range of food. We had decided earlier that to avoid loss of drinking time, we should only have breakfast on board, normally on the move, and take our main meals while in the pub.

The following morning we got up at 6am, another practice to become standard – the extra hours being invaluable in getting the number of miles that we like to do. Ascending Napton Flight I discovered, not for the last time, the value of walking, cranking a windlass and pushing on a heavy balance beam to work off the effects of the night before. At the top lock the Skipper and Cook left us to get provisions or post letters or some such chore. We didn't see them again until the early afternoon.

On, then, along the shallow, twisting summit level to Clayton Locks where we left the boat to walk the half-mile up Sunrising Hill to the Sunrising pub, where

the landlord told us that he had seen "someone on a bicycle looking like a big yellow pixie, who said that he would be back later". Sure enough, very shortly after the not insubstantial bulk of stalwart branch member Roger Marples, who we had arranged to meet, appeared, resplendent in a yellow oilskin suit with pointed hood. The young couple behind the bar had only just taken over the pub, and we were impressed by the Hook Norton and Flowers beers. It was the first time that I used this pub and the following Tuesday was to be the last, for after a couple of entries in the *Good Beer Guide* it closed down. Just before 'time' Dave and Mike arrived. It had started to rain, and they had spent all morning scouring the countryside trying to find the canal again. In the afternoon we continued in the rain down Claydon Locks and on to Cropredy, where



Moored at Cropredy on evening of 25th April 1981



The snowfall of the morning after.



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***Sunday 11-3pm 7pm-11pm***

Roger left us, to cycle down the tow-path to Banbury and his train home. We went into the village and sheltered under the porch of the Brazenose Arms until the landlord took pity on us and unlocked his door. Inside, we drank Worthington Bitter from the hand pump and ate well – on roast duck according to the log.

Looking more like a U-Boat crew than CAMRA members!



Saturday evening had been a typical damp and rather cold Spring evening.

Next morning several inches of snow covered everything, and was still coming down. Unperturbed, we continued on our merry way accompanied by a running snowball fight. Despite the unusually good depth of water in the canal, *Olympus* kept grounding, until we realised that snow on the cabin roof weighed quite a lot, and swept it off. At one point we came across a high-tension electrical power cable across the canal. Being an electrician I was dispatched forward to deal with it, and had it nicely balanced above my head on the end of the mop when the boat lurched and the cable fell on me. Fortunately the power was off and I did not light up like a neon sign as the crew seemed to expect. In fact, the whole area was suffering from a lack of electricity, but we stopped at Banbury and were able to get a meal, as well as Hook Norton beer, at Ye Olde Reindeer. We also visited the Old Vaults (Marston) and the Butchers Arms (more Hook Norton). By now the snow had stopped falling and the streets were turning into a slushy mess. Back on the move we found the canal and the accompanying River Cherwell very full from melting snow, in one place the boat only just managed to scrape under the bridge at the tail of a lock. Since Napton Junction I had not seen another boat on the move.

We tied up outside the Great Western Arms at Aynho on the Sunday evening. The power cut was still in progress, and there was no hot food and no electric light but we sat round a roaring log fire regaling ourselves on Hook Norton beer. Back on the boat, the Cook was dispatched to make bacon sandwiches, his share of which he washed down with half pints of gin. Next morning he was up again at 6am and produced breakfast, completely ignoring the hot spitting fat, although, apart from his flat hat, he was in a state of total undress.

Concerned that maintenance work due on one of the locks might impede our return we turned around and headed back to Banbury. Here, John and I purchased a large steak and kidney pie, which we put in the boat oven to warm up. Mike, who had returned to bed after cooking breakfast was asked to keep an eye on it, and told that he could help himself to some if he felt up to it. Then we rejoined the others in the Banbury pubs. On our return to the boat we discovered that Mike had risen, eaten all pie and, just as well for him, was once more dead to the world.



Back at Cropredy, the sun was shining, and a couple of working narrow boats were tied up. One old boatman asked us where we tied up during the blizzard. We said that we didn't. "Daft boogers!" was the reply. In the village Mike wandered off to the church, not, he assured us to express contrition for eating all the pie, but to look at the Civil War relics – a party of Royalists had once seen off some Roundheads in the minor battle of Cropredy. We walked a stiff half mile uphill to the Bell at Great Bourton and enjoyed our last Hook Norton beer of the trip. Then back to the Brazenose for more Worthington Bitter and our evening meal. Long-delayed retribution finally caught up with Mike when he fell over the churchyard wall on the way back to the boat.

Tuesday was fine, and after a return visit to the Sunrising at lunchtime it was back along the twisting summit route to the top of Napton Locks for the evening. On this stretch there's a certain bridge that, looking at the battered brickwork, everyone seems to hit. Ray did it this time, someone else managed to smite it on our next trip nine years later, and to complete the hat-trick, the Commodore did it in 2005. The top of Napton Locks is a pleasant enough place, except there is no pub. The Butchers Arms (now the Folly) at the bottom of the flight was then closed, the other pubs in Napton did not appear to sell real ale, and we didn't fancy walking to the Napton Bridge. So we hiked 1½ miles to Priors Marston, where a very-out-of-date Nicholson's *Real Ale Guide to the Waterways* showed a pub called the Holly Bush.

We found a very old, imposing pub of mellow local stone, boasting a landlady called Jessica Jingles, who sold a house beer which we promptly re-christened 'Jessica Jingles' Jungle Juice' after a parody to 'Home Thoughts From Abroad'. It also boasted an impressive inglenook fireplace and an ornate cypress tree in a tub, which the Commodore knocked over during a hasty exit when the Skipper threatened to throw a .22 cartridge on the fire next to him! The other pub in the village, the Falcon, was selling half-price Bass (about 34p in those days), so we spent the rest of the evening there.

Wednesday morning dawned misty, and after a late start, there were two days remaining; we decided to go a little way up the Grand Union in the Birmingham direction. The width and depth of the canal, once we had turned left at Napton Junction, made it an easy morning's run, as we headed for the Boat Inn at Stockton. Shortly before the pub we passed an embankment on top of which was a lone dog, gazing at us with a mournful expression. Someone on the boat called out to it. Whereupon it was immediately joined by a herd of goats, several geese, a few cats,



At Napton Bottom Lock  
29th April 1981

another dog or two and a human figure, all barking, bleating, cackling, meowing and shouting in unison. After calming our shattered nerves with a couple of pints of Bass at the pub the landlord informed us that it was "only the Mad Gyppo and her menagerie".

The weather had turned really summery at last, when, replete with good ale and food we reached the winding hole at the top of Bascote Locks where we planned to turn and go back to Long Itchington for the evening. However it had silted up, and with undergrowth on the bank encroaching into the canal the 70ft *Olympus* got well and truly stuck. While freeing it a small hire boat, the *Nell Gwyn*, arrived and an altercation developed, in traditional boating style, until we managed to complete the turn and *Nell Gwyn* could squeeze through. John and Mike set off along the towpath to carry on the "discussion", but were diverted by going to the rescue a couple of sheep that had fallen into the canal.

That evening *Olympus* was moored outside the Two Boats at Long Itchington, but as it had no real ale we walked the quarter mile into the village in search of more worthwhile sustenance. At the modern looking Jolly Fisherman (now the Inn on the Green) we drank Everards, and then moved on to the Buck and Bell, which was surrounded by a jungle of overgrown shrubbery and looked closed. Mike went and knocked on the door, and a figure attired in an ankle-length raincoat appeared; the landlord no less. He had a reputation as an eccentric and, it was rumoured, a collection of pianos and the like in his attic. "Have you any beer?" Mike asked. "No!!" the landlord retorted, and retired into the gloomy interior. The pub had not, in fact, been selling anything for a few years, but the license was retained and it was listed in CAMRA's *Inventory of Classic Pubs*. It eventually re-opened last year (2005) after changing hands. Anyway, we carried on to the Green Man, then a Davenport's establishment, where we were made extremely welcome. A darts match and social evening was quickly fixed up and continued well after time was called. At 3am the crew eventually staggered back to the boat. The Skipper and Commodore decided that we should make an early (i.e. immediate) start up Stockton locks and actually got the engine running when a gleam of sanity broke through the drunken haze and we shut down and went to bed like the others.

Thursday dawned and the majority of the crew didn't crawl out of their pits until after 9am. I was up an hour earlier, and enjoyed a pint of milk from a shop half-way up the locks. Together with subsequent paddle cranking and balance beam shoving I started to feel almost human again. At lunchtime we tied up again opposite the Boat, but any expectation that the landlord may have had of more largesse from our coffers was soon dashed as we set off towards Stockton village, half a mile away. However, we took a wrong fork and added an extra 1½ miles to our journey; but it completed the sobering-up process. The Barley Mow sold very acceptable Mitchell and Butlers, and at official closing time the Skipper asked the landlord if there was time for another pint. "No problem", said the landlord, putting the clock back an hour! Underway again that after-

noon the Commodore and the Cook enjoyed a dispute involving an egg, a bucket of water and canal mud; and ended up with them rolling about on the roof of the *Olympus*, much to the consternation of the crew of a passing hire boat. The two combatants spent the rest of the afternoon trying to get rid of the canal mud and its stench. At Braunston, we passed *Nell Gwyn*, but the occupants saw us coming and hid down below.

We moored up at the top of Braunston Locks for the last night and, the Admiral Nelson having no real ale, walked up the hill to the Old Plough, an Ansells' pub that was currently selling Davenports because of a dispute. The food was good but there were no 'lates', and for the first (but not the last) time we experienced a hike back to the boat across fields, over fences and along the sometimes rather dodgy towpath. We returned *Olympus* to Weltonfield Narrowboats at 10am on the following morning, where there was surprise that we had carried on through such bad weather, and great pleasure over the condition that we had left the boat. It was agreed that we should have another week on the canals in April 1982. 76 miles, 70 locks.

*Jim Green*

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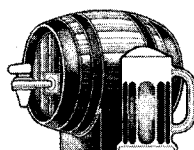
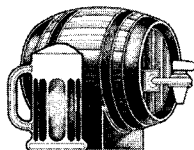
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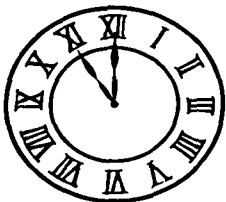


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## SMOKING UPDATE

Now that Parliament has voted in favour of a ban on smoking in pubs the media seems to have lost interest in the issue. Not so, of course those involved in the pub business who, from the summer of 2007, will be faced with implementing the new regulation. A random sample found the general feeling among landlords ranges from irritation about further Government interference to real anger that such restrictions should be imposed over the heads of themselves and their customers. Most anticipate some fall off in trade, with some planning the construction of outside covered smoking areas, although one landlord, at least, thinks trade might rise as he knows there are people currently put off by a smoky atmosphere. Universally, however, they all feel it should be a matter of individual choice by the publican, and that the ban as proposed is an infringement of personal liberty.



# LAST KNOCKINGS

**M**any employers now require their staff to have no more than the smallest trace of alcohol in their system when at work, and even the less stringent now often look askance at the tradition of a pint or two in the pub at lunchtime. Obviously understandable where safety is critical, it becomes less logical where, as with the railways, it is extended beyond those actively running the system, to include all staff. Whether efficiency or output benefits is highly dubious, and no doubt such restrictions have more to do with nannyism, political correctness, and the ever-present fear of litigation and insurance claims. Ten or twenty years ago pubs in the harbour area of Dover thrived on the trade from the port, the variety of shift patterns meaning there was always someone wanting a drink or a bite to eat. Pubs were as much a part of the working environment as juggernaut lorries, customs clearance or the ferries themselves. Today East Cliff, which once supported two or three pubs, retains just the First and Last (Albion as was). Among the others, the Arlington and Mogul have closed, and the White Horse has, of late, not been opening until 4 pm. Similar stories are replicated throughout the country with pubs increasingly no longer part of a diverse community, but instead compartmentalised into the 'leisure activities sector' – in line with that old school master's favourite, work hard, play hard, but don't mix the two. Not only is such categorisation profoundly depressing, it is also self-defeating. No less is drunk; alcohol consumption in Britain is at its highest since 1912 – its just that the pattern of drinking has changed. The workplace may be alcohol free but many of those restricted during the week over compensate at the weekend, to the great detriment of our town and city centres.

---

Since Autumn 2005 Dover and adjacent parts have had the benefit of direct deliveries from Kent's oldest micro-brewery, Goacher's of Maidstone. As reported in our winter edition Phil Goacher, having lost an outlet for his beers with the discontinuance of wholesaler East West Ales, was persuaded, thanks particularly to the efforts of Peter Garstin from Blake's, to fill the gap by supplying to East Kent. Whether or not Goacher's beers are to your taste (and from observation most ale drinkers find them extremely palatable) it's almost impossible not to respect the brewery. Uncompromising and unchanging, from the start the beers set a benchmark for quality and consistency. Once a brew has been established it never seems to change, the original 4.1% ABV Maidstone Ale tasting just as it did, and proving as equally satisfying, as when I first drank it twenty odd years ago – a credit to Kent and to brewing.

---

In his recent budget, Gordon Brown has put his usual '1p on a pint'. Dutifully reported by the media, as usual without any further comment, it sounds modest in the extreme. Of course as any pub user knows, together with the additional VAT, increases in other taxes, and the brewers' annual round of price rises often timed to coincide, the 1p, in due course, translates into, at the very least, 10p at the bar. And whether the duty increase on your pint is only 1p depends of course on what beer you drink. The Chancellor never specifies in his Budget Speech to what level of duty the 1p relates, but you can bet that it's the lowest. Somewhat paradoxically once again there was to be no increase in the duty on spirits – for the ninth successive year, the Chancellor boasted. While not wishing to see an increase in spirit duty it does raise the obvious question why, particularly as beer is clobbered every year. Also it seems out of step with constantly expressed concerns over the availability of cheap spirits in clubs and pubs, and the alleged resulting bad behaviour and damage to health. Of course it could be a canny Scotsman's ploy, to eventually see whisky as no more expensive than beer.

---

As regular readers of *Channel Draught* will know, the Deal, Dover, Sandwich and District branch of CAMRA has a strong attachment to canals and narrowboating. However, as with brewing, at the moment all is not happy. At the heart of the problem lies the Government requirement that British Waterways, who manages most of the canal system, operates like a commercial organisation. While the dour Scotsman may see this as of great benefit to the taxpayer, its benefit to the canal system is highly dubious. Particularly contentious is BW's apparent current policy of developing every last bit of canal side that can obtain planning permission. Very rapidly a lot of what makes the canals so attractive - the unplanned jumble of old buildings and quaysides, and relics of pre-leisure use - are being replaced, or at least dominated by, gleaming office blocks and smart waterfront apartments. A recent radio interview with the organisation's Commercial Director was chilling. Citing Birmingham's Gas Street Basin as an example he argued that great improvements could be achieved. I don't remember Gas Street Basin as it was, but I am told it was pretty derelict and needed something doing to it. However, the collection of flats, offices and anonymous waterfront bars of the national chains that now cover the area, is sterile and depressing, and relieved only by the retention of the excellent Prince of Wales PH. Such market-orientated philosophy is now attracting widespread opposition, not just from canal users, but also from local residents, local authorities and people who just like canals. One current focus of concern is the Castlemill boatyard in north Oxford, where British Waterways pursued plans for flats, a piazza and restaurant, despite their almost universal unpopularity, through two planning refusals and a public enquiry rejection, before being instructed by the latter to pay more attention to the needs of boaters and the local community. Such attitudes do not bode well for the chain of waterside pubs that they are planning in partnership with Scottish and Newcastle.

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*Channel Draught 27*



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And Finally.....

A woman said she thought she was in heaven when she turned on the kitchen tap to find a plentiful supply of beer. Haldis Gundersen was about to do the washing up when she made the unusual discovery at her flat in Kristiansund, west Norway. But two floors below, workers in a bar faced the more disappointing realisation that there was water flowing from their beer taps. A worker had connected a beer barrel to the apartment water pipe by mistake.

"I turned on the tap to clean some knives and forks, and beer came out," Ms Gundersen said. "We thought we were in heaven." But when we tried it the beer was flat and tasted odd, she said.

Downstairs at the Big Tower Bar, bar staff realised what the problem was - a new barrel had been misconnected to Ms Gundersen's water supply. "The water and beer pipes do touch each other, but you have to be really creative to connect them together," said Per Egil Myrvang from the local beer distributor. He helped employees to rectify the problem over the telephone. Ms Gundersen bore no grudge. "If it happens again, I'm going to order Baileys," she said.

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