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**CAMPAIGN
FOR
REAL ALE**

**Issue 29
Autumn
2006**

CHANNEL DRAUGHT

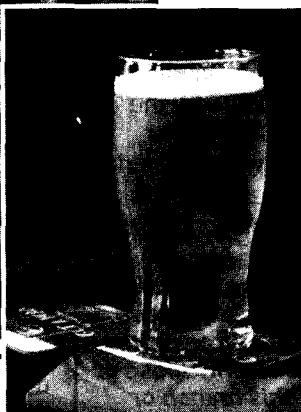
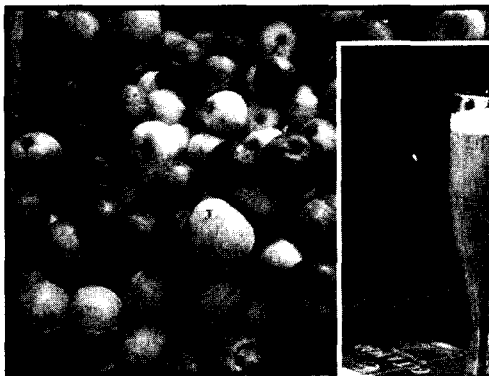


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Crown
Finglesham
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EAST KENT
Where to
find Real
Cider
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CIDER



**A
PRESSING ISSUE**

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

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Branch of the
Campaign for Real
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**Please note that
views expressed
herein are not
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this branch or
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Please drink
sensibly!

CHANNEL DRAUGHT

ISSUE 29
Autumn 2006

It seems incredible but *Channel Draught* is now seven years old – incredible, not only that it's been running for so long, but also that there was a time when it didn't exist, so much a part of my life has it become. Our first edition was a single A3 yellow sheet, printed on both sides, and folded into the pocket size format used for take-away menus or tourist leaflets. It had a print run of a few hundred and was distributed around a handful of our branch pubs in October 1999. However such stripped down efforts were soon abandoned and from the third addition we adopted the present A5 format, with the print run soon expanding to the current couple of thousand. There have of course been changes: Paul Turvey, our original editor, had to step down at the end of 2003 due to work and family commitments, while Dave Routh, provider of a very lively and informative news section, is sadly no longer with us.

Our pubs have seen changes as well, perhaps most notably the Mogul, also sadly no longer with us and illustrative of a disappointing current trend. As well as those that have disappeared over the last few years there are currently about a dozen pubs in our branch area closed for a variety of reasons – from the seemingly deceased like the Westbury, awaiting conversion to flats, to the Bell, Shepherds Well, due to be rebuilt after last summer's fire. In fact the Shepherds Well/Eythorne area is particularly suffering at present. As well as the Bell, the White Horse and Yew Tree are currently both closed and, not so far away, the Butcher's Arms, Ashley, and Endeavour at Wootton are also closed (see Local News).

On a more optimistic note, as it's Autumn, this issue incorporates an updated list of all the real cider outlets that we know of in our area; while in September the 2007 *Good Beer Guide* appeared, listing 4,500 of the best pubs and beer in the country. Our share is just 17, and as I say to our members and landlords every time this year, congratulations if your pub made it, but don't be downhearted if it didn't; we have many more pubs selling good real ale than we do GBG places available, and unfortunately someone has to be left out.

Martin Atkins (Editor)

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EVENTS DIARY

Sat 21st October	Rural Ramble (Goodnestone, Chillenden); meet at Aylesham Station, 11:45
Sat 11th November,	Rural Ramble (Martin, St Margaret's); meet at Ugly Duckling, 12:00 (Martin Mill Station)
Tues 14th November,	Mini-bus trip (tickets in advance to first 16 people to send cheques for £11 made payable to "Deal Dover Sandwich and District CAMRA" to 12 Elms Vale Road, Dover, CT17 9NW).
Mon 20th November,	Branch Meeting, The Jackdaw, Denton , 19:30
Fri 8th – Sun 10th Decbr.	Phoenix Beer Festival, Canterbury (details: 01227 464220) *
Mon 18th December,	Branch Meeting/Christmas Social, Blake's, Dover , 19:30
Mon 15th January,	Branch Meeting, White Horse, Dover , (to be confirmed), 19:30
Fri 2nd & Sat 3rd Feb,	White Cliffs Festival of Winter Ales, Dover Town Hall
Mon 19th February,	Branch Meeting, Royal Oak, Nonington , (to be confirmed), 19.30

For full details of Rural Rambles, please contact John Pitcher on 01304 214153.

Branch meetings normally held every third Monday of each month.

Events marked * are not organised by CAMRA.

Interested in joining CAMRA? Come along to one of our meetings!



The Local News

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

DOVER

Snoops, Castle St: Yes, you did read that right. Not normally included in our local news roundup, the former nightclub, probably more familiarly known to readers as Images (or to the older amongst us as the ABC Cinema, or even Granada) is once again featuring in Wetherspoon's future plans. Bought by it in early 2003 for conversion to a Lloyds No 1, work never got off the ground, and plans were eventually abandoned and the premises put back on the market in February 2005. However, having failed to sell the property, Wetherspoon has had a further change of mind and has revived the Lloyds plan. Work is expected to start next summer, at an estimated £1.5m, with the venue reopening in early 2008.

Louis Armstrong: Skrimshander has replaced Bass as the pub's regular bitter from mid July. Jackie had been looking for a replacement for Bass for some time, owing to dissatisfaction with the current state of the brew by many real ale drinkers, but a few diehards were reluctant to drink anything else. However salvation was at hand, ironically from Bass's suppliers, Coors – as far as the Louis was concerned Bass was a three handed operation: owned by Interbrew, brewed by Marstons, delivered by Coors. During the hot weather in July the Bass missed a delivery and the diehards were forced to drink something else: something else included Skrimshander, a beer not dissimilar to Bass (although generally considered far superior); while another barrel of the same beer had, a few weeks earlier, been praised unreservedly by one of

our branch's longer serving members. It was no real surprise then that Skrimshander was found most acceptable, and Jackie shortly after cut a deal with Tonie Prins. At the time of writing, sales of Skrimshander are running at two nines a week, up from one and a half for Bass, and the Louis is the only pub we can think of to make it house bitter. At the beginning of September we were particularly spoiled. Alongside the Skrimshander there appeared from the Ramsgate Brewery a barrel of the excellent Gadd's No5.

Eagle, Dover: Since the pub reopened at Christmas landlord Steve has re-established real ale as standard. During the summer he has normally carried two, Greene King IPA plus one other, Fullers Discovery proving particularly popular. However with the Autumn he is planning to add a third, and is looking for a 4.5% bitter, ideally from a local brewer. Your correspondent suggested he need go no further than Ramsgate. Steve also has plans to renovate the currently unused second set of handpumps at the left hand end of the bar.

Flotilla, Bench St: A note of sadness as we say goodbye to one of Dover's longest serving and most respected landlords. Dan Warwick, together with his partner of the time, Emma Lawrence, took on manager-ship of the pub just about nine years ago in Autumn 1997, after its conversion from the Dover Tavern to the Firkin format which its then owner Allied Breweries was keenly promoting. Initially called the Flotilla & Firkin it provided, as well as a normal range of keg beers, a selection of real ales



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brewed specifically for the chain; the most memorable probably being the famed Dogbolter, which locally we are still fortunate enough to be able to drink thanks to Eddie Gadd's Ramsgate Brewery. The pub subsequently changed hands (and again name), and with it the beer range: of late real ales have normally been the more standard Tetley Bitter and Adnams Broadside. It says a lot for Dan's management that, with one or two exceptions, the pub's staff are the same now as they were then – one of the exceptions being, of course, stalwart barmaid Anne Bishop (known to all and sundry as Bish) who retired recently, but had already worked at the pub for many years before Dan's involvement. Dan, however, will not be lost to our branch as we understand he is due to take on a pub in the Mongeham area of Deal.

Cullins Yard: Now owned by Jimmy Gleeson, we understand that a certain Mr Toomey (ex Blakes) has been in evidence over the summer in a consultative capacity, and that the very amiable Johannes is back in the kitchen. There was also talk of stillage (a la current Blakes) being installed, but on that front all has now gone quiet.

Cricketers, Crabble Avenue: Good London Pride and Spitfire were enjoyed here during a summer visit. In August the pub hosted a murder mystery night performed by members of the Blackfish Academy. The format comprised a comedy whodunit, which the audience watched while dining, with the opportunity of themselves taking small roles.

Fox, Temple Ewell: Steve and Alison still maintaining a wide selection of real ales at this edge of town pub. Four beers are standard with Deuchar's IPA as the only regular. Among the more frequently seen Abbot, Bombardier and Youngs, the pub has recently offered Archer's Mulcock's Real Lager, Nelson's England Expects,

and Tom Wood Golden Evenings. In a recent talk about his work to Dover Rotary Club, Steve described his current job as an enjoyable way of life. This summer, he said, had been particularly good for the pub, boosting trade by 20-25%, thanks in no small part to the large beer garden – although, at the time of writing, its small stream appears to be taking its normal summer break.

Blakes, Castle Street: Continuing with its predominantly micro philosophy, although Wadworth 6X appeared at one stage in the summer. Good representation by local brewers with Gadds, Hop-daemon and Goacher's much in evidence – the latter's Imperial Stout being a permanent fixture. Beers from further afield regularly include the likes of Sharps, Titanic and Dark Star; one of our number being mightily impressed by something from Dark Star (he couldn't remember the name) during late July, which he described as spectacular – refreshing and spicy with a long ginger aftertaste.

White Horse, St James Street: Traditional varying selection with only Landlord as regular. Less familiar brewers have included Shardlow and E&S Elland Brewery (both known to Beery Boaters) with respectively 5 Bells (dark 5%) and the 4.4% Nettle Thrasher, and from Manchester Holts and Hydes. From the other side of the Pennines Yorkshire beers, in addition to Landlord, have proved particularly popular – Guzzler and Centurion's Ghost from York and Acorn XL (5%) from Barnsley. One interesting beer was deck chair from Titanic, which reminded this correspondent of the dark brew from Johnson of Martin, of some years past. And more fun and games with beer supply. Jack has found some of his regular ales, the likes of Fortyniner and Summer Lightning, to be unavailable from his owner Enterprise, only to discover the delivery dray awash with the

WHITE HORSE DOVER

EST. 1365

Monday – Saturday
4.00pm – 11.00pm

Sunday
1.00pm – 10.30pm



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very same – but not for the White Horse; apparently these beers are destined for servicing big contracts with Wether-spoon.

Primrose, Coombe Valley Rd: Proposals to replace the pub with 11 dwellings and 7 flats have been resubmitted, presumably with amendments, after the first plans were refused earlier in the year. At time of writing no decision yet made. Meanwhile the pub remains boarded up and forlorn. In Folkestone Road the **Engineer** is still up for sale while the **Orange Tree** remains boarded up with the prospect of residential use. And no work, apparently as yet on the nearby **Westbury**, where permission exists for conversion to flats. In Ladywell the **Falstaff** is closed again..

DEAL

New Plough, Middle Deal Rd: Just off Western Road this often-overlooked pub

is well worth a visit. It's a well supported, good community local with a very friendly welcome and on our visit in the middle of September a very decent pint of Old Speckled Hen at one of the cheapest prices around – £3.10 for one and a half pints.

Prince Albert, Deal: Visits in mid September found, as usual, plenty of atmosphere and plenty of customers. Beers at the time appeared to be concentrating on Kentish brews, including Rochester Bitter and England Expects from Nelson, and Gadds No 3 and EKPA from Ramsgate. Other beers included Youngs Bitter and Hydes 1863. Ramsgate beers also at the nearby **Ship**, Middle St. where the normal selection is Gadd's Nos. 3 & 7, Master Brew, Summer Lightning and Deuchar's IPA. A traditional drinkers' pub, and always a good welcome.

Sportsman, Sholden: Substantial altera-



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FULL MENU & TRADITIONAL SUNDAY ROAST

tions over the summer, including a restaurant extension at the rear, new toilets and new patio – the whole wheelchair friendly and welcoming to families. However for those who liked the pub as it was, the front bars have been left untouched. Beer range varies although Greene King IPA is fairly standard. On a visit in early September we found it alongside London Pride and Master Brew. For local brew enthusiasts Eddie Gadd's Ramsgate ales are regularly available.

Three Horseshoes, Mongeham: More Gadds here, whose No 5, together with the pub's welcoming atmosphere, left one of our members having to abandon plans to stop for just the one quick pint. The beer is standard alongside Greene King IPA. Bank Holiday weekend saw a beer festival with a charity fun day in support of St John Ambulance on Sunday. Events included live music, stalls and games in the garden, with evening karaoke inside the pub; while among the beers were Engels from Holland, Grasshopper and Summer Perle Golden Ale from Westerham, EKPA and No 7 from Gadds, and Dark Star Sunburst. (See also Bumper Beer Festival Round-up.)

Bowling Green Tavern, Bowling Green Lane: The pub proved to be a 'rediscovery' for a couple of our cycling members in mid-September. They hadn't been here for a few years, but were rewarded with a very warm welcome (and personal tour!) from the landlords. Sheila and John have now been in residence since May 2005, and the pub had the feeling of being a good community local with regulars at the bar, in the pool room, and dining to the rear of the bar. Although fairly open-plan, the pub retains the feel of a traditional multi-room layout, with old beams in the main bar. The framed pub history shows that it has been licensed since 1702 (when it was The Gun Inn; it changed names in 1848), although the original building was built in 1521. So, this is a pub with something for everyone:

friendly welcome, interesting history, a variety of drinking and eating areas, including family room and separate restaurant, garden to the rear, and a decent pint of ale to reward the cyclist! Real ales were Greene King Abbot, Bass and Flowers IPA, of which the Abbot was particularly liked, and lived up to its reputation as their favourite GK beer.

SANDWICH & RURAL

Marquis of Granby, Alkham: Normal line is four real ales including regularly Abbot and Old Speckled Hen from Greene King, and beers from Scottish Courage and Nelson. Theakston XB, now brewed back at Masham by the Theakston family, featured recently, and very good it was to, a great improvement on the years when it was brewed by S & N. Meanwhile the drop in strength of Old Speckled Hen has not gone down well, one of the beer's regular drinkers remarking along the lines, whatever it is it's not Old Speckled Hen. However, motorists beware. To deter non-customer use of it's somewhat limited space, the pub operates a strict parking policy, which includes vehicles left in the pub car park outside of opening hours. Recently, a car left after a lunchtime drink received a £60 fine at the end of the afternoon. The couple concerned, while appreciating that it might have been reasonable to check with the staff first, were left wondering if such a vigorous application of the regulations was the best way for the pub to win the hearts and minds of its customers.

Market Inn, Sandwich: New landlords at Shep's central Sandwich pub. Richard and Tracey Muddiman took over the premises at the start of June. It's their first pub although Tracey has worked in the trade for 22 years. Beers in early August were Master Brew and Whitstable Bay. Meanwhile a stop at the **Red Cow** one Friday lunchtime during the heat-wave in late July, found an excellent pint of Gadds No 5. Don't believe anyone



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who tells you that the only beer for hot weather is lager or a golden ale; this was thirst-quenchingly superb. Other beers that visit were Abbot, IPA and Old Speckled Hen from Greene King and London Pride.

White Horse, Eythorne: Boarded up for several months with a large notice saying "this pub is closed, why don't you run it?" and a telephone number. Any takers? Changes also, at its near neighbour the **Crown** where new landlords are in residence. And still in the same area, drinkers in Shepherdswell have just the **Bricklayers** for choice, the **Bell**, remaining a burnt out shell with scaffolding around. All indications are that it will be rebuilt, but Meanwhile the front wall blackboard optimistically advertises big screen world cup football.

Kings Head, Kingsdown: Council plans to place double yellow lines along much of Upper Street are being strongly opposed by landlord Alex Evans, as well as many other residents. As well as deterring people from driving to the pub, which would particularly affect his older customers, it would encourage speeding, he said. "This is asking for someone to get killed. Parking on the narrow parts of the road deters traffic from using it and creates safe areas." Support for the restrictions comes from the Fire Brigade who says they can't always get their vehicles down the road.

Five Bells, Eastry: Still offering the same wide ranging selection of real ales as before. Mitchell and Butlers mild is a regular, and beers from locals Gadd's and Nelson feature prominently, the latter recently providing England Expects and Victory Mild. Otherwise ales come from all over the country with Bass, Cains FA and Broadside available during recent visits. Don't be misled by the

repainted pub sign over the door; the pub is still called the **Five Bells** – it's just the sign-writer has yet to finish his work. Back at the start of August the other pub in the village, the **Bull** joined the east Kent beer festival season with its own event 'Bullstock' with live music, barbeque and, of course, plenty of beer.

Coastguard, St Margaret's Bay: The pub provided an excellent venue for our September branch meeting, where we occupied a small room on the first floor, with the sound of breaking waves from the beach beyond the car park. Real ales were Gadd's East Kent Pale Ale (4.1% ABV and delicious), Northumberland Crimson Pirate 4.3%, and Everards Tiger, sporting a new design pump clip and now 4.2% ABV – it was recently (and had been for some years) 4.3%, and at one time was 4.5%. Additionally there was real cider – Westons Draught at 5%. To

THE GUILDHALL

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round off the evening Sam and Nigel provided us with beef stew and potatoes baked in a cheese sauce, together with *real* bread and cheese.

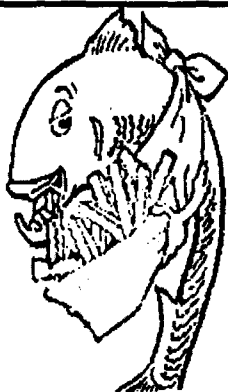
Clyffe Hotel, St Margarets-at-Cliffe: Back in the village changes are afoot at this weatherboarded old building. Real cider has now been dropped, while current landlord, Richard Hudson, will be moving to take on the **Port Arms** in Deal sometime in late October. Recent visits to the **Hope**, just along the road, found Shepherd Neame Spitfire and Master Brew.

Crown Inn, Finglesham: Plenty of activity and interesting beers. The late summer bank holiday saw a beer festival, which included charity fund raising for Kent Air Ambulance and a special baby care unit; followed on Tuesday by a CAMRA organised bat and trap social evening, where good fun was had by all.

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(See elsewhere in this newsletter.) On the beer front more unusual beers have included Whitstable Oyster Stout, Gadd's Seaside, Cottage Jack the Whippet and Adnams Explorer, the latter being much liked. David and Jackie are also moving into the marriage business. Already hosting receptions, they're intending to offer civil weddings – although the proposed gazebo (destined to play a major part in any such plans) will need to be rethought as the current design has just received the thumbs down from Dover District Council.

Yew Tree, Barfrestone: At the time of writing the pub is closed – a notice in the window dated Oct 7th stating that due to a breach of conditions the lease with Charlie and Heather has been rescinded. However, up until then the pub was providing its usual fare: regular folk music Thursday, as well as one-off events and get-togethers of local folk enthusiasts (Saturday August 12th saw a performance by, Canadian singer, Heather Dale as part of her UK tour), and real ale range almost exclusively micro based with local Kentish ales well represented.

Chequers, West Hougham: Still no real ale and, we understand, the present landlord is likely to be leaving in mid-October, and the pub once again closed. Local opinion suggests that the pub is popular but does not generate enough income to cover the rent/lease level set by its owners. As this newsletter pointed out during a previous period of closure, the village now has no post office or shop, and if the pub can't operate on its own, there may be potential for combining all these uses under one roof. Its near neighbour, the **Plough** on Folkestone Rd., appears about to receive a facelift of its Beefeater operation, with permission granted for new signage/adverts. Still owned by

Whitbread, links with the ex-brewer's former brands increasingly diminish – recent visits finding sole real ale to be Shepherd Neame Spitfire.

Royal Oak, Capel: One Sunday afternoon mid-September found the pub very busy – pleasing ambiance and loud band; and still offering competitively priced beers (Hancocks HB £1.70 and Courage Best £1.90). Master Brew and ales from Nelson feature regularly. In August there was a very good barrel of Leg Before Whippet from Cottage.

Elsewhere the **Endeavour** at Wootton remains closed, and shrouded in silence – no application for change of use and looking less like a pub every visit. At Ashley no decision as yet on the appeal against the council's decision to refuse residential conversion of the **Butchers Arms**, and at Westmarsh the **Way Out Inn** remains closed. At Plucks Gutter the **Dog and Duck** has changed hands (see Tony's Tappings), and in Bridge the **Red Lion** is still boarded up with scaffolding around, after the summer fire.

FOLKESTONE

Happy Frenchman: Closed since a fire in July, the pub was open again in October with a new manager, Sharon, and the long awaited refurbishment completed. The creation of a false ceiling has removed the pub's formerly rather cavernous feel, but the general layout remains much the same. A number of TV screens have been installed around the pub walls, but there is now only one pool table and the dart board has gone. Real ales in mid October were Timothy Taylor Landlord and Fuller's London Pride.

Chambers, Cheriton Place: Also maintaining an unaltered regular range (although who'd want to change it), Adnams Bitter, Skrimshander, Gadds No 5 and Ringwood Old Thumper, plus a couple of real ciders. Guest ales of late have included old faithful, Dark Star Original.

Lifeboat: Following Kevin's departure the pub has been redecorated, including plain pine panels along the back of the bar and re-upholstered benches that this correspondent found not very comfortable. Beer however was the excellent Harvey's Sussex Best, which has become a regular here in recent years. An ever changing range at the **East Cliff Tavern** a few streets away: mid-August saw a very pleasing 4.5% bitter from Arundel and late September, Lighthouse from Robinson's.

White Lion, Cheriton: Sheps big pub on the main road, and old bikers' haunt, is now boarded up and looking very despondent. It's a big site, which obviously raises concerns for its future – any news welcome. And still closed also, the **Martello** in Dover Rd., with steel shutters over the windows. However, the sign advertising a 'pub business opportunity' has disappeared: one can see it suffering the same fate as the **Harvey**, just down the road. Not so far away the **Two Bells** is also suffering from steel shutter disease, but in Tontine Street the **Brewery Tap** appeared to be open when last driven past.

Guildhall, The Bayle: Another superb beer from the York Brewery, Ebor Ale, in early September – also on, Bass together with IPA and Ale Fresco from Greene King. Brains SA Gold and Adnams Explorer also featured around the same time. The **Pullman** had no real ale at last visit in mid September, but the nearby **British Lion** was selling Young's Special and Schiehallion in addition to the more regular Greene King Abbot and IPA with, due in, Sharp's Eden, Titanic Iceberg and Lees Ruddy Glow.

TONY'S TAPPINGS

(The perambulations and musings of our
Pubs Officer, Tony Wells)

A PLEA FROM THE HEART

I have been approached a number of times in the past few weeks on a topic that relates to my role as branch CAMRA Pubs Officer - "Why isn't my pub or local represented more often in *Channel Draught*?" So I thought I would give you a quick resumé about how our pub reports are gathered and perhaps persuade you to help.

Step 1: Collect the Information

The pub information you read in *Channel Draught* is collected by a small, and I do mean small, group of stalwart individuals from the branch. Having visited one or more pubs they take the time to send in any useful and interesting information.

Step 2: Collating the Information

I collate these individual reports into my Pubs Officer's report, which is presented to the monthly branch meeting. This monthly report, which also includes information from the local press and the Dover District Council planning applications website, keeps the branch members informed about what is going on in the district.

Step 3: Publishing the Information

Copies of the monthly reports are also given to the *Channel Draught* editorial team who adapts the information for inclusion in the next edition, which in due course is printed and distributed to pubs throughout our area.

You can see that the answer to the original question depends on a number of vital steps. However, **Step 1** is the most important. If we haven't received any information about a particular pub, we will have nothing to consider for publication in *Channel Draught*.

Calling all publicans and customers

This is where **you** can help **me** to help **you**. If you have some interesting news about your local, and this applies to publicans and customers alike, send it in to me at:

channeldraught.pubnews@virgin.net

(a bit of a mouth full I know, but take the time to enter it into your email address book so you won't have to remember it).

What sort of information am I looking for? In particular I am interested in the beers being served, but in addition, any news about what's happening at your pub is also welcome. Perhaps your local is holding a beer festival or serving real cider for the first time, or is holding an event in aid of charity. Maybe there has been a change of landlord or ownership, refurbishment of the pub or alterations to the beer range.

Whatever it is, if we don't know about it we can't publish it. So help us to help you, and answer the question; "**How can I get my pub represented in *Channel Draught*?**"

LORD CLYDE - WALMER

It's interesting what you find when you read the press, in this case it was new tenants at the Lord Clyde. So off I popped to find out a bit more about them.

Mick and Chris Clarkson took over at the Lord Clyde on the 25th August. Karen has experience in helping manage pubs and ran the Eagle, in Deal, when the landlord was on holiday.

At the moment they have no plans to make any changes to the pub. Their main aim is on turn the Lord Clyde into a community pub and get the locals back again. They have already reintroduced darts back in to the pub and will be considering food sometime in the future.

On that all important question about their real ales: at the moment they are only

serving Master Brew, and the pint i was drinking while having our chat was a great example of this beer. As business picks up they hope to introduce Spitfire and Shep's seasonal beers.

A "BAT & TRAP" TRIP

"Far out in the uncharted backwaters of the unfashionable end of the Northern Spiral Arm of the..." whoops, sorry, drifted into the opening sentence of the HHGTTG (the Hitch Hiker's Guide to the Galaxy).). There is nothing unfashionable or uncharted about this part of our district. . In fact, there are three real ale pubs there, which this particular article is about.

The Half Moon & Seven Stars, Preston, the Rising Sun, Stourmouth, and the Dog & Duck, Plucks Gutter, line the Preston Road from Wingham through Preston and on to Gore Street.

The Dog & Duck, Plucks Gutter, is part of the Dog & Duck Caravan Park, and I have drunk there on a number of occasions during Bat & Trap matches. While delivering the last issue of Channel Draught I found that the owner of the Caravan Park had franchised out the pub to a local resident. John and Rita Moon, who took on the pub on 1st September, were already locals of eight years' standing. From sitting at the end of the bar drinking the occasional pint and driving around 40,000 miles a year, John now finds himself sitting on the business side of the bar serving customers, reading the latest copy of the Publican, and driving 20 miles each week if he is lucky. Even they are not too sure how it happened!

The beer range will remain very much the same with London Pride, its regular beer, supported by Greene King IPA, Wadsworth 6X, Young's Special, and the occasional guest, for example from the Wyre Piddle brewery. They intend serving good, wholesome food such as hot-pots and stews which, if the Bat & Trap

meals are anything to go by, will be very tasty; and they are now open all day.

Each year, through the Caravan & Lodge Charity Committee, they raise between £4,000 and £6,000 in aid of local charities such as the Canterbury Oast Trust, Footprints and the local school. They hold a Charity Awards evening, which this year, is on Friday 20th October. So, I would like to welcome and wish all the best to John and Rita Moon and, of course, the Dog and Duck Bat & Trap Team.

Driving south from the Dog & Duck the road leads you to Stourmouth and the Rising Sun. This is definitely a restaurant/pub but don't let that put you off. It is a modern-style establishment with a number of rooms set around a central cosy bar area that give it a sort of relaxed feeling. Its regular is Shep's Master Brew supported by a guest beer. On this occasion they it had Titanic Triple Screw, but on previous visits I have tried Adnam's Regatta and Ringwood's Huffkin. As a point of note, the Rising Sun also runs a Bat & Trap team, but as it is in a different league from The Crown, Finglesham, we haven't had the pleasure of playing against them it yet.

Driving south again we come to the village of Preston and the Half Moon & Seven Stars, another pub with a Bat & Trap team. This is one of those pubs with a "locals" feel to it, and has a number of rooms for drinking and eating. Its regulars are John Smith's Cask and Shepherd Neame's Master Brew with a guest; on this occasion it was Marston's Single Malt.

Talking to the landlord he told me that he had a bottled lager imported from Russia: Baltika Classic #3. So I purchased a couple of bottles to take home and try, and I'll let you know what this beer was like in a future article.

Tony Wells



The National News

By Martin Atkins

REGIONALS RATTLED

A group of British regional brewers has formed a real ale think tank called *Why Handpull?* to monitor the industry and make recommendations as to how they feel it could be improved. It comprises Greene King, Wolverhampton and Dudley, Charles Wells, Fullers, Adnams, Everards and Caledonian; and one of its first proposals is a reduction in the number of handpumps in real ale pubs. The group believes that many pubs are trying to sell too many different beers with a consequent fall off in quality. Unless a pub specialises in real ale the number of handpumps should be limited, and slowly increased, as licensees get more skilled at getting the quality right. The group claims that research shows a vocal minority including 'real ale bores and CAMRA members' has set the real ale agenda, and it's time to heed the silent majority. It wants to look after the hundreds of thousands who are passionate about real ale, introduce a new generation to the uniqueness of a hand-pulled pint at the local, and share with drinkers real ale's vast diversity in great condition. However, somewhat contradictorily, it also maintains that most people's experience of real ale is that it is of poor quality, that there's too much choice, and, in true management-speak, that 'the sector lacks the reassurance of tried and trusted brands'. Converting the nation's 1.5 million occasional real ale drinkers into more regular drinkers would generate £700 million in extra sales.

I suppose to criticise *Why Handpull?* is to number oneself amongst the real ale bores and troublesome CAMRA members, but much about the above

proposal seems to be a not very well disguised attack on the micros and CAMRA's campaign for a guest ale provision. Its argument is not even logical. Real ale quality is of course critical, and pubs carrying more ales than they can sell in good condition a problem, but cutting the number of handpumps isn't going to turn a poor cellarman into a good one. These are two entirely separate issues.

Meanwhile the group's accompanying comments (which seem strangely injudicious) only serve to harden suspicions as to what may be the real motive behind the proposal. It would seem thinking about what you drink and asking for choice labels you a bore – far better belong to the 'silent majority' and keep your mouth shut, and drink what you're given; the marketing executive's dream. We then have remarks about too much choice, tried and trusted brands, and what they've all got their eyes on: the £700 million crock of gold awaiting at the end of the rainbow. Even the chosen name, *Why Handpull?*, is suggestive of argument in favour of keg. Not a lot to give us confidence that real ale would be safe in their hands.

EARLS COURT EXTRAVAGANZA

CAMRA's moving of the Great British Beer Festival from Olympia to Earl's Court this year has proved the most spectacular success with attendance at 66,000 up 40% on 2005's 47,000, instead of the 10% the organisers had expected. 283,000 pints of real ale were sold and just under 1,300 new members

signed up. Once again Champion Beer was the 4% ABV Brewers Gold from Crouch Vale of Essex, who have become only the third brewer after Fuller's and Timothy Taylor to win the trophy in successive years. Other successes, which might be of interest to local readers, included Harvey's Sussex Best Bitter (pleasingly now quite widely available in our area) which won gold in the Best Bitter category; Triple FFF Moon Dance, Best Bitter silver and overall bronze – a regular in the old days at the Mogul; and York Centurion's Ghost, Strong Bitter gold, and very popular in the White Horse a couple of months back. Top bottled conditioned beer, for the third time was White Shield Worthington, now brewed once again in Burton at the former Bass Museum Brewery, renamed by its current owners Coors, the White Shield Brewery. In between times it was brewed in Sheffield, Cape Hill in Birmingham and at King and Barnes in Horsham. Only problem, you never see it anywhere; maybe Coors have it all sent back to America.

END OF AN ERA

Nothing stays the same for ever, and at the moment that is no more apparent than for London brewer Young's who, along with CAMRA and a handful of others, led the opposition to the large brewers' keg philosophy in the 1970s. Having searched for a new home for several years, agreement was reached earlier this year, to share the Charles Wells site in Bedford, where brewing of Young's beers is planned to start in October. Agreement has now been reached for the sale of its Ram Brewery in Wandsworth to a property developer for £69M, much of which is largely expected to be ploughed into a further expansion of its 220 pub estate in London and the South East. The move to Bedford ends four hundred years of brewing on the site, records showing that beer was being produced as far back as

1581, with Young family involvement dating from the 19th century.

However, somewhat ironically, Young's move from Wandsworth has coincided with the death on September 17th of its chairman for forty years, John Young at the age of 85. Great-great-grandson of Charles Allen Young, one of two businessmen who acquired the Ram Brewery in 1831, and one of the last of Britain's family brewing patriarchs, he was more than just chairman. Born in Winchester in 1921 he joined the family firm in 1954, became Managing Director the following year, and was chairman from 1962 when his father retired, until this year. To John Young beer was far more than just the business with which his family was involved, and British beer in particular. From the start of the real ale revival in the early 1970s he placed Young's at the forefront of the campaign and the brewery benefited accordingly, becoming one of the most respected producers of real ale in the country. And John's interest was not limited solely to Britain. In a true 'Coals to Newcastle' he created a beer for a Belgian Abbey which had none of its own: that beer is still brewed and available here, but we know it as Young's Special London Ale.

ENTERPRISE OFFLOADS

In the middle of August the country's second biggest pub landlord, Enterprise Inns, sold 769 pubs, somewhat under a tenth of its estate, to Admiral Taverns. Ted Tuppen, Enterprise chief executive, described them as 'traditional pubs that were more wet-led than average. They weren't bad, they just didn't fit our profile long term.' Annual profits from each were about £40,000, a third less than the group's bigger outlets. As well as removing some of the group's poorer performing pubs, it also reduces Enterprise's exposure to the inevitable loss of trade that will accompany the



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smoking ban due to come into force next July, and which is likely to hit the smaller drinker orientated pubs considerably harder than those with a substantial food trade. Much of the remaining estate comprises large outlets, selling food, and popular with families and non-smokers. However tenants are being encouraged to provide outside areas for those who do wish to smoke, with shelters and heaters. The purchaser, Admiral Taverns, formed in March 2004, is a fast growing pub chain acquiring much of its estate from other pub companies seeking to get rid of 'bottom-end' pubs.

OLD SPECKLED TURKEY?

What had been one of the country's strongest widely available real ales, Old Speckled Hen, has been reduced in strength by its brewer, Greene King, from 5.2% to 4.5% ABV (the non-real bottled version will remain at 5.2%). The move was kept very quiet and only sprung on an unsuspecting public a few weeks before the revised beer appeared in the pubs in late August. Apparently marketing surveys had indicated that more people would be willing to drink it at the lower strength. However, it seems likely that it is also the latest chapter in Greene King's attempt to find a mid strength bitter to compete with the likes of Bombardier, Pedigree or 6X; previous casualties of this seemingly forlorn hope having included, as well as Ruddles County, Triumph and Rayment's Special. Additionally, with the acquisition of Hardy and Hansons Olde Trip, and its own long standing strong bitter, Abbot, in the same 5% bracket, Greene King must have felt this part of its real ale portfolio becoming somewhat congested. Reports so far are not particularly favourable, and it seems Old Speckled Hen's reincarnation might end up a turkey.

Greene King is not of course the first brewer to tamper with its brands, which has been happening ever since beers

were first given names. Any brewery will reserve the right to make alterations to its beers. Fine tuning of a beer by minor variations in strength and ingredients would seem quite reasonable, especially as malt, hops and water can vary. So long as style and flavour remain essentially the same few would object. However a drop in strength from 5.2 to 4.5% ABV, effectively makes it a different beer. Whatever you thought of Old Speckled Hen it had many adherents, who bought it, not for its name, but for how it tasted. If it can be one thing one day, and something entirely different the next, does a brand name mean anything at all?

IN BRIEF

Punch Taverns has paid £164m for the 82 strong estate of South East and Midland based Mill House Inns, which it plans to integrate into the Spirit portfolio under one or more of the Value Food, Premium Food or Quality Local concepts; while up to 30 may become flagship Chef & Brewer outlets. Whatever happened to the ordinary pub.

No news yet about the future of Hardy and Hansons Kimberly Brewery now acquired by Greene King for £271m; Greene King's chief executive, Rooney Anand saying 'A bit of time is needed to get to know the business and explore all the options.' Meanwhile Nottingham CAMRA have so far gathered 1,200 signatures to a petition urging the retention of the brewery, and to highlight the campaign, staged a giant pub-crawl in its home village.



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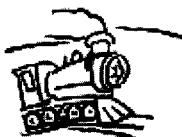
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Kent Small Brewery News



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

Following a very hot summer the brewery has been working to capacity, and to quote Phil, "We have been as busy as we have ever been".

It was recently erroneously reported in a CAMRA publication (not this one) that Goacher's had recently celebrated 25 years of business with the production of a beer named Gold Standard. This beer was produced to celebrate 21 years of brewing. At present its quarter centenary is two years distant.

Whitstable Brewery 01622 851007 Grafty Green: Contact Rafik Abidi

The brewery's beer festival that was held in its East Quay premises on 7th July was a great success. It sold 70 casks of beer in three days. Many of these beers were from Kentish micros, including its own brewery, while the rest came from fellow micros across the country. The sales were double those of last year and the festival will be repeated next year. The Whitstable Brewery Bar is open all of the year and is dedicated to micro-brewery beers.

The original plan to move from Grafty Green to Whitstable has now been abandoned, as the space at Whitstable is too small to allow for further expansion. We have the Whitstable Brewery in Grafty Green and The Ramsgate Brewery in Broadstairs, and the Swale Brewery ended up a long way from the Swale. Perhaps breweries should avoid geographical names.

The erstwhile County Hôtel, in Canterbury, is to transform itself into Abode Hôtel, with a bar named Michael Caines Old Brewery Tavern. This tavern plans to sell Whitstable E.I.P.A. and will open on Friday 29th. September. It is rumoured that there is also a possibility of Hopdæmon beers at this tavern. E.I.P.A. is also available in Thresher's Off-Licence in Wincheap, Canterbury.

Lastly, the brewery won first prize from the British Society of Beer Mat Collectors, for the best beer mat in G.B. We hope to be able to produce an illustration of this mat in the next edition of *Channel Draught*.

Hopdæmon Brewery 01795 892078 Newnham Contact Tonie Prins

Tonie apologises for the lack of news. He seems too busy brewing beer and is working hard to keep up with demand.

Greendæmon (5%) is now available in the cask, as is Leviathon (6%). It is planned to brew the popular Dominator soon.

Hopdæmon was awarded a coveted rosette in the *CAMRA Good Bottled Beer Guide*. This a high accolade, and I understand that only 20 of these were awarded.

Ramsgate Brewery 01843 580037 Broadstairs Contact Eddie Gadd

A new beer has been brewed, East Kent Pale Ale – 4.1%, which Eddie describes as fruity, pale and hoppy, and hopped with three different varieties of East Kent hops, and was available when this article was written. Those of you who were fortunate enough to attend the excellent branch social at the Crown Inn at Finglesham, could have sampled this beer at £2.00 per pint.

Bottled Dogbolter is now available from the brewery. Gadd's No.3 will shortly be available, from Waitrose.

Eddie comments that the hops this year are of a very high quality, owing to a good September.

Ramsgate Brewery was invited to exhibit at Brussels, in its exhibition of characterful beers. This is held every year in September. Eddie remarks that it was disappointing that there were so few beers from Kent at the GBBF this year, especially as Whitstable Brewery won the Kentish award.

Nelson Brewery 01634 832828 Chatham

(This edition's brewery report comes to us per kind favour of Medway CAMRA, via the brewery's Piers MacDonald.)

The Nelson Brewery, situated in Chatham's Historic Dockyard, now has a new owner.

Trading under the name Nelson Brewing Co.UK Ltd, Director Piers MacDonald has purchased the brewing equipment and recipes together with a five year lease. Piers is also presently licensee in Maidstone, where he has recently celebrated seven years. He was given his first start in the pub business some 20 years ago by close friend Paul Dixon, who until very recently was landlord at the Old Plantation in Bearsted. Paul has now joined Piers at Nelson brewing company. The remainder of the brewing personnel are Czech brewer Ivana, and Victoria who handles the office, sales and administration.

A web-site is in the process of being upgraded.

Visit www.nelsonbrewingcompany.co.uk for more information. You can also e-mail the company at sales@nelsonbrewingcompany.co.uk

With the company having an on licence, the shop is open 9.00am – 4.30pm Monday to Friday's selling polypins and bottled beers (RAIAB). This will soon be augmented by a range of t-shirts, sweatshirts and branded glasses etc.

The current portfolio of ales consists of:

<u>BEER</u>	<u>ABV.</u>	<u>BEER</u>	<u>ABV.</u>
Victory Mild	3.5%	Spanker	4.2%
Rochester Bitter	3.7%	England Expects	4.2%
Admiral's Bitter	3.8%	Dogwatch Stout	4.4%
Trafalgar Bitter	4.1%	Friggin in the Riggin	4.7%
Hardy's Kiss	4.2%		

OTHER ALES (subject to availability)

Spring Pride	4.4%	Spring
Powder Monkey	4.4%	Summer
Loose Cannon	4.4%	Autumn
Nelsons Blood	6.0%	

Expect some changes to this list, as Piers doesn't like the names of some of the ales and also wishes to discontinue brewing some. They have though, in the weeks since owning Nelson, already launched a new ale in cask and bottle conditioned form. It's a 3.8% light refreshing ale with full flavoured hops and a hint of chocolate aftertaste called Pieces of Eight.

A trade price list with special offers is already available from the brewery and they are working on individual leaflets to go inside a folder as an attempt to enhance the sales and marketing of the beers.

Alongside Pieces of Eight as a Real Ale in a bottle (RAIB), also available in 500ml bottles are: Rochester Bitter, Nelsons Blood, Trafalgar Bitter, Friggin in the Rigg and England Expects

The brewery is continuing to do swap deals with other breweries, at present there are deals with Burton Bridge, Milestone, Mauldons, Highwood and Castle Rock.

Tours lasting approximately 1½ hours can be arranged at a cost of £2.50 per head including sampling. The brewery is currently supplying around 75 outlets direct and is looking to expand, especially in its own backyard of Medway.

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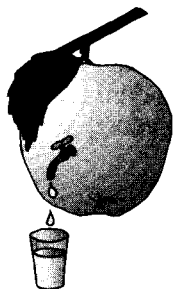
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CIDER MATTERS

Yes, it's that time again; time for more news from the world of cider and perry.

Since the last issue, I've been lucky enough to visit a couple of country pubs selling real cider, as well as one in Canterbury. As usual, I won't tell you which pubs they were, partly in the interests of impartiality, and partly to let you have the fun of finding out which they were. It's not all good news on that front, though, as at least one pub in the area has stopped selling the real stuff. There should be more news of that elsewhere in this issue.

October is, of course, cider and perry month for CAMRA. There are normally all sorts of apple events going on around the country, especially in places now seen as the traditional cider areas – mainly the West Country. There are events locally, though, and the main focus in our part of the world seems to be in Faversham, which may well be partly due to the fact that the Brogdale Trust is in Faversham. I remember in previous years working at the CAMRA Cider and Perry Festival at Brogdale, but these days the Trust organises its own festival. There are other events going on as well, but I daresay by the time you read this they will already be history, so remember next year to keep a look out for them. You never know, you might even enjoy them!

The UKCider group is as active as ever, with various recommendations and reports from people's summer holidays. More recently, there have been reports of harvests, and discussions about tips and techniques. The ingenuity of some people never ceases to amaze me! For some strange reason, little was made of the report last month that real cider has health benefits. Of course, we can only presume you need to consume in moderation, just as you should with beer. There is quite a bit of technical research involved but, sadly, the volunteers for the next stage have already been found. According to the more technically minded on UKCider, the beneficial chemicals are more abundant in real cider than the industrial version, but that fact might just get lost along the way somewhere, I suspect. Even so, it's excellent news for cider drinkers! Don't forget to add it to the reasons why your local pub should start stocking a supply of the good stuff.

As you can imagine, fans of craft cider have been quite scornful of the industrial cider wars. It's all very well saying that cider sales have gone through the roof, but we can only hope that the craft brands don't get trampled in the rush

to market ever more new brands of the industrial drink. I receive email alerts about cider references on the internet, and one related to a marketing company offering to provide brand loyalty among young adult cider drinkers. Of course, everyone who believes stereotypes knows there are no young people in CAMRA, so that won't affect us, will it?

Another subject that seems to have become cool recently is beer with food. Not surprisingly, you can have cider with food as well. Indeed, if you are planning to have wine with a meal, don't be afraid to have a glass of cider beforehand. Mixing fruit drinks won't normally have the same after-effects as mixing grape and grain. Worth thinking about, I suppose, and yes, I have researched the subject myself on more than one occasion.

Anyway, that's probably enough rambling from me for now, so I'll leave you to your own research.

Wassail!

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CIDER IN KENT

TIME FOR A COMEBACK

Cider making in Kent is recorded as early as 1165. Christchurch Monastery, in Canterbury, had an orchard containing apples and pears for eating and apples for cider making; and throughout medieval times, cider manufacture was an important industry in the county. Workers in Monastery Orchards received a daily allowance of cider as part of their wages. Later, during the 16th and 17th centuries, apple orchards were planted extensively in Kent.

Traditionally, Kentish Cider has been made from windfalls, using culinary and dessert apples such as Bramley and Cox's Orange Pippin. Perry is made from pears. West Country ciders are different in taste and heritage as these are made from specific cider apple types that would not be used for eating.



Since 1970 Kent has lost 10% of its orchards. Imports from abroad, so beloved by the large supermarket chains, are, to a large extent, responsible for this decrease. However cider sales are now increasing, although much of this is owing to the 'alco pop generation' who seems to like the artificially gassy 'ciderpops' such as Magners. Fortunately the move towards good quality organic food and drink has helped the sales from producers of 'real cider'. These ciders are well received as they are rightly perceived as a pure drink. A genuine traditional cider is made solely from crushed apples and yeast.

There are only a small number of public houses in the *Channel Draught* area that sell this excellent drink. There are even fewer that sell a Kentish cider. A list of these houses follows this article.

Now you have the list of suppliers, why not suggest to your landlord that he/she sells a genuine Kentish Cider?

Roger Marples



CIDER IN KENT

REAL CIDER IN EAST KENT

This list is a shortened version of those included in our special cider feature this time last year but with a few deletions, an addition from our own branch, and incorporating a few from the extended local news area we cover as well as a pub in Canterbury.

Anchor Inn, High Street, Wingham, 01227 720229
Biddenden (8%).

Blakes, Castle Street, Dover, 01304 202194
Thatcher ciders plus guest ciders and perries.

Bohemian, Beach Street, Deal, 01304 374843
Weston's Organic usually available.

Chambers, Radnor Chambers, Cheriton Place, Folkestone, 01303 223333
Biddenden Bushels (6%) and Thatcher Cheddar Valley (6%).

Cliffe Hotel, High Street, St Margaret's-at-Cliffe, 01304 852400
Sadly no longer selling real cider at time of contact.

Coach & Horses, Sandwich Road, Hacklinge, 01304 617063
Weston's cider usually available.

Coastguard, St Margaret's Bay, 01304 853176
Weston's Draught Cider (5%)

Crown Inn at Finglesham, The Street, Finglesham, 01304 612555
Various bottled Biddenden ciders, and occasional draught Biddenden Bushels (6%).

Dog Inn, Canterbury Road, Wingham, 01227 720339
Sadly no longer selling real cider, due to lack of demand.

East Cliff Tavern, 13 East Cliff, Folkestone, 01303 251132
Biddenden (8%)

Eight Bells, 19 Cannon Street, Dover, 01304 205030
Old Rosie, Weston's Organic, Thatcher's Perry (bottled).

Half Moon and Severn Stars, The Street, Preston, 01227 722296
Biddenden (8%) usually available.

Pheonix, 67 Old Dover Road, Canterbury, 01227 464220
Special cider made by Honey Hole Farm for the pub's annual beer festival, this year being held 8-10 December (last year the cider was 'Firebird', at 6%).

Red Lion, Stodmarsh, 01227 721339
Bottled Biddenden Monk's Delight (7.5%) – with mulled cider in the winter months.

Ship Inn, 65 Sandgate High Street, Sandgate, Folkestone, 01303 248525
Biddenden (8%)

White Horse, St James Street, Dover, 01304 242974
Biddenden Bushels (6%)

Yew Tree, Barfrestone, 01304 831619
Biddenden (8%) and bottled Biddenden Reserve (12%)

Of course, these are only the pubs we are aware of selling real cider in the local area and we always welcome news of any others out there in the area we cover – so please do get in touch and let us know!

Pub News E-Mail Address

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

channel draught.pubnews@virgin.net

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



CHANNEL VIEW

Once upon a time it was so easy. Beer was either real ale and good or non-real ale and bad, and brewers divided themselves into monopolistic national combines or regional and family upholders of tradition. Somewhat simplistic perhaps, but it's not an unfair reflection of the way things were when CAMRA was formed in the early 1970s.

As we all know it's very different now. The old national brewers, having abandoned pub ownership, now focus their interest on global lager brands with their position as suppliers of real ale on a national scale increasingly being occupied by the smaller, family and regional brewers. These, in addition to producing their own beers, are also moving into the contract brewing of the national's remaining brands. A rosy situation for the regionals, one might think, however many seem far from content. The cosy certainties of the pre Beer Orders world have given way to a hard commercial marketplace where huge pub companies seek equally huge contracts, with discounts to match, and the ever-growing band of microbrewers (latest figures 500 plus) have emerged as very serious competitors, particularly in quality and range. Not surprisingly there have been casualties, and many have either abandoned brewing or been taken over in recent years, while two of their number, Greene King and Wolverhampton and Dudley, appear intent on replacing the old national brewers both in size and philosophy. For the rest much of

their energy now seems devoted to protecting their position and retaining their independence, and management has changed accordingly. Businesses run for decades from quiet provincial towns by a gentlemanly combination of family patriarch and head brewer, now find themselves, and their customers, exposed to the hard headed products of the country's business schools, for whom a brewery is just another commercial operation to be run on the same principals that might apply to frozen food or a chain of burger bars.

In such a febrile atmosphere it is no surprise to find division and dissent replacing what had traditionally been a very united industry. In particular, conflict has arisen with the micro industry. A creation by those for whom real ale is a passion, it was attacked at this year's spring meeting of the Independent Family Brewers of Britain; and subsequently in a particularly ill-tempered outburst by Stephan Oliver, head of Wolverhampton and Dudley's tenanted pub division, speaking at the micro brewers own conference at Southport. The ostensible immediate gripe centres on the progressive beer duty, which benefits the smaller producers and allegedly allows them to undercut the regional brewers by up to £10 a firkin in the free trade. According to Stephen Oliver this, and presumably the support of diehard CAMRA members prepared to drink anything, is its sole advantage, because otherwise the beers are the product of "airing cupboard comedians and happy hobby-

ists" and "taste of p*ss."

Exactly how the economics of the micro brewers compares with that of the traditional family brewers, we cannot be certain, but it would be strange if the progressive beer duty did anything more than compensate for the benefit accruing to the latter from large scale production and economies of scale. However some sense of grievance is perhaps understandable. The micro-brewers do not have the responsibility of maintaining supplies to a tied estate, they have a much freer hand to whom and where they supply and what beers they brew, and although far from hobbyists, quite a number are not financially dependent on brewing. None the less, much of the space occupied by the micros is there because of the family brewers' neglect. Much of their real ale output has been restricted to bitter, usually in the 3.5 - 4.5% range, with often just their single flagship brew appearing outside their own locality (it's been left to the microbrewers to supply the dark beers and other more unusual varieties of ale, or in the case of golden ale to create a completely new style); and they have also become drawn into competing with the nationals, and the inevitable tendency towards sacrificing quality and the lowest common denominator. Admittedly some real ale drinkers have adopted a certain elitism which appears to hold that the smaller the brewery, the better the beer - a rough rule of thumb in some instances but by no means always the case. However it's hard to enthuse over the family brewers when we have the example of Greene King, who is quite happy to substantially downgrade Ruddles County and Old Speckled Hen just to suit its own marketing strategies; a cynicism which

even the old nationals might have balked at.

And suspicion and scepticism among drinkers are further reinforced by the appearance of a real ale think tank comprising half a dozen leading regional brewers, including Greene King and Wolverhampton and Dudley. Identifying poor cellarmanship as one of its first areas of concern, its solution is to propose a cut in the number of hand-pumps so as to discourage landlords from keeping more real ales than they can deal with. Those who might think this is a way of reducing access for the micros will only have their views confirmed by the group's accompanying market research which allegedly shows that there is too much choice and a lack of 'tried and trusted brands'. It suggests a mind-set still wedded to big brands, heavy marketing and massive volume. Many real ale drinkers will feel we should have moved on from this (See National News.)

All in all a sorry state of affairs, not just from the real ale perspective, but also from that of competition. Whatever theories of economics and the marketplace the regional brewers might espouse, it would seem that there is an element amongst them intent on establishing a tight oligarchy of supply with equally tight choice and range - a far cry from the 1970s or even a few years ago. CAMRA needs to make its opposition very clear. We should all be singing from the same hymn sheet, not sinking into factionalism and civil war. With just 10% of the market occupied by real ale there should be plenty of scope for growth, and room for everyone.

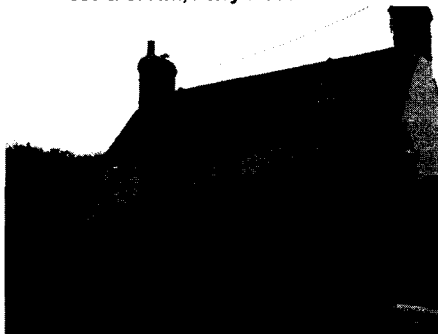


Bumper Beer Festival Round-Up

The summer period saw a bumper crop of small scale, pub-run beer festivals, and this is a quick round up of each of those I attended in the local area. Doubtless there were more dotted around the place, so we would welcome any reports you may have on those on your own local patch. (Try as I might, I cannot get to them all!)

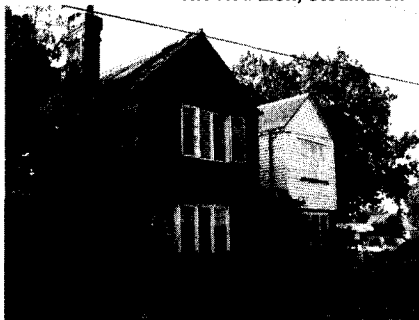
Our first festival was an eventful visit across the CAMRA border in Canterbury branch, at the Rose & Crown in Perry Wood, near Selling. The pub is pretty much in the middle of nowhere and had made an adjacent field available for camping – so, being intrepid souls, we arranged to camp overnight with friends from West Mailing on Saturday 8th July. The pub is one of those good, old-fashioned traditional locals that are obviously the heart of the community and worth seeking out (indeed it has won CAMRA pub of the year several times – it even has an award-winning fireplace).

The Rose & Crown, Perry Wood



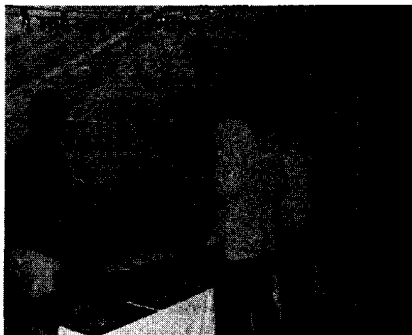
We settled down with our first few pints for a good catch-up in the beer garden enjoying the balmy weather, before tackling the tricky matter of erecting their tent and rolling out our swag in the back of the car (our tent is missing a tent pole, and rain was forecast). That done, the sampling from the beer festival marquee continued into the night and between us we tasted almost all of the fifteen or more beers on the festival list (and in the pub itself), sustained by a succulent hog roast - a whole pig roasting on a spit in a special oblong outdoor rotisserie oven. Our collective favourites were Woodfordes Wherry (3.8%) and Wye Valley Butty Bach (4.5%), appropriately refreshing, given that the

The Red Lion, Stodmarsh

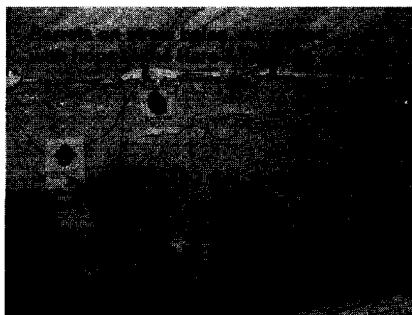


weather had been so hot that day, while we felt that such weighty numbers as Hanby Nutcracker (6%) and Orkney Skull Splitter (8.5%), were not quite what we needed at the end of the night. By way of a 'cleansing ale' (as my father would say), we repaired to the bar for a few excellent pints of Adnams Bitter (3.7) and Harveys Best (4%) to round off the evening. For those not in need of a cleansing ale, there were also the excellent Kentish brews from Goachers – Mild (3.4%) and Dark (4.1%). These were part of the pub's impressive beer line up, and it is clearly well supported as a real ale haven for the local area.

After a rather uncomfortable night's sleep (the field was on a hilly slope) we regrouped the next morning for a walk in the woods. This proved eventful for two reasons: the first being that we were using a pub strolls book printed around 1994 (meaning it rapidly become a DIY walk, making it up as we went along), and the second being that one of our west Kent friends was clearly suffering from the previous night's imbibing, and not a well man. Despite this, they both seemed nonetheless happy to consider joining us for the last of the six festivals in this round up, so you can catch up on more of their antics in a minute.



Back on our own CAMRA patch, next up was the Hare & Hounds festival in Northbourne, which we attended on Friday 28th July. Strolling across the fields to Northbourne for a few beers is always a great way to unwind from any working week, but this was especially welcome as it had been a few years since Tony, the previous landlord, had had one of his regular beer festivals – so we were full



The Plough Inn

Church Lane, Ripple

Tel: 01304 360209



Real Ales, Country Wines

Full weekday menu plus traditional Sunday lunches

Accommodation, Two Double Rooms & One Twin Room - All en-suite

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

Listed in the 2005 CAMRA Good Beer Guide

THE THREE HORSESHOES

GREAT MONGEHAM

OPEN

12-12 MON-SAT

12-11 SUN



ALES GREENE KING IPA GADD'S NO 5

Food Monday & Wednesday - Saturday 12.00 - 2.30
Sunday Roast 12.00 - 3.00

<i>Wednesday OAP Lunch</i>	<i>Thursday - Steak Day</i>
<i>2 Courses £3.75</i>	<i>Steaks from £5.00</i>
	<i>12.00-2.30 & 6.00-9.00</i>

Booking Advisable Wednesday, Thursday & Sunday

Large garden - safe for children
with swings and slides

Bat & Trap available Thursday

Music one Friday a month & bank holidays

Tel: 01304 375812

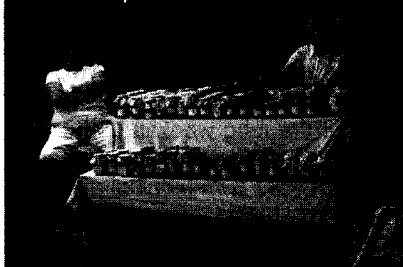
www.threehorseshoesmongeham.co.uk

of anticipation, and not disappointed. The 'stillage' was once again set up in a marquee on the patio, with the barrels arranged on straw bales and hops decorating the whole area. Bruce, the new landlord, had organised a good line-up of some 15 or so beers, including Kentish independents and a Biddenden cider. A few of us managed to work our way through most of them, and they were all in first-class condition. The band was excellent, and the weather once again balmy – so sitting out in the beer garden all evening meant it really did feel like summer. All four Finglesham Contingent members were present at the outset, and two of us stayed on in the company of some of our Dover CAMRA colleagues and their friends – a good night all round; and while we had so many favourites among the beers, in the end, I think all agreed the Gadds No. 3 (5%) was unsurpassable (it must have been, because we kept going back for more!). Sadly, we weren't able to get back for the Saturday session, which would have included a BBQ and more music, but hopefully Bruce and Tracey will make the festival a regular event.



The reason we couldn't get back to the Hare & Hounds on the Saturday is that we had resolved to get out to the wonderful Red Lion at Stodmarsh for its summer beer festival. Amongst a mountain of chores to be done around home, we took a few hours out in the afternoon to go and check out what proved to be mainly a selection of Greene King beers (not being great GK fans, this was a first for us!). The marquee theme continued, with beers set up under cover in one corner of the pub's beer garden, along with a stall of lovely home-cooked preserves, chutneys etc.

Home made preserves at the Red Lion



The pub's menagerie of characterful chickens and ducks provided great entertainment while we supped our beers (in my case two halves, being driver), a somewhat nostalgic experience as many bore the names of breweries bought out by GK over the years. All in good condition our favourites were Abbot Ale (5%), Ruddles County (4.3%) and Ale Fresco (4.3%).

The August bank holiday weekend saw three very local festivals: the Red Cow in Sandwich, the Three Horseshoes at Great Mongeham, and the Crown Inn at Finglesham.

Julian and I cycled to the first of these, the Red Cow, on Friday night and, sustained by a delicious Thai meal in Sandwich, the evening was thoroughly enjoyable. The stillage and beers had been provided by Eddie Gadd of Ramsgate Brewery and included favourites from Gadds' and Westerham, as well as regional/national independents. There was also 'Engels', a 5% rural Dutch beer from Brouwerij De Molen – which to me tasted like a cross between a Belgian beer and my home classic, Cooper's Sparkling Ale from Adelaide. It was most intriguing, and rapidly grew on us both; and while all beers were in great condition and, we obviously enjoyed the British independents such as Gadds' EKPA (4.1%), Wye Valley's Dorothy Goodbody's (4.2%) and Westerham British Bulldog (4.3%), we both found the Engels to be a beer we knew we would like to revisit again that weekend.



I only briefly sampled the second festival of the weekend, as I was in the car with the shopping, but my few halves broke the monotony of the Saturday shops. The Three Horseshoes line-up was similar to the Red Cow's, and I tried Westerham's Summer Pearle and Grasshopper, both 3.8% and the weakest on offer. Both were very interesting beers – not least because we do not often see them in this part of east Kent. As with all other festivals described here, the beer tent was set up in the garden – a must it seems these days, given the risk of torrential

downpours such as we had a few years ago on the August bank holiday weekend.

Sunday was the big day, one way or another. Our West Mailing pals arrived in the morning, and we started the day with a BBQ at home before cycling to Sandwich for a trio of events. Half way there one of our friends' pedals fell off, but somehow he managed to adapt his cycling style to overcome the handicap – a very peculiar sight indeed. Firstly, to the annual live traditional jazz in the pretty Kings Arms walled garden, followed by a return to the Red Cow beer festival (more good beer from Eddie's stillage and the smiling face of the pub's Novacastrian landlord), and finally a sampling of bottled Skrimshander from Hopdaemon (all that was left at the medieval fair on the outskirts of town). After that, the return cycle ride was bound to be eventful – firstly with hop-along solo-pedal man, and then with his partner deciding the bramble/nettle-filled hedge needed a bit of strimming as she hared down a hill and attempted to round a corner.

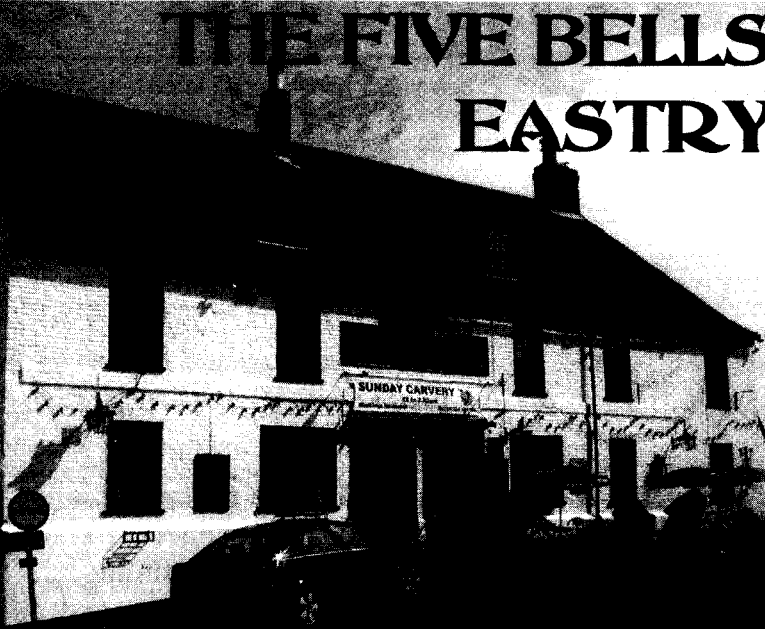
After (necessarily) feeding and refuelling at home we headed down to the Crown, where we caught up with all the local reprobates and settled in for the evening. The stillage, again supplied by Eddie Gadd, was in residence here for the long weekend, and with double the quantity of beers – so plenty to choose from. While the line-up included a few mainstream beers such as Fuller's London Pride, there were also plentiful offerings from Kentish micros such as Ramsgate, Hopdaemon and Whitstable, proper Biddenden cider (the Bushells, at around 6%), and beers from other national independents. There were further beers on hand pump inside the pub, and also, on stillage, once again the impressive Dutch beer Engels. Being our local, we had naturally found ourselves there at various stages over the weekend, so happily revisited our favourites, Dark Star Spiced Wheat at 4.1% and Whitstable Oyster Stout at 4.5% being high on the list, while having a good catch-up with everyone in the pub – true get-together of the regulars, with added west Kent 'incomer' flavour.

This time, though, *he* was the one driving back to West Mailing the next day nursing a rather poorly companion!

Anne McIlroy

*Stewart and Debbie
Welcome you to*

THE FIVE BELLS EASTRY



A Traditional Country Pub

Guest Ales

Home cooked food Sunday Carvery

Pentanque, Pool, Darts etc.

Sunday Meat Raffle in aid of Joint Services

Function Room Available

Open

Mon to Sat 11am - 4 pm, 5.30pm - 11pm

Sun 12 - 4pm, 6.30pm - 10.30pm

Enquiries 01304 611188



King's Head

Upper Street, Kingsdown

Tel 01304 373915

FreeHouse



**Your hosts Alex & Amanda
and your chef Michael French
welcome you to the King's Head**

**Bar & Restaurant food Tues to Sat
All freshly home-cooked by our chef
Fresh fish and good curries always available**

*Why not have an easy Sunday and come to
us for our superb Sunday roast from 12-6
Extensive wine list - Over 20 malt whiskies*

**Fine
Conditioned
Real Ales**

Opening Times

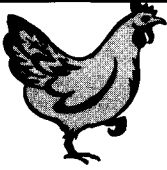
**Guest ales
always
available.**

Lunch	Friday	12 - 2.30pm
	Saturday	12 - 3pm
	Sunday	12 - 10.30pm

Often local

Evening	Mon-Friday	5-11pm
	Saturday	6-11pm
	Sunday	12 - 10.30pm

Available any lunchtime for personal or business functions



THE TALE OF THE OLD SPECKLED HEN

It was a fine morning at Animal Farm and Old Speckled Hen was happily scrabbling around the farmyard when she spied Mr King hovering outside the farmhouse door with a commercial looking gentleman in a white coat and hat. Eventually Mr King strolled over.

"Hello, Old Speckled Hen, having a nice day. How are things?"

Old Speckled Hen viewed Mr King warily. Senior members of the farm rarely showed much interest in her, in fact the last time had been some years before when they replaced her cosy Abingdon nesting box with the new, state of the art Bury box; she had wondered at the time if its name held any significance.

"You've been with us a long time" continued Mr King, confirming her suspicions "An old heavyweight like yourself, you're probably feeling you've done your share...*more* than your share, and you deserve a nice long rest".

"Oh no, Mr King, I feel fine, just like I did twenty years ago, I could go on for ages." She was already starting to feel the ground slipping away from beneath her.

"Of course, of course" said Mr King soothingly, "But you can't always see yourself what's best for you, the objective view is often the more accurate, and things change. People don't always know what they want. That's where we come in. Tell them what they need. They might not see it now, but in years to come they'll thank us for it. Now Mr Endbone over there has just the place for you. He's taken care of many a long server like yourself looking for that more relaxed, quieter life."

Old Speckled Hen knew just what he meant. Over the years she had said goodbye to many an old friend: Rayment's Special, Ruddles County, Old Bob Ridley – all gone, either never to be seen again, or just occasionally emerging for the odd seasonal celebration. And they were never quite the same, as if they'd undergone some kind of processing. Some of the animals had even spoken darkly of something called a conical fermenter, in fact she sometimes thought her new nesting box looked a bit conical, but she was never certain. Nor was she certain of the rest of the farmyard. Old Abbot, the Hereford, had never liked her, and spent most of the day glowering from his stall in the corner; although today he displayed an altogether lighter manner, flicking his tail and sniffing the air as if anticipating spring.

"Anyway" said Mr King abruptly, interrupting her thoughts "The decision's been made". and he beckoned to Mr Endbone. As he drew nearer, Old Speckled Hen, if she could have read, would have seen on the breast pocket of his white coat the words 'R.Endbone and Son, meat, game and poultry'.

"Morning lady," said the butcher, casting an experienced eye over her, and prodding her breast in a most un-gentlemanly and coarse manner, "We've a nice little place set aside for you and we'll soon have you trussed up without a care in the World."

"But who's going to do my job?" she cried in one last despairing effort.

"Don't worry Speckled Hen" said Mr King, glancing towards the farmhouse, "That's all been taken care of;" and through the window she could just make out a chicken-like

figure, lighter and younger than herself, its feathers, beak and feet receiving detailed attention from the farm's team of beauticians.

Old Speckled Hen sighed; she knew it was hopeless. "Just say my goodbyes" she was thinking, but already her world was turning upside down. Mr Endbone, in a deft movement, had caught a string around her legs and flung her over his shoulder, and was striding purposefully towards the farmyard gate.

Beatrix Orwell



THE BLUE PIGEONS, WORTH PUMPKIN COMPETITION

A selection of three real ales combined with a family fun day? Sounds like a contradiction in terms but this is what happens each October at the Blue Pigeons Pumpkin Competition: the popularity of the event ensured by the winner of the pub germinated pumpkin receiving one pint of beer for each weight of pumpkin. This year the winner weighed in at 109 pounds – enough to slake a healthy thirst – but three years ago the record was set with a whopping 360 pounds; about four barrels of beer. All plants competing in the main category must be purchased from the Blue Pigeons in May, and all are grown from the same seed. The rest is up to technique, secret potions and black magic. There are children's classes, including Worth school

which offers prizes of book vouchers, and an open class, this year won by Morgan Hood (13) who on receipt of her prize of Fosters lager showed impeccable judgement by promptly giving it away. Her comments are unprintable!

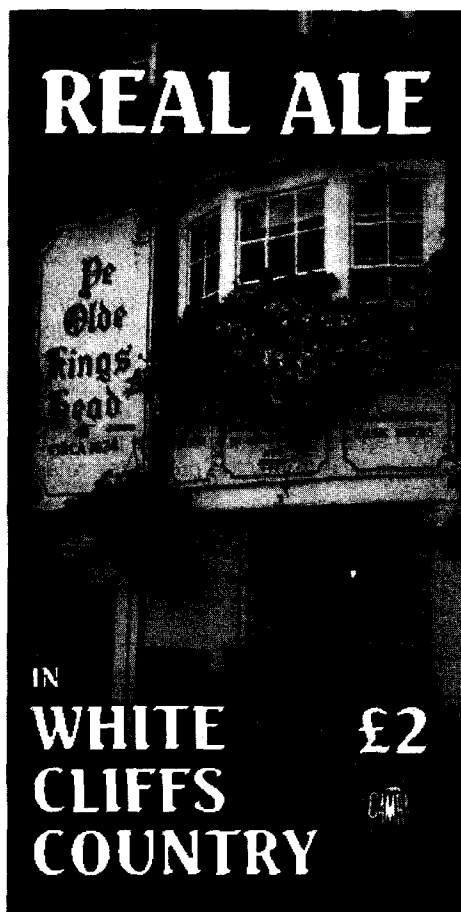
Landlord Paul Coleman provides a rock group all afternoon, Morris dancers, and picnic facilities in the pub's large garden, complete with swings, slides and bouncy castle; while the local fire brigade has a fire engine on display – ever popular with the children. Money raised goes to charities such as Master Trust, Kent Air Ambulance and Cancer Research. Pumpkin growing is great fun; if you don't win the beer you can always end up with a Halloween lantern! Buy your plants in late Spring and let nature take its course. Present your efforts in October and enjoy Paul's well-kept range of Adnam's, Young's and London Pride and an afternoon of "Merrie England" – each plant purchased entitling you to a pint on the day.



Alan Barnes

AVAILABLE NOW

REAL ALE



On sale in pubs throughout the White Cliffs area

Also available mail order

Send £2.50 (P&P inc) to :


**Real Ale in White Cliffs Country
167, Markland Road, Dover,
Kent CT17 9NL
(Cheques payable to 'DDS CAMRA')**

Real Ale in White Cliffs Country

Amendments as at June 2006

The revised licensing laws mean that some the pub opening times shown in the guide may now have changed.

- **Butchers Arms, Ashley** – Now closed, future uncertain.
- **Yew Tree, Barfrestone** - The family symbol  should be added. The cider is Biddenden 8% Dry.
- **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.
- **Orange Tree, Dover** – Closed and boarded up. Future uncertain
- **White Horse, Dover** - Opening Times changed to Mon-Sat 16.00-11.00pm
Sun 13.00-10.30pm.
- **Mogul, Dover** - Now Closed. Converted into offices. Stillage from The Mogul transferred to Blakes, Dover.
- **Crown, Finglesham** - telephone number should be 01304 612555.
- **Hare & Hounds, Northbourne** - fully no smoking 
- **Bell, Shepherdswell** - Destroyed by fire.
- **Lifeboat, Walmer** - Closed following retirement of landlady, future of pub 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

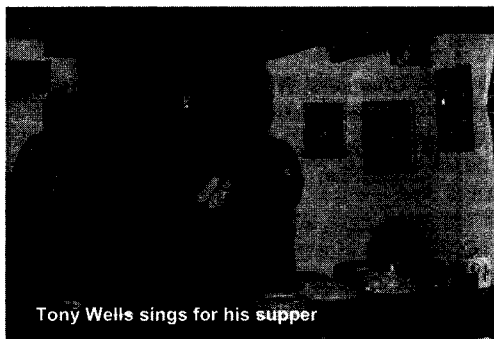
BAT & TRAP AT THE CROWN, FINGLESHAM

The latest Deal Dover Sandwich and District branch social took place on 29th August at the Crown Inn at Finglesham, which just so happens to be the local of... yes, you guessed it, the Finglesham Contingent. The aim of the evening was for people to get together over a few beers, good nosh, and a sociable game of Bat and Trap (more on this 'ancient Kentish art' in a minute).

The Crown is a centuries-old pub with 'modern' parts dating from the 16th century, although there have been dwellings on the site from as far back as the reign of King John (1199-1216). A framed history of the pub shows that, in 1628, there were three acres (of fifteen acres at the time) planted with hops and, in 1674, the premises were bought by 'a hop grower and common beer seller', who was then granted 'a licence to sell ales and ciders of his own making'. The framed history can be seen on the walls of the restaurant and on the pub's website (see below) – but suffice to say the pub today retains original features such as ancient flagstones in the restaurant, open fire, and exposed brickwork/timber. The outside area is still vast – there is a pretty garden to one side of the pub with BBQ and children's play area, and a huge field at the back, which is home to the Bat and Trap pitch as well as electrical outlets for caravans (it is a Certified Caravan Club site). It has been a regular *Good Beer Guide* entry for several years and, as a local, it's a great community hub – with a good social emphasis and traditional pub games such as crib, cards, dominos, scrabble etc (not to mention B&T).



The Beer Festival stillage



Tony Wells sings for his supper

As evening public transport to rural villages is problematic, a mini bus was organised to ferry six Dover Contingent members to our evening social at the pub, where everyone enjoyed a few beers out in the garden on arrival. We were spoiled for choice, as the timing was organised so we could put to good use any leftovers from the bank holiday weekend, for which landlord Dave Cooper had arranged a festival of Biddenden cider and more than ten beers (along with those on hand pump inside the pub) – so we were more than happy to oblige!

The festival is an established annual event, and for more details of this year's offering, please see the beer festivals round-up elsewhere in this newsletter.

Before the match, Dave served up a great BBQ supper of pig roast (a Crown favourite) and good old fashioned bangers with potato salad, coleslaw, rolls and other accompaniments – all delicious and getting the thumbs up all round. After such good sustenance and with full bellies, it was all we could do to tear ourselves away from the cosy restaurant and head out to the Bat and Trap pitch.

I know we've explained the game in previous issues of this newsletter, but for those who don't know it I'll briefly run over the basics again. Believed to be centuries old, some think the game was originally played between rows of fruit trees in Kentish orchards (which we think may account for the hugely varying types of pitch found across the patch). Teams in our league (East Kent Friendly League) comprise eight players and play includes various aspects of bowls, cricket, football and tennis.

Details can be found in the Bat and Trap websites listed below but, in a nutshell the game proceeds as follows. The batsman hits the 'trap' (a wooden oblong box with a see-saw 'striker' and flap at the front),

CAMRA's answer to the 'Magnificent Seven'

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sending a ball (a lacrosse ball, in our league) up into the air which he, or she, then attempts to hit down the pitch, with the aim of getting it between two posts at the other end (this is the bowling end). If the ball doesn't make it down the pitch, goes outside the posts, or is not struck after three attempts, the batsman is out by way of a 'knock out'. The batsman is also out if the opposition catches the ball before it hits the ground. Players in the bowling team then take turns to bowl the ball back, aiming to knock down the small square flap at the front of the trap, in order to get the batsman out. If they miss, play continues in this fashion until the batsman either 'knocks out' or is caught or bowled. Each team has a chance to bat and bowl, and whichever team wins the best of three legs is the winning team.

With four Finglesham Contingent members, five from Dover, and a new branch member (Tom) who signed up on the night, it meant we had enough players to form two slightly smaller than usual teams for our match. The Crown's official home team is undoubtedly one of the more raucous in the league, and games are always jovial and informal. Therefore we've never seen anyone wear a tie to Bat and Trap, until this night when, sure enough, Roger Marples did – he was quite the most respectably attired player I've ever seen on the pitch (and a demon with the bat, it must be said)!

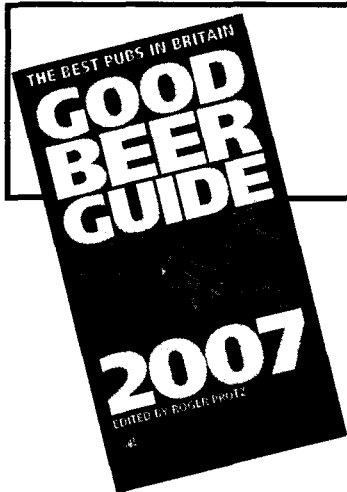
It was fun watching some of the newcomers to the game learn the 'art' that is Bat and Trap, and more than a few showed great natural talent. If only they didn't live in Dover, I'm sure my husband, Julian (the Crown team's captain) would have been tempted to sign them up. Indeed, the only two people to take traps on the night were Tom (who is semi-resident in Finglesham and, to be fair, has played for the home team this season) and Dick from the Dover Contingent. Having said this, years of experience must count for something, as the two shining batsmen were Julian, and the Crown Vice-captain, Tony, who was 'not out' at the end of the second leg.

The evening's banter was good, and everyone seemed to enjoy themselves, which is after all what we were all there for – and both teams decided to call it a day with a very equitable draw, having won one leg each. The deciding leg gave way to votes for retiring back into the pub for more beer from the festival tent, and the obligatory post match analysis before the mini bus came to take the Dover Contingent home. A good time was had by all, and it is nice the way we seem to alternate our branch socials between town and country pubs – in this way, people who cannot easily reach country pubs get the opportunity to experience places they seldom visit, while rural pubs receive a healthy boost by way of extra patronage.

Details of branch socials are normally listed in the Events Diary at the front of *Channel Draught*, or you can contact the branch for information (see Branch Contacts at the back of this newsletter). If you are a branch member, why not come along to the next social evening – or, if like Tom, you're not, come along and join on the night?

Anne McIlroy

Bat and Trap at the Crown Inn: <http://www.thecrownatfinglesham.co.uk/batandtrap.html>
Wikipedia Bat and Trap entry: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bat_and_trap
Rules of the game: <http://www.mastersgames.com/rules/bat-trap-rules.htm>



GOOD BEER GUIDE 2007

The Good Beer Guide is the only good thing about being out" - Andrew "Freddy" Flintoff

THE 34th edition of the Campaign for Real Ale (CAMRA) Good Beer Guide edited by award-winning beer writer Roger Protz is now available. The Good Beer Guide 2007 is the number one guide to pubs selling fine quality real ale. From sophisticated city bars to cosy country inns, tiny off-beat locals to grand architectural gems, with the Good Beer Guide 2007 you are never far from a decent pint of real ale.

The Good Beer Guide 2007 features:

County by county guides to the best real ale pubs.

Descriptions of more than 600 real-ale breweries across Britain.

4,500 full pub entries to guide the reader to Britain's best beer and pubs, complete with beer listings, opening hours, pub food, family facilities, accommodation, and history.

It also contains features on:

- **Loss of regional breweries and community ownership.** The loss of regional breweries has reached worrying proportions in recent years as larger companies swallow up smaller competitors and mergers and closures become more common. The success of the micro-brewery sector is encouraging but the threat to independent family-owned breweries, their pub estates and beers cannot be ignored. CAMRA wants employees of breweries under threat of takeover or merger to be given the opportunity to purchase the brewery themselves through a co-operative.
- **Pub Food.** Jean-Christophe Novelli, Antony Worrall Thompson, and most recently Gordon Ramsey - all are acclaimed and well-known chefs who have embraced pub food as the new premium dining experience. The Good Beer Guide 2007 features interviews with high profile chefs that provide pub food, including : Jean-Christophe Novelli - White Horse, Harpenden, Hertfordshire Antony Worrall Thompson - The Lamb, Satwell, Oxfordshire and Phil Vickery - hosts master classes for pub chefs
- **National Inventory: Pub interiors of outstanding historical interest.** The Good Beer Guide 2007 features an updated list of CAMRA's National Inventory Pubs, a pioneering effort to protect the most important historic pub interiors in the country.

Order your copy from <http://shop.camra.org.uk/> for a special on line price of £10 for CAMRA members, or £12.99 for Non CAMRA members. The Good Beer Guide 2007 retails in bookshops for £14.99



LOOKING BACK WITH THE BEERY BOATERS

'A Bit of a Brum Do'

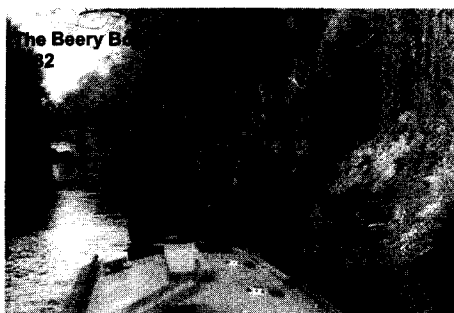
The 1982 Canal Trip

It was the last Saturday in April 1982, and once again a group of intrepid drinkers and canal enthusiasts assembled at the Crossroads Hotel, Weedon. The crew was the same as the previous year except for the absence of John Willcox and the addition of Andy Wells and Jeremy, who was promptly re-christened "Biggus Dickus" because of his involvement with the Ermine Street Guard, and the film *The Life of Brian* being in vogue at that time. Once again our boat was *Olympus* from Weltonfield Narrowboats, but a new *Olympus* – 70ft and just completed fitting out (last year's craft having now departed). It possessed substantially extra response and speed, which together with an excess of duty-free spirits led to an eventful first day.

The route as far as Napton Junction was the same as in 1981, but undertaken in a far less staid manner. Braunston Tunnel was negotiated without trouble but quite a lot of rum had been consumed by the time we arrived at the top of Braunston Locks where, outside the Admiral Nelson Inn, I was pushing off from the bank when the Skipper opened the throttle. Finding myself at an angle of thirty degrees to the horizontal, I surrendered to the inevitable, let go, and commenced a fast over-arm stroke after *Olympus*, which appeared to be vanishing over the horizon. The boat stopped, and when I caught up with it I was greeted by Frosty The Snowman peering over the stern – Andy's nose, always noticeable, tended to attain the hue of an over-ripe carrot when he had been drinking. He kindly removed my glasses before sitting back to continue his drink. Fortunately, there were others on the stern and I was unceremoniously hauled on board. Shortly afterwards Mike followed my example. Glass in hand, he tried to sit on the stern rail where the gap was located, and rapidly found himself in the canal, with his rum getting somewhat diluted.

We reached the bottom of Braunston Locks without further problems, and were progressing through the moored boats when someone shouted at us – perhaps our wash was somewhat excessive. We now know that EVERYONE gets shouted at on the canals, however this was our first experience, and Dave answered in choice seamanlike terms. Not to be outdone, the other fellow expressed doubts about Dave's parentage, with which *Olympus* was rapidly put alongside the towpath and Dave, windlass in hand, proceeded ashore to continue the conversation. The other, however, declined and, possessing a good pair of legs, made a speedy escape. Out of breath, but somewhat satisfied, the Skipper returned to the boat and we continued on our merry way.

At Napton Junction we took the course of the former Warwick and Birmingham Canal (now part of the Grand Union) towards Birmingham, and soon reached the Boat Inn at Stockton, with fond memories of the excellent Bass of the previous year. As we were tying up opposite we were mystified when the landlord hailed us to say we had a phone



call, we couldn't think who knew where we were. However, it turned out to be the owner of Weltonfield Narrowboats, who had received a complaint from the Braunston boater with the offensive voice and the fast pair of legs. Dave took the call, and retorted that if the owner was upset he could come and collect the boat and return our money. That wouldn't be necessary, he replied, but he'd come over and see us. On arrival he asked what we were having, and nine glasses were rapidly emptied and refilled.

Soon, our errant ways seemingly forgotten, we were joined by his wife, who had stayed in the car in case there was to be any unpleasantness, and an excellent evening ensued. What a start to the trip.

Sunday morning and with the sun shining on the righteous, we were up at six, and off to Leamington for lunchtime. We made good time, down the Stockton Flight of ten locks (Itchington Ten to the old boaters) and through another ten (two a staircase pair), before arriving early at Royal Leamington Spa, but the neglected and rubbish-strewn state of the canal persuaded us to press on to Warwick before mooring up. Between the two towns we crossed the Avon by aqueduct, where proposals exist to link it to the canal two by a set of broad locks, but to date opposition from the 'mistakenly-called' conservation lobby has prevented any progress. At Warwick we tied up above Cape Locks



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TRADITIONAL OLD ENGLISH PUB

OPEN

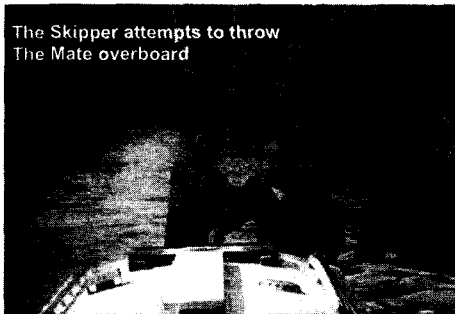
Monday to Saturday 12 - 3pm 6pm-Late

Sunday 11-3pm 7pm-11pm

near the then non-real ale Cape of Good Hope (now a GBG regular), but enjoyed Ansells mild at the Emscote Tavern, and Flowers bitter at the Simple Simon before setting off to tackle the mighty Hatton Flight.

The 'Twenty-one Steps to Heaven' are daunting. Lock-wheelers went on ahead and we all set to with enthusiasm. Before long *Olympus* had drawn level with another hire cruiser which breasted up with us. The sight from halfway up is thought-provoking; back down to the steeple of Warwick Cathedral, up to the walls of Hatton Mental Hospital! We cleared the flight in 2¼ hours and thought we had done well. However I have subsequently ascended in 1hr 45 min; and to put things into perspective a working boatman with a pair of loaded 70ft boats, and only his wife and maybe a son as crew, would reckon to take only two hours. A further five miles, and after passing through the 433yd

The Skipper attempts to throw
The Mate overboard



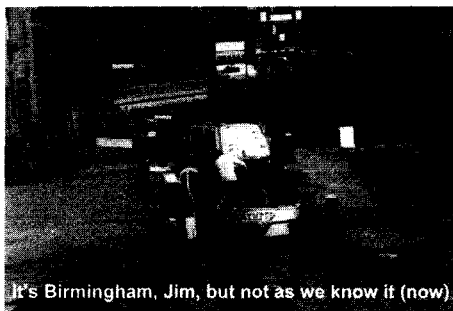
Shrewley Tunnel, where the cook had a field day tooting on his bugle despite threats to where it might be put, we moored at the end of the afternoon at Kingswood Junction, on the short link joining the Grand Union to the middle of the Lapworth flight on the Stratford Canal. The evening was spent at the nearby Boot Inn (Flowers), where we were allocated a small bar to ourselves in which to eat, drink and generally amuse ourselves. I'm not sure whether this was done as a kindness to us or to the other customers!

On Monday morning we ascended the top 19 of the Lapworth flight, our first narrow locks with stiff paddle gear and leaky gates. Once on top however we were on the 453ft high Birmingham Level where it's possible to travel lock-free over large parts of Birmingham and the Black Country. The rest of the morning was spent enjoying a mini heat wave and negotiating the rural, sometimes twisty, and usually shallow, North Stratford Canal, with just the occasional lift or swing-bridge to enliven proceedings. The Skipper wanted to press on towards Birmingham, but while negotiating a lift bridge at Majors Green, most of the crew absconded to the adjacent pub. Faced with a fait accompli he tied up, and we spent a lunchtime session at the recently-built Drawbridge enjoying the excellent Davenport's beer. In the afternoon we carried on to Birmingham through tunnels at Brandwood and Edgebaston, past Cadbury's factory at Bournville and the ex-working boats at Gas Street Basin, to finally moor up in Cambrian Basin right in the middle of Brum.

Ignoring the new and rather plastic-looking Long Boat pub-on the waterfront we set off (hopefully) for better things, which we soon found in the shape of the Prince of Wales, set in a terrace of houses in nearby Cambridge Street, with Ansells mild and bitter and Nancy, the Irish landlady. It was, and still is a good pub, although the rest of the terrace has gone. Alterations were in train at the time, causing a rather precarious journey to a portalo at the back across a wobbly plank over a ditch. After a few pints the merry men set off to sample the delights of the big city, but found the rest of the pubs rather disappointing. Light entertainment was provided in the Australian Bar by a bunch of chaps appearing in female garments. On the way back we stopped for a lamb Madras – all except Phil who said he didn't like funny foreign muck and could he have egg and chips; while one of our number added that the rest of us wanted curry, and would the dusky

visaged gentleman (or something to that effect) kindly be quick and make it hot – and hot it was, very. The following morning eight-ninths of the crew arose with delicate insides and wishing that they'd put the toilet paper in the fridge overnight. The other ninth wandered around with a sanctimonious smirk on his face. We stayed for a final pint or three at the Prince of Wales before setting off once more on our epic voyage.

Descending the 13 Farmers Bridge Locks, which disappear into a cavern under the Birmingham Post Office Tower, and were then quite polluted with a noticeable smell, and several unidentifiable bloated objects cruising around, we turned right at Aston Junction, down the six Ashted Locks, and up the six at Camp Hill. These were far-from-easy locks and the day was well advanced when we got into open country and tied up at Catherine de Barnes Bridge, where we went to the Boat, a rather up-market pub selling Davenport's beer. It was only in later years that we discovered the local's bar at the back. Someone suggested we try Hampton-in-Arden, about two miles , and with the road sign opposite the pub being marked 'Hampton Road' we set off and walked, and walked. Eventually a town sign appeared in the distance. We pressed on. 'Solihull', it read. We had walked in the wrong direction down Hampton Road! Solihull proved disappointing – characterless pubs, with limited choice of real ale, seemingly mainly pandering to teenage lager drinkers. However, the evening's gloom was brightened by an excellent Chinese restaurant (with egg and chips for Phil), a shopping trolley race with Mike and Andy as the intrepid jockeys and a taxi driver who took all nine of us back to the boat in his ex-London cab in one trip.



It's Birmingham, Jim, but not as we know it (now).

Wednesday morning found us through the five Knowle Locks, and on our way to the Durham Ox near Shrewley Tunnel for lunchtime. At Kingswood Junction I hopped off for a pint of Flowers at the Tom of the Wood, but found the subsequent walk along the towpath was further than I thought, and while the pleasant weather made this bearable, there was thick mud everywhere from recent dredging. I found *Olympus* moored at the north end of the tunnel, with the rest of the crew sprawled on the lawn outside the Durham Ox consuming ale as if it were to be abolished the next day. It was M&B, in excellent form and the cheapest beer on that year's trip – mild 42p per pint! On our return to the boat I proved how much I had

drunk by slipping off the side. The descent of Hatton Locks was enlivened by a stinging nettle battle, which ended with Mike shoving me backwards into one of the redundant narrow locks full of stagnant water. The passing lock keeper was not amused. The evening was spent in Warwick, which proved a far better drinking town than Solihull. However the aftermath is more memorable. On return to the boat the radio announced one of our first successes of the Falklands Campaign, then being waged, whereupon hidden bottles of spirits were produced and general celebrations took place.

The Hatton Filght, near Warwick



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Next day no-one got up until about eight o'clock, not only because of the previous night's session, but we had time in hand and wanted to have a decent lunchtime in Leamington. We did, visiting some of the pubs more remote from the canal, and paying serious attention to a take-away real ale and cheese shop. Our evening stop was Long Itchington and the Green Man, where we entertained ourselves with a replay of the Roman invasion of Britain, while waiting for it to open. Staged with clods of earth, history was reversed with the Ermine Street Guard (all one of them) being soundly beaten by the Cantii (the rest of us)! We had hoped for a repeat of last year's excellent evening at the pub but found it had overdone the 'lates' a bit and the police were currently taking an unwelcome interest. So although we had a pleasant session on the Davenportes we had to leave on time.

Friday morning, the last day, and we were well ahead of schedule. Lunchtime, we were back at Stockton where this time we tried the Crown, and enjoyed ourselves with good beer from Ansells, and silly games; the latter including seeing who could pee up the wall furthest in the outside urinal. Biggus Dickus claimed to have won, thus justifying his nickname, but the Skipper reckoned he had jumped! Nightfall found us at the top of Braunston Locks, having taken it a bit easier past the boats at the bottom. The Old Plough was again our last evening's venue, which entailed walking back down the locks, crossing the canal by a footbridge and taking a path to the village via several gates and stiles. Unlike the previous year the pub had its 'proper' beer, Ansells, and in good form, as was the food. We were joined by a young lady who claimed to be some sort of country and western singer, which I hope she was better at than her efforts to guess our occupations – me, a university professor! And we got very good 'lates'.

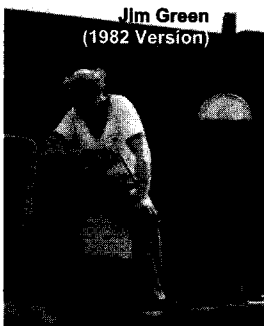
We all kept together on the tortuous route back to avoid getting lost, but when we reached the boat it was noticed that Ray had gone adrift. "Shall we go and look for him?" enquired some kind person. "No!" chorused the rest! He arrived some time later having found his way through the cow-pat infested fields to the canal, but opposite to where *Olympus* was moored up!

On Saturday morning we motored back to Weltonfield Narrowboats, having completed 99 miles and 152 locks. Thinking we were well on time (last year we had to return by 10am) we were surprised to find an irate owner waiting for us. The return time had been altered to 9am. Worse, he had engaged a camera crew to be there for our arrival, as he was making a publicity film featuring the new boat, and the movie lads had just departed to fulfill another engagement. We

decided it was time to move to fresh pastures for our 1983 trip!

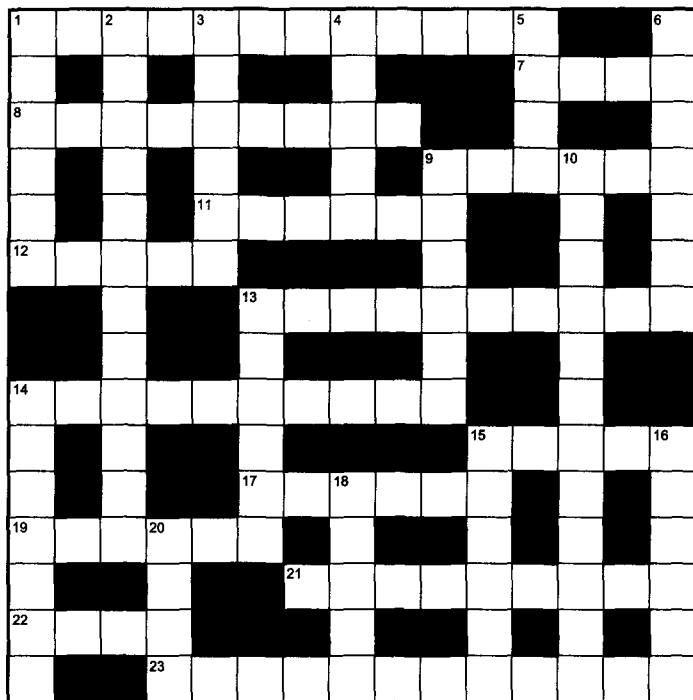
The 1982 Crew (Motley)

- Dave G - Skipper
- Ray - Mate (but not the Skipper's)
- Jim - Hon. Commodore/General Dogsbody
- Mike - Cook
- Andy
- Jeremy (Biggus Dickus)
- Dave R
- Phil
- Dodger



*Jim
Green*

BEERWORD



Across

1. Consort in pub opposite Maison Dieu (6,6)
7. Deal pub discovered in calm area (4)
8. Elderly gentleman drinking Garton brew (3,6)
9. Connection to Kent village (6)
11. Twisted silent Xmas decoration (6)
12. Cheapest hour to be in the pub (5)
13. Manufacturer of building materials has arms in Mill Road (10)
14. Royal French symbol in Sandwich (5-2-3)
15. The colour of nectar! (5)
17. Romeo X mixed in Somerset brewery (6)
19. Web err. makes beer maker (6)
21. Teaching Rita? (9)
22. Spring holiday cut short in the land of the rising sun (4)
23. Dizzy Miss drank her Kent ale (12)

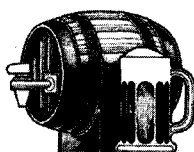
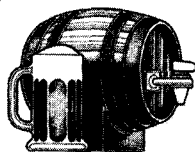
Down

1. Seven stars in Ripple? (6)
2. IPA in long hand (5,4,3)
3. Ruddles area (6)
4. Rifle Ed's hidden town in Yorkshire (5)
5. Take one home when you've drunk too much (4)
6. One who arranges food around terrace (7)
9. Cooks left in Dover bar (6)
10. Black curry, not too spicy, from Red Squirrel (4,4,4)
13. Brock from Dorset (6)
14. Initially first up, Mike bowled: Lengthy, even dangerous; dropped the catch (7)
15. Harveys ale sailed in from Spain, perhaps (6)
16. Looks like one when dead (6)
18. Not sir, reads up and down (5)
20. Keep yours about you when alert (4)

Solution on Page 61



The Chambers



ALES & CIDERS ALWAYS ON DRAUGHT:

ALES

ADNAMS - SOUTHWOLD
HOPDAEMON - SKRIMSHANDER
GADDS - NO 5
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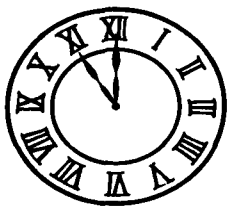
Note in your new 2007 diary:

WHITE CLIFFS FESTIVAL OF WINTER ALES 2007

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LAST KNOCKINGS

No doubt the good weather in June and July will have been a boost to pubs and the brewing industry: car parks choc-a-bloc, pub doors flung wide open and happy drinkers sitting out on benches and soaking up the heat. However pubs don't pop up in the spring along with the flowers, they are there all the year round and need an all year round income if they are to survive. If they regularly received the support we've seen this summer fewer landlords would have a struggle keeping their heads above water and the banks off their backs. Unfortunately too many drinkers seem to be of the fair-weather persuasion, wanting the pub for a barny summer evening or special occasion but ignoring it the rest of the time. I'm not suggesting everyone should match hardened CAMRA members, but dropping in for a couple of drinks once or twice a week would make one hell of a difference.

Also with the hot weather comes the mystery of the disappearing barrels. Whenever we hit a heat wave, or just a spell of fine summer weather, the normal routine of beer deliveries, is strangely disrupted. Landlords ring through their regular requirements and are assured by the office staff that it will all be on the dray as usual, but come delivery and, hey presto, a barrel (or maybe barrels) will have vanished – evaporated in the heat? stolen by the fairies? – who can tell. It is of course nothing to do with a sudden increase in demand, which the brewers hadn't calculated for. Interestingly, or perhaps not surprisingly, it also appears confined to the larger suppliers, and reinforces the opinion of those who view large organisations as dinosaurs. And the converse appears to be not unknown as well. In early September one local landlord told me he was being offered late dated beer at reduced prices by a major distributor – the only logical reason we could think of being the firm had ordered for August on the basis of July only to find the weather changed.

A recent edition of CAMRA's newspaper, *What's Brewing*, included an interview with Greene King boss, Rooney Anand. If nothing else he seems a smooth talker, praising CAMRA for its commitment and passion, but not the slightest hint of what was being planned for Old Speckled Hen. Then there was his reference to those who would write us off as 'a bunch of myopic terrorists'. Who might? Evidently not Mr Anand himself, who distanced himself from such comments, but is this the kind of thinking to be found amongst some of his fellow brewers, in response to our fight for quality and choice? Myopic might well apply to some members, but to my knowledge, CAMRA has not, as yet, spawned a militant arm devoted to covert operations against cask breathers and gas canisters. However a number of interesting points emerged from the interview. On brewery closures Mr Anand claimed a duty to shareholders and workers, as well as consumers. He is of course right – but are such duties even handed? If my understanding of

company law is correct his first and overriding duty is to the company's shareholders; not, obviously, a problem faced by the average microbrewer, and one which may well explain many drinkers' preference for micro products. The other thing that caught my attention was his praise for Worthington White Shield, a beer which, although allegedly still brewed, is notable by its absence from any pub that I've been in during the last few years. I note that Greene King has just launched a bottled IPA at 5%. Whether this in any way matches White Shield or indeed is bottle conditioned I don't know – I suspect not, but live in hope.

Sitting with a pint one evening during the hot weather in one of the area's smaller pubs, it was good to see another drinker enjoying a pipe of tobacco along with his drink. It was quite late and he appeared satisfyingly content, no doubt having popped round to the local for a pint or two and a smoke before going to bed. What a shame, then, that in a less than a year's time both he and the pub will be breaking the law. From July 2007 he will have to take his pipe outside – OK perhaps in the summer, but on a cold, wet winter night? For such an improvement to his life he can thank a large section of the House of Commons, who not for the first time, have allowed woolly thinking to replace cool and reasoned logic. In the complete absence of concrete statistics and any sensible assessment of the level of risk, they have acquiesced with the anti-smoking lobby, and given in to its demands for a ban on smoking in public places, which of course includes the real objective of the exercise: pubs. Whether the consequential fall off in trade, lost jobs, closed pubs and interference with personal freedom was given much consideration is open to speculation, but the anti-smoking campaigners appear quite happy that such sacrifices be made in their long running battle with the cigarette manufacturers. And, as yet, no one has satisfactorily explained to me how smoking, a perfectly legal activity, cannot, in any circumstances, be offered as an option by a public house or any other establishment, even if it necessitated the issuing of a licence to do so. Nor has anyone explained why it's OK for bar staff to be exposed to the risk of assault by drunks, but not passive smoking.

And there was more dissembling and disinformation from the health brigade during a recent discussion on Radio 4's Woman's Hour about excessive drinking. Listeners were informed by a doctor that people did not know how much they were drinking, that ALL wine is now above 12% ABV, and that brewers are promoting 'premium strength brews' and cutting out the weaker beers. In fact the strength of alcoholic drinks has never been more clearly or widely labelled, a glance at the wine shelves in any off-licence or super-market would reveal plenty of wine under 12% and, while there may have been some shift towards stronger beers weaker brewers still account for a major part of the market – Carling Black Label, for example, at 4%, being one of the country's biggest, if not *the* biggest seller.

Old Wort

St. Crispin Inn

*15th Century
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Branch Contacts

If you have any queries about
CAMRA, or any dispute concerning
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Chairman)

Martin Atkins - 01304 201870
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You can e-mail the branch using:
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And Finally.....

Beer glass Jesus

A group of churches in Britain plan to use an advertisement featuring the face of Jesus as a "miraculous" apparition on an empty beer glass the centerpiece of a campaign to encourage church-going this Christmas. Not surprisingly, early reactions are mixed.

In the campaign, a poster shows the face of Jesus emerging from the froth on the sides of an empty glass alongside the words "Where will you find him?"

The Churches' Advertising Network (CAN), an inter-denominational group of Christians that has previously depicted Jesus as a baby Santa Claus and the revolutionary, Che Guevara, said the new ads highlight the global trend for seeing religious figures in everyday objects.

"The message is subtle but simple - where is God in all the boozing at Christmas?" said CAN chairman Francis Goodwin.

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