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**CAMPAIGN
FOR
REAL ALE**

**Issue 37
Autumn
2008**

The newsletter of the Deal Dover Sandwich & District
Branch of the Campaign for Real Ale

CHANNEL DRAUGHT



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THROUGH
TIME &
TOWER
HAMLETS**

Part Two

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KNOW
GADD'S**

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WELCOME TO DOVER?



CAN WE SAVE OUR DISAPPEARING TOWN PUBS?

Channel Draught

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CHANNEL DRAUGHT



ISSUE 37

Autumn 2008

The chill winds of Autumn do blow, and perhaps none more chill than this Autumn, as we discover that a large part of the world's financial system appears to have been constructed on the shifting sands of Biblical parable, and we head towards recession. Perhaps no better time then, than to turn to more solid and substantial values, as might be found in real ale and the traditional public house. While no doubt brewers and pubs will suffer along with the rest of us, over the ensuing months, we might hope that the recent strength of real ale and the micro industry will place them in a good position to weather this particular storm (see National News and Small Brewery News). Our economic problems might also have a silver lining, as the falling housing market makes it less attractive for pub chains and breweries to sell off their "poorer performing" pubs for conversion to houses.

However as things stand at the moment public houses continue to be under considerable pressure, especially in and around Dover – our cover illustrating the fate of one of the more recent casualties, the Hare & Hounds, Maxton. As we comment elsewhere in this newsletter a quarter of the town's pubs have closed over the last few years, half a dozen within the last year alone. Never has the phrase, "use or lose it" appeared more apt. On the plus side, if you know where to find it, the variety and quality of real ale has never been better, and in Kent we have the good fortune to possess a number of very good small breweries. Our newsletter contains a description of a visit to one this summer. We also include our annual update of Kentish cider and perry producers, and local cider and perry outlets; the second part of Paul Skelton's time travel around the pubs of Tower Hamlets; the start of the Beery Boaters 1985 spring trip; as well as local and national news and some of our Branch's more recent activities.

Martin Atkins (Editor)

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EVENTS DIARY

Monday 17 th November	Branch Meeting, Louis Armstrong, Dover
Fri 5 th to Sun 7 th Dec	Beer Festival, Phoenix, Old Dover Rd, Canterbury*
Monday 15 th December	Branch Meeting and Christmas Social, Fleur de Lis, Sandwich 7pm.
Monday 19 th January	Branch Meeting, Blakes, Castle St, Dover.
Fri 6 th & Sat 7 th February	WHITE CLIFFS FESTIVAL OF WINTER ALES, Dover Town Hall

Branch Website www.camra-dds.org.uk

Branch meetings are normally held every third Monday of each month and start at 7.30pm.

For full details about pub strolls, please email john.pitcher@ic24.net or call 01304 214153.

Events marked * are not organised by CAMRA

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

The £5 Pint

In August CAMRA released figures showing that pub beer prices have surged following the budget. The average pub price of a pint of real ale has increased by 12p and the average price of a pint of lager has increased by 14p. These increases have taken place over a four month period and stem from a 10% increase in beer tax in March's budget, and new research shows that 62% of pub goers blame the Government for high pub beer prices.

Fierce price competition from supermarkets and falling beer sales have limited the ability of licensees to fully pass on cost increases to consumers. However, as licensees come under increasing financial pressure many will soon be forced to pass on, in full, the increased tax, wholesale prices and operating costs. CAMRA fears that pub beer price inflation this year could exceed 10%. Unless plans for swingeing increases in beer tax over the next four years are reversed, many thousands of community pubs will close and average pub price of a pint in London and the South East will be over £4 in a few years. The very real prospect of a £5 pint in some pubs by the time of the 2012 London Olympics looms very large.

CAMRA invited Alistair Darling to the Great British Beer Festival so that he might explain his tax-on-beer policy but to no one's surprise he failed to turn up. However if not there in person, he was there in image. On the opening day, Tuesday 5th August, dozens of "Darlings" turned, up wearing Alistair Darling face-masks, "fair deal on beer tax" t shirts and carrying placards, to

protest about his taxation policies. Meanwhile 65,000 plus visitors, including 5,000 licensees and brewers, were asked to send their MP a postcard protesting at high beer tax; and in the run up to the Festival over 1,700 people had joined a Facebook group, "Fair Deal on Beer Tax", to support calls for lower excise duty on beer.

CAMRA Chief Executive Mike Benner said: "This year's devastating increase in beer tax has forced publicans to increase prices, and pub-goers are right to lay the blame at the door of the Government. High beer taxes threaten to prevent many low and moderate earners enjoying a regular pint at their local pub. We desperately urge the Chancellor to think again before he goes down in history as the Chancellor who closed thousands of community pubs, damaged community life, and prevented many millions of pub-goers from enjoying a regular trip to the pub."

This is not something the British people want; research released to coincide with the festival revealed that 65% of British people view the public house as an integral part of British life. It also showed that 69% of all adults think well-run community pubs are the best places to enjoy alcohol.

Benner continued: "Public houses offer a safe, controlled and supervised environment for people to relax with a drink. The Chancellor has failed to recognise that well-run community pubs are the solution to Britain's binge drinking problems. Ever increasing beer tax will do nothing to stop binge drinking, as it will simply lead to a continuing shift in consumption away from well-run community pubs to drinking at home, on the streets and in public parks."

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The Local News

Contributors - Martin Atkins, Anne McIlroy, Roger Marples,
John Pitcher, Tony Wells, Malcolm Birt and
Di Jones etc.

*Please note that any views expressed herein are those of the contributors
and are not necessarily those of this branch or CAMRA Ltd*

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 email:

channeldraught.pubnews@virgin.net

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

DOVER

Hare & Hounds, Folkestone Rd: The pub now joins the ranks of those that will not be featuring in these pages much more, having been declared a non-pub by virtue of the District Council's granting of permission for conversion to a house at the end of August. The change of use was not unopposed, there were several letters of objection including a petition with 150 signatures, and the Branch also spoke against the proposal at the planning meeting. However, with no urban pubs policy there was little the Planning Committee could do but accede to Shepherd Neame's wishes. Particularly depressing were comments from a couple of the Councillors. A Conservative councillor, while admitting that as a local resident he was perhaps guilty of not patronising the pub, added however, that these days he was unlikely to be found in a pub which didn't sell food. Meanwhile, one of his Labour opponents saw the future of the Hare and Hounds as simply a matter for the market.

Prince of Orange, New St: At the same meeting the proposal to convert the pub into six flats with extensions and additions was thrown out, however, again the use was not an issue and the refusal arose from problems with de-

sign and the overlooking of other properties. Those of us who despair at the current sudden loss of so many Dover pubs may therefore retain some hope that the intentions of the developers might yet be forestalled and this particular pub retained. Meanwhile, Rab and Teresa at the **Golden Lion** a few streets away continue to put plenty of real ale across the bar. Recently seen brews have included Marston Long Hop, Brains SA Gold, Fuller's London Pride, Greene King IPA and Abbot and Theakston's XB. Real ale is now a very competitive £2.50 a pint up just 10p from before the budget, and the first price rise in two years.

Old Endeavour, London Rd: Also on the plus side, the pub has reopened following its closure in early April as a result of a police anti drugs operation, and with plans for putting the hand-pumps back into use again. New licensee is Chris Gardener, who runs other pubs in the Deal area and has wide experience in the licensed trade. He is determined to make the Old Endeavour a family pub again, and held an official opening on Sunday 14th Sept. Daily opening is from noon, and with reference to its previous problems Chris says, "it will be known as a pub with a zero tolerance to drugs." With respect

to real ale, which has been absent from the pub for several years, Chris hopes to carry two Shepherd Neame Ales.

Eagle, London Rd: The pub has moved away from its dependence on Nelson ales to include beers from further afield. Harveys Sussex proved particularly successful and a firkin of Bass in the middle of August disappeared in a couple of days. Greene King IPA has also been tried, and a pint drunk in mid September was one of the best kept of that ale our reporter had come across.

Blakes, Castle St: At the end of July Kathryn and Peter introduced a mystery ale competition in support of the hospital for Dover campaign. Guesses were a pound a go and the winner would be entitled to four free pints. The first mystery firkin was emptied after a couple of days and the ale's identity revealed: nobody got it right and most were amazed (see Last Knockings). Subsequent weeks have seen a variety of widely available ales put up for test, including Ruddles County, Pedigree, Brakspear Bitter and Oakham Bishop's Farewell, and the general level of recognition has remained in line with the first week's, although about four people identified Bishop's Farewell.

As well as the mystery challenge there are special offers at Blakes from Monday to Thursday: all real ales £2 a pint on Monday, draught ciders and perries £2 a pint Tuesday and reductions on wine and malt whiskies on respectively Wednesday and Thursday. Owing to delivery problems Blakes standard bitter is switching from Goacher's brewed Blakes (which will continue as an occasional) to Harveys Sussex.

White Horse, St James St: As usual the last few months have seen a wide variety of ales. Regular suppliers such as RCH, Dark Star, Titanic, Acorn and Hop Back have been well represented,

often with new beers or ones not seen before – Acorn Forester and Harvester both proving particular pleasing. From less commonly seen breweries Nick Stafford's Buckaroo and Lodden's Rin Tin Tin (both 4% bitters) stood out, while totally new brewers, to this reporter at least, were Inveralmond Brewery of Perth and Fenland Brewery of Ely. The former provided the pub with Independence, a 3.8% malty bitter and, particularly good, Lia Fail, a 4.7% strong bitter, while from the latter Doctor's Orders was excellent. The summer has seen Channel swimmers continuing to record their exploits on the bar walls, and remaining space is now limited. The first Sunday of every month the pub hosts an entertaining and well supported quiz.

Prince Albert, Biggin St: Cheerfully describing itself as a lively town centre pub with a loud juke box, standard real ale is Ruddles Best, very competitively priced at £1.80 a pint. On the other two handpumps are a guest ale and a cider, at the time of writing Badger's Tanglefoot, and Thatcher's Farmer's Tipple, a 6% clear scrumpy, rarely seen outside the West Country and, we understand, the Albert is its only outlet in Kent. Cider and perry is quite a passion for the pub – a further three or four on draught and up to a dozen in bottle. Hours are 9am to Midnight Monday to Saturday (possibly later on Fridays & Saturdays) and 10am to Midnight on Sundays.

Royal Cinque Ports Yacht Club: Tuesday July 22nd saw £500 donated to Dover's lifeboat by the Deal, Dover, Sandwich and District Branch of CAMRA from the proceeds of this February's 15th White Cliff's Festival of Winter Ales. Branch Chairman, Martin Atkins handed the cheque to Stuart Richardson, coxswain of the Dover

lifeboat after the crew had been delayed providing assistance to a German yacht with engine problem in the Channel. Stuart said: "It was a bit embarrassing to be late to the presentation but I am very pleased the local CAMRA members have chosen to support us so generously. I'll be arranging a relief coxswain for next February so I can go to the festival and sample a few ales myself."

Snoops, Castle St: The latest chapter in this long running saga was announced in September with the submission of yet another planning application to Dover District Council. Following Wetherspoon's purchase of the property, seemingly an eternity ago, for conversion to a Lloyd's No 1 outlet, it has successively seen plans abandoned and the property up for sale; plans revived (2006), but involving demolition and a new building - to be in operation late 2007/early 2008; a modification in mid 2007 incorporating a pub with flats above at the rear, and retention of the Castle St façade (and possibly the foyer, marble floor and grand staircase), at the front; and finally the current proposal: a pub and thirteen flats. To be called the Dolphin, architects' drawings show the pub sited at the back of the premises with an entrance at the junction of Dolphin Lane and Dolphin Passage, above which rises a futuristic looking structure of three storeys, curving around the corner and encased in a framework of steel bars – the London HQ of Dan Dare perhaps, for those old enough to remember.

Royal Oak, Whitfield: Closed for several months the pub has now joined that long list of public houses that the pubcos and brewers no longer consider to fit in with their future plans, and has been placed on the market for £800,000 freehold. This would seem

particularly disappointing in view of the sterling efforts of a former landlady who successfully opposed its conversion to housing some ten years ago.

Britannia, Townwall St: Another member of the closed brigade, the pub falls within an area due for redevelopment and we understand the property has been acquired by Dover District Council. The building dates from the early 1960s when Whitbread Mackeson replaced the old Wine Lodge. Speculation arises as to the fate of the man of war which occupied a prominent position in the window over those forty odd years. We trust it has found a good home. Also now up for sale, "at a reduced price" is the **Castle**, Russell St. which has been closed since January. And, as we go to print, we understand that also closed are now the **Flagship**, the **Nelson** and the **Renaissance**

DEAL

Leather Bottle, Mongeham: Dan Warwick informs us that the work on the outside of the pub was completed by early August and new toilets installed, "which smell much nicer than the old ones", he says. The next big job is an internal refurbishment, which might include casks on the back of the bar, in the style of the old Mogul. In the meantime, he's decided to vary the ale range more with two regularly changing ales available – the first two being Wadworth's Henry's IPA and Everard's Sun-chaser.

Along the road the **Three Horseshoes** has seen a change of licensees. Sam and Sarah Rodwell have taken over the running of this Admiral-owned pub. With a background in running pubs in the area as well as in London, they are looking to run the pub as a traditional, friendly boozier and plan to offer pub food. At the moment they are not too

sure what their plans are for real ales as it depends on the quantity they are able to sell while retaining the quality.

Magnet Inn, London Rd: As well as the regular Master Brew in early August the pub was also selling Shepherd Neame Oyster Bay Stout, in very good condition by all accounts

Dunkerley's, Beach St: St Austell Tribute is still the regular beer at this hotel and restaurant, and reportedly excellent. It was certainly on good form on a visit in late September. At the **Bohemian**, beers over the last few months have included Westerham 1965, described by one of our members as "a good beer although a little chewy", Hopdaemon Incubus, Goacher's Fine Light Ale and Best Dark, Gadd's Seaside, Sharp's Doom Bar Bitter and Adnam's Broadside.

Berry, Canada Rd: Chris continues to supply a greater variety of real ale than the rest of the Walmer pubs put together. Seen in August as well as the regular Harvey's Sussex Best Bitter were Tring Ridgeway, Stonehenge Pigswill, Cottage Wicked Hound and Temple Mead, Surrey Hills Gilt Complex, Ossett Beijing Gold, Hydes Bells & Whistles and something called Golden Pig from a brewery, new to your editor at least, called Countrylife.

Prince Albert, Alfred Sq. Among other beers early August saw Henry IPA, Robinson's Olympic Blond and an excellent Westerham Bulldog. Later in the month drinkers were treated to Dale-side Blond, Nelson's Cat O' Nine Tails, Ossett Beijing Gold and Brakspear Bitter. Nearby the **Ship Inn** tends to stay with the same range. Of late Gadd's Seaside and No 7, Caledonian Deuchar's IPA and Dark Star Hophead and Original. One of our members during the summer commented that "the

Dark Star Hophead was absolutely wonderful and worth every penny of £2.60."

SANDWICH & RURAL

Black Pig, Barnsole: Our apologies for reporting in a previous issue of *Channel Draught* that the pub was now owned by Punch Taverns; it is in fact owned by Enterprise Inns. A visit in early August found Timothy Taylor Landlord, Woodforde's Wherry and Fuller's ESB. At Staple's other pub, the **Three Tuns**, Gadd's is selling well with No 5 and Seaside alongside Greene King IPA in early August. The pub's cider is now Biddenden Dry. And more Gadd's around the same time at the nearby **Frog & Orange**, Shatterling, where the former Green Man was selling No 5, No 7 and Seaside.

George and Dragon, Sandwich: New licensee at the George and Dragon in Fisher St. is Matthew Philpott. Apparently food is going very well, for which they've already gained a good reputation, and he is keen to promote the pub's real ales. Currently there are two bitters on during the week and three on during the weekend. Master Brew is standard but the other beers vary. At the end of September, start of October these included Bass, Skinners Betty Stogs and St Austell Tribute.

New Inn, Sandwich: Licensees Bryan and Lynda Thompson have been presented with a Safer Socialising Gold Award for the third successive year. Designed to target anti-social behaviour, and encourage licensed premises to make a positive contribution towards community safety, it follows a very stringent assessment of the pub involving the police, fire service and trading standards.

Fleur de Lis, Sandwich: Maintaining one guest alongside Wadworth's 6X

and Greene King IPA. Recently these have featured Cairngorm Trade Winds and Freeminer Speculation Ale (3)

Coastguard, St Margaret's Bay: "Can't buy enough", was landlord Nigel's comment on his current real ale supply problem. Late Sunday afternoon in early August and the pump clips on two of his four handpumps were turned round, leaving just Gadds No.5 and Weston's Organic Cider on sale; "and these, right down", he added, waving at the array of keg beers on the T-bar.

Way Out Inn, Westmarsh: Any chance of finding real ale on these premises seems now to have been abandoned, at least for the time being, as the former pub is now calling itself the Rose Garden Tea Rooms.

In Wingham the **Dog Inn** appears to have given up with real ale. A visit at the start of August found no real ale on the handpump and when asked if it was in use the bar staff commented "Sorry we sell lagers." The pub seemed generally very expensive. Over the summer months beers at the **Red Lion** included Adnam's Bitter, Greene King IPA and Fuller's London Pride, while the Anchor sticks with London Pride and of course Biddenden Cider.

Greyhound, Aylesham: August saw permission granted for the change of use of part of the ground floor and first floor to offices, leaving the rest of the ground floor as a pub/restaurant. The ground floor offices will be for the use of Aylesham Parish Council.

Turners Inn, Woodnesborough: Visits to the renamed and refurbished Charity in August found Harvey's Sussex, Greene King IPA, Spitfire and Adnam's Explorer on handpump in the middle of the month and Greene King IPA, Spitfire and Bishop's Finger available at the

end. The 'Charity' tarted up, someone commented, although generally liked well enough – not sure how much of the local trade had been retained, though. Food however, while reasonable in price could not match the "bargain basement" value of before, but that was exceptional.

Five Bells, Eastry: Since changing hands earlier in the year, the pub has been refurbished outside, and had a bar switch inside - the lounge bar has now become the public bar and vice versa.

Crown Inn, Finglesham: Dave and Jackie Cooper celebrated 4 years at the pub in August. Their annual Beer Festival held over the Late Summer Bank Holiday Weekend featured ales from Whitstable Brewery (Kentish Reserve 5%), Crouch Vale, Oakham and Dark Star Brewery – the Crouch Vale Amarillo and Oakham JHB and Inferno receiving particularly high praise.

Plough Inn, Ripple: A visit in early September found Theakston's Mild, Fuller's ESB, Shepherd Neame Whitstable Bay and Harvey's Sussex Best Bitter on the handpump. Our reporter commented, "A quiet Saturday afternoon, with just a handful of locals at the bar. Friendly welcome from staff and customers, and an all-day breakfast, consisting of 2 eggs, 2 bacon, jumbo sausage, 2 hash browns, 2 slices of black pudding, grilled tomato, baked beans and toast – fantastic value." It's also good to see the pub continuing with a real mild – others have included Thwaite's and Elgood's.

Old Lantern Inn, Martin: Despite calling itself a free house the pub these days rarely offers anything other than Sheps beers on its handpumps. In early September these were Master Brew and Spitfire. Meanwhile, with all

the tables but one laid up for food, the feel was more of a restaurant than a pub, although there was a very good welcome from the landlord. However, unfortunately a heavy investment in food trade is now the only way many pubs can survive, and the Old Lantern is at least still with us, unlike currently its near neighbour, the **Ugly Duckling** at Martin, closed, boarded up and sporting for sale signs.

Blue Pigeons, Worth: Mark & Jane Daniels are new licensees having emigrated from New Zealand. As well as running a restaurant in New Zealand they also had a pub in Hampton Court. A visit in early August found London Pride, Harvey's Sussex and an excellent Hop Back Summer Lightning on the handpumps. And Summer Lightning and Harvey's Sussex have also been among the beers available at the **St Crispin** Other beers have included Jenning's Cumberland Ale, Black Sheep Bitter and Ringwood Fortyniner.

King's Head, Kingsdown: Alex and Amanda have been offering some interesting beers of late – the selection over recent months including Coach House Dick Turpin, Goacher's Kingsdown Ale and Silver Star, and Cottage Western Arches, as well as the more regularly seen Greene King IPA and Fuller's London Pride. One of our members visiting one Saturday lunchtime in mid August was also impressed by the good value food.

Lighthouse, Capel: At the end of August the pub was selling Old Speckled Hen, Greene King IPA, Broadside and Bombardier. Visits over the years have found the beer quality to be consistently good, however our reporter on this occasion wondered if the internal layout orientated towards food and with limited natural light would encourage the casual drinker. There was talk at

one time, probably during the previous ownership, of creating a separate public bar behind the bar servery, but that seems to have been knocked on the head – pity, it sounds a fine idea to us.

Chequers, West Hougham: Following the news of the pub's closure and consignment to redevelopment Paul Skelton informs us that at one time there was a pub called the King's Head in the parish, but that was going back to 1593. Apparently the building still exists today but at the time of writing uncertain as to which. There was also a pub at Church Hougham, the Three Horseshoes. It lay to the rear of Parsonage Villas and was reached by a lane, still there, at the junction of Stonyway Lane and Doctor's Lane. Unfortunately a doodlebug landed on it in the war and it was never rebuilt.

Jackdaw, Denton: At the time of writing we understand that this pub too is closed. We don't know the circumstances but assume that being well patronised and the only pub in the village this will only be temporary.

Marquis of Granby, Alkham: Now apparently calling itself just 'The Marquis' and having undergone refurbishment for most of the year, the pub re-opened in September amid substantial publicity as a 'boutique hotel'. Those who might have hoped to find a more traditional rural establishment will probably be disappointed, as the premises, with decor very much of white, silver and grey, more resembles the style of an urban wine bar. However, real ale is still much in evidence, Harveys Sussex and Hopback Summer Lightning being on handpump shortly after reopening.

FOLKESTONE

While Hythe shows every indication of improving as a drinkers town (see page 42) Folkestone appears to be suffer-

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ing in the same manner as Dover. As reported in our last issue as well as the long term closed pubs – the **White Lion** in Cheriton, the **Martello**, **Two Bells** and **Brewery Tap** – the club now includes the **Shamrock and Thistle** (seemingly gone for good), and the **Pullman** and **Three Mackerel**, both up for sale, but while the former is advertised as a pub business, the latter with a Terson's sign outside gives the impression that its days too might well be numbered. And in August these were joined by the **Railway Bell**, boarded up and allegedly destined as a site for one of Tesco's small local stores.

Chambers, Cheriton Place: Following Westerham Black Eagle's appearance as the pub's ordinary bitter in May, Summer Pearle from the same brewery was filling the position at the start of October– remaining standard, selection comprising Skrimshander, Gadds No 5

and Old Thumper, otherwise unchanged. Guest ale to no one's surprise was Dogbolter. The **Happy Frenchman** is still apparently sticking with just the single real ale, Adnams Bitter seemingly a regular choice , and at **Harveys** two real ales normally, of late Bombardier and Courage Best.

The **British Lion** and the **Guildhall** continue to offer a varied selection from around the country, including in August and September Jennings Cock-a-Hoop, Hydes Bells and Whistles, Copper Dragon 1816, Hancocks HB, Everards Equinox, Wadworth Farmers Glory and the particularly tasty Wooden Hand Cornish Mutiny.

Sunday afternoon in Folkestone seems synonymous with music, visits during the summer finding live events at the **Richmond**, the **Lifeboat** and the **Ship**. In late September a jazz band, somehow squeezing itself into the tiny area

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at the front of the Ship, was competing with a rock band in the garden of the Lifeboat. Ales at the Ship remain London Pride and Abbot, while as mentioned in previous issues the Lifeboat is now offering a range of six or seven – on that particular afternoon London Pride, Harveys Sussex, Bombardier, Doombar, Elgoods Golden Newt, Burton Bitter and something from Ossett. Meanwhile, for those who want the quieter experience, it exists at the **East Cliff**, where Richard runs a traditional drinking and talking pub. Normal fare is a local beer, such as Incubus or Skrimshander plus another from away, Cottage brews being popular. In mid August Stonehenge Pigswill proved most enjoyable. For those who want a change from ale (and aren't driving) a cider is usually available too.

CANTERBURY

Simple Simon's, Church Lane: Appar-

ently the pub has been bought by Young's and has been renamed the **Parrot**. We also understand that its live music has been severely curtailed, and maybe stopped completely, which would be a great shame.

Phoenix, Old Dover Rd: The pub will be hosting its usual winter beer festival in December – Friday to Sunday, 5th, 6th and 7th – with thirty different real ales available.

New Inn, Havelock St: The long anticipated change of ownership eventually took place in July. New landlady is Katrina with manager Gary. Beer range varies with normally three to four beers on at any one time: at the time of writing the selection was Wherry, Harveys Sussex, Hog's Back Best Bitter and Henry's IPA. Hours of opening are Mon-Sat 11am-3pm lunchtime and from 6pm onwards at night, with corresponding Sunday times 12am-3pm and 7pm onwards.



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throughout December

THE LOUIS ARMSTRONG REMEMBERS MICK FOX WITH A BEER & BANDS TRIBUTE

Louis Armstrong, Maison Dieu Road: Back in the spring two of the Louis Armstrong regulars had the thought that the pub should host a beer festival. Landlady Jackie Bowles needed little persuading and the event was arranged for the weekend following the late summer bank holiday (Friday August 29th – Sunday August 31st) – on the basis that the bank holiday weekend itself is already overpopulated with pub festivals, the weather should still be good, and being the end of the month there might be some money around. Because of the pub's music connections music was to be a main element of the festival, while all the real ale was to be from Kent - for some years now the pub's real ale has mostly come from the county. The festival was also dedicated to the memory of Mick Fox, harmonica player and long time Louis regular, who sadly died in May.

And so it came to pass. Advertised as the Louis Armstrong Beer and Bands Festival music was booked throughout the weekend while Jackie ordered sixteen firkins of Kentish real ale from five of the county's micro brewers – Hopdaemon supplier of her regular bitter Skrimshander, Gadds, Goachers, Westerham and Whitstable – plus three bottle conditioned Kentish ales and a cider, Rough Old Wife, a new producer from Old Wives Leas. Publicity was obviously going to be crucial to the festival's success, and as well as an advert in the summer edition of Channel Draught, posters were put up in local shops and press releases sent to local newspapers.

Thursday August 28th arrived seemingly all to soon, and by the evening all was set up ready, with Jackie, Jane, Jeanette, Neil, and everyone else involved keeping their fingers seriously crossed. In addition to the pub's four handpumps, three of the stronger ales, Gadds Storm Warning, Westerham 1965 and Whitstable Oyster Stout, had been set on a temporary stillage, constructed from a folding ladder laid across the top of the pub's cold box. Outside the pub was decked in bunting and a banner hung on the end wall advertising the festival.

Friday evening, with music provided by a variant of blues outfit Standard Five, was fairly quiet, but Saturday and Sunday beat all expectations, drinkers flocking to the pub from early afternoon onwards; the excellent weather encouraging people to sit outside or in the garden. Saturday music came from Joe Jones in the afternoon followed by an open mike evening, while Sunday saw Burt Osbourne and his guitar pupils, and Sheila Collier's Southern Serenaders. Both real ale and lager sold well (the pub was in danger of running out of Carling), but pride of place must go to Whitstable Oyster Stout (4.5% ABV), broached by thirsty regulars on Thursday evening, it proved universally popular, and Gadds Rye Pale Ale (4.0% ABV) which disappeared in a few hours on Sunday afternoon. All in all a great success, and one we might hope will be repeated in future years.

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TONY'S TAPPINGS

The perambulations and musings
of our Pubs Officer, Tony Wells

BUS TRIP TO THE NORTHWEST FRONTIER

There are some pubs in our branch which are just about impossible to get to by public transport, or you can get there but can't get back. The Northwest corner of our branch is just one of these places. Along the road from Wingham, past Preston and out to Pluck's Gutter are three pubs which we rarely visit as a branch, and to address this situation a bus trip was organised, picking up people in Dover, Deal and Finglesham. Fifteen people in all turned up, just one short of the coach's capacity and a great turnout for this inaugural event.

Our first pub was the Dog & Duck, Plucks Gutter, right on the edge of our branch. Situated next to the river, this is a large pub and was offering a decent pint of Wadworth's Henry's IPA and Fuller's London Pride. They also put on a good scoff of ham, egg and chips at a reasonable price and enough to line the stomach for the rest of the evening.

A couple of pints under our belt, it was southwards back to East Stourmouth and the Rising Sun, a large, rambling modern restaurant/pub selling that evening two beers from Wadworth's: Henry's IPA again and JCB as well as a good Betty Stoggs, from the Cornish brewers Skinners. A small amount of CAMRA business was conducted with a brief discussion on CAMRA's National Beer Scoring System and some membership forms being handed out to those that weren't already members (well it was campaigning trip).

Our next port of call was the Half Moon and Seven Stars at Preston. This has a typical drinking/community feel to it with the bar very much at the centre of things. Having bought our pints of Barnsley's Blackpool Bitter, Gadd's #3 and Shepherd Neame Master Brew, most of us retired to one of the side rooms, thus sparing the locals from the noise a large group of CAMRAites can make after a few pints.

Our fourth pub of the evening had seen some serious discussion, as we were now back on to the main bus routes. We eventually decided on the Frog and Orange, Shatterling formerly the Green Man. A largish two room pub including a bar/eating area and restaurant. The Frog and Orange usually has Gadds on offer and tonight it was #3 and #7. They also put on a platter of sandwiches which was welcomed by the group. After that it was back on the coach and home.

Thanks should go to Trisha, our Social Secretary for organising the event and to Mike and ASM coaches who, with their usual efficiency, picked us up and dropped us off on time and at the right pubs. We're considering our next trip

out but if you can put together a bus/coach pub crawl then please drop us a note at pubs.officer@camra-dds.org.uk. We're always looking for ideas.

A WALK UP THE HILL

On a warm and sunny Saturday in mid September a small group of CAMRA members met at the Hope Inn, Lydden for a walk out to a few pubs in our area. After we'd had our pints of Adnam's Bitter, Courage Director's or Fuller's London Pride, it was out and a stiff walk up the hill to the A2. The only complaint coming from Paul, who wrapped up warmly enough for a winter's day and was suffering somewhat in the sunshine. Our destination was the Bell Inn, rebuilt following a disastrous fire over two years ago. We had intended to have lunch here, but they were preparing for a large party in the evening and the chef was out shopping. We comforted ourselves with a decent pint of Black Sheep Bitter before heading off to the local Coop in the middle of Shepherdswell, to pick up sandwiches, pork pies and pasties. We ate lunch on the hoof as we wandered through the glorious Kent countryside having in-depth discussions about the rolls of straw that were spread across the fields and how what they were wrapped in is held together.



The Yew Tree, Barfreston was our final destination. This has had something of a chequered history over the past few years since being Pub of the Year in 2004. Recently it has been refurbished into the modern restaurant/pub it is today. Thankfully the owners have seen fit to maintain one of the rooms as a bar area and continue to serve a good range of beers from the local Kent breweries, Goacher's, Gadds and Hopdaemon as well as 1648 from East Sussex, all at £2.60.

Don't forget to check www.camra-dds.org.uk, for the latest updates on real ale related events in our area.

BEER SCORING AND THE GOOD BEER GUIDE

In past editions of Channel Draught we've had articles on CAMRA's National Beer Scoring System (NBSS), the Good Beer Guide, and how entries for the GBG are selected. Well we are fast approaching the time when entries for the 2010 GBG will be selected.

A foundation to this selection process is the beer scores that are submitted, based on the NBSS, to myself as Pubs Officer and to the GBG sub-committee. The NBSS is a simple 6 point scoring system (including half points) rating a

beer from undrinkable through to perfect. This method offers an objective way of selecting pubs and is based on information throughout the whole year.

A continuing problem, however, is getting representative beer scores from across the branch, and unfortunately we still receive the bulk of information from just a handful of members.

So how can I submit beer scores?

Firstly, you have to be a CAMRA member to be eligible. If you aren't a member then why not sign up today? JD Wetherspoons is running a promotion with CAMRA. If you join CAMRA today you'll get £20 of Wetherspoons drinking vouchers.

You then have four ways of submitting a beer score:

- On the web:- www.beerscoring.org.uk
- By Email:- pubs.officer@camra-dds.org.uk
- Via text message:- 07518 949587
- Telephone:- (01304) 611090

For the last three ways you should include your name, CAMRA membership number, date, pub, town/village, beer and score. **Simple!!!** So, what do the NBSS numbers mean? (Remember that you can award half-points if for example you can't decide between scoring a 3 or a 4)

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- 0 Undrinkable.** No cask ale available or so poor you have to take it back or can't finish it
- 1 Poor.** Beer that is anything from barely drinkable to drinkable with considerable resentment
- 2 Average.** Competently kept, drinkable pint but doesn't inspire in any way, not worth moving to another pub but you drink the beer without really noticing
- 3 Good.** Good beer in good form. You may cancel plans to move to the next pub. You want to stay for another pint and may seek out the beer again
- 4 Very Good.** Excellent beer in excellent condition
- 5 Perfect.** Probably the best you are ever likely to find. A seasoned drinker will award this score very rarely

Here are some notes about the NBSS that were published in a past edition of Channel Draught:

- Concentrate on the quality of the beer: the look, smell, taste and condition. This can be difficult if you do not like a particular style of beer
- If you can't decide between two scores, say a 2 and a 3, don't forget you can mark in halves as well
- For a score of 0 we would you expect you ask for a replacement, which the landlord should provide without quibble. Please indicate whether this happened. All pubs have the occasional undrinkable pint

Dan welcomes you to

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01304 375931

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Sun	Noon to 9pm

and shouldn't be penalised as long as they took appropriate steps to correct it.

- How to award a 5. Simple. Before you have even finished swallowing your first sip you're already holding the pint out to the rest of the pub as a shining example of the perfect beer. You've also started to wonder whether you can squeeze in another couple of pints of this "nectar of the gods" before you have to go home. So far I have only awarded one 5 this year.

Tony Wells

Kent CAMRA Discussion Board

A new Yahoo discussion board, **KentCAMRA**, about events in the Kent CAMRA region has been set up for CAMRA members based in Kent, This includes details of Kent Regional Meetings, Kent beer festival, Kent GBG submissions, events to which all Kent CAMRA members are invited and information relating to Kent breweries. To subscribe to the board, go to <http://uk.groups.yahoo.com/group/KentCAMRA/> and click **Join This Group** in the upper-right corner of the group's page. Please enter your name, branch and Membership Number in the Comments box before submitting your request. You'll need a Yahoo ID, which you can register for by clicking **Sign Up**. Alternatively, you can subscribe just to the mailing list by sending a blank email to KentCAMRA-subscribe@yahoo.co.uk (this will not give you access to the board's website).

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The National News

By Martin Atkins

A Wake up For Westminster

A Wake up For Westminster is how the British Beer & Pub Association (BBPA) has named its report on the current state of their industry, in the hope that Government might at last take some interest in its parlous state. It highlights that pub beer sales have sunk to their lowest since the 1930s and that pub closures have reached the unprecedented level of five a day. It also condemns the planned increases in beer taxes over the next four years, which will likely see them rising by a third, and also proposed extra red tape, such as a new mandatory code of practice. On top of the 44,000 jobs that have already been lost in the last five years, the report predicts that a further 43,000 jobs are likely to go. However while beer sales are down eight million pints a day since 1979, pint for pint, beer sales in pubs and clubs create 18 jobs for every three jobs created by sales in supermarkets and off-licences.

Particularly revealing was a comparison of brewery profits and Government tax. The four largest UK brewers, who account for approximately 80% of British beer production are making about 0.7p per pint, while an average strength pint produces excise duty of 36p. Added to VAT and other taxes, this enables Government to make 50 times the profit per pint.

BBPA chief executive Rob Hayward

said: "The economy is shrinking, drinking trends are shifting and overall consumption is sinking. Now is not the time for the government to be introducing policies that will force up prices for all." He also said that alcohol misuse would be more effectively dealt with by targeting the problem few, rather than penalising all adults and driving more pubs out of business. "We need action to support the Great British Pub as a vital part of local community life in Britain. If we don't have a change of approach, many more communities will be without their much-loved pubs."

Real Ale on the Up

However, as we've reported in recent previous issues, real ale is bucking the national trend of declining beer sales. While pub beer sales have fallen by 8.3% over the last 12 months real ale has dropped by just 1.3%, and if trends over the last few years are anything to go by this will mainly be accounted for by the national brews. According to leading market analyst AC Nielsen many regional and micro brewers are clearly growing or doing better than the market. They are benefiting from wider distribution and access to more pubs, and cask beer is doing better than non-real ale and a lot better than the total beer market. Meanwhile the nationals have seen some falling away through lack of focus and support. Further encouragement

comes from the Society of Independent Brewers (SIBA) who report record growth among its 420 members of nearly 11%.

Julian Grocock, SIBA's chief executive commented, "There is little doubt that our members are doing well by concentrating on quality local beers, which offer cash-strapped drinkers something new and exciting to try as people turn away from standard quaffing lagers to quality real ales.

Hard Times for Pub Chains

The general decline in beer sales and pub use has inevitably had its impact on the country's pub chains. Early September saw Punch scrap its final dividend in order to conserve cash in view of future economic uncertainty, although the company states that its falling sales are flattening out. It is also setting aside £6m to support struggling landlords. At JD Wetherspoon, profits fell by 11% last year with the smoking ban being seen as prime culprit. Growth was down by 3% during the winter, but had recovered by July which saw a rise of 0.4%. Disappointingly for beer drinkers both companies see future growth principally in terms of increased food sales and drink associated with food. Meanwhile things are not too hot at Enterprise either. General concern about its level of earnings and volume of debt saw its shares decline in late summer, ending with the company falling out of the FTSE 100 in September.

Common Sense

The Government may well find it's

ploughing a lonely furrow with its approach to beer duty and plans to counteract binge drinking. A recent poll by the British Beer and Pub Association finds that three out of four people believe that the traditional pub is threatened by the proposed tax hikes, while there was a general belief that the use of duty increases to deter binging will not succeed, as well as being unfair on sensible drinkers. It will turn people against the Government many thought.

Bottle Conditioned Label

Bright and eye-catching neck collars designed to make bottle conditioned beers stand out on the shelf, were launched at this year's Great British Beer Festival in August. As a joint initiative between CAMRA and the 151 brewers signed up to the Real Ale in a Bottle scheme, which promotes bottle conditioned beer, it is hoped to roll out the new identification later in the year. The rear of each tag will contain information about RAIB, explain how bottle conditioned beers differ from other bottled beers, and describe correct storage and pouring. *(It always seemed to me that a straight forward logo on the label indicating real ale should have been introduced years ago – Ed) .*





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KENT CIDER MAKERS & CIDER PUBS AUTUMN 2008

As it's Autumn and October is cider month we take the opportunity to provide details of Kent cider producers and pubs known to sell real cider.

CIDER PRODUCERS

Badgers Hill Farm,

Newcut Road,
Chilham CT4 8BW
Tel: 01227 730573

Website: www.made-in-kent.co.uk
*Sales 6 days a week, no wholesale,
£60 for a 5 gallon keg*

Biddenden Vineyards & Cider

Gribble Bridge Lane,
Biddenden
TN27 8DF
Tel: 01580 291726

Fax: 01580 291933
Website:
www.biddendenvineyards.com
Email: info@biddendenvineyards.co.uk

Big Tree, Hartley

No further information available

Broomfield Orchard,

Broomfield Road,
Herne, CT6 7AY
Tel: 01227 362279

*Small producer, producing dry,
medium and sweet unpasturised cider.
Opening times vary, so telephone be-
fore visiting.*

Castle Cider Company,

Nestlewood,
Wickhurst Road,
Weald, Sevenoaks, TN14 6LY
Tel: 01732 455977

*Small, sells all cider locally. Nothing
available for festivals*

Chafford Cider,

Chafford Rise,
Fordcombe, TN3 0SH
Contact: Chris Ballanden
Tel: 01892 740437
600 -700 gals per year. 5 gals £30

Crippledick Cider, Boughton

Currently, no address available
Tel: 01227 751435
*Medium & Dry (6.5%) available in 26
pint boxes (£1.80/pt)*

Double Vision Cider,

Marlpit Farm,
Wierton Road,
Boughton Monchelsea,
Maidstone, ME17 4JW
Tel: 01622 746633

*Medium & Dry Cider, Perry. 1 litre bot-
tles, 10/20 litre boxes or 5 gal tubs. Sin-
gle varieties 500ml bottles
– Cox, Gala, Katy*

Johnson's Farmhouse Cider, Isle of Sheppey

Contact: Paul Johnson
Tel: 01795 665203
*Blended cider, plus (new) small quanti-
ties of cider from his own orchard, Isle
of Sheppey*

Neal's Place Farm,

Neals Place Road,
Canterbury, CT2 8HX
Tel: 01227 765632
Cider in bottles only

Pawley Farm Cider,

Painters Forstal,
Faversham, ME13 0EN
Tel: 01795 532043
Website: www.made-in-kent.co.uk

Dry/medium/sweet/spiced – bottles only

Pippins Cider, Pembury

No cider currently available, possibly starting up again in the autumn

Rough Old Wife Cider, Court Farm, Old Wives Lees

Restored orchard in use again, no further details at present

BRANCH CIDER & PERRY PUBS

DEAL & WALMER

Bohemian, Beach Street (01304 374843)

Weston's – most of the time

Berry, Canada Rd (01304 362411)

Weston's 1st Quality, Thatcher's (varies), Mr Whitehead's Midnight Special Perry

DOVER

Blakes, Castle Street (01304 202194)

Thatchers 6% medium, Broomfield Orchard 7% medium, Double Vision Cider & Perry, Westons Perry (occasional)

Eight Bells, Cannon Street (01304 205030)

Weston's

Fox, High Street, Temple Ewell (01304 823598)

*Addlestons**

Prince Albert, Biggin Street (01304 204272)

Thatcher's Farmer's Tipple

White Horse, St. James Street (01304 242974)

Thatcher's Cheddar Valley, Weston's Herefordshire Country Perry

SANDWICH & RURAL

Anchor Inn, Wingham, High Street (01304 720229)

Biddenden

Bull, High St., Eastry 01304 617037
Weston's Old Rosie

Coach & Horses, Sandwich Rd, Hacklinge (01304 612555)
Weston's

Coastguard, St Margaret's Bay (01304 853176)
Weston's, Dr Whitehead's Cirrus Minor Cider and Midnight Special Perry in bottles

Crown Inn, Fingleham, The Street (01304 612555)
Choice varies – cider not always available, bottled perry

Plough Inn, Ripple
Biddenden's Dry Cider#

Three Tuns, Staple
Biddenden Dry#

Yew Tree, Barfrestone (01304 831000)
*Addlestons**

Some pubs are also stocking bottled ciders - e.g. The Place Brasserie in Sandwich, the Three Cups in Dover and Dublin Man O' War in River.

Outside our branch area real cider can be found at the Chambers and the East Cliff Tavern in Folkestone and the Ship, Sandgate; and on occasion at the Phoenix, Old Dover Rd. Canterbury and the Red Lion Stodmarsh. Again please let us know any we've missed.

N.B. * Addlestons is not a real cider in CAMRA's eyes because it is made with apple concentrate

We understand Biddenden's is top pressure at the Plough Inn, Ripple and Three Tuns, Staple so it is not a real cider by CAMRA standards.

However despite these criticisms we mention them anyway as offering a better option than keg cider.

Andrew, Sarah & Kevin
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Kent Small Brewery News

By Roger Marples

Following the national trend many of the local micro breweries are reporting an upturn in trade, despite the problems in the financial world, increasing employment losses and a general tightening of belts. This has also been commented on in the national press. The more discerning drinker is turning to the better quality beers that are often, but not always, brewed by the smaller breweries, such as those featured in this article. Licensees are also realising that it is no good merely selling only national brands (or blands as some of us prefer to call them), and drinkers want something with a more distinctive flavour. Also a bonus to the more environmentally minded is to drink locally produced beers from Kent. It is a fact that the craft breweries tend to use better ingredients such as top quality malts and hops and are less likely to use cheaper brewing sugars to replace malted barley. Without the vast advertising budgets of the larger breweries, they have to rely on the quality of their product, and word of mouth, to stay in, and increase, business.

Westerham: Owner Robert Wicks has purchased the two strains of yeast, from Carlsberg, that were used in the former Black Eagle Westerham Brewery when it ceased to be in 1965, and has carefully propagated them in the present Westerham Brewery. Subsequently, he managed to recreate the last brew from Black Eagle Brewery, using the same water supply, the same yeast strain and as far as possible, the same recipe, and plans to do the same with many other of their recipes. Apparently the last brew was dry hopped with Styrian hops, and Robert will now emulate this dry hopping with the next brew of 1965 Westerham Special Bitter.

The current capacity of 60 barrels per week will soon be increased to 108 barrels, as new equipment is on order, and will probably make Westerham the largest craft brewer in Kent. A special seasonal beer, Little Scotney Green Hop Harvest Ale (4.3%), using freshly picked moist hops, from Scotney Castle Estate Hop Garden, was brewed for early Autumn; and from mid October General Wolfe Maple Ale (4.3%) using maple syrup in the brew, will be available. At Christmas, God's Wallop (4.3%), will be produced from which 10% of the sale price is donated to a Christian Charity. Also for winter there will be Puddledock Porter (4.3%) which requires an extra two months maturing, and another recreation from Black Eagle – Audit Ale, a 6.2% winter brew with tremendous hop character and an exceptionally long finish. We hope to have it available at White Cliffs Festival of Winter Ales, in February.

Nelson: Press Gang P.A. (4.3%), is a new beer from Nelson, and selling extremely well. It is highly hopped, and four different hop varieties are used. The malt is a low colour pale malt, and this is the first time that the brewery has made this style of beer. At the time of writing, Press Gang was available at The

Prince Albert . Two new 'one off' brews are Birthday Boy at 4.9% using Crystal Rye Malt, to commemorate Horatio Nelson's birthday, and Trafalgar Extra, which is the 4.1% Trafalgar brewed at 5.0%.

The Eagle, in London Road Dover is re-launching Nelson beers, with new equipment installed by Nelson. Quality control will be paramount. Initially they will by selling two Nelson beers. At the brewery Piers has been introducing new methods to improve consistency and quality control, while improvements to recipes have been made to enhance the taste of the beers. Trade has been brisk, and with these modifications it is hoped that sales will further improve.

Ramsgate: A very busy summer was had, and Eddie has more help in the shape of Steve Mann (a famous brewing name), ex- publican and brewer, who took charge as General Manager, in June. Steve was the person who taught Eddie to brew in 1994, and they have remained friends every since.

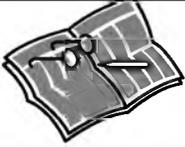
October will see a return of the ever popular Old Pig Brown Ale at 4.8%, while in November a beer to a completely new recipe is planned. This will be in the style of an American Winter Warmer, of a slighter lower gravity than normal for this style of beer, but should allow one to consume a few extra pints. The beer will be 4.7%, and dark, aromatic and malty with a good hoppy bitterness. Appropriately it will be called "Fall Over", and Eddie has arranged for a genuine American brewer to help on the day that the beer is brewed. In December there will be a 5% ruby ale with seasonal hints of cranberry, to be named Little Cracker.

Hopdaemon: Dominator at 5.1% is on the cards, as soon as Tonie finds time to brew this popular beer again. This will be followed by Leviathan, which will be out in cask form in time for Christmas. Two awards were won at SIBA Paddock Wood (Beltring) Hop Farm Beer Festival, this summer – Incubus winning a silver, and bottle conditioned Green Daemon a bronze.

Goacher: Once again Goacher's have had their best ever quarter, despite these straightened times, and are brewing to capacity; so much so that they are regularly turning business away! Existing Goacher's customers should not fear as they will be provided for. The excellent 1066 Old Ale will again be brewed for Christmas, and the Stout in November. Apparently Goacher's regulars keep asking for its return.

Whitstable: A Gold medal was won at the recent North Cotswold CAMRA festival for Oyster Stout (*deservedly* – Ed), and Perle of Kent at 4.5%, having been well received, is now on the list of regular beers. Business is good and is only constrained by the number of casks in use. Recent tastings show beers to be on top form, and as reported elsewhere have been very well received at The Red Lion, Hythe. Among other outlets they should also be available at its "sister pub", the Railway Bell, Kearsney.

Roger Marples



CHANNEL VIEW

Culture Change

Culture change is very much a current buzz phrase: culture change over carrying knives, culture change over carbon use, and, of particular interest to us, culture change over drinking. The Government, health campaigners and supermarkets all back it as the solution to what are seen as our present problems with alcohol. However many would argue that it is culture change over the last thirty or forty years that has led us to the position that we are in now. The small off licence and easily managed local, have given way to supermarkets selling wine, beer and spirits at unparalleled low prices, and hangar-like town centre managed houses with special offers and promotions targeting the young at weekends. In fact except that they sell alcohol the latter are often hardly recognisable as pubs at all; bars maybe, but nothing like the traditional pub. Additionally, and conversely a new puritanism amongst employers has often seen the lunchtime pint, or even a drink on the way home after work, either prohibited, or at least severely frowned upon, further eating away at the viability of the local.

It is hardly surprising, therefore, that the ordinary pub finds itself in a parlous state – “never known it so bad”, most landlords will tell you, a despondency made all the worse by the bitter irony that we now consume 60% more alcohol than forty years ago. Last year across the country 1,500 pubs closed, which will surprise no one who cares to check out the number of Dover pubs either standing idle, boarded up or in

the process of conversion to alternative uses. Obviously no benefit here from the much publicised current excessive consumption of alcohol. However, with alcohol related hospital admissions allegedly running at 800,000 a year and egged on by the Alcohol Health Alliance the Government is of a mind that something must be done – and it could do a lot worse than look back over those thirty or forty years at the regulation of alcohol before the pub business underwent its own culture change, and when, by comparison with today, problems were slight.

Several centuries of dealing with the excesses of alcohol had, by the mid 20th century, seen the development of policies for controlling the sale and consumption of alcohol, and the traditional public house lay very much at its heart. Generally comparatively small, split into several bars and often run by a middle aged or older couple, it provided the ideal environment for sensible and restrained drinking and accounted for the majority of alcohol sales. Not perfect by any means, but conspicuously better than the deregulated set up we live with today, the consequence of more recent generations forgetting or ignoring the lessons learnt by their predecessors. As we have recently seen in the financial world, while deregulation may have initial attractions there are often very good reasons for keeping a fairly tight rein on human activity.

We cannot expect a return to the days when alcohol sales were restricted to public houses and a few dedicated off-

licences, but positive action to support and promote our remaining traditional pubs would be very welcome. They are after all the innocent party here. It wasn't, usually, a pub's landlord or traditional customers who wanted all the bars knocked into one, theming, and rents based on a substantial food trade. Neither were they responsible for the licensing of town centre mega bars, discounting of alcohol by supermarkets, or breweries tied estates being turned into property companies.

As Mike Benner, CAMRA chief executive, points out on page 4 (The £5 Pint), the well run community local offers the ideal controlled environment to enjoy a drink. Rather than trying to deal with the problems arising from alcohol abuse by tax increases, which will principally only hurt the moderate and restrained drinker and do nothing to impede the binger, the Government should put its full weight behind the supporting further culture change, and a return of the traditional public house to the centre of the community.

Urban Pubs

Dover offers a fine example of the problems facing the modern pub. It is unlikely that the number of Dover pubs ever reached the "one for every day of the year" of popular mythology (a similar figure has been quoted for several other towns), however there were well over 200 by the end of the 19th century. Today with just thirty or forty left we can't even manage one for every week of the year.

Although there has been a general decline in numbers since the last war, and probably from before that, the new century has been devastating, a quarter of the town's pubs disappearing in just the last four or five years. Those

that have gone include the King Lear, the Arlington, the Mogul, the Britannia, the Prince of Orange, the Engineer, the Westbury, the Orange Tree, the Primrose, the Hare and Hounds and the Gate. Meanwhile the Castle in Russell St has been closed since January with no indication of what its owner's future plans might be.

The recent fate of the Hare and Hounds at Maxton typifies what is going on. A traditional local, it relied on wet trade to keep it going. Unfortunately across the country pub beer sales are falling. In their submission in support of the conversion to a house Shepherd Neame listed its reasons for declaring the Hare and Hounds no longer economically viable. As well as falling beer sales, these include lack of opportunity for food trade, shift of trade to large town centre establishments, recent restrictions on entertainment, general increases in costs, and the smoking ban. Of course these are all problems which will be affecting most of the smaller urban public houses in our branch area; and if such arguments justify closing the Hare and Hounds, for which public houses could they be refuted? Would we be prepared to see small pub after small pub close until the town is left with just a handful of large premises in the town centre? To most people that would be unthinkable, but then at one time to be left with only thirty plus pubs would have been unthinkable.

At the moment while the Dover District Council has planning policies in force which offer some protection to rural and village pubs there is nothing comparable for urban pubs. We feel that their introduction should be now seriously considered.



A STROLL THROUGH TIME & TOWER HAMLETS Part 2

By Paul Skelton

In our summer edition we published the first part of a stroll through Tower Hamlets and its pubs, and the following is a continuation of that journey.

We start at the corner of West Street and Tower St, where if you remember stood the now closed Tower Inn. Continue down West St for fifty yards or so and we come to the “Carriers Arms”. We can enter this any time between 1877 and 1988, or between 1998 and today. Between 1991 and 1998 the pub changed its name to the “Battle of Britain” after a complete renovation sometime between 1988 and 1991 when it was closed, and looking at the picture



from 1987, not before time. Believe it or not the pub was actually open and running a trade when the photo was taken. I find it hard to believe today that a pub looking like that attracted enough customers to stay solvent. However after being ordered to again close in 1998 due to complaints about noise and after hours drinking, it lost its licence and, as seen before and probably again, got over the problem by changing name and reverted back to the “Carriers” again. And a much smarter looking pub it is today and still trading thankfully.

At either end of West Street we have Tower Street where we have just come from and Tower Hamlets Street that runs parallel to it. Plenty of pubs in these two short streets, so it's lucky we are spanning the centuries with so much good ale and hospitality on offer. The next pub is unfortunately not there any more and I haven't any pictures of it, but it stood at number 1 Tower Hamlets Street from 1828 and was called the “Paul Pry”. Paul Pry being a popular character of the 1820's created by John Liston, a comic actor of the time. In 1859 this property was auctioned as freehold for £395 when it was stated to be in close proximity to the extensive tunnelling of the East Kent Railway. However, it was still serving in 1867. Whether the same building or not I do not know, but James Gann and his wife changed the name of this establishment to the “Coach and Horses” where we can have a lovely pint of Ash and Company's fine beers till closing time in 1913.

Not to worry though, we'll just walk a little further up Tower Hamlets Street to number 58 where we can visit the “Canterbury Bell”. Incidentally, I'd like to point out at this stage that Tower Hamlets Street doesn't have its numbers even on one side and odd on the other. The right hand side of the street continues from number 1 to

I'm not sure what now, but once you reach the end you cross the road and walk back down the other side where the numbers continue in sequence. This must be marvellous for postmen who don't have to continually cross the road to deliver their post if sorted sequentially. Anyway, the "Canterbury Bell" is open from 1870 to 1908 for some George Beer and Company beers who brewed from Canterbury, and almost definitely explains the name.

On the other side of the road, situated at number 27, and in the years between 1847 and 1878 we come across the "British Tar". A Mary Monday was serving there in 1847 and that is about 20 years before the other houses actually appeared in the street, so I doubt it had that number at that time. However, around 1878 the pub changed to its current name; the "Dewdrop Inn" and I am informed around about 1908 it was described as being rebuilt. The pub is still open today but now occupies numbers 26 and 27. In the October storms of 1987 part of the frontage collapsed into the road and has never been replaced. The photo below shows the pub just before those storms with the impressive top part of the building still intact.



Bit of a walk now to the next pub and we'll keep pretty close to the 20th century and travel just at a time shortly after Queen Victoria sadly died. The year is 1902 and there is a lot of development being carried out in Dover with new housing and of course new pubs being built to entertain those living within walking distance. Continuing along Astor Avenue, which carries on where Tower Street finishes we come to a road on the right called Goschen Road. Prominently seen on the left hand side of this road at number 1 is the King Edward VII. Obviously named after the new King who was on the throne from 22nd January 1901 until his death on 6th May 1910. The pub is still open today I am glad to say. The photo below shows a pub outing, date unfortunately unknown. I wonder if it is we time travellers caught in the lens of the camera. If so I think we could be positioned in the middle at the front. (Also somewhat reminiscent of the mid/late 1960s and the Beatles – "Sergeant Pepper" or maybe "Magical Mystery Tour". Ed)



The next pub on our travels is a little bit older, having opened its doors in the year 1900, it is still open for refreshment today, and known to us as the Boar's Head. Originally owned by the local brewery Leney it later passed to Fremlins. 1900 saw Leney apply for an "off" licence for the premises, the house still

being under construction. It was refused, but by 11th August that year the tenant Mr Cheeseman was in occupancy and the road was completed the following year. Shortly after occupancy a second application was applied for, this time an "on" license and it was approved, but only if that for the "Round Tower Inn" at Round Tower Street was surrendered. Round Tower Street being around the Archcliffe area



by the way and certainly nowhere near Tower Hamlets. Mr Leney also owned the land that is now part of the Dover Grammar School for Boys playing fields, and as a governor of the early County school, bequeathed the land that the school now use to play football on. I do have a couple of photographs that show the pub holding a fete on the land before the school landscaped it to what it looks like today. The photo below, date unknown, shows another outing from that pub. The Boys Grammar School also have an archive website that can be accessed from the following address, should anyone be interested – www.DoverGrammar.co.uk

Moving on to our very last destination and again a pub from the same era we reach Elms Vale Road. Just opposite the entrance to Kitchener Road you can find the

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“Crown and Sceptre”. This pub was again built at the turn of the century when the rest of the road was being constructed and from the look of it with a public house in mind, and was originally owned by Thompson and Son of Walmer. Again it took two applications before a license was granted, but beers could be purchased there on the premises from 1902. Still open today, although now under Kent’s oldest brewery Shepherd Neame, it had been a Charrington outlet prior to February 1991, as can be seen from the picture above taken in 1987.



The Crown & Sceptre in 1987

Well, I hope you have enjoyed our stroll through time and Tower Hamlets and aren't too the worse for wear. If you are interested in further information regarding the pubs of Dover, that too can be accessed at the following web site www.Dover-Kent.Com and I am always very interested to hear your stories or receive any photographs that aren't already on display at the above website, so please contact me if you have anything you would like to add.

Paul K Skelton

N.B. Since writing the article earlier in the year I realise there are two other pubs that should have been mentioned. Firstly the King William I at 12-14 Tower Hill which was bombed on 10 December 1942. I haven't got a photo of that I'm afraid, or indeed of what's there now, but I can trace it back as a pub as far as 1847. (*I believe it's now housing but was for many years a commercial site carrying out, I think, "stove enamelling", whatever that was - Ed.*). The other pub was called the "Windsor Castle" and was mentioned in an 1851 census. At that time the licensee was given as George Dennis and the address number 19 Tower Hamlets. In the same year that W P Brackenbury was licensee of the King William I, so I'm pretty certain that they are indeed two different pubs. Still don't know where 19 Tower Hamlets could have been though.

During our stroll I have referred to the game of skittles, and if anyone is interested in playing there are very strong leagues in and around Dover that play the game on outside, but mainly covered, alleys. A new website has been started that could introduce you to the game, which can be found at www.dover-skittles.co.uk.



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THE BUTCHERS ARMS

Herne

Kent Pub of The Year

The Kent pub' of the year, The Butcher's Arms, is not run of the mill public house. As its award suggests it is something special. In fact, it was not even a public house before 2005. Here is how it all happened.

Its owner Martin Hillier was a lager drinker until 1985, when while working in a London motorcycle shop, he had a chance meeting with an attractive young PR lady who was promoting David Bruce's Firkin Home Brew Houses, and specifically The Flounder and Firkin in Holloway Road. Although Martin had little interest, or little knowledge in cask conditioned beers the PR lady had sufficient powers of persuasion to tempt Martin into visiting the Flounder and Firkin, where, amazed at the abundance of tastes and lack of gas, he was an immediate convert to the cause of 'real ale'.

Five years of serious assiduous application to the cause of cask conditioned beers followed, and then, in 1990, he decided to purchase The Canterbury Beer Shop, when it came on the market, where his devotion to real ale gained him a place in The Good Beer Guide. However, after seven years at this location Allied Domecq decided to open an off-licence just down the road. Martin fought hard to compete, but as so often happens, the man with the superior supply of money wins, and he transferred his interests to a former Butcher's shop in Herne. His wife of the time being a florist, and with the shop located near to a church and undertakers, the premises was initially opened as a Florist and Beer Shop, but in 2003 it was decided to concentrate on the beer side, and the florist's was closed. The shop was run solely as an off-licence until 2005, when after a chance discussion with a licensing

Martin Hillier outside the Butchers Arms, Herne



officer from Canterbury City Council, he learned that it would be possible to run it as a public house. Martin thought about this and wondered if he would be happy serving rowdy, tonsorially challenged lager drinkers with small IQs, and being engulfed in thick clouds of cigarette smoke and loud pop music. He decided he would not, so he opened as a pub and banned smoking, lager and music.

Martin treats his beers with reverence, and is always ready to chat about them. They are sold straight from the cask, and as he has the use of only one arm, Martin has designed his own cask tapping machine, which may be viewed on request. The Butcher's is very much a beer house. Spirits are not sold, neither are wines unless you are a lady accompanying a beer drinker. Lemonade is given to drivers, accompanying beer drinkers, but it will not be sold for the purpose of adulterating beers. Locally produced cheeses are sold, to eat in the bar, or to take away. Off sales are still buoyant, and account for, roughly, 1/3 of sales.

The standard range of beers are Dark Star Hop-head Bitter, Harveys Sussex Best Bitter and Fuller's ESB. These are joined by two guest ales, often from microbreweries, and frequently one of these is a mild. One other beer is also always available, but not advertised and will be sold to the discerning drinker, by approval of the landlord. This is Harvest Ale, from J W Lees of Manchester, a draught Barley Wine at 11½ % ABV. More of this beer is sold at The Butcher's than anywhere else in the world, and three or four different vintages are usually available, each slightly different in taste, and sometimes in colour. The prices are reasonable and beers start at £2.25 per pint, and there is 10% discount on off sales.



Martin Hillier at his stillage

Space is limited. There are only seats for 12 medium to small people, so arrive early if you do not want to stand. The Butcher's Arms is probably the smallest free house in the country, and the smallest in Kent. If you enjoy good beer and good conversation in peaceful surroundings, take the No. 6 bus from Canterbury to Herne, alight at Herne Church, and cross the road to the Butcher's. Buses are every 10 minutes throughout the day, and half hourly later in the evening. Opening times are 12.00 – 13.30 and 18.00-21.30, with occasional extensions. Closed on Mondays and Sundays.

Roger Marples

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- Thurs 27th – Italian Night

December

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- Thurs 4th – Curry Night two home course Thai for only £10.95
- Mon 8th – Wine Tasting try new delicious wines with a great selection of cheeses for only £5.95 each!
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REDISCOVERING HYTHE

Hythe had, until recent times, little to attract the real ale drinker in search of something other than run of the mill beers that might be found in most houses throughout East Kent.

The Carousel Bar



The first bar to offer something different is the **Carousel Bar**, in Prospect Road, which opened on 17th March of this year. The Carousel was formerly a restaurant, but is now a comfortable one bar public house, decorated in the style of a hotel lounge bar. Hours of opening are 11.00 - 23.00, 12.00-23.00 Sundays. Gary, who came from The Good Intent in Aldington, and seems to be in constant attendance at the bar, attracts a good regular trade.

There are normally four cask beers on sale which tend to be from a mixture of micro and regional breweries. When last visited Wadworth, Sharpe's, Wells and Young's, and Jennings were all represented, and a mild is often on offer. Should one be travelling by bus in the direction of Folkestone and Dover it is possible to observe the arrival of the bus through the doorway, and providing there are intending passengers awaiting, to quickly down ones pint and join the queue.

The second of the interesting cask ale outlets to appear on the scene is the **Red Lion**, Red Lion Square, which was for some obscure reason renamed for a short time, the Waterside – the public House that is, not the square. In May of this year this Enterprise Inn was taken on by Fran from the Railway Bell, Kearsney, and while there is an emphasis on food, that does not prevent well kept cask beers being served. On a previous visit I had found three beers on sale, from 1648 of East Hoathly, Gadds and Whitstable. On my last visit just two pumps were in use and were selling beers from 1648 and Whitstable, the Whitstable Native being in top form, and it is policy to sell Kent and Sussex micro brewery beers. Despite the meal trade, the casual drinker is always made to feel very welcome but. The bar is closed between 15.00 and 18.00. Accommodation is also provided, as the Red Lion is a Hotel in practice as well as in name. Although the 'bus stop is not right outside it is only a few paces away.

The Red Lion



The Three Mariners



The last of the new interesting cask ale outlets to appear on the scene is an erstwhile Shepherd Neame house, the **Three Mariners** in Windmill Street. This is tucked away in the back streets on the seaward side of the Canal. The landlord formerly ran the Clarendon in nearby Sandgate, which was, and still is, a Shepherd Neame House, although this is a brewery whose beers are very unlikely to feature in The Three Mariners. The pub has been completely refurbished, very much in the style of a traditional back street family house, and attracts a cross section of drinkers from different age groups. It retains two bars and is very much a beer house. The beers on offer range from micros to regional and national breweries. On my last visit there was a choice of brews from Highgate, Greene King, Wells and Young's and McMullen, the latter being in first rate condition. As I am not a fan of Greene King or Wells and Young's, the landlord kindly let us sample a pint of Jennings that was ready to go on; this was also in top condition. The favourite brewery here is York Brewery, which I am told sells out in no time at all. The pub does not close in the afternoon.

Roger Marples

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GETTING TO KNOW GADD'S

A trip to Gadd's Brewery, Ramsgate

Back in April to celebrate our country's patron saint, the Louis Armstrong in Dover had hosted a St. George's Day quiz, with, as prize for the winning team, a trip to the Ramsgate Brewery, the home of Gadd's beers, and one of Kent's leading micro brewers of real ale. Needless to say the prospect of a brewery visit sparked interest beyond just that of the winning team and arrangements were made for a dozen or so of us to be included in the trip.

Accordingly we assembled at the Louis one Thursday evening in early August, and well primed with a pint or two set off by mini-bus for the Isle of Thanet. We arrived at 8 o'clock, the last part of our journey through the outer suburbs of Ramsgate and Broadstairs accompanied by the disembodied voice of a satnav, whose mid Atlantic female tones, made us feel that we might be "doing Europe" – if its Thursday it must



be Gadd's. Like so many micro breweries the Ramsgate Brewery is situated on a modern industrial estate, in its case the end unit in a nondescript block of units on the outskirts of Broadstairs, a location hardly equating with the usual image of a brewer of traditional English ales. Forget the elegant Victorian tower brewery tucked away down a side street of a sleepy market town, today, real ale production is just as likely to take place amidst, car repair workshops, haulage yards and builders merchants.

Unfortunately owner and proprietor Eddie Gadd was away, involved with the Broadstairs Folk Festival, but we were warmly welcomed by his wife Lois and manager Steve. "Get yourselves a drink" said Steve, and Lois was soon pulling us up pints of No7 from the three pump beer engine in the tiny reception area. After photographs of the assembled group outside the brewery (while the light was still good), and replenished glasses for the more speedy drinkers, the brewery tour commenced. Tour is perhaps something of an exaggeration, as the brewery's full extent is probably no more than 30 yards from back to front. The contrast with a regional or national brewer could not be more evident: no separate floors for different stages in the brewing process, or labyrinth of offices for the running of a large and complex organisation, and no luxurious hospitality suite with brewing memorabilia and pictures of dray horses around the wall. The Ramsgate Brewery's concept of brewing, shared by micro brewers up and down the country, involves a handful of brewing vessels, extensive lengths of plastic piping, lots of casks and a forklift; and just four members of staff. Otherwise, except for raw materials, office and the reception area mentioned above, that's about it: well, no doubt it isn't, but that's the impression that remains – the product however is excellent. Although only a tiny

operation Gadds range of ales puts to shame many of the country's larger brewers. As well as the six regulars – Nos. 3, 5 and 7, Seaside, Storm Warning and Dogbolter – draught ales include a special brew for each month, which covers almost every conceivable ale style, plus a few occasionals such as the 6.7% ABV Exodus Stout brewed every March for the following October, and a traditionally brewed real IPA at about 8% ABV, available around Easter time, and with each year's brew being unique to the variety of hop used and that seasons growing conditions.

Steve explained the use of different types malts and hops, offering us tastes of examples of each (the crystal malt was delicious), and the processes involved, from the initial mashing, through boiling and fermenting, and finally casking. The brewery has a five barrel capacity with five individual fermenting vessels. It all seemed very simple, straightforward and down to earth, and totally lacking any sense of the mystic, which one felt must be necessary to create Gadds mouthwatering brews. Much of the equipment had come from the Ferret and Firkin in Chelsea, when the brew pub chain abandoned home brewing; and the Firkin outfit itself also provided Eddie with the rights to one of his most famous brews, Dogbolter. Both Eddie and Steve had previously worked for the Firkin chain, and there is talk of a big reunion of ex-Firkin staff at next year's Great British Beer Festival. Like much of the micro industry, business is booming, a recent brew of the August beer, 40 firkins of the tongue twisting She Sells Sea Shells, was all sold by the time it was casked.

A picture hanging in the brewery of a fearsome landlady of days gone bye



Sampling the product

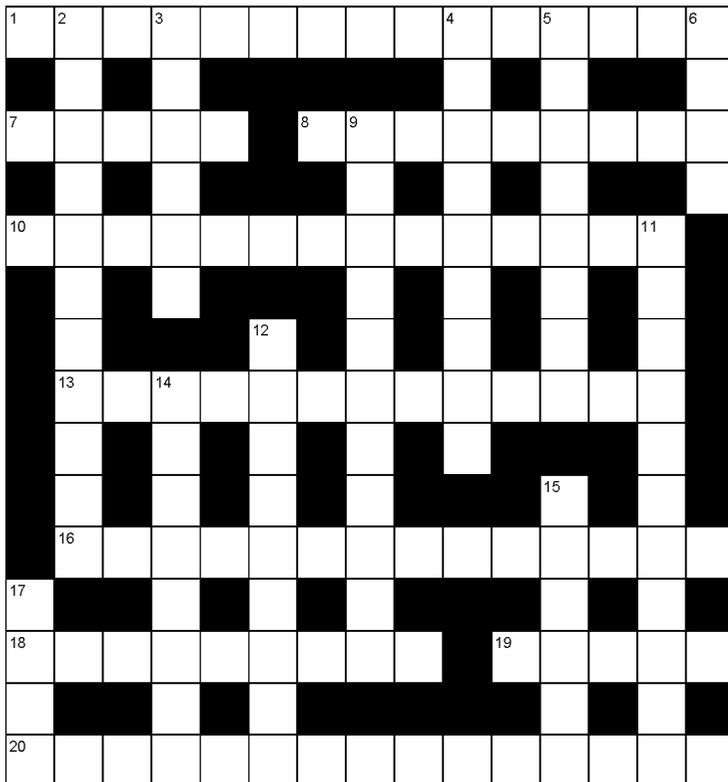
It was then back to reception and more beer.... to drink that is. The Gadds No 7 had been replaced by She Sells Sea Shells, and Steve produced several of the brewery's bottled beers – the golden pale ale No3 (ABV 5%), Dogbolter porter (ABV 5.6%), Black Pearl Oyster Stout (ABV 6.2%) and the pale India ale No Tomorrow (8.0%). Like all Gadds bottled beers, all were bottle conditioned, and while all were excellent, the Black Pearl was universally considered superb, mellow and rich and with a marvellous depth of taste. To accompany our consumption of ale the Louis

Armstrong had thoughtfully provided sandwiches, sausage rolls, etc., and we munched and imbibed happily, standing outside the brewery in the balmy evening air as the light faded. All too soon it was time to board the bus and return, with, in the sky ahead of us, a particularly impressive moon – which for some reason some of the company found particular difficulty in locating.

Martin Atkins

CROSSWORD

Not a Beerword this Month



Across

1. Film lost in a storm (4,4,3,4)
7. A reverse pose for fabled author (5)
8. Colourings go on, it follows English saint (9)
10. No blemishes on this alloy (9,5)
13. Racer throws a Maori trident (5,8)
16. The victory of wisdom in the eleventh century (6,8)
18. Most boring air deters arrangement (9)
19. Chair motion (5)
20. Reed simply wrote about Sayers detective (4,5,6)

Down

2. Delighted about home working in the open, to start with (4,3,4)
3. Unusual previous partner – no jerk (6)
4. Uproar follows call for ice drop (9)
5. Pure high temperature! (5-3)
6. Sid's spoilt town (4)
9. Unfastens join in 6d (11)
11. Occupation: rock explorer (11)
12. Double face cut from the same cloth (9)
14. Cultivate hospital room towards the back (8)
15. Trade convention (6)
17. Overheard lazy pop star (4)

Answers on Page 61

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NOW WE ARE TWO

A NOSTALGIC LOOK BACK AT THE BEERY
BOATERS 1985 TRIP ON THE
FOUR COUNTIES RING

April 1985 saw the Beery Boaters back at Middlewich in increased numbers; enough, in fact, for two boats. After our first successful attempt at a 'ring' in 1984, it was decided that we should go round the Four Counties Ring which, in mileage and lockage is very similar to the Cheshire Ring of the previous year; 100 miles and 91 locks. Our route was anti-clockwise starting from Middlewich: south-west along the Middlewich Branch of the Shropshire Union Canal to the Main Line at Barbridge Junction, left to join the Staffordshire and Worcestershire Canal at Autherley Junction just north of Wolverhampton, left again past Stafford to the Trent and Mersey Canal at Great Hayward where a final left turn would return us to Middlewich via Stoke-on-Trent and the 2919 yard Harecastle Tunnel.

So on Saturday 27th April we duly congregated in Middlewich at the Newton Brewery, a Marston's pub, the Dover contingent having arrived in a mini-bus kindly loaned to us by the Kent and East Sussex Canal Restoration Group. New member, Dave McNair ('Jonah' to all for some unexplained reason) was to join us the next day; exactly when, where and how nobody quite knew. Dave Green was to

take charge of the 70ft 'Sycamore' as on the previous year, his crew being Mike Green, Peter 'Cherub' Broberg from CAMRA Hants and Surrey Borders Branch, Phil Simpson, Roger 'Dodger' Milbourne, Jeff Waller, Dave Routh, John Underdown and the Commodore, although I spent some time helping out (but not sleeping) on the other boat. This was the 56ft. 6-berth, 'Pine' with Ray Crane as Skipper, Mike Lock, Simon Lamoon, Andrew 'Speed' Bushby and (hopefully) Dave McNair. Also the Rogers Marples and Corbett turned up to see us off, as well as any spirits that we might possess!

There are few pubs near the Middlewich Branch (one less now since the Badger at Church Minshull has closed) but we able to get to the Verdin Arms at Minshull Vernon, near Wimboldsley, a short walk from the canal via a muddy farmyard. Whilst engaging in the usual horseplay en route, Roger Corbett managed to straddle a live electric fence. Painful! The Verdin Arms was a Robinson's pub with beer on electric pump, good grub and a landlord with quite a



'The Homepride Man' on holiday

repertoire of Stanley Holloway monologues. So a good time was had by all. Just how good was apparent the following morning from the variety of sombre expressions. For my part, as there were no locks for a while I had an extra hour in my bunk, emerging briefly to repair Sycamore's throttle linkage which had come adrift. Eventually a couple of locks did appear, so I reluctantly turned out.

Just after turning left at Barbridge we came across Jonah, calmly sitting on the canal bank waiting for us to arrive. Such faith! It was somewhere around here that the crew of Sycamore spotted two cars parked in a quiet location, with a pair of bored-looking dogs in one and their presumed owners in the other actively getting on with things. As we passed cheers and shouts of encouragement arose, first from the lads sitting in the bows and then from the others crowded on the stern. This caused a brief cessation of activities and angry glares until the hooligans had passed, then they got down to things again, not realising that, some 60ft behind, a further



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batch of noisy spectators were approaching to urge on their efforts! Our lunchtime venue was Audlem, 9 miles from Barbridge Junction, and towards the bottom of our first major obstacle, the Audlem Flight: and we went up the first 3 locks and moored outside the Bridge Inn and the Shroppie Fly at Audlem Wharf. The Shroppie Fly at that time didn't sell Real Ale, although it wasn't long before it did and still does, so we patronised the Bridge Inn, a Marston's tied house for beer and eats.



We also visited the Lamb, now closed, just round the corner in the Square for some Ansell's.

In the afternoon we negotiated the rest of the Audlem flight and proceeded to the 5 Adderley locks less than 2 miles away where it started to rain. By the time that we had got to Market Drayton it was raining steadily and getting cold and dark. There were even some flakes of snow with the rain. "Here we go", we thought, "1981 all over again!" However this was just the first of our problems. We had just moored opposite the towpath at an innocent-looking wharf when a chap appeared and informed us that we were on private moorings but that we could stay there on payment of a hefty fee. Understandably, we decided to move over to the towpath side. Sycamore crossed and tied up and Pine followed, but a couple of feet from the edge came to a halt, stuck on something, and try as the crew might, by poling, rocking the boat, putting the engine ahead and astern, they could not budge the boat at all. Most of the crew of Sycamore had by now gone off into Market Drayton, but a couple of us were left, including Dave and I, so we decided that we'd better rescue Pine. We cast off, backed up to the bow of Pine and secured our aft mooring rope to its bow stud. Full ahead on all engines! Both boats remained shuddering for a few seconds before the tow-rope snapped! The free end whipped round and almost wrapped itself around Simon, who was standing in the bows of Pine. He went inside to a safer environment! Another thought. We took Sycamore astern of Pine and nudged her off the obstacle with a sharp blow from our bow. *(Sounds like the Beery Boating we know and love - Ed)*

We found Market Drayton disappointing. It might have been better in less unwelcoming weather, but to us the pubs seemed characterless and in the main filled with noisy youngsters, and those of us who had to perform with Pine in the sleety rain were not exactly in the best of humour either. So it was not the most enjoyable of evenings and we have avoided Market Drayton ever since. Among the pubs visited were the Stags Head and the Crown, both selling Marston's beers.

On Monday morning it was still raining, but much warmer and the threat of snow had departed. By the time that we reached Norbury Junction, where the Newport Branch used to lock down from the Main Line (restoration is continually talked about; one day it might come to fruition) the sun had emerged, and a couple of miles later we tied up by Bridge 34 and the Boat Inn at Gnosall, pronounced 'Noesall' for lunch. More Marston's and a good enough hostelry for us to spend lunchtime



there without visiting the village's other pubs, of which I know at least three; the Horns, the Royal Oak and, by Bridge 35, the Navigation. The afternoon was uneventful with eight lock-free miles to Brewwood (pronounced 'Brood') where we had planned our overnight mooring.

Brewood is quite a good stop-over place with five pubs to my knowledge. We drank in the Bridge Inn (Marston) by Bridge 14, the Three Stirrups (M&B) and the Swan (Bass). There is also the Admiral Rodney and the Lion Hotel. Only five miles further on is Autherley Junction where the Shropshire Union Canal



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joins the Staffordshire and Worcestershire Canal, and the stop lock which ensures that the couple of inches lower Shropshire Union does not take water from the Staffs & Worcester: and leads me to digress to an event which took place here just over a year later when Ray and I were on another Four Counties trip with another couple of Middlewich narrowboat craft, Oak and Rowan, as guests of the Kent & East Sussex Canal Restoration Group (KESCRG). The incident was reported in a letter to one of the national canal magazines shortly afterwards, the writer, a first-time hirer, stating that "the highlight of the trip was when a couple of hire boats, manned by a group of youngsters dressed in 'Save the Whale' tee-shirts (or something like that) managed to get through Autherley stop-lock with both sets of gates open, ramming the opposite bank in the process!" Well, it didn't happen quite like that; the tee-shirts read KESCRG and we oldsters stood clear while the restoration youth made a bold attempt to destroy more canals for future restoration.

It occurred something like this. Oak entered the lock from the Shropshire Union, but instead of closing the bottom gates behind it, about a dozen young stalwarts managed to open the top gates against the small head of water. Throttle open wide, Oak stemmed the flood, crept out of the lock and turned left onto the Staffs & Worcester. Throttle also wide open, Rowan staggered into the lock and the bottom gates were released to slam shut behind it. A series of incidents then set themselves into motion. Two other hire cruisers had been approaching the junction from opposite directions on the Staffs & Worcester. The one approaching from our left, intended to pass the junction and carry on down the canal, the other, approaching from our right, was going to turn into the lock and proceed up the Shropshire Union. As he did so the bottom gates shut and the flow of water suddenly stopped, to be followed by a wave like a miniature Severn Bore rebounding towards the junction, bring Rowan with it, throttle was still wide open, like a cork out of a bottle. The boat entering the lock took rapid evasive action and ran up the bank, while the other craft coming down the canal, and now opposite the junction, also had to make an emergency change of course to avoid the runaway Rowan and collided with the opposite bank. All, except Ray and I, scuttled up the towpath to board their boat leaving Ray and I to face the wrath of the owner of a canal side shop below the lock who emerged fuming against "those young vandals trying to flood my cellar!" We sympathised and said that if we came across them we would make sure that they were reported. Incidentally, unless I



am mistaken (which I doubt) one of those young 'vandals' is now Chairman of the Waterway Recovery Group!

On this occasion, however, there was nothing untoward to mention except that the Skipper who had been below came up to find me steering through the very hard outcrop of rock where the canal narrows to little more than a boat's width. He swore I'd lost my way and we were going up a drainage ditch! Between the end of this cutting and the top of Gailey Locks some six miles away the canal is very exposed in places, and it quickly became evident that a strong wind had got up, and that difficulties accompany steering a 70ft slab-sided narrow boat in those circumstances. At the Anchor Inn at Coven I managed to give a nudge to a boat tied up on the inside of the sharp bend there, hopefully teaching the owner to choose better mooring places in future; and a little way further on at Hatherton Junction (the Hatherton Branch now disused once led to the Birmingham Canal Navigations) where there is an almost right-angled bend, found the bows of Sycamore heading straight for the centre hatch of a very smart full-length boat with the owner looking out of it with a horrified expression. Try as I might, I couldn't get Sycamore to respond sufficiently to the tiller to avoid collision, so at the last moment I put the throttle into full astern, and with less than two feet to go the boat stopped, slid gently backwards, and with the wind catching the stern pulled neatly into the end of the Hatherton Branch and alongside the very handy landing stage and post office and stores that are to be found there. I put on the 'it's easy when you know how' expression and we tied up and went to buy some post cards. Under the circumstances, it seemed the best way of saving face!

The rest of the morning passed without undue incident and we travelled on to our lunchtime stop at Penkridge, some four miles and seven locks. We took on water, moored up and went in search of our beer. The canal side Boat Inn did not then sell Real Ale, but there are several more pubs in this small town and we enjoyed some Banks's beer at the Star and Ansell's at the Railway. For the evening Stafford was the obvious choice, particularly as Cherub knew the town well and, more importantly, some good pubs. So it was an easy afternoon's cruise of 6 miles and 4 isolated locks before tying up at the nearest place to Stafford, Bridge 98 at Weeping Cross on the A34, a mile from the town. At one time you could actually get to Stafford by boat via a canal link to the River Sow, but this has been disused for many years.



Sycamore & Pine at Penkridge

Stafford fulfilled all our expectations. It must have done, because I can't remember too much about it! My list shows that we visited the Malt & Hops which, for 1985, had an exceptional range of Real Ales including Marston's, Holden's, McEwan's, Younger's and Ruddles. Also visited were the Bear (Banks's), Pheasant (Ansell's) and Sun (M&B). The landlord of the latter pub had a friend who kept the Star at Stone, which was our planned stop for lunch the following day. When we informed him of this he seemed very doubtful whether we would be there by then. After all, it was over 14 miles and 4 locks away by canal! Knowing our capabilities better, we promised to forward his regards. After the pubs had closed we encountered a Chinese take-away and in time honoured tradition ordered food to take back to the boats. The proprietor offered to take the food and a couple of us in his car, so leaving a couple of the more weary-looking in his charge, the remainder of us started our trek back. When we arrived we found that all the food had been laid out in Pine's galley and was overflowing – it resembled a Chinese New Year's feast for about 50 persons. Either the Chinaman had been over-generous or more likely, in our beer-laden enthusiasm, we had over-estimated. Even after everyone had eaten their fill, there was still a lot left.

To be continued

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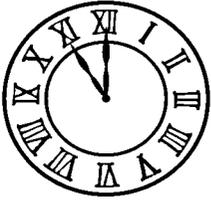
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LAST KNOCKINGS

Well there's a thing, the collected expertise of a fair chunk of the local Branch plus a good representation of other real ale drinkers could not identify Blakes' first mystery ale. And what was the brew that had everyone so confused and misled, and which was generally considered most palatable? – all Peter and Kathryn would tell us was that it was a local regular brew we had all tasted at some time or other, and that its strength lay between 4 & 5% ABV. Believe it or not it transpired that it was Spitfire, and tasted like no pint of Spitfire I had ever tasted, although admittedly it had the best of attention, and was poured directly from the barrel on gravity. Among the wrong guesses were Gadds No. 5, Nelson's Friggin' In The Riggin' and Harvey's Sussex. Not a particularly creditable performance, but then we perhaps started off on the wrong foot, so to speak, as none of us would have expected Blakes to be selling Shepherd Neame beers. But then, also, shouldn't we have recognised the alleged use of brewing sugars, bottom fermentation, conical fermenters, centrifuges, and all the other “non-traditional practices” (or malpractices) supposedly to be found at their Faversham brewery? – apparently not, though no doubt, some would maintain, that nobody with a really discerning palate tried it.

How times change. Elsewhere in this issue we report on a visit to the Rams-gate Brewery. Fifty years ago such an operation would have been seen as a no-hoper, totally out of line with the then fashion for vast industrial complexes and gleaming technology; when being a part of the atomic age mattered more than the product. And how we benefited, not just from the ever present threat of nuclear oblivion (not that I was ever a supporter of “Ban the Bomb”), but the outpouring of all manner of industrial processing – sliced bread, mousetrap cheddar, keg beer. “Never had it so good” cried the Government, “Pile it high, sell it cheap” shouted Tesco, and it was and they did. Never had so much cheap been piled so high so good. Meanwhile the old world was disappearing. Streets of terraced houses were replaced by ring roads and tower blocks, branch lines were torn up and the country's vast heritage of small breweries amalgamated into half a dozen national combines. Only a nut case or incurable romantic would have envisaged any future for a brewery such as Gadds.

All the current talk of community locals and traditional pubs brings to mind a night's stop at a Pennine village some ten years ago. We arrived at about 8pm one Saturday in late September, the first evening of that year's Beery Boater's

End of the Year Trip, and slated our thirst and ate, at the nearest pub to the canal. We were in a side room, and I don't recall much about the beer or the meal, but I do remember the laughter, which ebbed and flowed around the other bars, as if the next day might have been Christmas but no one else knew. Later we climbed to another pub behind, the village seemingly comprising solely steep roads and stone built houses. A traditional Saturday night (how dated that suddenly sounds) was in progress, all ages and types enjoying a late evening drink, and a young girl going from group to group around the bar, and being congratulated on her recent engagement. We sat in a corner with our pints, and closing time came and went, and no time was called (this was under the old regulations) and there was no move to empty the bar. Lates were evidently a strong possibility, but having travelled up that day followed by four hours on the canal we were all too tired, and returned reluctantly to our boat and our bunks.

One of the more curious aspects of the smoking ban has been smell. Not that of tobacco itself, nor the happy fug of cigarette smoke and warm beer that used to exude from pub doorways – long since victim of modern ventilation and the taste for chilling everything; but people smells. While many might have objected to the smell of burning tobacco, it did mask almost everything else, new and old sweat, strange deodorants, and the inevitable results of excessive gassy beer. One pub musician commented recently that returning into a warm and crowded venue after a cigarette outside during the break was a real challenge.

Once upon a time the Government's job was to keep civil order at home and fight the monarch's wars abroad. Unfortunately this originally limited brief, has, over the years, grown into an interest in almost all aspects of our daily lives. A good example is personal health with all parties vying to become the champion of health and fitness. At the end of August such an initiative emerged from new Conservatism, with the launch of Conservative Health spokesman, Andrew Lansley's "There is no excuse for being fat" campaign. Aimed at encouraging healthier lifestyles, individual responsibility will be the watchphrase, with firms urged to cut the size of ready meals and Olympic stars used as role models. While we should not disregard our health it is all too reminiscent of the school-room or the nursery. What would have been the view of that former Conservative leader, Winston Churchill, whose body mass index, if such things existed in his day, and enjoyment of eating, smoking and drinking, would no doubt have produced paroxysms among the health brigade. Perhaps it might have been along the lines of the reply he gave to General Montgomery when the latter declared that he didn't drink, didn't smoke and was 100% fit. "I drink and I smoke", said Churchill "and I'm 200% fit."

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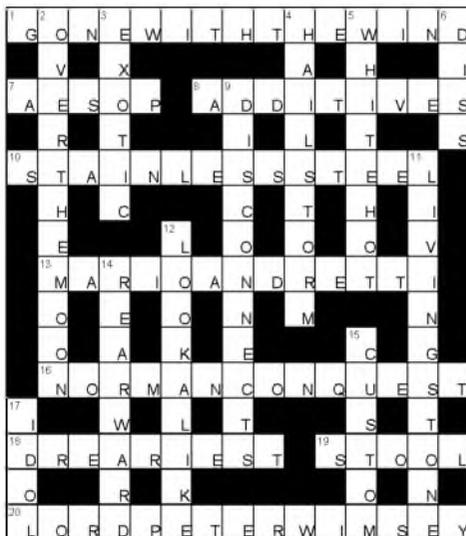
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And Finally.....

This years Munich Oktoberfest is over. During the festival overall totals were down on last year but some 6.6 million litres of beer were drunk by 6 million visitors. The number of oxen eaten remained stable at 104 and the security guards in the 14 giant beer tents confiscated a total of 200,000 empty litre glasses that visitors had tried to smuggle out of the tents as souvenirs. Anyone who has visited the Oktoberfest and seen hundreds of revellers dancing on the wooden tables, holding up their beer glasses and chanting along to DJ Ötzi's cover version of "Hey! Baby" knows how merry the atmosphere can get. For those who haven't, a look at the lost and found records gives you an idea of the raucous celebrations. Festival staff found 680 identity cards and passports, 410 wallets, 360 keys, 265 pair of spectacles, 280 mobile phones and 80 cameras, one set of diving goggles, one set of angel's wings, a superman costume and four wedding rings. A long-haired Dachshund was also found but was later reclaimed by its owner.

"For the first time since records began, no dentures were found," the Munich city press department announced with a mixture of surprise and disappointment. "Is this a sign of demographic change, good dental hygiene or a higher rate of tooth implants?"

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