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**CAMPAIGN
FOR
REAL ALE**

**Issue 46
Winter
2010/11**

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

CHANNEL DRAUGHT



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MAISON DIEU
and the Pubs of
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Editorial Team

Editor &
Advertising
Martin Atkins

Editorial Assistants
Trisha Wells
John Pitcher

Design & Format
Steve Bell

Editorial Address

You can write to the
Editor c/o
2 Eastbrook Place
Dover CT16 1RP
01304 216497
Email
martin_atkins_camra@yahoo.co.uk

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CHANNEL DRAUGHT

ISSUE 46
Winter 2010/11

Welcome to 2011 and the latest issue of Channel Draught – and one not without a note of sadness, as we report the deaths of Daphne Fagg, long serving landlady of the Carpenters Arms, Coldred; and of former Branch Member and Beery Boater, Phil Simpson.

If you don't recognise the photograph on the front cover it's not because it's a little known local gem you have yet to become acquainted with, but because it is in fact, a unique Worcestershire cider house. Known, for whatever obscure reason, as the Monkey House, Roger Marples visited it recently and describes it in greater detail elsewhere (see 2010 Divisional Trip). He also points out, that quite likely it will not be there for much longer – a survivor from another age, whose life has perhaps finally run its course. For some two hundred years it happily supplied a needed community service, without feeling any necessity to pursue wealth and celebrity, or promote and replicate itself all over the country. What chance that enthusiasts, fifty or a hundred years hence, will be seeking out the last remaining supermarkets, mobile phone shops or burger bars?

Returning to East Kent, more pub closures are in evidence. By the time you read this the village of Lydden will probably be without an open pub, and Shepherd Neame may have divested itself of even more of its tied estate; although we hope the Enterprise owned White Horse in Dover, closed at the time of writing, will have reopened (see Local News). By contrast local micro brewers continue to thrive: the four additional, anticipated in our Autumn edition, all now in various stages of operation, and Abigale of Ashford (see Page 44), having already supplied beer to among others Blakes and the Prince Albert in Dover and the Berry, Walmer.

As well as further details of the above and all the usual items, this edition includes, a look at a now disappeared local brewery, a brief history of Maison Dieu and some of its neighbouring pubs, an update on the Dover war Memorial Project, and a very small, and new, Ramsgate pub.

Martin Attkins

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EVENTS DIARY

Fri 4 & Sat 5 Feb	White Cliffs Festival of Winter Ale – Dover Town Hall
Mon 21 Feb	Branch Meeting – Royal Oak , Capel-le-Ferne
Fri 25 & Sat 26 Feb	Beer Festival – The Berry, Walmer.
Fri 4 & Sat 5 Mar	Beer Festival – Royal Cinque Ports Yacht Club , Dover*
Sat 12 Mar	Dover walkabout – meet at Red Lion, Dover at 12 noon.
Mon 21 Mar	Branch Meeting – The Bell , Shepherdswell.
Mon 18 Apr	AGM & Branch Meeting – Royal Cinque Ports Yacht Club , Dover. (tbc)
Thur 21 Apr to Mon 25 Apr	Easter Ale & Cider Festival – The Chambers , Cheriton Place, Folkestone*
Fri 22 & Sat 23 Apr	Planet Thanet Beer Festival , Winter Gardens, Margate - visit www.easterbeerfestival.org.uk for details.

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 rural rambles & pub strolls, please email

john@ramblingrumbler.plus.com

or call 01304 214153.

Events marked * are not organised by CAMRA



ANOTHER NAIL IN THE PUB COFFIN?

"We're all in it together" says David Cameron but it's rapidly becoming apparent that some are more in it than others. Among the former are drinkers and pubs, who, having just seen a 2.5% increase in VAT, face a March Budget in which the Chancellor is already committed to increasing duty by 2% plus inflation under the beer duty escalator. The VAT increase has generally put 10p on a pint in the pub, while with UK inflation under the Retail Price Index running at 4 - 5% the duty rise is likely to be in the region of 7%. Additionally the early months of the year is the usual period in which brewers choose to increase the wholesale price of beer. To be frank, we shall be lucky, if by Easter, we get away with only a 20p per pint increase over the prices at the end of last year.

CAMRA says the VAT rise alone, which supermarkets might well decide to absorb for the time being, is likely to push up the rate of pub closures above the current 29 a week. Chief executive Mike Benner said the time had come to scrap the duty escalator and lower VAT in pubs. "Many pub goers will be hit with a VAT increase that will push up the combined taxation on a pint of beer to more than a pound. This historically sad moment for the nation's 15 million pub goers is compounded by the knowledge that this increase will cause yet more well run community pubs to shut their doors unless the government acts. Relentless tax increases on the nation's pubs are contributing to closures, job losses and a decline in community spirit."

CAMRA's call for a compensatory duty cut is supported by new data from Oxford Economics. In a report to the Treasury, it said increasing VAT to 20% would cause the loss of more than 7,000 pub jobs a year unless there was a compensatory cut in duty. British Beer and Pub Association chief executive Brigid Simmonds said with dozens of community pubs closing each week in the UK, increasing VAT will have a "devastating effect on local communities and on the beer and pub industry" with thousands of jobs being lost. And reduced beer tax in pubs is being advocated on health grounds by Dr Nick Sheron, head of clinical hepatology at the University of Southampton. His thinking would see VAT in pubs reduced to 12%, which, combined with a minimum price for alcohol, would deliver health benefits, increase tax revenue for the Treasury, and save pubs. Following CAMRA lobbying a recent change to EU law has made it possible to reduce VAT on pub meals and drinks.

If the Coalition is being honest in its desire to see increased employment in the private sector, improved health, and the survival of the community pub it should very seriously consider these calculations. In particular the Lib Dems might like to resurrect their manifesto commitments which included scrapping the beer duty escalator and consideration of a differential rate of duty for draught beer sold in pubs. Following the damage suffered by supporting the Conservative line over tuition fees they must be owed something.

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The Local News

Contributors - Martin Atkins, The Mcilroys, Roger Marples, John Pitcher, Tony Wells, Jim Green and Mike Sutcliffe 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:

channel.draught@camra-dds.org.uk

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

DOVER

After a succession of landlords over recent years, the Shep's owned **Wheelwright's Arms** and **Old Endeavour** are, at the time of writing, both closed, with considerable doubt as to whether either will ever reopen as a pub. The Endeavour, having been 'For Sale' for some time, acquired steel shutters over doors and windows during the autumn, while rumour already has the Wheelwright's lined up for flats.

Elsewhere, we hear that the **Edward VII**, Goschen Rd. closed and boarded up with 'For Sale' signs since last Spring, has now been acquired by Asians for use as a shop and off licence. In Snargate St, the **Flagship** remains closed, as is the **Britannia** in Townwall St. which appears to be awaiting the area's redevelopment. In Folkestone Rd. the former **Renaissance**, converted to a café last year, and back to its old name, the **Alma**, is advertising itself as a hostel. We understand that a licence has been applied for. Further along the street the **Orange Tree** and **Hare & Hounds** are being converted into houses.

White Horse, St James St: Also closed at the time of writing, following discontinuance of involvement by the **Park Inn**, it is hoped that the pub will shortly



The White Horse, Dover

be reopening with Jeanette Harper still at the helm

Prince Albert, Biggin St: A change of direction from licensee Stephen Davies, who has dispensed with the loud pop music during the week and banished the jukebox. Wantsum and Gadd's beers are now regulars, Want-



The Prince Albert, Dover at Christmas

sum Hengist being on top form during a visit in November, with prices a reasonable £2.40 - £2.60 per pint (pre VAT rise), and a third beer engine on the agenda. Steve is hoping to attract more tourist trade with food made and prepared on the premises – fresh, seasonal and local where possible, and available 12noon to 8pm seven days a week. In January the pub was one of the first to receive Abigale Samphire.

Blakes, Castle St: An even earlier beneficiary of Samphire (in December), the pub may be seeing changes in the future, as Kathryn and Peter offer a lease on the bar and restaurant. The couple will retain ownership of the property and the operation of the letting rooms; and to ensure that the pub retains its GBG status, Peter's knowledge and experience of looking after real ale will be available to assist new proprietors. The last Thursday in November saw the pub host its first Beer and Brains Quiz Night for this season, where we enjoyed Gadds Dark Conspiracy and Adnams Old, as well as a variety of ciders including Double Vision Medium. In the run up to Christmas local seasonal brews included Hopdaemon Dominator and Westerham Godswallop.

Boars Head, Eaton Rd: Regular real ale remains Young's bitter. Mid October found Black Sheep on alongside and both "in good nick" (and probably fortunately so) according to our reporter who called in to watch England's attempts at playing football.

Three Cups, Crabble Hill: Mid November once again saw a mini beer festival at the pub – Friday 19th to Sunday 21st. The emphasis was beers from across the country and included Skinners Betty Stoggs from Cornwall, RCH PG Steam from Somerset and Wolf Ale

from Wolf Brewery, Norfolk. Pints were priced at £2.50 for duration of festival and customers had an opportunity to pour their own directly from the barrel.

Louis Armstrong, Maison Dieu Rd: Another beer festival, this time mid December, from Friday 10th to Sunday 12th. A dozen or so strong and winter ales had been brought in and from Thursday evening a choice of seven were available at any one time – the pub's four hand pumps augmented by three barrels on stillage above the cool box. Beers included the ever popular Thornbridge Jaipur and Westerham Double Stout, and an interesting collaboration between Thornbridge and Dark Star, a darkish 4.7% ABV brew calling itself Thornstar. From Cottage came a very quaffable 5.5% ABV winter ale, Santas Steaming Ale, from Hopdaemon, Dominator (the requested Leviathan already all gone), and from Gadds Dark Conspiracy and Little Cracker, a very tasty spicy ruby ale at 5% ABV. In December drinkers were treated to the appropriately named and very palatable Old Dairy Snow Top.

First & Last, East Cliff: Often forgotten about, but worth a look this Sheps pub in the back road below the White Cliffs sells Master Brew as standard, backed up by Spitfire and seasonal guest.

Fish 'n' Chips with Your Pint: If you've ever left the pub at the end of the evening fancying a bag of fish and chips only to find all the chippies closed, the **Dublin Man O' War** offers the solution – fish 'n' chips while you drink. The pub is now a fully fledged fish 'n' chips outlet, eat in or take out. Standard real ales remain Green King IPA and Sharps Special.

In Whitfield what was left of the **Royal Oak** was demolished shortly after the photos that appeared in our Autumn

issue were taken. Now all is clear for even more houses to be built, as if Whitfield needs any more, with the great expansion that is planned.

DEAL

The Berry – National Cider Pub of the Year Finalist: Saturday, 30th October saw locals and members of the Deal, Dover, Sandwich and District branch of CAMRA, celebrating the end of the campaign's Cider Month and the pub's particularly successful year as a cider outlet. A range of real cider and perry was on offer, plus a buffet, and a chat about cider making from Dan Baldwin, of East Stour Cider.

The day concluded with Paul Meredith, Kent CAMRA's Cider Representative presenting CAMRA's National Cider Pub of the Year Finalist Certificate to landlord Chris Barnes. "Making it through to the final four of the National Cider Pub of the Year competition has been the icing on the cake for an already fantastic year for us," said Chris. "A huge thanks must go to all our staff and customers, as well as the local CAMRA branch for all its support."

Paul Meredith commented that he was very pleasantly surprised at the Berry's success – a big achievement for a Kent pub in a national cider award. Chris and his team deserve hearty congratulations for their enthusiasm and commitment. "I only wish the pub was closer to my home!" he said. DDS CAMRA website (www.camra-dds.org.uk) lists all cider outlets in the branch area.

At the end of February a beer festival is planned – Friday 25th from 4pm and Saturday 26th all day – while the pub is hoping to arrange other events earlier in the week, including a bottled beer tasting session, a brewery trip and visit

from a local brewer.

Stag, The Strand: Good to see three real ales on the handpumps during a



recent visit – specifically Harvey's Sussex, Bombardier, Hobgoblin. However, elsewhere along the Strand not so good. Following the loss of the Lifeboat a few years ago (now converted to a house) the **Lord Clyde** is apparently another pub for which Sheps have no need, and at the time of writing is closed and being advertised for sale. Local rumour has it lined up for conversion to a French restaurant or similar. And at the start of the year the **Lord Nelson** was closed – the landlord believed to be ill and in hospital.

In Beach St. more work appeared to be in progress at the **Port Arms** in December – the building surrounded by scaffolding, while nearby **Dunkerley's** continues with a single real ale, normally St Austell Tribute. On the other side of Broad St. we note that the **Beach Brow Hotel** carries a sign announcing 'Free House' though whether this includes anything of interest to CAMRA members we can't say. At the **Bohemian** a nautical theme appeared to be running at the time of a visit in November, the three real ales being Sharps Doom Bar and Cornish Coaster

and Woodforde Wherry.

Ship, Middle St: In mid December the pub was selling Gadd's Seaside and No.7, Hophead, Deuchars IPA and London Pride, the latter now being a regular addition to the range; and in January an excellent pint of No.7 was enjoyed at most reasonable (post VAT rise) £2.40. Along the road in November at the **Prince Albert** local brew Whitstable East India Pale Ale rubbed shoulders with Suffolk and two brews from Adams – Lighthouse and the very good Old. Also in November the **Alma**, West St. was selling Master Brew and Doom Bar, while at the **Hoy**, Duke St. a Hook Norton brew was on alongside Sheps own beers – presumably indication of another Shepherd Neame festival in progress. Later, around New Year, the pub was offering one of Sheps own winter brews as guest – its 5% Christmas Ale, a pleasing enough taste but with a certain thinness. However at £1.80 a half, price was far from thin. At the **Saracens** in early October Spitfire, Master Brew and Canterbury Jack were available.

SANDWICH & RURAL

Carpenters Arms, Coldred: Sad news at the start of December with the death of long established licensee Daphne Fagg. Daphne who has run the pub for some forty years had not been well for several months following a fall. Her funeral, which we understand was very well attended, took place on Dec 21st at Coldred church, where she was laid to rest in the churchyard. Afterwards there were refreshments at the Carpenters.

Market Inn, Sandwich: Master Brew and Late Red at end of October, and both in good condition. "Downed a pint or two with nice pussy on my lap!" said our correspondent – obviously no more need be said.

Plough, Ripple: A visit in late October found the pub no longer selling Fuller's ESB – a major change, if true, the beer having been a regular here as long as anyone can remember. Strong ale on this occasion was Broadside, reckoned very good, alongside another beer from Adnams and Master Brew. A few days later the **Chequers** at Ash was selling Green King IPA plus a guest (Dick Turpin, we think), however it was not particularly popular and the pub probably will not be taking it again. Greene King IPA also at the **Five Bells**, Eastry where the guest was a very good pint of Tribute. Both the **Charity** at Woodnesborough and the **Crown** Finglesham are in possession of new landlords. (see Page 30)

At the other **Five Bells**, at Ringwould, building work seems to have finally finished and by early November the pub was advertising for cook/chef and bar staff. A glance through the windows show complete internal re-arrangement with a bar at the back of the pub, and considerable open space in front – rather different from its former 'cosy boozer' character. However, by mid January still no sign of re-opening.

High & Dry, Waldershare: work continues to create a cider producing establishment. At Eythorne an autumn visit to the **Crown** found Young's Special, Greene King IPA and Directors, while the long closed **White Horse**, sold earlier last year, has now received an application for change of use to a house. The **Yew Tree** at Barfreestone remains closed but apparently with occupants. No application for change of use but we gather it is up for sale, freehold or lease. And in Lydden, at the time of writing, the **Bell** is closed and the **Hope** about to – new licensees from August at the former, claiming, we gather, a lack of local support.

At Wootton no change at the **Endeavour**, which is also occupied but closed, as it has been for the last five or six years, although the owners maintain it is intended to eventually reopen. An event which is unlikely now at the **Chequers**, West Hougham. Having been closed since October 2006 and looking ever more forlorn and derelict we understand it is now little more than a pile of rubble. And also closed at the time of writing is the **Lighthouse** at Capel – since early Autumn according to a neighbour, with the lease now up for sale. Meanwhile its near neighbour the **Royal Oak** continues to sell keenly priced real ale and good value meals. A particularly good pint of Nelson's Hardy's Kiss was enjoyed on a visit before Christmas.

Black Robin, Kingston: The pub now offers four real ales as standard – in late December Harveys Sussex, Doom Bar, Hobgoblin and Rudolph's something or other at 3.7% from Sheps, maybe the Rudolph's Reward which it was brewing ostensibly for the M&B Pub Group. At Stelling Minnis an interesting variation of choice at the **Rose and Crown**. Once seemingly unaware of the micro industry the most recent visit finding beers from Kelham Island and Skinners alongside Flowers IPA.

CANTERBURY

Phoenix, Old Dover Rd: Continuing former licensee Linda's tradition, mid December saw the return of the pub's winter beer festival. Held over Friday 17th and Saturday 18th December it featured thirty real ales from Kent and across the country. Regular choice features up to six or eight real ales from a variety of sources with usually at least one from either Whitstable or Wantsum. We understand that the pub is offering a 10% discount on real ale on

presentation of a valid CAMRA membership card.

Elsewhere in Canterbury local brews are making their presence felt. In early December the **Old Brewery** was selling Incubus and Gadds No. 5, and the **Blind Dog** Incubus and Skrimshander. At the **King's Head** in Wincheap Old Dairy Bluetop was on alongside Ossian from Inveralmond of Perth, Harveys Sussex and Green King IPA. The **Old Coach and Horses**, Harbledown was selling Sheps Late Red and Adnams Bitter and the **New Inn** Hophead, Harveys Sussex and Youngs Winter Warmer

FOLKESTONE

Work now appears to have started on the former **Railway Bell** site in Dover Rd., the pub having been closed and demolished over the last couple of years. Rumour still suggests that the site is earmarked for a local Tesco store. Further down the hill the Raglan was selling Green King IPA in mid November, while at the **Richmond** Kent Best was available. In the **Lifeboat** the emphasis was on Sharp's brews – Doom Bar, Cornish Coaster and something with red in the name, plus Young's Special. Down the hill in the Stade the two remaining pubs (the Three Mackerel now a café and the non-real ale Jetty's demolished) were offering Abbot and London Pride at the **Ship** and Harveys and Doom Bar at the **Mariners**. As we reported in our Autumn edition the latter is now being run by a former landlord of the currently closed and boarded up Princess Royal, having moved in with his family during spring last year. Harvey's Best and Sharps Doom Bar are standard, plus a guest beer, Wychwoods Hobgoblin having featured recently. We understand that adding a fourth handpump is

currently under consideration.

At the time of writing the **Harbour**, Harbour St. was surrounded by scaffolding and undergoing refurbishment, while round in the High St. the **Earl Grey** remains closed. In Tontine St. we understand that the rebuilt **Brewery Tap** is in ownership of Roger de Haan's Creative Foundation and is not likely to be used as a pub, although further rumour has it destined for a wine bar/bistro or similar.

In Hythe in late November the **Carousel Bar** was selling Abbot, Old Speckled Hen and Eagle and the **White Hart** Master Brew and Greene King IPA. However, more recently three Old Diary beers were found on the handpumps. Now owned by Gill and Peter from the Plough and Harrow, Bridge, we hope it has been saved from the once rumoured flat conversion.

We gather that the ultra modern café style décor will in due course be replaced by more traditional decoration. However, the **Red Lion**, for several years a holder of LocAle accreditation from Ashford, Shepway and Romney Marsh CAMRA, was offering just Doom Bar and Ruddles Best: and we understand that the pub has now abandoned its Kent brews and is concentrating on nationally supplied beers. Interestingly, there were few customers – a striking contrast with the **Three Mariners** in Windmill St. which was 'heaving', and had Young's Bitter and three micro beers (including one from Whitstable) on the handpumps. At the **Hope** real ales were Bombardier and Greene King IPA. We also hear that the **Gate**, Dymchurch Rd., another pub whose survival at one time seemed in doubt, is open again, and that the **Duke's Head** has been acquired from Punch by its land-

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lord. As we reported in an earlier *Channel Draught* the pub is now a serious outlet for traditional cider, four being available on a recent visit.

At Sandgate the ex-Sheps **Earl of Clarendon** continues to offer an interesting choice – a recent visit finding Bitter and Twisted and York Brewery Autumn Kiss alongside Greene King IPA. At the **Ship** we hear that a restau-

rant has been installed at the far end of the pub with views over the sea. Beers from Greene King remain prominent, plus of course Hopback Summer Lighting. Disappointingly, a visit at the end of November found no sign of the Harveys Old which had been standard fare over winter months in recent years.

PHIL SIMPSON

As most of his many friends will know by now, Phil departed for the great pub in the sky on December 21st. He was a stalwart of the Deal, Dover, Sandwich and District Branch of CAMRA in the late 1970s and early 1980s before his job as an accountant with the Co-op took him north to Cheshire.

He was also one of the original eight Beery Boaters way back in 1981, and took part in every April Canal Trip until after his final cruise in 2006 he was diagnosed with cancer and had to lay off for a bit, promising to return to the fold when he was cured. Unfortunately this was not to be. He told us that when he married Wendy the conditions were that not only had she to promise to love, honour and obey him, but also to let him go boating for a week every year!

Despite all those many weeks on the canals, I've never known him to take either the handle of the tiller or of the frying pan once, but, after learning not to open gate paddles too early (this was on the Leeds and Liverpool Canal in 1983 when he almost sank us in a staircase lock), he became the best deck-hand bar none. He was absolutely unflappable and had a great, if typically Simpson-like rather dry, sense of humour. I recall when, in 1998, we had a young lady with us for the first, and only, occasion. Wanting to spring it as a surprise, I didn't tell many of the crew beforehand. We were having our usual pre-trip session at the Beehive, Bradford on Avon, when our new recruit came into the bar. Phil looked, took a gulp of his Wadworths and turned to me. "Jim!" he said with an absolutely dead-pan expression, "That new Beery Boater! It's a *woman*!"

Wherever you are, Phil, find a canal with plenty of good pubs, and in due course we'll see you there.



Jim Green



Kent Small Brewery News

By Roger Marples

ABIGALE BREWERY Ashford 07734 342278 james@abigale.plus.com

Please see the article on page 44

CANTERBURY ALES Chartham 079 4465 7978

A few months ago, Martin Guy, 50, spent his days producing spreadsheets as a financial consultant. Now he plans to be single-handedly producing 10,000 pints a month. His first brew is The Miller's Ale, soon to be joined by The Wife of Bath's Ale. Their beers have been in evidence at the Cherry Tree, Canterbury and the Elephant in Faversham and I understand that it is soon to be available on the Enterprise special beer list. More news in the next edition of Channel Draught.

P&DJ GOACHER Tovil, Maidstone 01622 682112

The Old has been submitted for the 2011 National Festival of Winter Ales, in Manchester, after winning an award in the strong ale category in the South East Regional event.

HOPDAEMON BREWERY Newnham 01795 892078 info@hopdaemon.com

Nothing to report this month.

Nelson Brewery Chatham 01634 832828

sales@nelsonbrewingcompany.co.uk

New kit was installed to nearly double capacity and has been up and running very successfully since July. A special barley wine to celebrate the 1000th brew at Nelson will soon be available and the local CAMRA BLO has been invited to help with its brewing. The seasonal special of Shiver M'Timbers 4.8% will be available in January and February.

OLD DAIRY BREWERY Rolvenden 01580 243185

fineale@olddairybrewery.com

Ed, the brewer is very pleased with the Silver Top, and it's turned out well. Having tasted it at the Red Lion, Snargate I agree with his sentiments. In addition to the core range of Red, Gold and Blue Tops they are currently also brewing Copper Top, a rich dark beer at 4.1% and the Silver Top at 4.5%. An extra fermenting vessel will be installed this month (January) so that production can be increased. More beer is being bottled, the core range plus Double IPA, Hop Top at 9%. Silver Top will shortly be also available in bottle.

RAMSGATE BREWERY Broadstairs 01843 580037

info@ramsgatebrewery.co.uk

GADDS 'Year in Beer 2011' is finalised and at the time of writing is expected on the web site very soon. As usual an eclectic mix of hardy annuals, old favourites and



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innovative new beers. Look out for a Dunkel Bock, a South Sea pale and a Hoptoberfest Bier, amongst others. Eddie is off to Italy to learn from some of their finest brewers. He tells me that there is some astonishingly good beer being brewed there. He will then visit California for the same reason. Better than working for a living

Wantsum Brewery Hersden 0845 0405980 wantsumbrewery@googlemail.com

A new beer was released in December, Imperium 4% ABV and it was well received. James has also collaborated with Herculese Wine Warehouse to brew a bottled beer for them, and this was so popular that it sold out in the run up to Christmas. Hengist and Black Pig continue to sell well in bottles with outlets growing (Good Shed, Mamma Feelgoods, Tiddly Pomm Brogdale...) A new beer for the White Cliffs Winter Beer festival will be 'Vortigen' This is going to be a light coloured Canadian Pale Ale of about 5.6%. So make sure that you are in Dover Town Hall on 4th & 5th February to drink it. Portly Pig will also pay another annual visit. In March Wantsum will be brewing a mild with Jim the Landlord of the Elephant in Faversham and Mathew the Landlord of the George and Dragon Sandwich.

Westerham Brewery Edenbridge 01732 864427

sales@westerhambrewery.co.uk

2011 will be a year when monthly specials will feature international styles of beer, including a Belgian wheat beer in March, an American brown ale in May and a Czech pilsner in August. This last December's specials were God's Wallop and Double Stout, the latter proving sufficiently popular at Dover's Louis Armstrong for Jackie to very rapidly re-order. Last year was another record with increased sales in Kent, Surrey and Sussex and a growing trade in London.

Whitstable Brewery Grafty Green 01622 851007

whitstablebrewery@btconnect.com

Winkle Picker has now become a permanent beer due to increasing demand, and joins Native (3.7%), East India Pale Ale (4.1%), Pearl of Kent (4.5%), Kentish Reserve (5.0%), and Oyster Stout (4.5%). The brewery have also started supplying Roast Restaurant in Borough Market a couple of months ago with bottled beers using their own labels. It has proved amazingly successful and the people at Roast have literally been ordering 1000 bottles at a time!

REMEMBER

**CHANNEL DRAUGHT IS AVAILABLE BY POST
or ON-LINE**

See www.camra-dds.org.uk or send £3.00 to cover postage and packing for the four seasonal copies to Mr R Meares, 17, Barley Close, Martin Mill, Dover, CT15 5LD. Please enclose your name and address and make cheques payable to **DDS CAMRA**



The National News

By Martin Atkins

The Fuller Pint

In November Fullers of Chiswick announced an 11% increase in profits to £16.8m for the six months to 25th September with turnover up 4% to £121.5m. As a sign of the times managed houses and hotels are performing better than tenanted properties, sales up respectively 3.3% and 1%. Particularly interesting for beer drinkers are details of beer sales – up 1% in total, but down 2% for Fuller's own beers: the difference being accounted for by foreign brews, chiefly lagers. Fullers have 350 pubs in the south east of England and said that the profits increase reflected more people eating and sleeping in their pubs and hotels. Chairman Michael Turner said that Fullers benefited from being family controlled as it allowed them to plan for the long term. He also criticised supermarket discounting and Government taxation policy, suggesting that it should be put under the same regime as cider – duty on London Pride for example costs them 50p a pint. He also praised pubs as a means of controlling drinking: if they behaved irresponsibly the police have powers to close them down.

Those interested in traditional brews might like to note that Fullers have just launched a limited edition series of bottle conditioned beers called 'Past Masters'. Using recipes drawn from their own archives, the beers will be "sourcing ingredients as close as possible to those originally used", with each ale crafted with traditional

techniques to recreate a truly authentic taste." The first in the series is XX, a strong 7.5% ABV ale which Fuller's describe as dark, rich and fully flavoured, with a distinctly warming character, and intended to recreate a beer first brewed in 1891. Price, and whether you'll be able to find any is a different matter.

New Enterprise for Thornbridge

Go-ahead Derbyshire brewer Thornbridge has entered into a new arrangement for running a leasehold pub with pubco Enterprise. It is leasing the Highcliffe pub in west Sheffield, which has had a series of tenants in recent years, with an agreement that allows it to supply all the pub's cask ale from its own brewery.

Right to Buy

As part of the Localism Bill new laws will give communities the right to bid for pubs threatened with closure. The Bill will give people the right to bid to buy local services and assets, such as pubs, libraries and shops, before they disappear, or are sold to developers. Local authorities will also be allowed to grant discretionary business rate discounts to help regenerate the local economy. Communities minister Andrew Stunell said: "Local facilities have been closing, leaving towns and villages without vital services." He said new rights in the Bill will put real power in the hands of real people, empowering local communities and putting them at the heart of local decision making and enable them to

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MPs Debate 'The Pub'

The beer tie, duty and supermarket pricing were all raised during a three hour Parliamentary debate on the pub, called by Lib-Dem MP Greg Mulholland. Among the speakers was Tory MP Karen Bradley who said the pubco model was "clever" but it led to licensees being "squeezed", where the more successful they were, the higher the rent. She also said tenants should have the option of a guest beer. Greg Mulholland commented that some small pubcos were opening pubs, while "large pubcos who have different business models are in trouble and in debt".

CAMRA Ceases OFT Campaign

CAMRA has declared that it has little faith in the Office of Fair Trading's ability to deal with "obvious examples" of pub companies' anticompetitive behaviour, following last October's announcement for the second time that it intended to take no action over abuse of the beer tie. Although it will not pursue its super-complaint any further CAMRA will not stop campaigning. The issue has the support of all political parties, the Government and the Commons Business Select Committee. CAMRA's head of policy and public affairs Jonathan Mail said, rather than refer back to the OFT for a third time CAMRA will be looking to promised direct Government intervention if large pubcos fail to make adequate progress by June. And he added, "The manifest inability of the OFT to tackle competition problems in the pub sector also means government can now use reserve powers to order a full market investigation by the successor body to the Competition Commission." The

OFT's apparent impotence will surprise none of the City wags who have termed its initials as representing 'Office for Tesco'.

Still More Food

Mitchells & Butlers is planning to open "at least" 50 new-build pubs this year and is looking at a further 120 openings in 2012, giving the pubco more than 1,600 outlets. Chief executive Adam Fowle said: "Excellent progress has been made against our strategic goal to turn Mitchells & Butlers into a food-led business by concentrating our industry leading brands on the informal eating out market." If you have visited an M&B pub you'll know just what he means.

Giants Diverge

Recent months have revealed diverging trends at regional brewing giants Marston's and Greene King. While Marston's real ale sales were up 3% by volume over the year to Oct 2nd. Greene King's own brewed beer sales were down 4% for the 24 weeks to Oct 17th. A reflection of the latter's policy of concentrating most production at Bury St Edmunds, whereas Marston's support half a dozen breweries across the country?

A Curate's Egg

Christie & Co predicts that by 2012 the number of tenanted and leased pubs will drop to 22,000 from 30,800 in 2008, but freehouses will rise to 20,000 from 17,700 in 2008 while managed pubs will stay at 9,000. However, the company also expects a further 6,000 pubs to be sold off and closed in the next two years.

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RAMBLINGS & RUMBLINGS

Wed 3 Nov – Chance, Guston: Bass – 18 ramblers welcomed here late lunch-time. About half brought their own food which they were allowed to consume on premises – the rest bought pub food. Everybody buying a drink. This works well and makes this pub a favourite among rambling fraternity. It also speeds up proceedings since in small country pubs large numbers converging all wanting food at once can cause chaos. Other pubs please take note!

Fri 5 Nov – London Crawl. Doric Arch: Butcombe bitter, Fullers Discovery, **Bree Louise:** Filton's Bristol No 7, **Skinners:** Adnams Old

Sun 7 Nov – Crown & Sceptre: Just changed hands but still no real ale. **Boars Head:** Young's Bitter, Black Sheep, both in good nick.

Mon 8, Tues 9 & Thurs 11 Nov – Eight Bells Autumn Real Ale Festival: Tring Brewery Signal Box, Everards Copper Nob, Tom Woods Vanilla Orchid, Titanic NY Porter, Oakleaf Wether's Orig, Jersey Liberation Ale, RCH Strawberry Line, Coach House Regency Ale, St Austell Coxwain Special, Mordu 1879 Coriander.

Mon 15 Nov – George & Dragon, Sandwich for Branch Meeting: Ringwood Bitter, Master Brew. One guest beer just gone, will be replaced on Thurs – disappointing. **Fleur:** Northumberland Amber, Black Sheep, Greene King IPA

Sat 20 Nov – Maidstone. Earls: Bombardier. **Flowerpot:** Wantsum Moor's Head, Tonbridge Ales Ebony Moon

Thurs 25 Nov – Evening in St Pancras, courtesy of High/Speed Train. Skinners Arms, Judd St: St Edmunds Ale, Abbot. Drink topped up on request but with bad grace. **Mabel's, Mabledon Place:** Kent Best, Late Red. Good, though not cheap!

Fri 26 Nov – Red Lion St Margs: 6X, Courage Best. Both @ £2.50. **Smugglers:** Daleside Lubrication, Betty Stoggs. Accompanying excellent meal.

Sat 27 Nov – Canterbury: Thomas Ingoldsby: Liberation Ale + others. **New Inn:** St Austell Tribute, Land Lord, Adnams Old, Harveys Best. **Phoenix:** Land Lord, Whitstable Winklepicker, St Austell Tinnars, London Pride. New Inn and Phoenix very quiet early evening, perhaps owing to very cold weather

Mon 29 Nov – Chance: Adnams Explorer – snows just starting. Back to Dover through a blizzard.

Tues 30 Nov – Chambers: Springhead Surrender, Skrim, Dogbolter, Whit. Kent Reserve. From £2.50 a pint. Almost deserted late afternoon, but cold weather once more.

Thurs 2 Dec – Blakes: Harveys Best, Adnams Bitter, Hopdaemon Dominator – mildly surprised to find pub open given extreme conditions above, and doing food! Good value as usual. A fair number of punters. **Eight Bells:** Wantsum 1381, Weltons HoHo, Goff's White Knight. Relatively quiet owing to weather, beer good.

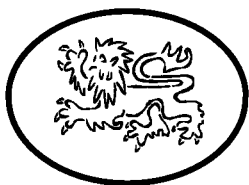
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Sun 5 Dec – Archer: Brakspear Bitter , Rudgate Rudolf's Ruin – live football and decent real ale, unusual combination, some might think! **Kittiwake:** Hobgoblin, Marstons Old Empire, UCB, Pedigree – pub about quarter full though plenty of people eating 'Sunday lunch' at 6pm. I seemed to be the only one merely drinking, but no problem – plenty of room

Mon 6 Dec – Hole in the Roof: Youngs Bitter , Directors Old fashioned hand-pumps carefully concealed in new-style chrome, had me worried for a bit! **Alma:** Doom Bar, MB, Sheps Rudolf's Reward – following meeting in back room, intended staying for another pint or two, but driven out by 'music' **Hoy:** Late Red, MB, SF – Pricey, but a bit quieter than previous locale.

Wed 8 Dec – Archer: Rudgate Rudolf's Ruin, Brakspear bitter. Yep, that time of year again – 12.30pm - Shrieks and merriment from the other end of the pub ushering in the Xmas party season once more. Roll on Jan when we'll get our pubs back again! Deserted and miserable like we luv 'em. **Fox:** Sheps Rudolf's Reward, Cottage Polar Express, Wadsworth Swordfish – pub very busy following some function or other. Yes, have to get used to the "Nearly Christmas, let's go to the pub" brigade. " Nice to go once a year isn't it, just like church"

Thurs 9 Dec – Eight Bells: Butcombe Christmas Step, Welton's Santa's Gone Ginger, JW Lees Plum Pudding – 'all strong and the on the last', I couldn't make an informed judgement, my taste buds not able to shake off affects of the second! The Welton's was 5.3% I believe. Just churning out a strong beer for the sake of it doesn't necessarily make it tasty, does it? No doubt cleaning fluid is 11.3%, but I'm not tempted yet!

Mon 13 Dec – Crown Finglesham: Thwaites Liberation, Robinson's Scrooge, Shep's Rudolf's Revenge, MB, Biddenden Cider – Fairly lively for Mon lunchtime, pre-booked group of 12 walkers appeared, with suspiciously clean boots. Loud drilling from heating engineer drowning out seasonal music – though nothing wrong with that! Landlady friendly and efficient. **Cullens Yard:** Adnams bitter, Broadside – excellent venue for Christmas meal.

Fri 17 Dec – Fox: Hopback 'Elf and Hoppiness' (*groan*), Cottage Red Nose, Bate-man's Rosy Nosy – unusual lunchtime visit: expected place to be heaving with office parties, but nearly deserted. 'No office parties since Kittiwake opened' sighed landlord Steve

Wed 22 Dec – Chance: Bass – large dish of chip butties on the house, provided for ramblers, but as fewer turned up than expected I had to eat about half of them!

Mon 27 Dec – Albert, Dover: Wantsum Black Pig, Gadds Little Cracker (both £2-60) – pub surprisingly quiet late afternoon for high profile football match – Chelsea/ Arsenal I think. Encouraging though to see group of about eight blokes (fortyish) playing cards – live games struggle on it seems.

Stroller

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THE CONQUEROR OPENS

We, of course, know all about micro breweries, but Micro Pubs? Well, apparently, in recent years these have been popping up here and there across the country. The philosophy behind the concept is that a pub's fundamental purpose is the drinking of good ale and enjoyment of good conversation, elements often lacking in many a modern public house. Strip out all the periphery items – food, music, heavily branded industrial brews – and what remains is just that: good ale and good conversation, and an economically very attractive operation. Locally our nearest example was the Butcher's Arms at Herne where Martin Hillier has been dispensing superb real ales to discerning drinkers for the last five years, in the course picking up Kent Pub of the Year in 2008. Now he is joined by the Conqueror in Ramsgate. Roger Marples recently paid it a visit.



On November 16th, Colin Aris, the current Chairman of the Thanet branch of CAMRA, and one of the organisers of the highly successful Planet Thanet Easter Beer Festival, opened Ramsgate's smallest public house, the Conqueror. The bar space is approximately 15ft. by 15ft, in the mould of the Butcher's Arms of Herne, and was formerly a sweet shop. It can be found at 4C Grange Road. Set up costs and furniture totalled about £10,000, and trade is already steady at lunch times and can be very busy in the evenings. The name comes from a twin funnel paddle steamer, skippered by Colin's grandfather which operated as a tug from Gravesend, although it did run a summer season of excursions from Ramsgate.

Opening hours are Tuesday - Saturday 11.30 - 14.30 & 17.30 - 21.00, Sunday 12.00 - 15.00, and Monday closed. Buses stop nearby on the "Loop" service, that operates around Thanet and passes Ramsgate railway station every 8 minutes throughout the day. Stagecoach service 9 from Canterbury and service 87/88 from Dover, although less frequent, also stop nearby as does local service 34.

The Conqueror is a place to visit for conversation and good beer. There is nearly always a Gadd's or Wantsum beer available plus two other beers from well respected micro breweries. On the day of my visit the choice was Dark Star Hophead and Thornbridge Jaipur, with Thornbridge Lord Marples (what an excellent name for a beer) awaiting the demise of Wantsum Turbulent Priest. All three beers are

served straight from the cask and were in excellent condition at a reasonable price, £2.40 - £2.80. Broomfield Cider and apple juice are also available. Potato crisps and hand raised pork pies, with a choice of mustards, might be purchased to soak up the beer. Small bottles of wine are also available for those who do not appreciate our national drinks.

There is seating for eleven people, soon to be increased to fourteen, and no electronic machines or piped music, and no bar. Customers from the Hotel De Ville, opposite, have been known to abandon it when the televised football match becomes too loud and to cross the road for a good pint and lively conversation. The drinks are served by Colin from a back cool room which also gives access to a W.C. Already three other people have spoken to Colin about opening their own micro pub in Thanet, and both Westgate and Birchington are being considered as possible sites. To my mind Ramsgate is one of the best towns in East Kent in which to drink. The Artillery Arms is just down the road from the Conqueror, and Churchill's just around the corner, and not too far away are the Foy Boat and the Montefiore Arms. At Dumpton Park, is the unspoilt Brown Jug, which now sells Gadd's, and which too can be reached via the Loop 'bus service.

For further details of The Conqueror see www.conqueror-alehouse.co.uk and for Thanet Public Houses www.barsofthanet.org.uk which is a local CAMRA website. For those without internet access, Colin might be contacted by portable telephone 07890 203282.

Roger Marples

KENT'S HOP HERITAGE

A leaflet, that looks at Kent's hop heritage, has been published by Produced in Kent. Called "Hops 'n' Downs", the leaflet looks at the history of the hop, the hop plant itself, the brewing process and events around the county that celebrate the hop.

The leaflet also lists Kent's micro-breweries and CAMRA branch pubs that won Pub of the Year 2010.

The publication is from the Food Trail series, which highlight some of the products most closely associated with Kent, and include titles such as "Soul to Solo", "Sheep Ahoy!" and "Apple Source": the fruit, the cider and the juice.

The leaflets offer a glimpse of the history and traditions, the countryside which shapes the products and a guide to when and where to buy them. They all include a walking guide of the area for those who want to really explore.

You can find more information about Produced in Kent and download copies of the Food Trails at www.producedinkent.co.uk.





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A DAY OUT IN ST. MARGARET'S

On a cloudy but dry Saturday at the beginning of November, a group of us met up for a wander around St. Margaret's. We started with a walk down to the Coastguard, situated at the bottom of the cliffs, which we'd decided was the best place to begin as it was more likely we would be able to manage the climb back up to the main village.

The Coastguard had its usual good range of real ales, including beers from Westerham, Cottage and Cotleigh, and we partook of a particularly good pint of Cotleigh Barn Owl looking out over the Strait of Dover. Our strategy of starting here seemed to work, as the walk back up the cliff was achieved without too much trouble.



A detour through some footpaths around the village led us to the Smugglers, a cosy pub with a large semi-circular bar. Beers from Greene King and Courage were supported by a rather nice pint of Double Maxim from the Maxim brewery and was first brewed in 1901. Here we tucked into lunch, which included a selection of good-valued tapas, including garlic chicken, chilli pork and a rather scrummy hoisin beef.



As we continued through the village we stuck our heads into the White Cliffs Hotel to see if they had any real ale on, and while there was nothing on hand-pull, they did have a good range of bottled beer on display, from breweries such as Gadd's and St. Peters. Our next stop was the Sheps owned Hope Inn – a large open plan pub with only one beer on offer – a pretty decent pint of Master Brew.



Rain accompanied us on our short walk from the Hope Inn to our final pub of the day, the Red Lion, where Courage Best and Gadd's #5 were available. At the time of our visit the pub was up for sale and we understood that temporary tenants were looking after the pub. All in all a good day out and another successful walk.



Tony Wells

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THE IMPACT OF EYJAFJALLAJÖKULL LIVES ON!!

For those of you who don't know what or who is "Eyjafjallajökull", it's the Icelandic volcano that caused so much disruption in 2010. However, its effects live on in the pub trade today. As a result of the dust cloud Tony Humphries, a regular at the Crown, Finglesham, was marooned in Australia, and while waiting for his flight home heard that the pub was up for sale. Over a few tinnies, he decided to buy the pub – a pub in which he had been drinking for 30 years. (*Shows you the sort of trouble a few drinks can get you into - Ed.*)

So August saw the formal change of ownership and Tony and his partner Helen Ovenden took over the Crown. Since then the pub has seen some significant changes: an extension to the bar area to provide more standing and seating room; an all-over paint job; a wood-burning stove in the top bar and wooden floors in the bar and restaurant. The pub is now open all day, every day, there is a greater range of real ale, bottled drinks and bar snacks, and menus have been extended, including on Tuesday, an Over 60s lunchtime menu at £5.99 for two courses. Next year should see extensions to the restaurant and kitchen areas, but be assured however, the pub still retains its traditional country style.



THE CHARITY REOPENS

After a short closure, the Charity Inn in Woodnesborough reopened under new management, on Friday, 26th November, when Julie Ballantyne took over the helm with a very successful opening night. Julie has spent the past six years renovating holiday cottages in France with her partner, and the Charity's owner, Philip Miller, who just happens to be Julie's son-in-law, has been asking her for a long time to take over as manager. It looks like his patience has worked – although there might be some interesting management discussions and decisions.

Real ales will be primarily from the Wantsum brewery, whose owner and head brewer, James Sandy, has been helping Julie and her staff get up to speed on cask beer. A wider range of guest beers will be introduced as Julie gets a better understanding of the demand.

Future plans at the moment include a Burns Night, quiz nights and petanque matches. Julie is looking forward to the Golf Open next year when they hope to make good use of the pub's accommodation, which consists of one family suite and two doubles. They also intend to have a special golf menu for the event. As ever, we wish them all the very best for the future.



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CHANNEL VIEW

THE FIVE Fs The Five Fs is the latest buzz phrase in the pubs business, or probably more precisely among those managing pub chains and tied estates. No doubt the average CAMRA member would be only too willing to provide their own 'Five Fs' drawn from any number of transgressions and indignities that have been heaped upon the traditional boozier, each prefixed by the appropriate earthy Anglo Saxon adjective. However, no such joy, we are into accountant land here, and the Five Fs stand for those areas of activity and interest identified as being the most likely generators of easy profits – food, families, females, forties and fifties.

As we reported in our Autumn edition, and as indicated by Fuller's in their recent half year statement (see National News), food is regarded by many as the brightest prospect for the future of the pub. However, as well as being one of the Five Fs itself, food forms an intrinsic part of the others. Families rarely go to a pub other than to have a meal, female customers are as like as not to be eating, while those in their forties and fifties will have progressed beyond the pursuit of binge drinking oblivion, to combine less likelihood of trouble with every likelihood, that after a few pints, further expenditure will involve food.

Not of course that there should be any conflict between food and pubs, alcohol and food having been soul mates as long as they have both existed, and food has been a saviour of many a pub. The problem with the Five Fs, however, is embodied in its corporate philosophy,

the same thinking that gives us themed pubs and fiddles around with the strength and taste of a beer. Given half a chance food rapidly dominates, with eating the main purpose for visiting a pub, and the providing of food seemingly the main activity of pub staff. Think of the number of pubs where all (or nearly all) the tables are reserved for diners, with drinkers confined to the odd corner or leaning on the bar. If done well it can work, and the best incorporate all the attributes of a good local – engaging bar staff, good conversation, an interesting range of beer, and even darts and pool and sports teams. Too often, though the result is pre-packaged food, real ale limited to a few national brands, and little or no communication between bar staff and customers: the whole enterprise not altogether unressembling an institutional dining area, admittedly perhaps with softer furnishings and decorative prints on the walls, but in fact with little to really identify it as a pub at all, other than such it is called.

Not much here then that recalls the traditional back street boozier, full of talk and beer, darts and crib, and faded photos of charabanc outings; or that would gladden the heart of Dr. Johnson, whose 18th century sentiments are famously, "Sir, there is nothing which has yet been contrived by man by which so much happiness is produced, as by a good tavern or inn." Draughty Dickensian coaching Inns, predating the mod-con era by a hundred or so years would seem eminently preferable, and even the lowly gin shop or ale

house of earlier days exude more character. George Orwell's idealised 1940s creation the *Moon Under Water*, is a very distant cry.

If such is the envisaged future of the pub – a kind of fast food joint with alcohol – its advocates should at least stand up and make a formal declaration of their intentions, if only to enable those of us of a different persuasion to at least put the venerable institution decently to rest. But of course we do not believe this to be the future. The rising sales of cask ale, particularly from the micro sector, demonstrate that the traditional pub has sufficient popularity not to slip away, as the poet might have it, gentle into that good night. The early days of CAMRA were about the fight to retain real ale, the battle now is to maintain a decent environment in which to drink it.

NANNY or NUDGE Apparently there is increasing worry among health professionals that the present Government is going soft on public health. A feeling that is not assuaged by Health Secretary Andrew Lansley's background in a marketing company whose clients included major food and drink concerns, and the heavy representation of such companies at the first meeting in September of the policy forming Public Health Responsibility Deal.

Nudging, not nannying is the philosophy of the new Government, with the areas of concern principally excessive drinking, smoking and over eating. However, the former Labour administration would never have admitted to nannying, and so far proposals from the Coalition do not seem radically different from their predecessors, despite David Cameron's Big Society concept of self reliance and individual responsi-

bility. To date it is suggested that cigarettes be sold only in plain packets (Labour proposed that cigarettes should not be on display in shops), that duty be increased on beer over 7.5% ABV, and that below cost selling of alcohol be banned (Labour confined itself to the retention of Alistair Darling's beer escalator). The proposals were immediately condemned as inadequate by health campaigners, with that cheerless outfit, the Alcohol Health Alliance, stating that increased duty should have been applied to all beer above 5% ABV., and who, if truth be known, would no doubt be quite happy to see swingeing tax increases on all alcohol, if not its complete ban.

However, nudge or nanny, many might be inclined to question whether government is not already far too involved in these areas, and whether perhaps, other than offering advice, it should be involved at all. At one time a Government's duty extended to not much further than keeping law and order at home, fighting the monarch's wars abroad and protecting the established church. Of late it appears to have come to believe that it has an almost proprietorial interest in every last aspect of our existence. If we are considered, as all of us over the age of eighteen are, to have sufficient judgement to participate in choosing that government, should we not also be considered old enough to make our own decisions about how we choose to live our lives. The Government should confine itself to giving us the facts, all the facts, not spurious guidelines plucked out of the air, or that old favourite, the selective statistic....and then leave us to make up our own minds.

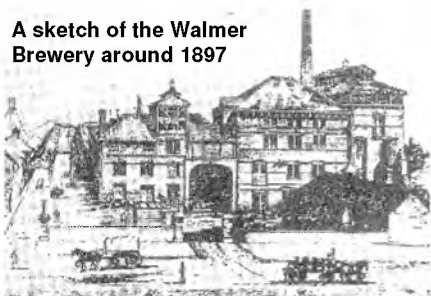


THE WALMER BREWERY

Readers of a certain age may remember that before the large brewers began to seriously reduce the size of their tied estates (from the 1980s onwards), East Kent, and Deal and Walmer in particular, were particularly well served by public houses owned by the east London brewer Charrington: and some might remember that before the time of that brewer's green and orange signage, the pubs would have borne the name Thompson & Sons of Walmer. Little trace now remains of Thompson's brewery. Its site, now occupied by several roads of suburban housing to the right of Dover Rd. as it enters Walmer, last saw brewing related activity some forty years ago when its final use, as a beer storage and distribution centre, eventually ceased. The following is very brief history with particular thanks to David G Collyer.

The brewery was founded in 1816 by one Edmund Thompson, at a time when Deal was one of the country's major naval bases, with all the accompanying requirement for stores and supplies. The town's initial military involvement probably dates from the time of Henry VIII and construction of Deal, Walmer and Sandown Castles, but over the next century or so it also developed a maritime connection as the site of a naval stores yard. By the mid 17th century this comprised some five acres, and over the next couple of hundred years as England expanded its role as a world power and the Downs became an important home anchorage for the Royal Navy, Deal and the Admiralty established a vital interdependence. There is a saying that Deal was founded on 'bread, beer and baccy,' and while the latter was no doubt a reference to the extensive smuggling trade, bread and beer points to the business of providing the navy's basic necessities.

A sketch of the Walmer Brewery around 1897



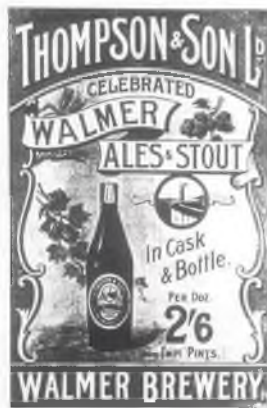
We have comparatively little information about the early years of the Walmer Brewery, not helped by an office fire in 1820 which destroyed its records. More detailed information dates from 1867 when its management came under John Mathews, formerly the senior partner at the Anchor Brewery, Chelsea, who had the new maltings built and various other improvements made. In 1897 The Deal and Walmer Illustrated Guide was particularly complimentary:

"the entire range of premises, mostly of quite modern construction, has been admirably planned throughout; strict cleanliness and good order being distinctly observable features in each spacious department. Plant and appliance, too, even to the smallest minor details are of the latest improved kinds, and necessarily equal to an extremely large regular turn-out. In fact, the firm's well known trade mark, the South Foreland Lighthouse, on either bottled or draught ales or stout, may always

be looked upon as a distinct guarantee of purity and excellence"

Of course we do not know of any connection that might have existed between the Guide's authors and the Brewery, or to what extent they might have felt a duty to promote local businesses and institutions. Their description of Thompson's beer continues in the same vein:

"The A.K.S Bitter Ale will be found a particularly well flavoured tonic ale for general use; whilst the A.K. cheaper ale, and the celebrated India Pale Ale are both of excellent quality, clear and bright to the last. The latter, as well as Pale Ale, Light Dinner Ale, Stout and Cooper are also obtainable in fine condition in screw-topped bottles. The other productions of the Walmer Brewery consist of X, XX and XXX Ales of varying strength, double stout and Porter; whilst the firm also bottle large quantities of Bass's Ales in the best possible condition."



BEER IN CASK AND BOTTLE.

	12 pints	12 pints	12 pints
Light Dinner Ale	3/6	5/0	5/6
Pale Ale	3/6	5/0	5/6
Double Stout	3/6	5/0	5/6
Stout	3/6	5/0	5/6
Guinness Stout	3/6	5/0	5/6
A. K. S.	3/6	5/0	5/6

These Beers are to be obtained from most of the leading Grocers in Kent and Walmer, and all the licensed houses supplied by Messrs. THOMPSON & SON, LIMITED.

Two years later Thompson's bought Messrs. Hills of Deal and Great Mongeham, the only other sizable brewer operation in the area, amalgamating operations at Walmer and combining Hill's tied houses with their own.

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The 20th century found the brewery adopting modern technology. In 1912 a Sentinel steam wagon was purchased to deliver beer to the outlying pubs, and after horses had been 'requisitioned' for the war effort in 1916, a second was purchased. These would travel as far as Margate or Dover, the latter no doubt to include deliveries to the Crown and Sceptre and the Grapes, or Louis Armstrong as it is today. Prices, however, retained a distinctly 19th century feel. In 1914 a 36 gallon of light ale could be purchased at 36 shillings – a shilling (5p) a gallon.

In due course after World War I motor lorries replaced the steam wagons. A flavour of the period is provided by Dick Game, son of the head Brewer:

"In the 1920s the whole of Upper Walmer was influenced by the Brewery. The smell of beer pervaded the whole area and its tall chimney was visible for miles. Employing 70 people, who in turn supported the shops and local businesses, the brewery never closed, although work stopped on the whistle. As you went through the main gates on the right was the cask washing. Hot water and steam, men in clogs and leather aprons washing hogsheads, barrels, kilderkins, firkins and pins. On the left was the office, a single storey building with big windows, while behind that was the bottle store, where the women worked and machines filled bottles with different beers, and then labelled them."

He remembered the malt house as a long low building with shuttered windows where men with wooden shovels turned the sprouting barley; and his father who always wore a suit, stiff collared shirt and gold watch and chain. In the brewery he also wore a long white coat ("like a doctor") and outside a Homburg "like Edward VII."

After World War II, when the brewery provided a look out post for enemy aircraft, its history followed the path taken by so many small family breweries. In 1951 it was taken over by Charringtons of Mile End, who about the same time acquired the Kemp Town Brewery in Brighton, and initially maintained brewing at both. However, after a few years brewing at Walmer ceased and it remained a bottling plant only until 1963 when that ended as well. For the remaining few years of its life it was retained as a storage facility for local deliveries.

At its greatest extent Thompson's tied estate comprised some 90 houses in green and cream livery, stretching along the coast from Margate to Folkestone and inland as far as Canterbury. Among their more distant houses those that still exist today include the Dog at Wingham, the Crispin at Sandwich, the St Crispin at Worth, the Green Man (now Coast-guard) at St Margaret's Bay, the Five Bells at Easry and the Crown at Eythorne. The greatest concentration of course was in Deal and Walmer, where perhaps half the pubs were in



Thompson's ownership. In Kingsdown the brewery held a monopoly, at one time owning all four pubs, the Rising Sun, Kings Head, Zetland and a few doors from the latter, the Victory, now a private residence.

As we said at the start little now remains of this once thriving local business, however here and there reminders do exist. The Thompson Bell (formerly George & Dragon) just down the road from the brewery displays Thompson's South Foreland trademark on one side of its pub sign, while the door to the lower bar at the King's Head, Kingsdown retains a fine frosted glass panel bearing the brewery's name.

PUBS LOST, GONE AND FORGOTTEN

Channel Draught is always interested in photos and pictures (as well as history, anecdotes, etc.) of old pubs, whether they are no more or still in use. We do of course, already have the benefit of Paul Skelton's excellent website www.Dover-Kent.Com, with information on hundreds of pubs going back centuries, and an extensive library of photos. However, there are always gaps. At the moment we are particularly interested in old photos of the Newcastle, Ewell Minnis before or just after World War II; the Queen's Head, Biggin St. in the 1950s and 1960s; and the Crypt, Bench St. during the 1960s and 1970s. Either Paul or ourselves (e-mail as per Editorial Address, page 2) would be very pleased to see any such pictures our readers may possessor for that matter of any other local pubs in days gone by.

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THE DOVER WAR MEMORIAL PROJECT

Last year the Deal, Dover, Sandwich and District Branch of CAMRA donated £500 from the proceeds of the 2010 White Cliffs Festival of Winter Ales to the Dover War Memorial Project. Festival team members Peter and Dave Green were very pleased in October to receive the following letter from the project's founder.

Dear Peter and Dave,

You have probably heard of the Heritage Lottery Fund (LF) we received at the Dover War Memorial Project (DWMP). This is to teach young people about the Unknown Warrior – it's the 90th anniversary this year of his return, through Dover – and thus introduce them to the meaning of remembrance.

Congratulations, CAMRA! We were only able to get this grant because of the cheque you so kindly gave us back in March, from the White Cliffs Beer Festival. It arrived in the nick of time, as the DWMP was down to its last few pounds. Although we would of course have continued with the Virtual Memorial (www.doverwarmemorialproject.org.uk), which is funded personally by me, we were facing the prospect of being unable to continue with any other of the Remembrance work we were doing, including, working with relatives of casualties, putting on exhibitions, etc. (You may have seen the exhibition we held in Dover library over the summer, about "The Summer of 1940", including artefacts kindly lent by Shoreham Aircraft Museum. The panes from the exhibition are now on display at Crabble Corn Mill.)

The donation you so kindly made enabled us to do the extra work and research necessary to put in the bid to the HLF (something we had been hoping for since Summer 2009), and we finally received the good news this September. Had it not been for your help just when we desperately needed it, we'd have been unable to go ahead – but now the benefits have been magnified a hundred-fold!



Last year's presentation by CAMRA to the Dover War Memorial Project

I've enclosed with this letter (see below) a résumé of some of the things happening with this grant. They're already underway, with over 100 Brownies and Scouts helping us design the stained glass window, and all the schools' sessions (five different schools) now completed. The exhibition is about to go to the printers, and we are now getting ready for all the activities in Westminster Abbey.

All this, and we still have enough of your donation left to enable us to carry on through the winter. So thank you so much for your donation, which has enabled us to do much in Remembrance, for the benefit of so many of our young people. One



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feels rather proverbial as these times – the donation was like yeast in a bread, or the acorn from which a great oak grew....

With best wishes and thanks

Marilyn Stephenson-Knight

The grant is for £28,000 and will be used for a variety of projects, including enabling children to handle original artefacts, access original sources, research those who lost their lives in the two World Wars, and provide trips to Westminster Abbey where they will visit the grave of the Unknown Warrior and take part in a number of Remembrance activities. Also, the 3rd (St Martins) Dover Scout Group and 8th Dover Brownies, with the help of a professional artist, will design a stained glass window about the Unknown Warrior and the wartime casualties, while in November a special musical performance about the Unknown Warrior, was due to début at St. Martin's School on the 90th anniversary of the Warrior's return to Britain. An exhibition, after touring various places in the country, will be stored by Dover Town Council for loan to interested groups and parties, and there will be booklets and an internet site available for educational use.

Marilyn Stephenson-Knight states that everyone involved with the project is a volunteer. They are giving freely of their time, in memory of those who gave their lives in the service of their country, and to ensure that new generations understand the significance of Remembrance and the lives and sacrifices of their forefathers.

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THE MAISON DIEU, DOVER

and the pubs of Ladywell

The magnificent building that now hosts the White Cliffs Festival of Winter Ales was founded by Hubert de Burgh in the 13th century to welcome pilgrims on their trip to Canterbury. From Henry VIII's reign in the early 1500s to 1830 the building was used as the Crown's Victualling Office. Shortly after the breaking up of the Victualling Offices here, the building was earmarked for demolition, but fortunately a representative of the Duke of Wellington saw the importance of the building



and the Board of Ordnance purchased it for use as stores – it is sited in a central position between the Castle and Western Heights. The tower, occupying a commanding position over every road into the town, was pronounced as being in the finest position for defence against inland attack. However, 1831 did see a large section containing the grand entrance taken down. Maison Dieu, as we know it now, dates from the Victorian rebuilding which was opened in 1883.

The Wheatsheaf



Just around the corner in Ladywell and almost adjoining the building we see today, used to stand the Wheatsheaf. The earliest references I have so far come across for this public house are in 1858 from Melville's Directory, and in 1864 when John Thomas East was summoned to court for threatening the life of his father, the landlord, William East. However, his father decided not to turn up against him in court and the case was dismissed. The house was compulsory purchased by the Dover Corporation in

1938 for the building of the new police station and it was demolished in February 1939. At its end it was said to be taking over £30 a week in trade.

Other public houses existed in Ladywell. The Maison Dieu Arms, kept by Thomas Robert Bourner, and the Queen of England, kept by John Collis, have only been traced to 1854, but unfortunately no addresses are known and no further information either side of that year. However, the Sir John Falstaff was, and still is, situated opposite the site of the Wheatsheaf, but, dating back to at least 1871, it was not then the same building we see today.

in the mid 19th century Ladywell was only 14 feet wide, and the lane was considered to be one of the boundaries to the town, beyond which were the villages of Buckland, River and Temple Ewell, with almost nothing but fields between. 1867 saw the lane widened to 20 feet at the point shown in the picture of the Sir John

Falstaff, and in 1893 it was found necessary to widen the lane yet again, with the pub and adjoining properties required to be demolished. The Sir John Falstaff was rebuilt in its present form, finally being erected in 1903.

In 1934 the Council were looking for housing for the police and tried to purchase the pub for that purpose – being right next door to the fire station the premises would have been ideal, but it survived to tell the tale. However, I believe the pub did close for a short time during the war.

2001 saw a fire in the building when the owner was awakened by the sound of crashing glass as fire-fighters broke into the pub with the aid of a sledgehammer to extinguish the flames. Luckily, only a small area of carpet was damaged. In 2007 pole-dancing landlady Sarah Webb from the Britannia, took over the pub and promised to change its name to the Finest Hour. Like her pole-dancing this never took place. However, the pub is still serving beers today.



The original Sir John Falstaff

Paul Skelton

NB Further information regarding the public houses of Dover and District can be found at www.Dover-Kent.Com



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Good Beer Guide 2010



Getting to Know THE ABIGALE BREWERY

As mentioned in the last edition of Channel Draught, a new brewery has opened in Ashford, although at the time of writing no beers were actually on sale. They are now; so, on 26th November together with Christopher Excell, Abigale's Brewery Liaison Officer, and Jeffrey Waller of Swale Branch, to take the photographs, I visited this brewery. The location is Henwood Industrial Estate which is a short walk from the town centre. The brewery's name is A-big-ale, not, as I incorrectly spelled it in the last edition of Channel Draught, Abigail, the girls name.

James Wraith is the owner, brewer and everything else, as he has no assistance in the brewery. James is very much a devotee of good real ale and is no fan of the massed produced characterless beers that predominate in many public houses. His mission is to brew beers of character and to take the opportunity to improve the range of beers in Ashford, which for a town of its size, has a poor choice of outlets for the serious beer drinker. Being a Man of Kent, James decided upon Ashford, for this very reason and because of its central position and good transport links. He is very much a fan of the hop and intends to brew hoppy beers from local hops.

The equipment was supplied new from Westgate Fabrications of Bury. This firm has no connection with the huge beer factory located at Westgate Brewery also in Bury, but of the St. Edmund's variety. We will all be familiar with the latter mentioned firm. There is a ten barrel brew length, but with room for expansion should trade warrant it. No adjuncts, such as brewing sugars, will be used and James is keen to do everything that he can to ensure that all of his beers are of top quality. So much so that he produced four test



**The brewing plant at the
Abigale Brewery**

brews of his first beer before releasing the fifth brew for public consumption. The beer is named Samphire, and takes its name from Samphire Hoe: all of his beers will have a Kentish theme to their name. It is a mid brown bitter made from pale malt with a small amount of crystal malt, and uses Challenger, Northdown, and East Kent Goldings hops. The alcohol by volume is 4.1%, and the beer is available in nine gallon casks, half polypins (17½ pints), quarter polypins (8¾ pints) and mini casks (7-8 pints). A sixth brew has now been undertaken which is about ready to be put into the cask.

James asked us if we would taste brews No. 4 and 5. As we wished to be of assistance we acceded to this request with celerity. The first gyle that we tasted seemed

to me to be reminiscent of a Wantsum beer. it had a good body and a pronounced hop character, but i could detect a slight acidity. When we tasted the other gyle we could all detect a marked difference in taste. i thought that there was a slight but pleasant honey taste, but with a predominant taste of fresh hops, although less bitterness. it was also lighter in body. Overall i preferred the second beer that i tasted, which was brew No. 4, as did Jeffrey, but i thought that a little more bitterness would not come amiss. Christopher and James both preferred the first beer that we had tasted, brew No.5. The recipe was the same for both beers, but different yeasts were used and obviously brew No. 4 had been conditioning for a longer period of time. We all thought the difference was so marked that these two versions of Samphire could have been marketed under different names. Just to verify our findings we repeated the experiment with the same results.

A second beer is already planned and this will be a 3.8% pale ale to be named Ridgeway. Obviously further beers will be added to the range and James does plan to brew with aromatic imported hops which are very popular amongst many real ale drinkers. Look out for further information in Channel Draught, Small Brewery News. The range of pump-clips will be distinctive, and one will be easily able to identify an Abigale beer.



Chris Excell and Roger Marples (left)
with James Wraith, brewer (right)

As i write this article the first beers from Abigale Brewery are being sold in the brewery's first two outlets. These are The Conqueror, Ramsgate and The Lifeboat, Margate. in our branch area, i should think it very likely that Blake's in Dover will order beer from Abigale, as they are usually one of the first to try new local beers, and also The Berry in Walmer who apart from The Eight Bells, Dover stocks one of the best selections of beer to be found locally. However, it is James's intention to supply outlets in East and Mid Kent. So keep looking, Abigale Brewery could come to a public house near you.

Abigale Brewing Company can be found at :
Unit 4 Javelin Enterprise Park,
Javelin Way Ashford TN24 8DE
07734 342278 james@abigale.plus.com

Roger Marples

NB An e-mail from Chris Excell in mid December informed us that Samphire Bitter had just been delivered to the Man of Kent at Rochester, Blakes of Dover, and Three Mariners at Hythe.



THE 'DIVISIONAL' PUBS TRIP

An Autumn 2010 journey in search of the dwindling number of Britain's unspoilt pubs

For the last 25 - 30 years a group of four (which has differed over the years) have set out in the Autumn to visit some of the dwindling number of unspoilt traditional public houses – Pubs of the Top Division as some of us like to refer to them. These houses are the antithesis of today's gastro pubs and venues for loud music. They are the old fashioned places where conversation and good ale are the norm.

Our latest expedition was in late October last year. We started out just after sunrise in a hired car, each of us taking a turn at driving, to enable the other three to indulge reasonably at lunchtime. The first call was the Monkey House in Defford, near Pershore, Worcestershire. Nothing indicates that this is anything but an old thatched house on a busy main road. It has no bar and nowhere to drink inside the building. The cider (no beer) is served straight from 18 gallon



The Monkey House, Defford,
near Pershore

kilderkins that are in a barn-like room complete with a typical barn half door. The top half opens and there is a shelf on the bottom half on which the pints of cider are served. A porch over the serving area will keep one sheltered from the elements and there are benches against the wall of the building in the front garden. For less hardy souls there is a former bake house where one might sit. In inclement weather a fire is lit. The gentlemen's lavatory is utilitarian and is open to the air, with a nice view across the Worcestershire countryside that can be enjoyed whilst answering a call of nature. The most popular cider, made to the cider house's own recipe by Weston's of Much Marcle, is 6%, dry and extremely potable at £2 a pint.

We spent a happy couple of hours under the canopy sampling this tasty cider whilst partaking of the copious amount of comestibles that one of our number, Jason Jones from the Ashford & Shepway Branch of CAMRA, had thoughtfully provided. Unfortunately, the future of the Monkey House is in some doubt. The landlady, thinking that perhaps its time to commence a well earned retirement, is seriously considering not remaining open after next Spring. As the premises, which used to be the village bakers and cider house, have been in her family since the time when the census began in the 1700s, it will indeed, be the end of an era. So, visit this splendid little anachronism whilst it is still extant.

Our next port of call was about fifteen minutes drive away, the Three Kings at Hanley Castle. Twice CAMRA National Pub of the Year, it is half timbered with part

built in 1540, and the business has been in the same family for 99 years. it is situated next to the local school, in a dead end lane, and car congestion can be a problem as no one seems to walk to school these days. There is a cottage garden in front and entrance is along an ancient brick built path. The bar we normally use is the small one at the front with a large curved wooden settle which also forms the wall of the bar. The welcome is always friendly and the range of beers from micro breweries. By consent the Butcombe bitter was the most popular. We met with a newly married couple (second time round) whom we had encountered in the Monkey House and had persuaded that they should experience The Three Kings. They seemed happy to have followed our advice.

On to Llandovery, where we were to stay the night, and visit the Red Lion. Opening time at the Red Lion is very limited: Fridays 17.30 - 22.00, and Saturdays 12.00 - 14.00 and 19.00 - 22.00. Beer is BB (3.8%) from Evan Evan's Brewery of Llandeilo and is a rather expensive £2.80 per pint. As stocks are limited to just two days sufficiency, we thought it best to visit Friday. The pub is run by two brothers, or rather by John Rees who is assisted by his brother Dai. Both are "characters" and are jolly souls with a repertoire of jokes. The location is right in the centre of this sleepy Welsh town, but again, there is no sign to indicate that this is a public house. There is one room with a hatch in a corner and no counter. John or Dai will lurk behind the hatch, when not circulating amongst the customers, and one may hold up ones fingers to indicate the requisite number of pints required which will then be delivered to the table. The locals are friendly and always good for a yarn.

When we arrived Christopher Excell of Ashford & Shepway Branch, who we had



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previously arranged to meet, was ensconced at a table. We were surprised how few seats were left vacant, but it soon transpired that a birthday was being celebrated; an employee of the Forestry Commission, no doubt making the most of things before David Cameron abolishes this quango. After an hour there was standing room only as more and more forestry types filled the bar, and huge slices of untypically Welsh pizza were passed around to all customers. Among these was a crank

The Blue Flame, Nailsea



who told us he spends all of his spare time and free railway travel in a constant peregrination of unspoilt public houses (a pub going version of painting the Forth Bridge). As this pleasant crowd dispersed, John warned us that he would shortly be going to bed, and allowed us one more pint apiece, after which at about 22.00 we repaired to a nearby house for Evan Evan's Cwrw and Golden Hop. A residue of The Red Lion's customers seemed to have the same idea.

After an excellent breakfast of local produce (no pizzas here), we set out back to England, arriving at the Back Horse, Clapton in Gordano, Somerset, some 15 minutes late at 11.15 owing to closure of one of the Severn road bridges. Whilst pleasant enough it is not as unspoilt as some pubs we had visited. A 14th century ex-George's house, it is tucked away in a narrow lane, with a stone flagged floor, open fire and beers served straight from the cask through a hatch. It is popular with walkers and still retains an outside WC. We again drank the superb Butcombe Bitter.

We were due to re-meet Christopher Excell at The Blue Flame at nearby Nailsea, but a phone call to Jason announced that it did not open until 18.30. As the Good Beer Guide states 12.00 we thought that this was an attempt at humour, but not so. Christopher, who was waiting in the drizzle, had spoken to the landlord, and been informed that he had not opened at lunchtime for three years. So much for the accuracy of the GBG. However, on my suggestion that the increased number of five might make a difference he granted us a half hour. The Blue Flame is an old fashioned place with early 60s transport café style decoration and outside WC. Again we drank Butcombe straight from the cask. This is a house that I should like to revisit, albeit, in the evening when time was not so pressing.

After saying our farewell to Christopher we continued to The Rose & Crown at Huish Episcopi, known by the sobriquet "Eli's" after an erstwhile landlord. It has been in the same family for over 150 years and was built in 1800. I had not visited Eli's for some time and noted a few changes that had been made after serious flooding a few years ago. There are three separate rooms two of which are accessed by passing through a central space where the beer is served, there being no bar, as such. This is a friendly house but owing to changes not so unspoilt as it once was. The beer was from the Branscombe Vale Brewery and was by popular opinion, not as good as Butcombe.

We travelled on to Frome where we had booked rooms at The Blue Boar, a chaotic

seeming place, where the barmaid was only able to find bookings for two of our party, despite frantically searching the register, which with crossings out and alterations reminded me of a second form schoolboy's jotter. it seemed likely that we had been double booked, but she was unable to contact the landlady, and had no success telephoning other sources of accommodation in the vicinity. Eventually, some forty minutes after our arrival, another perusal of her records found our reservation. However it now transpired that the previous occupant of one of our rooms had departed with the key, so a new lock had to be fitted. i said i would wait no longer and deposited my bags in the room reminding her that she must take responsibility for their security. On the way out a customer remarked that he hoped that the karaoke would not unduly disturb our slumbers, as it usually finished at about one o'clock. After we left one of the others mentioned that the barmaid had said, "Your friend does not seem very happy with us".

We decided to call in at The Lamb and Fountain where we could book a taxi to our ultimate destination, Witham Friary, some four miles distant. The Lamb and Fountain is ruled with a rod of iron by an 88 year old landlady known as Mother. The building, at the top end of the hilly town dates from 1690 and was modernised in the 1950s, and usually seems full of rambunctious locals. One particularly garrulous fellow seemed to take a liking to David Green who had sat next to him in order to regain his strength after the steep ascent. The cider is from Rich's at £2.00 a pint.

The Seymour Arms at Witham Friary is one of my favourite houses. The Duke of Somerset had it built in 1867 together with an adjoining farm, and the same family



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have been in residence since 1943, since when little has changed. It is a traditional Somerset cider house that sells copious quantities of Rich's cider at £1.50 a pint. There is also a draught bitter from Cheddar Ales, but we all stayed with the excellent Rich's cider. Through the front door is a wide stone flagged corridor hall with a bar at the end where one is served through small glass windows. There are a couple of stools and locals congregate to drink in this space. We repaired to a room on the left, to which service provided from a hatch in the wall. A coal fire was burning, and we sat around a large table to finish off the rest of Jason's comestibles, washed down by many pints of cider.



Next day after leaving Michael Green at Reading station to take a train home to Bicester, the remaining three of us continued home, stopping en route only at the Queen's Arms at Cowden Pound, one of *Kent's* most unchanged taverns (see Last Knockings). We hope that there will be enough of these unspoilt public houses left for us to visit next year.

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THE PLEASANT CALDON

The Beery Boaters 2010 End of Year trip

The start did not exactly bode well for the rest of the week. The weather forecast was atrocious and Dave broke his leg getting onto the boat even before we set off from Anglo Welsh's base at Great Haywood Junction. Fortunately it was his artificial leg and not the other one, but as he hadn't brought a spare with him, it prevented him steering and restricted how far he went from the boat. The boat was Hatherton, one of the pair of boats that we had hired in 2008 for the April Trip, and the crew were Dave & John Underdown, Martin Atkins, Jeff Sherwood, Terry Easley and yours truly, Hon. Commodore (Unelected) Jim Green.

For now though, the weather was fine, and we set off at about 3.30 pm on Saturday 2nd October, going up the Trent and Mersey Canal and mooring at Weston at 5.20 at Bridge 80, adjacent to the Saracen's Head. The pub is in the 2011 GBG and the real ale available consisted of the ubiquitous Greene King iPA, Marstons Pedigree and Limestone Stoneface from a micro brewery at nearby Stone. Very nice the Limestone was, and so was the food. The sky was still clear as we walked the very short distance back to the boat at the end of the evening.



This had changed next morning. The promised rain started at 6.00 and was in full spate when we set off at 7.00. At long last we had come across *the* Jolly Angler. He had just arrived on the towpath, was talkative and pleasant and helped us cast off, although this might have been prompted by us having moored opposite a tree under which lurk the biggest roach on the Trent and Mersey Canal! The rain continued as we headed towards Stoke-on-Trent. After six miles and a couple of locks we arrived at Stone and its four locks, followed by the four of the 'Mefford' flight, and then, after a further couple of miles at midday, tied up at our lunchtime destination, the Plume of Feathers at Barlaston. Stone was once the home of Joules ('Jowls') brewery, and the large canalside warehouses painted with the Joules logo still exist. Bass closed it some 40 years ago, but a micro-brewery of the same name has opened in Market Drayton and supplies several local pubs around Stone.

A few years ago the Plume of Feathers was run by a curmudgeonly Northerner who always referred to us as "You Southern Tory Bastards!" it had subsequently

been closed for a while, leaving no canalside pub between Stone and Stoke, but was now thankfully reopened, and was selling Everard's Tiger, Marston's Pedigree and, of course, Greene King IPA. We opted for the Tiger, and the saloon bar, where we ate; the public bar being crowded with raucous, but good-humoured, footballers.

We recommenced our cruise at 3.15, the rain now having stopped; through open country for about four miles, until Stoke-on-Trent closed around the cut. By and large, the urban sprawl of Arnold Bennett's 'Five Towns' (although, in fact, there are six), does the canal no favours at all, and presents a pretty miserable façade to the water-borne traveller. There are no canalside pubs, even though the canal passes quite close to Stoke centre, and no suitable mooring places until one gets to the junction with the Caldon Canal at Etruria, where five locks raise you up to the summit level of the canal. By the junction and below the top lock is Shirley's Bone Mill and a couple of bottle kilns, with an industrial museum. You *can* moor here, but there are no pubs close at hand. We arrived at 6 pm and negotiated the sharp hair-pin onto the Calden Canal with an umpteenth-point turn.



The first two locks on the Caldon Canal form a staircase pair, followed by a single lock, all still going upwards. Both the nearby pubs, the Bird in Hand and the Norfolk, were closed, so we skirted Hanley Park as dusk was falling, and tied up just after Bridge 8 on some new-looking mooring rings at 7.15 in slight drizzle. Except for what had possibly once been the Duke of Wellington, but was now garish pop and fizz, there are no nearby pubs, and Dave elected to stay on board while the rest of us walked the half mile uphill to the centre of Hanley. Unfortunately the CAMRA National Inventory Coachmakers Arms, just over the ring road, was closed for some work to be carried out, so we carried on a little further to the Reginald Mitchell, a Wetherspoon pub named after the Spitfire's designer. Not feeling like exploring further, we stayed there until closing time before walking back to the boat.

Monday morning and we set off 7.20 in a bit of a mist but with the sun shining through. A mile further on, past Ivy House Lift Bridge (electro-hydraulically operated using the B.W. 'Watermate' key – sanitary station key to us old-stagers), and we were in open country, broken by the villages of Foxley and Milton. By about 9.00, at Engine Lock, the sun had burnt off the mist; and quite a few boats were making the most of the fine weather, including a smaller Anglo Welsh boat from Great Haywood, Aston, with just a couple on board, who we encountered several times during our trip. It was a bit of a busman's holiday for the skipper, he was a British Waterways employee.

At 9.50 we reached the five locks at Stockton Brook, which raise the canal to summit level. Here we encountered a pair of hotel boats going up in front of us, which caused a bit of a delay, especially as one was a butty which had to be bow-hauled by hand. We cleared the top lock by about 11.00, and passing the hotel boats,

Duke and Duchess, which had moored up, carried on to Endon, where we took on water. A mile later we arrived at Hazelhurst Junction, where the main line starts its descent through three locks towards Froghall, and the Leek Branch continues on the level for two and a half miles towards the town of that name, and where a feeder comes into the canal from Rudyard Lake, after which Kipling's parents named their son.

interestingly, although Leek lies to the left of Froghall, the branch starts by forking off to the right, crossing over the main line below Hazelhurst Locks by aqueduct. it was our intention to take the Leek branch and moor beyond the aqueduct at bridge 4 and walk the 100 yards downhill to the Holly Bush at Denford, which is canalside on the main line. i had done just that long ago in 1988. However, 22 years later the canalside undergrowth made it impossible, so we continued towards Leek, until just after Leek Tunnel we came to a winding hole with a notice advising boats of over 45ft to turn there. To reach Leek would have necessitated a walk of about a mile, so we decided to forego a stop there and return to Hazelhurst Junction and the main line, go down the locks, and tie up early at the Holly Bush for the night.

On the way back we collected some ceps (edible fungi) from a wooded bank, but which, in the event, proved too past their prime to eat. After more shunting round a hairpin bend from the Leek Branch into the top lock we found ourselves outside the Holly Bush at 4.30 for a pre-session that turned into a session! The Holly Bush is very popular, and was crowded when we went in, but we managed to squeeze into a couple of tables by the wall. A couple more boats arrived and the locals were quite welcoming, one chap even going home to fetch tape, etc., to effect a tempo-

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rary repair to Dave's leg. Later in the evening we were entertained by a solo singer doing a charity circuit around local pubs. We got back on the boat at 1.15 on the Tuesday morning but some regulars seemed to still be going strong in the bar. The beers? – Courage, Marston, Fullers, plus a couple from micro-breweries.

Tuesday dawned fine, and we were away at 7.30. An hour later we were at Cheddleton, with its two locks and imposing flint mill, and shortly after passed close to the sheds of the Caudon Railway with a couple of diesel and steam engines visible. This restored railway would now keep us company for most of the remainder of our journey towards Froghall, in what was now a quite wooded valley. At Consall Forge where is the Black Lion, the canal passes under the railway track and becomes very narrow, with Consall Forge



Railway Station to its right; its platform and waiting room cantilevered over it. A little further was Flint Mill Lock, the last on the canal, where we were informed that only boats of 65ft or less could turn in front of Froghall Tunnel. I knew that Hatherton wouldn't pass through the restricted bore of tunnel itself, but I had not realised that the winding hole was so restricted. So we winded above the lock, and by 10.30 were back at Consall Forge and tying up opposite the Black Lion, to await opening time at noon. Aston passed as we were waiting, heading towards Froghall where, being much shorter than Hatherton, it would have no trouble turning before the tunnel.

The Black Lion is an isolated pub, accessed only by a track across the canal bridge and railway line from the nature reserve opposite. It is in the 2011 Good Beer Guide and, in our opinion, is a well-deserved entry. The regular beer was Peakstone's Rock accompanied by two or three guest beers and more than a few real ciders. We stayed until about four o'clock, before returning back up the canal to Cheddleton for the evening, and the Boat Inn, an attractive Marston's pub with a good range of ale, including Pedigree, Banks's, Jennings and Wychwood. There are a couple of other pubs in the village, but quite a walk away, so we stayed where we were, and, after the long lunchtime session, most of us had returned to Hatherton by about ten.

There was some rain in the early morning, but by 7.30, as I was getting the boat on its way, it had stopped and the clouds were beginning to clear. We passed the Holly Bush at 9.00 and were through Hazelhurst Junction an hour later. After replenishing our water tank at Endon again we were at Stockton Brook for our lunchtime stop by 11.20, and tied up by the road bridge after the second lock down. Here there is another Holly Bush, which I had visited in 1988, but it appears to be more of a restaurant nowadays, so we waited until the Sportsman, just a few yards from the bridge, opened at midday – meantime Aston passed us again, going down the locks. The Sportsman seemed very much a locals' pub, selling Marston's Pedigree and Jennings Crag Rat beers, and we enjoyed another good lunchtime session, not getting the boat under way again until 3.50.

With no definite ideas for an evening venue (the provisional itinerary having gone by the board on Monday) we continued down Stockton Brook Locks and stopped by Bridge 18 at Milton, a couple of miles and further on. There are two pubs near the bridge: the Miner's Arms, an attractive terrace pub a hundred yards downhill, but whose pump clip was turned round, and the Millrace, the same distance uphill, which although displaying a Burtonwood sign, was now a Marston's pub selling Pedigree, Banks's and Ringwood. Naturally, it was to the Millrace we went. Again, a locals' pub with darts and table skittles (devil amongst the tailors), and we departed at midnight under a cold, starlit sky. While there, Martin went exploring and found, that because of a dogleg in the canal, the next pub along, the Foxley, could be reached by a few hundred yard footpath between the houses behind the Millrace. It is also a Marston's pub and had Pedigree on handpump. In the other direction, five minutes past the Miner's Arms, were shops, takeaways and another pub.

Thursday morning, and we got going at 7.15, there being no canalside pubs until our lunchtime destination, the Plume of Feathers at Barlaston. At Ivy House Lift Bridge an hour later Martin and Jeff held up motorists while trying to work out how it operated, and by 9.00 we had reached Bedford Road Staircase Locks, with a light mist now on the canal. A further hour on we were back on the Trent & Mersey Canal, having had to wait a little while at Etruria Junction for a boat to come up the locks and shunt round the hairpin. By 12.30 we had passed Wedgwood Pottery and were outside the Plume of Feathers. With no football fans this time, the Plume was quieter than on Sunday, and as our evening's destination was Stone just 3 miles and 4 to 8 locks away (depending on where you tie up), we stayed until 3.30. While we were in the pub the sun appeared, replacing the autumnal nip that had been in the air that morning, and the rest of the afternoon proceeded in bright sunshine.

The moorings at Stone were very crowded, and it looked at first as if there was nowhere to moor, but we managed to tie up at 6.05 to a fence just above Stone Bottom Lock from where a path led to the road and the Star Inn conveniently situated across the lock. The Star is a very old pub, with lots of rooms, none apparently on the same level, and some welcoming real fires. Again, a Marston's pub, there was Bank's and a guest beer, and we stayed the evening. A light rain had started and a breeze had arisen as we left at a quarter to midnight and went back to the boat.

Friday, the last full day. The rain hadn't amounted to much, but it was a sullen, grey, autumnal morning. I was out on deck just before eight and as no-one else had risen, shifted the boat across the canal to the lock moorings, and went to prepare the lock. The rest of the crew gradually emerged. Just after Stone we came across an unattended boat which had broken its stern mooring and had drifted across the canal. Jeff got on board it, and we pulled it round so that we could proceed. And lo and behold, just before Aston Lock which, by the way, is 46 miles from either end of the Trent & Mersey, there was a British Waterways boat adrift in the middle of the canal. This we managed to nudge out of the way to get by. The mist had thickened almost to a drizzle as we headed towards Sandon Lock and our lunchtime stop the Dog & Doublet, some five or ten minutes walk along a very busy road. An old coaching inn, it was in the process of being redeveloped as a sort of

conference centre, but the bar was being retained with two changing guest beers and a promise of another two handpumps to come. At the time of our visit the beers were Limestone and Salter's.

We started off again at 4.00, and rather than go all the way back to Great Haywood where the pubs are a bit of a walk from any convenient place to tie up, we decided to moor again by the Saracen's Head at Weston (a couple of miles and no more locks). Just after setting off the sun appeared through the mist for the first time that day. We tied up at Weston at 4.50, in the same place as on the previous Saturday and had another enjoyable session in the Saracen's Head. Later on that evening a large plateful of fried chicken legs was passed around among the customers. I was a trifle concerned that the chickens which were scratching about on the lawn outside the pub at the time of our last visit, seemed to have vanished.

Last morning, and up on deck at 0700 with a light breeze, good visibility and high cloud. The wind seemed to be getting up a bit. Jeff noticed that the aft toilet wasn't flushing away. For some reason everyone seemed to have been using that one most (*or flush had got stuck open – Ed*). At twenty to nine we arrived back at Great Haywood, reversed into the boatyard, offloaded our baggage and, after the obligatory photographs, set off back to Dover.

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LAST KNOCKINGS

Naval Manoeuvres Much speculation surrounded the running aground last October of the Royal Navy's latest submarine while undergoing sea trials. Old canal hands, and Beery Boaters in particular, will however, be in no doubt as to the cause. Either the crew had knowledge of a well appointed hostelry, access to which by water was a sporting possibility.....or someone (i.e he on the tiller) was taking photographs. Neither would they have had any truck with the need to call on the services of an ocean going tug – judicious use of the gangplank inserted under the hull would have had the craft re-floated in a matter of minutes, and the boatyard (sorry, dockyard) need never have known. But then the extensive specification of the modern Royal Navy submarine probably does not include a gangplank. A deficiency that we trust the Admiralty will now seriously be looking at addressing.

Those We Have Lost Elsewhere we write about the old Thompson's Brewery in Walmer, which has largely vanished without trace from East Kent. It is of course not alone. Only the occasional frosted glass window now recalls Leneys, George Beer and Rigden, Thomson Wootton, Gardners or Cobbs. Even reference to Fremilins is hard to find although the memory is particularly kept alive by Folkestone Race Course's Elephant Steeplechase, while of course the name Mackeson lives on through its eponymous milk stout. One of the perhaps less well known East Kent breweries was Flint and Sons



of Canterbury. Their brewery premises were still in existence quite recently, being resurrected for brewing purposes by the short lived Canterbury Brewery Co. in the late 1970s, but evidence that their tied estate extended as far as the East Kent coast is scant. That it did, however, was recently established by work at the Dublin Man O' War in River. The removal of the sign board which was attached to the top left hand corner of the front wall, revealed underneath a fine engraved panel bearing the pub's name and the words "Flint and Sons Fine Ales, Stout and Porter."

A Different World At the start of *Cider With Rosie*, Laurie Lee comments that his early years in a Gloucestershire village after World War I saw the end of a way of life that had lasted for generations, an age before large scale mechanisation, global communication and the motor car. Occasionally, though remnants remain, one such being the Monkey House in Worcestershire, described by Roger Marples in his piece on unspoilt pubs. One can imagine the perplexity with which authority

would view a proposal for a similar establishment submitted today – the gentlemen's toilets alone would surely raise a host of problems. However, as the article suggests, there are, around the country, more of such places than one might think. One of the most local of course being Elsie's (aka the Queen's Arms at Cowden Pound) just this side of the Surrey Border, which our intrepid group visited before returning home. The diminutive licensee, Miss Elsie Maynard, who was born here, is now very frail and does not serve, making only the occasional visit to the bar with the aid of a tea trolley: "which always heralds her arrival by the squeaking of its wheels." However, she is well supported by her locals, who on Sunday have a tradition of bringing their own food, and which on this particular occasion included chestnuts which could be roasted on the open fire. No doubt to the big brewery or pub company accountant these places are a complete anachronism, under used assets which should be selling food or sold off to the urban rich. To many of us however, they are examples of a more pleasant and reasoned society.

One Man's Meat As we point out in Local News the purge of the Shepherd Neame tied estate shows no signs of abating. Recently closed, demolished, up for sale or otherwise surplus to the brewery's requirements are the Hare and Hounds, Old Endeavour and Wheelwright's in Dover, the Lord Clyde in Deal and the Railway Bell, White Lion, Princess Royal and Earl Grey in Folkestone. Apparently Sheps have a list of some 35 'under-performing' pubs which they intend to get rid of. One wonders if this is 'under-performing' as defined by the Three Mariners in Hythe, which since Sheps relinquished ownership a year or so back has proved to be one of the greatest pub success stories in East Kent.



Football Crazy Not everyone is necessarily disappointed that England's bid for the 2018 World Cup was unsuccessful. I have nothing against football, it can be most entertaining, but the modern game is so surrounded by razzmatazz, hype, excessive salaries and general hyperbole that the further away the major events take place the better. Our efforts this time were particularly notable for drawing on the active participation of the Prime Minister, and representatives of English Royalty – Prince William and David Beckham. What a pity then, that the energy and influence assembled to campaign for what is by any judgement a transient event, lasting for a month or so, could not be assembled to oppose a long term problem, the decline of the traditional pub.

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Originator's Identification Number

9 2 6 1 2 9

FOR CAMRA OFFICIAL USE ONLY

This is not part of the instruction to your Bank or Building Society

Membership Number

Name

Postcode

Instruction to your Bank or Building Society

Please pay CAMRA Direct Debits from the account described on this instruction or to the payee designated by the Direct Debit Guarantee. This instruction shall be valid only if it is made with CAMRA and it will be passed electronically to your Bank or Building Society.

Signature(s)

Date



Your Guarantee should be checked and retained by the bank

The Direct Debit Guarantee

- 1. The Direct Debit Guarantee is offered by all Banks and Building Societies and it guarantees that the Direct Debit will be paid in full and on time and in accordance with the authority and accuracy of the information provided by you when you set up the Direct Debit.
- 2. If there is an error or if you are not happy with the payment, you can cancel the Direct Debit at any time without any charge to you and without any loss of service to you.
- 3. If you have a problem with your Direct Debit, you can contact your Bank or Building Society for advice and assistance.
- 4. You can cancel a Direct Debit at any time by writing to your Bank or Building Society. Please do not send a copy of this instruction.

Direct Debit Guarantee: this form accepts Direct Debit instructions for one type of account



National Contacts

Nationally CAMRA can be contacted at:
CAMRA, 230 Hatfield Rd, St Albans,
Herts., AL1 4LW.
For enquiries, phone 01727 867201
Web www.camra.org.uk



Adjacent Branches

Ashford Folkestone & Romney Marsh
branchcontact@camra-afrm.org.uk

Canterbury

Mike Galliers 01732 771775 (w)
01227 272494 (h)
mike@calebriparc.co.uk

Thanet

Debbie Aris 01843 591731 (h)
debbie@thanet-camra.org.uk

COMING SOON

**Friday 22nd Apr 2011
to Saturday 23rd Apr 2011**
6th Planet Thanet Easter Beer Festival
Margate Winter Gardens
Margate, Kent

Saturday 18th June
Kent & East Sussex Railway
Beer Festival
Tenterden Town Station
Tenterden, Kent

Thursday 21st to Saturday 23rd July
Kent Beer Festival
Merton Farm, off Nackington Lane,
Canterbury, Kent

Local Information & Useful Numbers

Dover Tourist info 01304 205108
Folk Tourist info 01303 258594
Dover Police Stn 01303 240055
Folk Police Stn 01303 850055

Dover Taxis

A1 01304 211111
A2B 01304 225588
Central 01304 204040
Dover Heritage 01304 204420
Star 01304 228822
Victory 01304 228888

Deal Taxis

Ai Cars 01304 363636
Castle Taxis 01304 374000
Direct Cars 01304 382222
Jacks Cars 01304 362299

Sandwich Taxis

AM Cars 01304 614209
Sandwich Cars 01304 617424

Folkestone Taxis

Channel Cars 01303 252252
Chris's Taxis 01303 226490
Folk. Taxi 01303 252000
Premier Cars 01303 279900

National Express 0870 5808080
Stagecoach 0870 2433711
National Rail Enq. 08457 484950

Trading Standards Office (East Kent)
01843 223380

Trading Standards Office (Mid Kent)
01303 850294

All numbers on this page were believed
correct at time of going to press.

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And Finally..... Pretend Drunks enforce the Law

Trading standards officers in Conwy and Denbighshire used "pretend" drunks to catch out pubs in an undercover operation. Serving alcohol to intoxicated people on a licensed premises is a criminal offence. The volunteers pretended to be so inebriated they fell into tables, carried bottles and glasses out of bars and slurred their words. Roly Schwarz, community safety enforcement manager for both authority areas, said they used three professional witnesses to act out the drunken display. He said: "We actually dressed one of them as Frank Gallagher, the very dishevelled main character in the TV series Shameless and had him trying to buy a drink in character and smelling of drink and he was still served. "We were very surprised by the findings as we went along and decided to up the ante, with them acting more and more drunk and making sure they told anyone who listened they had been drinking all day."

He said the idea of using 'pretend drunks' has also been trialled by the Metropolitan Police in London but so far few other authorities have used this unusual method. The pubs caught out in the operation, which took place over nine nights last October, have all been asked to attend training sessions on the laws surrounding serving alcohol.

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