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**CAMPAIGN
FOR
REAL ALE**

**Issue 59
Spring
2014**

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

CHANNEL DRAUGHT



INSIDE

PARLOUR PUBS

A look at this
increasingly
rare pub style

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PUB OF THE YEAR 2014

The results of a
close fought
contest

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USE IT OR LOSE IT

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CHANNEL DRAUGHT

ISSUE 59
Spring 2014

Welcome to the Spring 2014 edition of *Channel Draught*, the Branch magazine of Deal, Dover, Sandwich and District CAMRA, which aims to keep you informed of all that is going on in the world of real ale and pubs. And at the moment there is probably no more important matter than the survival of the public house as we know it, the continuing loss, as ever more close, threatening to place this traditional part of British culture among the ranks of endangered species (see Channel View).

Meanwhile, while the Chancellor's budget reduction in beer duty is of course welcome, there still remains the issue of the general level of duty and tax on beer to the licensed trade (see National News). There is also concern about slow progress over the introduction of a code of practice for pubcos in their dealings with tied licensees, promised by the Government in January last year.

On the more positive side, comes heartening news that beer is good for you, in particular that moderate drinking is better than strict abstinence (see Page 4), while, at least locally, more and more real ale is to be found in pubs, and more pubs are selling it, including some in which it has not been seen in years. Also on the increase, are the number of beer festivals, averaging almost one a week over the coming months – you can find all that we know about in Branch Diary, and our apologies to any we have missed.

Elsewhere in this edition, as well as all the usual items, we try to distinguish between the acceptable and unacceptable face of KeyKeg, take a look at the rapidly disappearing phenomenon of the parlour pub, offer a definition of a pub, and publish the first of what we hope will be a regular contribution from across the Channel.

Martin Atkins



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EVENTS DIARY

<i>Mon 19 May</i>	Branch Meeting, Chance , Guston
<i>Thur 22 - Mon 26 May</i>	Beer Festival, New Inn , Canterbury*
<i>Fri 23 - Sun 25 May</i>	Beer Festival, Crabble Corn Mill , River.*
<i>Fri 23 - Mon 26 May</i>	Beer Festival, Haywain , Bramling*
	Beer Festival, Rose , Wickhambreaux*
<i>Sun 25 May</i>	Deal Classic Motor Show, Walmer Green
<i>Sat 31 May</i>	Romney Marsh Outing, Romney, Hythe & Dymchurch Railway 10.15am
	Cider Pub of the Year presentation, Rack of Ale 3pm*
<i>Sat 7 June</i>	Beer Festival, Kent & East Sussex Railway , Tenterden
<i>Fri 13 & Sat 14 Jun</i>	Branch Meeting, Five Bells , Eastry
<i>Mon 16 June</i>	Beer Festival, Carpenters Arms , Coldred*
<i>Fri 27 - Sun 29 June</i>	Sandwich Folk & Ale Festival*
<i>Fri 11 - Sun 13 Jul</i>	Kent Beer Festival , Merton Farm
<i>Thur 17 - Sat 19 Jul</i>	Dover Music Festival*
<i>Fri 18 - Sun 19 Jul</i>	Branch Meeting, Carpenters Arms , Coldred
<i>Mon 21 Jul</i>	Beer Festival, Berry , Walmer*
<i>Fri 25 - Sun 27 Jul</i>	Pub of the Year Presentation, Berry , Walmer 3pm.
<i>Sat 26 Jul</i>	Beer Festival, Phoenix , Canterbury *
<i>Fri 8 - Sun 10 Aug</i>	Branch Meeting, Crown , Finglesham
<i>Mon 18 Aug</i>	

Branch Website www.camra-dds.org.uk

Branch meetings are 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



BEER IS GOOD FOR YOU

Drinking in moderation, not enforced abstinence, is better for your health says CAMRA. The Campaign has challenged the supposed benefits of drinkers bowing to health lobby pressure to abstain from drinking for a month – such as Dry January – saying enjoying alcohol, especially real ale, in moderation all year round, is better for you.

The claim is part of CAMRA's initiative to use scientific evidence to challenge spurious health claims about alcohol consumption. According to the Campaign, while it's clear drinking too much is bad for us, research shows the advice not to drink at all for a month might be counterproductive.

Moderate drinkers live longer said Professor Charles Bamforth of the University of California, Davis. "It's well known that drinking too much can cause serious health problems." However, he says many people don't realize that drinking in moderation has significant health benefits and that moderate drinkers have a longer life expectancy than non-drinkers. "Regular moderate intake of alcohol is good for the heart and blood circulation." Bamforth who is author of the book *Beer, Health and Nutrition*, emphasised, however, that just because you took a month off from imbibing doesn't mean you can go "hog-wild" for the rest of the year.

"The key is a little and often," he stressed. "You are seriously mistaken if you think that having a month without drinking will protect you from the effects of excessive drinking for the rest of the year. The best advice is to drink moderately throughout the year." And, it is not just the amount that you drink, but what you drink as well. Bamforth says beer – and in particular, real ale – offers nutritional benefits. "The great thing about beer is that it is low in alcohol and brewed from natural raw materials so it's a good source of important nutrients such as antioxidants, B vitamins and dietary silicon that promotes strong bones. Indeed beer used to be known as liquid bread," he says.

Meanwhile, Britain's brewers have hit back at more inaccurate scaremongering by the *Daily Mail*, which claimed a pint of real ale contained nine teaspoons of sugar. The claims were nonsense said the British Beer and Pub Association, which was quick to rebut the story saying "a pint of ale typically contains less than a teaspoon". "We are investigating where these figures came from," said a spokesman for the BBPA.

You can follow us on Twitter: @DDSCAMRA.

We'll be using Twitter to publish information about the pubs and real ale events in our branch area as well as other stuff we think you might be interested in. Let us know what you would like us to publish information about.



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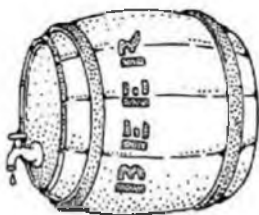
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The Local News

Contributors - Martin Atkins, The McIlroys,

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.

Firstly a note of sadness. Jan and Keith who have run the **Red Lion** in Charlton Green for a number of years finally relinquished the reins at the end of April. Unhappily, shortly after, Keith fell ill and died a week or so later. Our most sincere condolences to Jan, and our best wishes to her for the future.

There's lots happening in Dover at the moment. **Pier Three** which closed its doors in December is planned to re-open in June under the proprietorship of Peter and Kathryn Garstin, formerly of Blakes in Castle St. There is talk of possibly establishing a microbrewery on site in due course. At the time of writing we do not know whether the name will be retained. Also re-opening as a pub shortly, will be the **Arlington** in Snargate St., which for the last ten years or so, has existed as a restaurant and bistro. It will be a micropub, which to many of us it always was, with beer served on gravity and kept behind a sliding glass screen for temperature control. At the other end of the road the former **York House/Flagship**, converted to the Last Stop Supermarket a few years ago, no longer appears to be operating in that format, or as anything else either.

In the Market Square the former **Ellie** is in the process of being reincarnated as the **Hop and Vine**, selling real ale

(which it has not done for many a year) and offering accommodation. A glance through the doors shows a much reduced bar area, and again there have been rumours that a microbrewery might be installed. We understand that the business has links with Sutton Vale. Real ale has also resurfaced in Church St. at the **Roman Quay**, for the first time that almost anyone can remember. At the moment the only beer observed has been Doom Bar.

However, all is not gain. The **Golden Lion** which closed after Christmas, apparently "for some electrical work to be done", remains closed, although lights and activity have been seen inside from time to time. Also now closed, and encased in steel shutters, is the **Flotilla**. Local talk has it acquired by "a Chinaman", but beyond that there is no indication of what its future might be. We also hear at the time of writing that the **Lord Nelson** has been closed much of late and might now be closed altogether.

In Cambridge Rd. **Cullins Yard** continues to provide its home-brewed product from the Tir Dha Ghlas Brewery, alongside Adnams, the latest addition to the range being Toomey's Stout, which by all accounts is superb. At East Cliff the **First and Last** remains boarded up and presumably up for sale, and in St.

James St. Harvey's Sussex Bitter and two guests remain standard at the **White Horse**. In mid April two from Fullers under the Gales brand were available – Seafarer and HSB, the latter proving excellent. In Castle St. **Blakes** offers a wide ranging choice from both near and far. Whitstable, Goody and Millis were among the Kentish brewers represented in recent months, while from further away there is normally something from Adnams plus a variety of micros – Milestone, Bank Top, Cottage, RCH, Nethergate all having been seen of late.

In Ladywell, the closed **Falstaff** remains a work in progress, with little sign of activity over recent months. However, the **Rack of Ale** goes from strength to strength, with normally four or five micro brews available, plus cider and wine. It is also LocAle accredited, so there is always Kentish beer available. In January a pint of Smugglers Stout, from the new Time and Tide Brewery, proved outstanding. In March the pub received the accolade of being awarded Branch Cider Pub of the Year, a considerable achievement after just six months.

At the nearby **Park** in February, we said goodbye to Mandy who we wish well for the future. The pub remained closed until mid April, when re-opened under the proprietorship, we understand, of the landlord of the Black Horse at Densole.

Choice at the **Louis Armstrong** remains normally two or three Kentish microbrews with occasional representation from more distant small brewers – e.g. Dark Star (whose American Pale Ale barely lasts a couple of days), or the excellent West Berkshire Brewery. Standard draught real ale remains Hop-daemon Skrimshander, although there

is a range of bottle conditioned ales as well. On March 25th the pub presented a cheque for £477 to Pilgrim's Hospices from money raised over recent months, including a music quiz that evening, and a CD of music recorded in the pub over the years compiled by local musician and pub regular Slim, of Hey Rudi fame.

At the **Boar's Head** Eaton Rd. Dean has now added Courage Best to his real ales, alongside Doom Bar and Young's Bitter; the latter, on a quiz night in March proving particularly excellent.

On Crabble Hill Greg's rugby associations saw the **Three Cups** offering Belhaven Grand Slam as guest ale on the handpumps during the Six Nations mid February. His normal line-up is selected from Director's, London Pride and Flying Scotsman, with guests as appropriate. At the **Cricketers**, Hobgoblin and Old Dairy Red Top were available and at the **Dublin Man O' War**, Adnams Bitter and Broadside. In Kearsney, the **Railway Bell** was closed for a while in March & April ("pub business for sale"), but has now re-opened.

Dover Music Festival Local businesses including pubs, are set to benefit from a not-for-profit event to be held over the weekend of the 18th to 20th July, which aims to 'fill the town with music', and bring visitors to Dover from far and wide. Headline acts include Paul Jones and the Blues Band and China Crisis, and main venues Pencesster Gardens, the Market Square, the Town Hall and Crabble Mill. However, the festival will also provide a showcase for dozens of performers from the flourishing local musical community, while it could not achieve the organisers' ambition to 'fill the town with music', without the support and participa-

tion of the many local pubs who provide such a valuable service by promoting live music all year round. Among those that have already agreed to participate are Blakes Wine Bar, Boars Head, Bull Inn, Louis Armstrong, Park Inn, Priory Hotel and Rack of Ale, and it is hoped that this will expand to include some of the pubs that are currently being refurbished or changing hands. In the meantime the organisers would like to hear (via the website www.dovermusicfestival.co.uk or Facebook page) from any other local pubs planning music that weekend who would like to be included in the programme. It is hoped the event will become a major annual feature in the town calendar.

DEAL

Berry, Canada Rd: Once again Chris Barnes' combination of an extensive

and excellent range of real ale and a warm welcome, while retaining the essence of a good traditional local, has seen the pub win a seventh successive year as Deal, Dover, Sandwich and District Branch Pub of the Year. It was one of a short list of six (see page 17) which had been selected to compete for the title, its nearest runner-up being the **Carpenters Arms** at Coldred which it eventually defeated by a short head. Presentation will be on Saturday 26th July.

Saturday March 22nd saw the Branch undertaking one of its occasional pub strolls, this time visiting a selection of pubs from Deal and Walmer. Kicking off at the **Sir Norman Wisdom** at 12 noon, the event attracted up to a dozen Branch members over the afternoon, some staying the whole course, others for just a selection of the pubs. Hop-

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daemon Golden Braid and Mordue Workie Ticket were among the beers sampled at the start venue, before progressing to the **Just Reproach** where Goachers Beyond Reproach and Two Cocks Roundhead Bitter both proved very impressive.

At the **Rose** in the High St., a new recruit to real ale, we enjoyed Ripple Steam Best Bitter, before we moved on to the **Steak & Dive Bar** opposite the Town Hall. Often overlooked, probably because of its limited street level frontage, it has sold real ale for a number of years, and deserves greater attention. That day the choice was Time & Tide Sprattwaffler and Adnams bitter. The **Alma** in West St. followed with more Ripple Steam, this time Classic IPA, along with Harveys Best, Landlord, and Thwaites Wainwrights.

The group then moved to the seafront and the **Bohemian**, now sporting up to half a dozen real ales and an extensive range of Belgian bottled beers. Doom Bar and four local brews were available – Spencers Galaxy, Ripple Steam Best Bitter, Whitstable Pearl of Kent and a new creation from Eddie Gadd, East Kent India Pale Ale, a hefty 6.5% ABV of considerable bitterness.

A ten minute walk then took the party to the **Lighthouse**, formerly the Lord Nelson, on the Strand, Walmer. Closed for several years, it was saved from residential conversion, by reopening as an Arts and Music Centre, although beer drinkers might legitimately consider it a pub. Considerable alterations have been undertaken: the bar opened out with the servery pushed over to the left hand wall and a stage created in the opposite front corner. It had a pleasing ambiance and was quite busy. Local ales predominated in both cask and keg forms, with Ripple Steam once

again to the fore for real ale drinkers. The group then moved on to finish up at the **Berry**, but this reporter had a bus to catch and can offer no details, except to say that top marks were awarded to Over a Barrel from Bespoke.

Ship Inn, Middle St: Dark Star American Pale Ale was included in the pub's real ale line up earlier in the year, alongside its stablemate Hophead, a long standing regular here. Also featured were Caledonian Deuchars IPA, and from East Kent, Gadds No 7 and Seaside. More local ales at the **Prince Albert** where the recent selection has included Canterbury Ales Pardoner's Ale, Whitstable Native, Hopdaemon Skrimshander. From more distant parts, visits found Cottage Golden Arrow, Wentworth Imperial Ale and Adnams Lighthouse on the handpumps. On the other side of Alfred Square the **Saracen's Head** was selling Master Brew and Whitstable Bay in early April. A cosy little pub, well worth a look.

Information has reached us, that the **Walmer Castle** in South St. is now selling real ale although as yet no-one has established what. Also, that on the seafront, real ale is now to be found at the **Foresters Arms**.

In Kingsdown the **Zetland Arms**, acquired by Sheps in 2012, now serves a range of real ales from the brewery, including seasonal, plus occasional guests. In late February Master Brew, Spitfire, Whitstable Bay and Amber Ale were available. The **Rising Sun** has been selling Young's Gold and Courage Best regularly of late, and at the end of March guest beers at the **King's Head** were Gadd's No 5 and a very palatable Good Heavens from Goody Ales.

In early April, Caledonian XPA and Ripple Steam Best Bitter were to be found at the **Leather Bottle** in Mongeham, and London Pride and Charles Wells DNA (New World IPA) at the **Sportsman**, Sholden.

SANDWICH & RURAL

Five of the Branch's village pubs have been granted **Asset of Community Value (ACV)** status: both the **Bell** and **Bricklayers** in Shepherdsweil, the **Carpenters** at Coldred, the **Charity** in Woodnesborough and the **Five Bells** Eastry. Unfortunately the **Hope** at Lydden was turned down, on the basis that it was not currently in use, which we understand is a necessary requirement (see below).

Real ale in Sandwich goes from strength to strength. The **Admiral Owen** is currently normally carrying a couple of local brews. Visits earlier in

the year found Time and Tide's excellent Smuggler's Stout on several occasions complemented by beers from Wantsum, Gadds and Ripple Steam. Over the road the **Crispin** has developed a close association with Mad Cat who provide the pub's Crispin Ale, as well as other beers such as Golden IPA and Special Relationship – an Anglo-American Pale Ale, which was described by one customer as “a full frontal heavy hoppy taste with good balance of flavour.” Other beers have included Doom Bar and Cornish Coaster from Sharp's, and Adnams Broadside.

The **New Inn** which once appeared confined to Shepherd Neame and national brands now offers microbrews as well – visits in March and April finding Ripple Steam Best Bitter on the hand-pumps. At the **Red Cow** a varied selection is offered, local micros such as Gadds and Wantsum rubbing shoul-



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ders with more distant brews like Black Sheep, Purity, Hogs Back TEA and Doom Bar. And Wantsum features regularly at the **George and Dragon** in Fisher Street with More's Head and Yellow Tail making regular appearances of late. The latter being available at our March Branch Meeting where we also drank Adnam's Lighthouse and Master Brew.

In Worth, the **Blue Pigeons** usually features three or four real ales. Locally Canterbury Ales has a significant presence – visits finding both Miller's Ale and Pardoner's Ale appearing at different times. Other real ales have included Landlord, London Pride and Director's.

At Woodnesborough the **Charity** remains closed. As we mention above, it is now an ACV but future remains uncertain. In Eastry, despite approval for conversion to a home for recovering alcoholics the **Bull** remains apparently empty and unused. At the **Five Bells**, also an ACV, Greene King IPA remains standard, normally accompanied by a guest, and recently including Young's Special, Woodforde's Wherry, Gadd's No 7 and Cameron's Tontine, "an interesting ale of great quality" as someone described it. Easter saw the pub's usual bank holiday weekend beer festival.

The annual spring daddlums match at the **Carpenter's Arms**, Coldred, duly took place on April 10th. Beers included Hop Back Entire Stout and a Mordue brew, both in superb condition, and rather over indulged by some of us. Three games were completed, the pub defeating the Branch by two games to one – the latter collapsing miserably in the final leg, where they completely failed to achieve the 20 plus required to claim victory. Too much good ale no doubt, and perhaps excessive con-

sumption of the pub's as usual excellent buffet. In Shepherdswell two or three real ales are usual fare at the **Bell**. Regulars include Doom Bar and Hobgoblin, a pint of which on a visit in late February being described as exceptional.

Down the hill to Lydden, and a visit in late February to the other **Bell**, found the hand pumps occupied by half the Hopdaemon range – Skrimshander, Golden Braid and Green Daemon. At the **Hope** development carries on, where demolition of the Dover end of the pub has reduced its length by about a third – all in line with the small housing development at the rear, permission for which included retention and extension of the pub. However, work on the frontage, now seemingly largely finished, has included removal of all signage and lights, which supports local talk, that believes the ultimate plan is to convert the whole building to residential.

CANTERBURY

Recent visits have found an expanding choice of real ale across the city, much of it local micros. In mid March the **Three Tuns** was advertising Nelson, Wantsum and Goodys, and at the end of the month was selling Goodys Heaven (excellent) and Good Life alongside Marston's EPA. At the **Thomas Becket** the choice was all national – Doom Bar, Thwaites Wainwright, Youngs Bitter and Bombardier. In White Horse Lane, can be found Canterbury's indigenous city centre brewery, Canterbury Brewers, based at the **Foundry** pub. Here, its beers can be sampled, as well as at the brewery's other pub the **City Arms** in Butchery Lane, and various other outlets across East Kent. Also in White Horse Lane, is the **Cherry Tree**, one of the city's old-

est pubs and a long time home of real ale. Choice varies and recently beers have included Caladonian Flying Scotsman, Everards Yakima and Charles Wells DNA (New World IPA).

Away from the centre the **Two Sawyers** in Ivy Lane was all Kent micros on an early April visit – Ripple Steam Best and Original IPA, Gadds Seaside and Kent Brewery Cobnut. At the **Phoenix**, at least four, mainly local, real ales are normally available – mid March found Mad Cat Platinum Blonde, Hop Fuzz Northern Star, Wantsum One Hop First Gold and Caveman Palaeolithic, and a month later London Pride, Ripple Best, Gadds Magical Mystery Mild and the superb Wantsum Golgotha Stout. 10% discount for CAMRA members, and the pub's Cossack brewery, following problems, is up and running again. A beer festival is set for the start of August.

In Havelock St. the **New Inn** will be

holding its normal Spring Bank Holiday festival from Thursday 22nd May. There will be up to 20 real ales over the weekend, with music and a barbecue. Notable beers should include Downton Chimera (a 6.8% IPA), Rooster's Buckeye and Tryst Raj IPA. Another regular Bank Holiday festival starts Friday 23rd at the **Rose Inn**, Wickhambreaux, this year featuring 16 plus real ales, local ciders, live bands, hog roast and barbecue. And at Bramling the same weekend, there will be the annual event at the **Haywain**. Planned to be its biggest ever spring festival, the line up includes music and 35 beers and ciders. (See Branch Diary for all these)

FOLKESTONE

Guildhall, The Bayle: We hear that long time proprietors Stuart and Gilly will be retiring in October after 40 years in the trade. Formerly of the Raglan, and later the Sports Club bar they have



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had GBG entries since 1980. Our best wishes for the future. Meanwhile they continue to offer an interesting and well kept range of ale – guests in mid March included Kite Thunderbird, Portabello Star and Wychwood Piledriver. In nearby Church St. the **Pullman** remains shut at the time of writing. We understand that internal work has been taking place recently, but with the bar, for the moment at least, remaining.

Raglan, Dover Rd: Current uncertainty about real ale. Apparently the landlady still hopes to continue selling it but various visits earlier in the year found none available. In early March the **Richmond** was selling Sheps India Pale Ale alongside Master Brew.

Chambers, Cheriton Place: Chambers has added another hand pump, to total now five, with local brews prominent. A visit in mid March found Goody's Goodness Gracious, Ripple Classic IPA, Cottage Resolution and Time and Tide Smuggler's Stout. Normal range was expanded for the annual Easter beer festival – one of our members awarding top marks to Brentwood Maple Mild, Old Dairy Spring Top, FFF Moondance and Time & Tide Spratwaffler, while enjoying the peace a quiet of late Sunday afternoon before his 'slumbers' were unceremoniously disturbed by 'coachloads' descending around 7pm. *(It is a beer festival, after all - Ed)*. Heavy emphasis on local beers also at the **Folkestone Firkin**, where recent visits found among others Tonbridge Blonde Ambition, Gadds 3 and Foundry Kentish Pale ale.

Harvey's: Recent visits have found beer range expanded beyond regulars Bombardier and Courage Best – Theakston XB, Old Man from Long Man Brewery in Sussex, and Brain's SA all being seen.

Lifeboat: New landlady Annette, we hear, is concentrating on beers from Kent and Sussex. A visit earlier in the year found Harvey's Sussex Bitter, Kent Cobnut and Pale Ale, Hop Fuzz Old American Pale and English, Goody's Genesis and Goacher's Dark. In mid March the **Eastcliff Tavern** was selling Gadds Mystical Mild and OD Sitting Bull.

In the Staid the **Mariner** normally has three real ales available, Pedigree and Doom Bar featuring regularly. On 27th July, to coincide with the Trawler Race & Fun Day, the pub will be holding their 3rd annual Fish Pie competition. All proceeds go to the National Coast-watch Institution.



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WHITE CLIFFS FESTIVAL OF WINTER ALES 2014

Well, we've come of age at last. Where's it all gone one might ask. Have we really been doing it that long? It certainly doesn't feel like twenty one years since we started out, with about 30 firkins set up between the two doorways into the Con-naught Hall, and opening for just Saturday. This year we offered a choice of 75 beers (as we have for the last dozen years or so), the festival started at 1pm Friday, and almost 1400 people had attended before the last barrel was drained at 4.30pm on Saturday afternoon.



Friday Afternoon in the Stone Hall



Helen Bell pours the pints

In many respects this was one of our most successful festivals. Attendance was the highest we have ever known – continuing the recent trend of growing by twenty or thirty most years; we sold out of beer – again a growing trend, until a few years ago we always had a couple of firkins worth left over; and, this was achieved a whole hour and a half before our finishing time – a first as well.

It was also, a great success for Tonie Prins' Hopdaemon Brewery, sponsor of this year's festival glasses. Commemorating the start of World War One, they bore a poppy emblem, and were accompanied by a special light bronze ale, Over the Top, using hops from each of Allied Forces countries. Using our traditional criteria of the first barrel emptied, the brew was declared 'Beer of the Festival': and, with last pint being drawn at 3.30pm, just two and half hours after our start, setting a further record. However, far from resting on its laurels, the brewery also claimed second and third places – respectively a second barrel of Over the Top and that old festival favourite, Green Daemon!

For the rest, lovers of darker ales, especially stouts and porters, were particularly well provided for this year – Acorn's Gorlovaka Imperial Stout, Elland's award winning 1872 Porter and Fyne's Sublime Stout all proving excellent. Top place, how-

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ever, must go to the 7.3% ABV Russian Ruble from Flipside of Nottinghamshire – absolutely delicious. Of course, for those whose tastes ran to paler beers, there were plenty of alternatives, from copper and bronze to lager look-alikes. Average beer strength was perhaps somewhat less than in previous years, when we enjoyed brews of up to 10% or 11% ABV, and maybe reflects the additional duty now added above 7.5%. Strongest this year was Ballards Lost In Space at 8% ABV. And if we awarded a prize for best named beer, it must surely have gone to Old Dairy's Over the Moo.



As usual Friday was the busier day accounting for some two thirds of total attendance, and rather more of the beer. The Old Lone Gin Band entertained drinkers in the Stone Hall during the afternoon, while Mick Morris and Colin Hinds took the stage in the Connaught Hall during the evening with a variety of acoustic folk and rock. Saturday, as ever more relaxed, saw a return of the traditional lunchtime classical recital – drinkers in good voice, heartily accompanying old standards such as *Jerusalem* and *Rule Britannia*.

Maintaining the World War One theme, this year's charity donation will be to the Royal British Legion.

Another festival under our belt, we look forward to next year, as ever the first weekend in February. And as ever our grateful thanks to all who helped, supported and sponsored us, in particular, Adams Printers, Brandon Plant Hire, Hop-daemon Brewery and Your Leisure Kent Ltd. who run the Town Hall, and without whom the festival would not exist. Hope to see you all in 2015.



Martin Atkins



PUB OF THE YEAR 2014

So I guess you've heard by now, that the **Berry** in Walmer has won the Deal, Dover and Sandwich CAMRA Branch Pub of the Year (POTY) competition for a seventh consecutive year. 'What', I hear you cry, 'Are there no other decent pubs in the area?'; 'Has the Berry got this competition sewn up or what?' The answers are "Yes" and "No" respectively. Indeed, this has been one of the most closely fought POTYs in recent memory, with six pubs fighting it out for our Branch's highest accolade.

We all know about the **Berry**, right? Cracking range and quality of beers, enthusiastic and knowledgeable staff, who are driven to promote real ale and cider across the board, but what about the others? Which pubs were pushing Chris and his team to extremes to win this year's award?



Situated just off the A2 and the only rural pub to feature in the competition this year, the **Carpenter's Arms** in Coldred has undergone something of a real ale revolution over the past four years. The pub has been in the same family for over 100 years and, when landlord Colin took over from his mother Daphne, it was not renowned for the quality of its beer. But with the encouragement of an enthusiastic and friendly local crowd, Colin has become a bastion for real ale in the rural hinter-

land. Initially introducing beers such as Hopdaemon Incubus and Gadd's No 5, Colin has gone on to provide an eclectic mix of beers from around the country. The Carpenter's Arms is a true gem and one of the must-visit pubs in our branch; for those of you put off by the restricted opening hours (it only opens in the evening), Colin will open up during the day for groups.

On a corner of Middle Street in Deal is the **Prince Albert**, another of our historic pubs with restricted opening (evenings only Monday – Saturday, all day Sunday). The exterior boasts Fremlins windows and inviting curved doors, which if



you choose to go through will see you into an exceptionally well-kept Victorian pub, with a cosy bar and separate restaurant. The beer is sourced from a wide range of smaller, often local, breweries and is consistently of a high standard and very good value. The food is also highly rated (booking is advised I am reliably informed!). It's the perfect place to while away a Sunday afternoon.

A short hop along Middle Street and you come to the **Ship**. On entering the Ship, with its dark wooden floors and subdued lighting, I feel as if I could be in a ship's galley or on the set of Treasure Island, that there could be scurvy dogs shiverin' their timbers at the bar. And this is testament to the pub: nautical by name, nautical by nature, and, as such, it is a very popular pub in our branch. Five excellent value real ales are served, including the ever popular Hophead and at least one from the Ramsgate Brewery. And you never know, as you snuggle in by the fire with your pint on a stormy night, you may hear the wisps of a sea shanty from one of the regular folk music acts.

Continuing along Middle Street towards the town centre you'll find the **Just Reproach**, our



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**The Just Reproach,
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Branch's first micro-pub. The white walls and simple seating create a congenial atmosphere for conversation to thrive, true to the micro-pub philosophy – you will find no keg beer, recorded music or mobile phones here. Landlord Mark and his daughter Bronwen are knowledgeable and enthusiastic about the beer and cider they sell and they ensure a warm welcome to all. Up to five beers are on offer, of varying styles and strengths, from

across the country, but always with a strong local presence. Handy tasting notes are provided and you can even try one of each of the beers on offer before you buy. The Just Reproach was also a runner-up in our Cider POTY competition.

Last, and by no means least, is the **Mill Inn**, a large housing estate pub which has just celebrated its 80th anniversary. Landlord John and son Mike are in charge of this vibrant boozier and have done much for the quality and selection of the real ale since taking over the pub in 2009. Doombar is the regular beer with up to three guests from larger breweries. The move into real ale has been popularly



The Mill Inn, Deal

received, and the beer quality has enabled the Mill to make this year's finals – a real success story for our branch. It has a friendly, community spirit, supporting pool and darts teams, and holds regular events in support of local charities.

Well that's it from me on this whistle-stop tour of this year's POTY finalists. It just goes to show that the quality of real ale in this area is in rude health. My top tip to you, dear reader, is to get out there and try them for yourself. And it doesn't end with these six: there are many other excellent outlets, old guard and newcomers alike. Go on, go down the pub (and if you're a CAMRA member, don't forget to submit a beer score or two...).

Richard Haynes



KENT SMALL BREWERY NEWS

Canterbury Ales, Chartham 01227 732541 canterbrew@gmail.com

This year's single hop specials started with a 4.4% pale brewed with El Dorado hops from the USA; this sold like hot cakes with the last cask showing at Planet Thanet. The next one is Calypso, a 4.6% pale, which is available from Easter. Other single hops to look out for are a New Zealand pale and ales showcasing European hops. In other news, The Merchant's Ale, a 4% smooth stout, is joining the regular line up and will be available throughout winter.

Canterbury Brewers, Canterbury 01227 455899 thefoundry@live.co.uk

Beers for the season include: Topaz (ABV 4.7%), using Belgian yeast and Australian Topaz and Summer hops; a new Belgian IPA, Belgian Five Hop (ABV 4.6%), hopped with Citra, Simcoe, Centennial, Pacific Gem and Nelson Sauvin; and the Kent hopped pale ale GB (ABV 4.1%) is back in cask and bottle. A 'Beer and Wings' night, every Thursday at the Foundry, will see a new beer launched every week.

Caveman, Swanscombe 07900 234644 cavemanbrewery@gmail.com

Having turned one year old in April, James will be brewing a number of one off beers to celebrate. The first will be a double Citra (ABV 7%), effectively a Citra IPA, which uses a blend of Marris Otter and Pilsner malts and as much Citra that can fit into the kettle, it is then dry hopped with more Citra for good measure. The second will be a big, hoppy red ale called Si-Te-Cah, named after a legendary tribe of giant red headed cavemen. In other news, there is a new recipe for Megalithic, and Clovis Point Brown is being produced in keykeg.

Goody Ales, Herne 01227 361555 karen@goodyales.co.uk

2014 has seen awards galore for Goody Ales: they are winners of Best Kentish Beer 2014 for Genesis in the Taste of Kent Awards, and Best Hopped Ale in Kent 2013-14 by the Hop Growers of Kent, also for Genesis (sounds like they need to do a beer called Good Effort!). May will see the launch of a new beer, Good Evening, a mild. Fermenting capacity is being increased and the range of bottle conditioned beers is being expanded.

Hopdaemon Brewery, Newnham 01795 892078 info@hopdaemon.com

The brewery is flat out at the moment, with all beers in their range selling well.

Kent Brewery, Birling 01634 780037 info@kentbrewery.com

Spring is being welcomed with the reintroduction of their range of hoppy 4.5% pale ales. First out of the block was Simcoe followed by Cascade, using hops from the US and New Zealand rather than the Cascade grown in Kent as it is less intense. Keep your eyes open for a beer using a brand new local hop, which the guys at Kent Brewery think has a big future. Barley wine, Twelfth Night (ABV 7.4%) won Gold at the Champion Beer of Britain, London and South East Regional final.

Nelson Brewery, Chatham 01634 832828 ales@nelsonbrewingcompany.co.uk

Upcoming ales are as follows: Buccaneer Bunny (ABV 4.2%) an amber, hoppy Easter ale; Dragon's Revenge (ABV 4.3%), a spring ale for the celebration of St

Georges Day; and Splice the Mainbrace (ABV 4.5%), a deep amber ale brewed with German lager yeast, making a reappearance to coincide with the Queen's Birthday. Redevelopment of the brewery is underway.

Old Dairy Brewery, Rolvenden 01580 243185 fineale@olddairybrewery.com
It is spring and therefore Spring Top (ABV 4%), a medium to pale ale with firm bitterness from Fuggles and Goldings hops, will be re-joining the core range.

Pig and Porter, Tunbridge Wells 01424 893519 ask@pigandporter.co.uk
Pig and Porter beers are becoming increasingly familiar to drinkers in our branch and Sean is keeping things interesting with a number of one off brews: American IPA (ABV 6%) uses Amarillo, Galaxy and Simcoe hops to create a powerful beer which is destined for bottles in the future; and Neither Nor (ABV 5.2%), a pale ale fermented with lager yeast and conditioned in a conditioning tank for six weeks. Sean will soon be brewing Crab and Winkle (ABV 3%), a light summer ale, which proved so popular at the Kent Beer Festival last year.

R&R Ales, Thanet 01304 249482 info@randrales.co.uk
R&R currently have two beers in their portfolio: inspired by medieval times and using ingredients likely to be readily available in the 14th Century, Gallant Ale (ABV 6.8%) is a reddy-brown farmhouse ale with a rich malty taste and well-balanced hop bitterness; and, inspired by Saxon times in Eastry, Eastrian Blonde (ABV 5%), a blonde ale with a citrusy, spicy aroma and clean, crisp finish. Mostly available in bottles, casks of both beers are making occasional appearances in the local area.

Time and Tide, Deal 07840 327265 info@timeandtidebrewing.co.uk
Following the launch late last year, Time and Tide's beers, particularly Spratwaffler and Smugglers' Stout, are now appearing regularly in pubs across the branch. They have also produced their own Belgian style beers in bottle and key keg: a Dubbel (ABV 7.1%) and a lovely Tripel (ABV 9%).

Tir Dha Ghlas Brewery, Dover 01304 211666 jim@cullinsyard.co.uk
The three core beers – Jimmy's Riddle Bitter, Jolly Roger Mild and Toomey's Stout – are now available in bottles to take away from the bar at Cullin's Yard.

Wantsum Brewery, Hersden 0845 0405980
wantsumbrewery@gmail.com
After a slow start to the year, Yellow Tail (ABV 4.5%) has been flying out as the sun shines. Preparations are underway to brew their summer ale, Red Raddle (ABV 5%), in time for the Crabble Corn Mill beer festival at the end of May. The first Wantsum lager, Pruessen Pilsner, will be available in bottles shortly.

Westerham Brewery, Edenbridge 01732 864427
sales@westerhambrewery.co.uk
May sees the return of the ever popular Summer Perle for the summer months, which uses First Gold hops from Kent, Cascade from the USA and Perle from Germany to give the beer zesty citrus feel. Westerham's monthly specials this year follow the countries participating in the World Cup in Brazil; the next few months will feature beer styles from Germany, Brazil and Belgium. The golden version of British Bulldog, made entirely with Kent Hops, will be available in June.

Richard Haynes



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June

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Allen & Johnny Hewitt 4pm. **Fri 13th**: Lonesome
Trails (Americana) 8pm. **Sun 15th**: Two Man Ting
(Afro) 4pm. **Sun 22nd**: Andee Price (Swing) 4pm.
Tues 24th Acoustic Jamming Session 8pm.
Sun 29th: Ron Trueman Border 4pm.

July

Fri 4th: Open Mic 8pm. **Sun 6th**: Arcellia 4pm.
Sun 13th: Andy Smythe Band 4pm. **Sun 20th**
Matt Woosey 4pm. **Sun 27th**: King Sized Slim
4pm. **Tues 29th**: Acoustic Jamming Session 8pm.

August

Sun 3rd: Paul May 4pm. **Sun 10th**: Warren James
(Skiffle) 4pm.

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The National News

By Martin Atkins

Pub and Club Winners The last few months have seen declaration of the winners of CAMRA's National Pub of the Year and National Club of the Year. The former, in which the Berry was Kent's regional contestant, ended up going to the Swan with Two Necks in Pendleton, Lancashire, an ex-Whitbread freehouse, described as a hard to find gem. While the latter, was finally awarded to Barnton Cricket Club. Sporting an extensive range of ten handpumps, and situated just outside Northwich and very close to the Trent and Mersey Canal, it might well be of interest to a well known group of narrow boat enthusiasts.

Pound Pub Stockton on Tees is the first community to play host to a new venture in the pubs industry. Due to open in April, and describing itself as a no frills pub, a half pint of lager is being priced at £1 and a pint £1.50. A second pub with the same format was being planned for Atherton in Manchester. Mike Wardell, a director of the pub chain Here for Your Hospitality Ltd., said it was returning to the traditional concept, not fuelling drunkenness. It is rather the pub version of Poundland, intending to bring people back into the pub. Not surprisingly the concept has met with strong criticism from alcohol awareness campaigners: "Drink is already too affordable, too available and too heavily promoted." said Colin Shevells of Balance. However, supermarkets, with cans available for as little as 40p, will still be substantially cheaper. Mr Wardell said they were aiming to attract moderate day time

drinkers with traditional pub games and heavily discounted brands, and there would be non alcoholic beers at £1 a bottle. Whether real ale is on the agenda we cannot say.

ACVs TOP 300 More than 300 pubs are now listed as Assets of Community Value (ACVs), and CAMRA now wants to see the total raised to 400. ACV status provides an extra layer of protection, and gives councils greater ability to refuse planning applications for up to six months. It provides community groups with sufficient time to explore more options to save a pub if it is for sale, with communities often raising the cash to purchase and re-open the pub themselves. According to the government, pubs are now the most-listed UK buildings. CAMRA is holding a series of joint workshops with Civic Voice and the National Association of Local Councils to help communities learn more about protecting their pub.

Grants to Save Pubs Additional help is also available via the Department of Communities and Local Government - Community Assets Fund. Two community groups whose pubs are both listed as ACVs, the King's Arms pub in Shouldham, Norfolk, and the Bevendean Community Pub in Brighton (mentioned before in this magazine and the UK's first co-operative pub on a housing estate), will be receiving respectively £189,950 and £130,000. Both pubs are among seventeen schemes across the country involving a variety of buildings and local assets, which will receive a share of the £5.5m.

Minister for communities Stephen Williams said: "For far too long the government in Westminster sought to dictate every aspect of local life but we are bringing this to an end and handing back power to local people and communities who know best how they want to run things." A further £3.5 million is planned for this year.

And the Fight Goes On News of similar struggles comes from all over the country. In Sidbury, East Devon the Red Lion, put up for sale last April by Punch Taverns, was listed as an Asset of Community Value in September. Campaigners have set up an industrial provident society limited company, and made a formal offer for the pub with the prospect of shares being offered. In Binfield Heath, Oxfordshire the Brakspear owned Bottle and Glass, which closed last July has also been registered as an ACV. Again a

community bid is hoped for, with the prospect of creating an industrial provident society, and finance raised through shares, donations, grants and loans. In Spinkhill Derbyshire, the local planning committee unanimously rejected the conversion of the ACV listed Angel Hotel into homes. The Angel Spinkhill Community Interest Group subsequently requested to be treated as a potential bidder for the Angel which means that until 18 June 2014 it or another community interest group will be eligible to buy the property.

However, less good news from Powys where Punch Taverns have applied to build houses on the site of the Punch Bowl in Llandrinio. Montgomeryshire Branch pubs officer Jon Edwards said: "The village has a population of 1,000 and this is the only pub so there is no reason why it can't be saved. There

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have been offers to buy the place at £150,000, but Punch refuses to sell.” And in Holloway, north London an administrative error by Islington Council will see the Good Intent bulldozed and replaced with six luxury houses. The council missed a deadline allowing developers to take the case to the planning inspector. The application was approved despite the town hall policy of protecting pubs. The council appealed but the decision was upheld.

Tax and Duty While beer drinkers have widely applauded the Chancellor's reduction in beer duty for the second year running, there still remains a lot to be done. The current tax regime still benefits supermarkets and other retail outlets at the expense of pubs, while duty, although reduced, still remains far in excess of most of the rates elsewhere in Europe, disparities

highlighted by Wetherspoon boss Tim Martin in a speech at the recent Society of Independent Brewers conference. Supermarkets, he said, pay no VAT on food, pubs pay 20%, while the structure of business rates means that a pint bought in a supermarket will include just 1% to 2% in business rates compared to almost 6% for a pint bought in a pub. Allowing that supermarket beer is about £1 a pint and pub beer £3, that works out as 1.5p in the supermarket and 15p in the pub.



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LETTER TO THE EDITOR

I was dismayed to read in the recent winter issue of Channel Draught that "Key Keg" met CAMRA'S definition of real ale. It certainly sounds so near to the old keg beer as to make very little difference. I joined CAMRA in the mid seventies in order to help protect us from anything that was not properly conditioned, and served beer. The idea I could be drinking beer that is weeks or months old does not fill me with delight.

There are a number of pubs in our area where the use of blanket pressure CO-2 allows them to sell real ale when the turnover is low, or to have more choice than the turnover would properly allow. When I drink in these places the beer can be fine if it's new on, but can be pretty awful if it's weeks old, although of course having not oxidized it's not gone vinegary. This leads to many people saying they don't like real ale.

It's no surprise to me that where beer is properly dispensed i.e. allowed to breathe via the spile hole, there are accolades about the quality. Pretty much all of the new micro-pubs are in this category.

I used to brew a fair bit myself years ago, and became very aware that barreling the stuff, and using CO-2 to make it keep resulted in a much poorer beer than if it was allowed to breathe. Unfortunately even I couldn't drink it quick enough to do that.

I really think CAMRA should look at these dispense issues again, "craft beer" included, as I became a member to protect our unique beer heritage. The big brewers will jump on the Key Keg band wagon with glee, I suspect they will be thinking they've won in the end.

Regards, **Graham Parker**

Thanks for your letter, Graham. All this is very new to us, and I think there has been a certain confusion over the various technologies in use. As we understand it now, the system in use, KeyKeg, is a brand name and used in the KeyCask format, has CAMRA approval, in the strictly Keg format it does not. Obviously, our blanket generalisation in the last edition of Channel Draught, that KeyKeg complies with CAMRA's definition of real ale was incorrect, and we apologise for any confusion caused, and if anyone has been misled. It was a genuine mistake arising from a misunderstanding of terms.

However, despite CAMRA's approval, some of us have considerable reservations about Key Cask. An obvious criticism being that although it has been described as bottle conditioned ale in a cask, bottle conditioned ale comes in quantities of a pint or less, and is opened, and poured out and drunk fairly quickly. It is not drawn off glass by glass over several days.

The following is CAMRA's analysis of Key Cask technology.

CAMRA's Technical Advisory Group (TAG) has ruled that beer stored and served using new dispense technology KeyCask complies with the Campaign's definition of real ale. However, the group has warned that KeyCask does pose some additional challenges for licensees and beer festival volunteers looking after the beer – especially in terms of venting and cooling the beer properly.

KeyCask is similar to a wine box, where beer is held in a flexible “bladder” inside a rigid plastic sphere. The beer is dispensed by air being drawn in between the outer sphere and the bladder as the beer is drawn out by handpump. In KeyCask the bladder is made from a semi-permeable material to allow reaction of the beer with oxygen.

The new dispense system was trialled at the Great British Beer Festival last summer, with the Netherlands based manufacturer of Key Cask disputing the results which appeared to show traditional cask was the preferred option in terms of taste. TAG has said it does not believe any further testing is necessary.

Paul Moorhouse, chairman of TAG, said: “The use of KeyCask does not conflict with CAMRA's definitions of real ale but CAMRA does not endorse any products. Our concerns are around the difficulties of venting the KeyCasks and cooling and dispensing the contents at beer festivals.”

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RAMBLINGS & RUMBLINGS

Mon 10 Feb – Mill Inn (*Doombar, Black Sheep Bitter*) Pleased to see pub fairly busy Mon afternoon. Doombar “popular with locals.”

Tues 11 Feb – Bake & Alehouse, Westgate on Sea (*Goody Goodlife, Incubus, Whit Oyster Stout*) First ever visit, having braved torrential rain. Beer and bar a bit on the cold side, unusual complaint from me, who usually finds everywhere over-heated.

Wed 12 Feb – Sportsman, Cliffsend (*Master Brew*) Doing good lunchtime trade with both drinkers and eaters. **Sir Stanley Gray, Pegwell** (*Ripple Steam bitter, Gadds 5, Abbot*) Unintended, though welcoming port-of-call to shelter from afternoon hail and hurricane. **Fox** (*Sheffield Pride, Butcombe bitter, Cottage Somerset & Dorset*)

Sat 15 Feb - Montefiore Arms, Ramsgate (*Gadds 7, Gadds 3, Welsh Mild*) Visited for POTY judging, impressed! **Red Cow** Oh dear, can't remember, but beer was in good nick. Offered sample of Gadds EIPA, cough mixture, declined (*not a reflection on the beer's condition, but its style I trust. I tried some at the Bohemian: challenging - Ed*). Also Doombar

Mon 17 Feb – Rack of Ale (*Ripple Steam Best, Hop fuzz Triumph Stout, R & R Gallant, Caveman Paeolithic*) Branch Meeting. Great to see such a turnout, and beer @ £2-50 too!

Tues 18 Feb – Conqueror (*Golden Braid, Ripple Steam IPA*) Quiet at lunchtime. Tried sampler of Gadds EIPA at 6% but didn't proceed to full purchase!

Thurs 20 Feb – Hovelling Boat, Ramsgate (*Brighton Bier English Garden, Mayflower Lancashire Stout, Goachers Hoveller*) First ever visit. Good beer quality but not quite sure what to make of it.

Fri 21 Feb – Berry Beer Fest (*Stratheven Old Mortality, Southport Golden Sands, Three B's Doff Cocker, Oldershaw Old Boy*) Never seen the place so crowded early Fri evening. A lot of effort put into sourcing unfamiliar beers from God knows where, but maybe the grass isn't always greener elsewhere.

Sat 22 Feb – Smugglers, St. Margaret's (*Smuggler's Ale, Ripple steam Best, GKIPA*) 'Smuggler's Ale' went down well though Landlord would not divulge whence this came.

Tues 25 Feb – Artillery Arms, Ramsgate (*Whit EIPA, Goody Goodlife, Oakleaf Hole Hearted, Doombar*) Quiet early on Tues but good ambience.

Thurs 27 Feb – Crown Finglesham (*DS Hophead, Wantsum One Hop, Black Cat*) Nice to come here in the evening for a change. Balance between pub and restaurant seems to work.

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Fri 28 Feb – Zetland (*Sheps Amber, Whit Bay, Spitfire, Master Brew*) Busy with well-healed foodies but just about possible to drink only. Service friendly and welcoming. Just as I'm used to suspicious looks when walking in the woods without a dog, I felt conspicuous here too! (see Last Knockings). **Alma** (*Harvey's Best, Thwaites Wainwright, Land Lord, Ripple Steam Classic*)

Sat 8 Mar Foray into deepest Derbyshire courtesy of Bob Steel's Pub Walks. **Hollybush, Makeney** Enjoyed Dancing Duck Brewery's *Ay-Up*. **Dead Poets, Holbrook** (*Bateman's Oatmeal Biscuit, and Oakham Citra*) Both beers excellent. Landlord keen on lower strength beers, 'not only strong beers have flavour'

Wed 12 Mar – Crispin (*Crispin Bitter, Mad Cat Golden IPA, Broadside, Doombar*) Landlord Terry says the (Mad Cat) House bitter has been tweaked, now less hoppy, and yes, I prefer it. But the Golden IPA tastes like the standard bitter used to. Is 'hoppy' a polite word for 'tastes like cough mixture'? **Red Cow** (TEA @£2-60!! *Gadds 5, Purity Mad Goose, Doombar*) **Fox** (*Butcombe Bitter, Pride of Sheffield, Cottage Hooker*)

Fri 14 Mar Spotted in Strand Wine Store window display, Sandwich. Elegant presentation pack of three Old Dairy beers – Red, Blue and Gold Top @ £9-49. Also pack of two Wantsum beers at same price: One Hop and Ravening Wolf. Ideal gift for those 'Whatever can we buy him?' people?

Sat 15 Mar – Shepherd & Crook, Burmarsh (*Old Dairy Crooked Top, Cotleigh something or other*) Doubtful pub would be open at 17.45 but fortunately was wrong. About ten drinking inside. Great ambience. I imagine the Bull in Ambridge to be something like this. **Eastcliff Tavern** (*Gadds Mystical Mild, Old Dairy Sitting Bull*) First visit here for a while but doesn't change. Urban version of rural cousin above

Sun 16 Mar – Louis Armstrong (*Skrimshander, Gadds 5*) 'Modern jazz' being played apparently. Ghastly tuneless din to my untutored ear, but place did seem fairly full of somewhat younger people than normal, so well, 'Every cloud.....' I suppose.

Mon 17 Mar – George & Dragon: Branch Meeting (*Yellow Tail, Adnams Light-house, Master Brew*) **Admiral Owen** (*Gadds 5, Time & Tide Stout*) **Crispin** (*Mad Cat 'Special Relationship', Crispin Ale, Doombar*) St Patrick's day gig in full swing around 10pm. Good way to get people in on a cold Monday

Thur 20 Mar – Pilot, Lydd-on-Sea (*Banks Mild, Broadside, Harvey's Best*) Surprisingly popular with foodies midweek, off season. Glad I left plenty of time for my food, there wasn't a long wait, but just to eat all put before me. No fancy slim-line cuisine here!

Thur 27 Mar – Bell, Ivychurch (*Henry's IPA @ £2-50!, Doombar, Trelawney, Pen-shurst Stout, McMullen's AK*) Good range of snacks lunchtime, full menu at weekends presumably. **Star, St Mary-in-the-Marsh** (*Bombardier, Young's Special, Bitter, Master Brew*) Select few punters mid-afternoon nostalgizing in the superb music of day-before yesteryear. Some sort of tape apparently. Beats 'modern jazz' any time!



CHANNEL VIEW

Use it or Lose it Probably, for those of us for whom the pub forms a normal part of everyday life, it is not immediately apparent, but nationally pub going continues to decline. Recent research by CAMRA shows that 38% of adults never visit the pub, and another 36% visit it less than they did a year ago. Particularly concerning are figures that show that the number of adults never using the pub has increased by 40% since 2009. just five years ago. And over the same period of time regular pub-goers, those that visit a pub once a week or more, has shown a similar decline, 24% down to 15%. It is therefore not surprising that pubs continue to close, the current figures standing at 28 a week.

At the same time matters are not helped by ever increasing pub prices. In February the national average price per pint of real ale was £3.11, a rise of 8p on February last year, when the £3 barrier was breached for the first time. There are of course considerable regional differences – £3.41 in London compared to £2.81 in the North West, £2.85 in the West Midlands, £2.89 in Yorkshire and £2.93 in Wales. Across the rest of the country it was £3 a pint plus. Lager and cider, however, are even higher with average national prices of respectively £3.26 and £3.40 a pint. While these might be not far adrift from the general level of inflation they remain at two or three times the supermarket price.

CAMRA national chairman Colin Valentine said it is important that we all take such research seriously. One interesting aspect to emerge was that one in four

people said they were likely to visit a pub more often if they were informed of what events were planned. However, 80% of pub-goers have never been contacted by their nearest pub, and many of those who never used pubs did so because they did not drink alcohol or drank less, but great community pubs are not only about enjoying alcoholic drinks.

Colin challenged the pub industry to get this message out, identifying events such as Community Pubs Month as ideal platforms from which to do this. "Pubs are an important part of our heritage and play a major role in many communities across Britain. We must support them before they close," he said.

Of course we have been here before. Pubs have been disappearing since before any of us were born but few would not argue that the situation is now at crisis point. And many of the pubs that remain are little more than a pub in name. As we comment elsewhere, the big brewers and pubcos preferred models – the edge of town or village eatery – often bear little resemblance to the local that they all once were.

What is clearly evident, is that pubs today need a specific role. The days of vast estates of brewery owned pubs, through which brewers sold their beer are long gone. Alternative outlets, booming property prices, ever increasing costs and regulation, and changing lifestyles have made them unviable. If we are not to preside over the demise of a centuries old tradition it is essential

that we make best use of what remains. It was a line of argument put forward by Lisa Wadlow, a CAMRA activist, in a recent edition of the Campaign's newspaper *What's Brewing*.

"A trip to the pub can mean many things. Within the borough of Bromley where I live, there is a huge range of pubs offering experiences ranging from large suburban hubs, tiny back street locals, village pubs popular with walkers, to high street pubs favoured by young punters. If it is live entertainment you go to a pub for, I have seen Morris dancers, brass bands, rock tribute groups, and jazz performers in Bromley pubs and further field. I have seen children's story tellers, knitting clubs and even sock monkey making!

These are all examples of the diverse range of experiences offered by pubs in the 21st century as they adapt to survive, as sadly, pubs are still closing all too frequently. What should also not be forgotten, is the positive spin-off effect on the wider community. Pubs generate revenue for taxis, food outlets, and with fundraising events, charities, to name but a few of the beneficiaries.

Given the wealth of activities on offer, and the benefits pubs have, I urge you, whatever your particular interest or hobby, to go support our pubs, not just in community pub month, but in future as often as you can, so we don't lose this fine example of our heritage."

Dubious 'Facts' (from *What's Brewing* March 2014) The most worrying aspect of the current anti-alcohol health lobby is the success it's had in establishing itself as an unimpeachable authority when it comes to information about alcohol misuse. You'll see this in the lack of rigorous questioning of the facts the health lobby produces in support of

calls for regulation and taxation of the drinks industry and more intervention into our private lives.

It's difficult for the drinks industry to call the figures into question – research by the industry, or organisations linked to it, is dismissed by the health lobby as biased. However, many alcohol-related health organisations owe their existence and funding to proving they are relevant and that there is a serious alcohol problem. Is the research they commission any less likely to be contaminated by self-interest? While under-resourced local press and agenda-driven tabloids can be almost forgiven for "churnalism" – reproducing anti-alcohol statistics without question – the publicly funded and impartial BBC should set the standard. But too often its reporting fails to seek the truth in the statistics presented.

Everyone accepts that a small minority of people suffer harm from alcohol misuse – but the majority continue to enjoy moderate and healthy drinking without harm. Misrepresenting the facts about alcohol harm makes it more difficult to identify the real reasons for misuse and the people who need support. And wouldn't all that public money, currently used to try and make all the perfectly healthy, moderate drinkers feel needlessly guilty, be better used in targeted and effective treatment for those with real problems?





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PARLOUR PUBS

A look at an almost disappeared pub style

In our last edition we reported on a visit to Wales and the west country which included a visit to Bessie's (aka the Dyffryn Arms) near Fishguard. The pub is of a style sometimes referred to as Parlour pubs, often consisting of just one or two rooms, with no proper bar counter and beer served via a hatch or brought in from another room or up from the cellar. Such places were at one time not altogether uncommon and going back a few centuries would have likely been the standard from which the public house as we know it developed.

Until recently it was reasonable to assume that the few remaining examples would disappear as their usually ageing proprietors either gave up fighting against modern trends or succumbed to the infirmities of the elderly. However, the rise of the micro pub, in many ways not dissimilar to the parlour pub, has given hope that they may have more life left in them than we thought.

In January 2012 the *Hereford Times* reported that permission had been granted in Leominster for what the paper described as a parlour pub – though with no music, TV or fruit machines, and customers encouraged to sit and chat, it sounds like a micro pub in all but name. Inevitably the paper made reference to nearby Leintwardine, and the Sun, run for many years until she died in 2009, by Flossie Lane, and probably the best known example of a parlour pub in the country. It also added: "The only other remaining examples of parlour pubs in the UK are thought to be in Kent, Hartlepool and Chesterfield."

This reference to Kent, which might of course have been just speaking of the micro pub boom, stirred considerable interest, and there followed on the internet, an exchange of recollections and updates about parlour pubs. Locally most, if not all had closed, although several were operating until comparatively recently. The Hog and Donkey, at Marshside outside Herne Bay which closed in 2008, has been described as one, and another, over the border in Sussex, was the Welcome Stranger in Herstmonceux, sometime known as the Kicking Donkey, also now closed. Maidstone and Mid Kent Branch visited it some years before its demise, and recall beers served through a hatch, and toilets in the yard, "guarded" by a German Shepherd held back by just the bottom half of a stable door.

Also recalled was the Good Intent at Egerton which closed in the 1970s and the Black Bull at Newchurch on the Marsh, although when I last remember it from the early/mid nineties it had acquired a bar and a Juke Box. As a matter of interest the Sun at Leintwardine is still operating, although with an extension and a limited range of food. A music night is held monthly and there is an annual beer festival on August Bank Holiday Sunday.

Two others from East Kent were the Woodman's Arms, Hassel St. at the back of Wye and the Mounted Rifleman at Luddenham near Faversham.

The Woodman's Arms I visited the Woodman once, in the summer of 1971. It was not far from the Bowl at Hastingleigh, and by the mid 1980s had been converted to a restaurant. It is now a private house. Beer Blogger Paul Bailey took a trip to it at about the same time, having seen it featured in Southern Television's Friday local magazine programme *Scene South East*, in which the reporter particularly noted the lack of a bar. Like me, Paul visited it only the



once, on his motorbike one June evening, but admits that having just turned eighteen did not, unfortunately, appreciate its finer points at the time.

"Hassel Street was only a few miles away from my then home village of Brook, but being tucked away amongst the maze of narrow lanes that lie at the top of the North Downs it took a bit of finding. I eventually succeeded, and found the pub located half-way down a "No- Through Road". From what I remember, it was an unassuming, white-painted building which was considerably older inside than it looked from the outside.

According to a guide to *Kent Pubs*, published by Batsford in 1966, the Woodman's dated back to 1698, and had three rooms. One was a side room, that doubled up as a children's room, one was for darts whilst the third acted as the bar-parlour. It was the latter that I made my way into, and I do vaguely remember there being a darts room to the left of the entrance. As shown on the television programme, the room was plainly decorated, and simply furnished. There was a table, complete with tablecloth, in the middle of the floor, and along one of the walls, was a dresser on which were placed various bottles of wines, spirits and bottled beers, plus a selection of glasses. Pushed up against the other three walls were some hard wooden chairs, occupied by about half a dozen or so people.

As I walked in I could see no evidence of any beer pumps, so I enquired as to whether the pub sold draught beer. I was told that it did but, feeling very conscious of the lull in the conversation, decided to opt for just a half of bitter. The landlady retrieved a half-pint mug from the dresser, and disappeared down some wooden stairs to the cellar below.

According to the aforementioned "Kent Pubs", the Woodman's was renowned for its beer. Although it was a freehouse only one brew was stocked, 'so that it is always in condition'. 'Come here for your Fremlins', said the guide. The recommendation would have been lost on me back then, as I didn't know that much about beer. However, the beer stocked at the time was almost certainly cask Whitbread Trophy from the former Fremlins Brewery in Faversham.

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8 - 10.30pm

SATURDAY 21st JUNE - GREAT MATES 8 - 10.30pm

SATURDAY 12 JULY - CHARLIE 8 - 10.30pm

When the landlady returned with my drink, I made some half-hearted attempts at conversation, but felt increasingly awkward and out of place. Most of the clientele seemed to know each other, and whilst they were not unfriendly, I quickly decided that one swift half was enough. This was a great shame as this turned out to be my only visit to the Woodman's.

I am not certain exactly when, or indeed why the pub closed, but one possible clue to its demise is again given in *Kent Pubs*. The landlord of the Woodman's worked as a postman in the mornings, which suggests that his main income came from delivering letters rather than serving pints. This indicates that the pub may not have been viable on its own, and given its isolated position, it is perhaps easy to see why."

My own recollections from 1971 are very similar.

The Mounted Rifleman By comparison, I became much more acquainted with the Mounted Rifleman, visiting it quite regularly in the late 1980s/early 1990s. The pub was situated between Faversham and Teynham, half a mile from the level crossing at Stone, down a side turning off the main route. It stood on a right angled corner, some way from the road with a sizeable garden in front, with seats and a well.

The Mounted Rifleman



The pub entrance was at the side and opened on to a broad hallway, with from what I recall benches along one side, if not both, and with at the far end a serving hatch. To the left, before the serving hatch, was a side room with a dart board, which looked out over the marshes towards the Swale. Like the Woodman, draught beer was brought from the cellar.

One customer recalls: "The pub had been in the hands of the same family for well over one hundred years and had not been touched probably in a hundred. If ever you look at an old film and there is a scene in a pub, the pub usually has basic lino on the floors and no decoration, this pub was the same. When you went in for a drink the (by now) elderly landlord would load the glasses onto a tray and disappear into the cellar where all the drinks were drawn straight off the barrel."

Memory suggests that the beer was Fremains Bitter.

Not getting any younger the landlord placed the pub on the market in the early/mid 1990s, and although a certain interest was generated in purchasing it as a pub, it ended up, like so many, being converted to a house.

Martin Atkins



FROM ACROSS THE WATER

Stuart Roberts reports from France

As always, Channel Draught endeavours to keep its readers informed of all that is happening in the world of real ale and pubs. To this end we have recently been offered the services of a former Man of Kent, now living in France, who will act as Brewery Liaison Officer and reporter on real ale on that side of the Channel, not perhaps as rare an animal as you might think. We shall let Stuart introduce himself, and ourselves to real ale in France.

I am a civil engineer, and lived in Boughton Under Blean, near Faversham, before moving around England and ending up in France. I joined CAMRA when it first started, fewer than 300 members, but left in the 1980s as I was unhappy with what they did to Ben Truman, poor soul. However, I rejoined again in 1995.

I last worked in UK for Gloucester City on infrastructure for new developments on brown fields but left in 2000 when we started moving bulldozers into green fields. I bought a bar/restaurant and moved to France in the same year with my then, young family, and sold bottle conditioned beer from another local brewery, (since closed) and swapped firkins (full for empties) with a landlord in the midlands who was also a haulier, and passed nearby me every two weeks on his way to Spain.

We did a firkin of real ale once a fortnight, which was demolished in 48 hours, mainly by the French, and sold authentic Indian food that had an eight week waiting list and 50% French clientele. Meantime, I found my knowledge about installing swimming pools, much in demand, and in 2003 sold the bar to run a successful pool construction company, now with my adult son as my partner.

Kent remains my spiritual home and Ann and I visit several times a year with our two weeks holiday in summer and Christmas and New Year also, always in Stelling Minnis where I have made friends with the locals and enjoy, amongst others, the hospitality of Stew and Jackie at the Rose and Crown, and where I collared my first copy of Channel Draught, for which I now have a subscription delivery to France.

LA CLOCHE, BREW PUB, BORS DE MONTMOREAU, 16190, CHARENTE

Arne Gaastra is a typically tall Dutchman. A former petrochemical engineer and basketball player who swapped hoops for hops and octane for ABV when he took over the bar in 2003. Known for my visits to the Frog n Rosbif brew pub in Bordeaux, someone tipped me the wink that the Dutch guy was brewing real ale, English style, and serving it on gravity so I had to give it a try, especially as it was a convenient seven minutes down the road. Between 2003 and that fateful day in 2007, I had been receiving polypins from expats and friends with holiday homes and using homebrew from quality kits, and was very pleasantly surprised, and have been a regular in La Cloche ever since

Bors de Montmoreau is a small, quiet village on a quiet cut- through road between Montmoreau St Cybard and Aubeterre sur Dronne, and the pub is a converted barn, maintaining many rustic features, and the ambience is mellowed lighting typi-

cal of the Netherlands. Arne had started his brewing activity earlier in 2007, and now brews three real ales and one craft wheat beer with seasonal specials both on draught and in bottle. The beers are:-

Perle de Bors Pale Ale (4.1% ABV) – refreshing, with a delicate balance of British and German hops

Vieux Battant Red Ale (4.5% ABV) – a typical and tasty English Bitter

Queue Tordue Stout (4.3% ABV) – roasty and hoppy as it should be

Blanche de Bors Hefeweizen (4.8% ABV) – a traditional German-style wheat beer

I have been witness to the triumph and heartache of Arne's efforts. The developing of recipes, and the pleasure and pain of the response. The success of consistency and the rise in demand and the glitches that go with it: controlling cold breaks, and dealing with yeast problems, but finally the elation from mastering his art.

His current method of dispense is gravity and involves lugging containers from the ground floor brewery up narrow stairs to his super insulated loft. Being unfiltered and unpasteurised it is allowed to settle before he opens the tap and gravity brings it down the pipes to the glass. He did have cask breathers on hand to take a squirt of CO₂, but the barrels empty so fast it was not needed.



Being a second hand CAMRA member (he reads my hand on What's Brewing), he has followed the cask breather debate, and lately the approval of KeyKeg by CAMRA (*it does need to be the KeyCask version to get CAMRA approval – Ed. See page 26*), and has developed an acceptable dispense system that your average French bar understands. The only additional instructions being "let the barrel rest for twelve hours and don't move it until it's empty." He has now six other British pubs interested in selling real ale, and interest is growing.

For my part, as a purist CAMRA member (and former BLO for Shakespeare Branch and the Evesham Brewery) La Cloche is an oasis, as I cannot touch beer under pressure, adulterated fizz or "craft". The new method is simply no more than if one was laying a concrete block on a polypin to produce the energy for dispense.

Arne's beers are real quality and would match, if not beat, the best of styles in the UK. They can take a chill and still give off the flavours, which is essential when one has had a hard day's graft in 35 degrees. His brews and beers are appreciated by all that taste them, Brits, Dutch and especially the French, and he sells more pints of the real stuff, by far, than the national favourites.

The pub is very friendly, and retains a darts team of British, Dutch and French. It is not just an important hub for the village, but for miles around, with the bar also forming an exchange for whatever is in season, from tomatoes to wild mushrooms, and from chickens to eggs.

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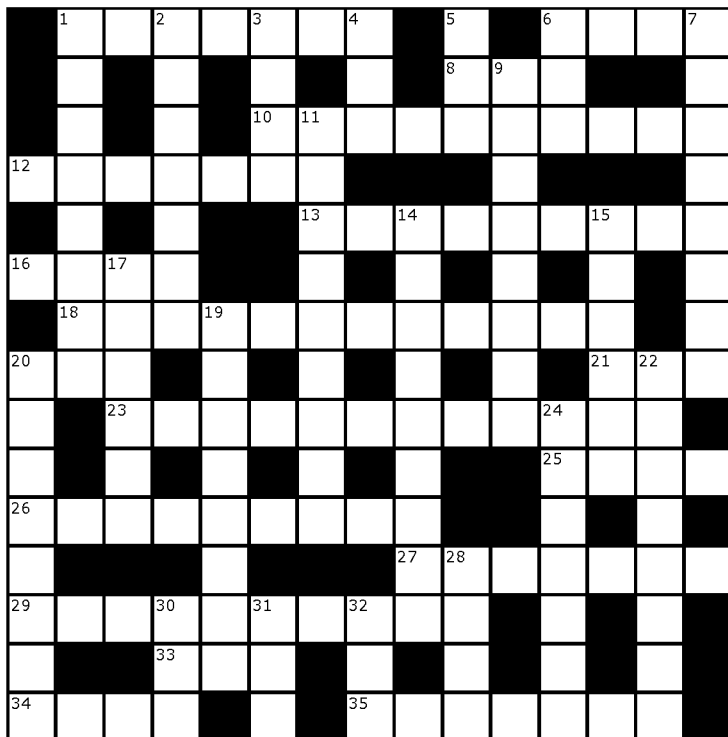
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CROSSWORD

BY TRISHA WELLS



Across

1. Bison from a New York city (7)
6. Sure to alter scheme (4)
8. Poem seen in German river (3)
10. Eve gave it to him! (5,5)
12. National emblem – it gets left out of this title (7)
13. Scent: is it written about by boffin? (9)
16. It's pleasant in Provence (4)
18. Cut errors in Oriental arrangement for Easter event (12)
20. see 3 down
21. Man, a giant, had a sports car taken away (3)
23. Mend, not rent asunder in town in midlands (5,2,5)
25. Cooker right in Indian city (4)
26. Recipient dreads reorganised diocese (9)
27. Sun god to follow the pursuit of money (3,4)
29. Salesman begrudges what he stands for (10)
33. A lot of fuss about 34, perhaps ... (3)
34. ...nothing around town (4)
35. Twitchy about type of gum, I hear (7)

Down

1. President takes flak for burning forest (4,4)
2. Bursts of lightning over Florida cricket trophy (7)
- 3 and 20 across. Turbulent as a real lake (4,3)
4. Eggs found in cricket ground (3)
5. Because it's a lettuce! (3)
6. Theatre was organised before (3)
7. Voter arranges to go north for microscope, perhaps (8)
9. Am I not common in red? Back is more elegant (8)
11. Reds steer around renegades (9)
14. I and Norwegian go to recital together (2,7)
15. Winning, despite losing first batting spell (6)
17. A hundred slowed down, then stopped (6)
19. New organisation started trading (8)
20. Ron joined his team in the fleet (8)
22. Troy and I act appallingly over barbarism (8)
24. Attention! Call sleeper, perhaps (7)
28. Wine discovered at tasting session (4)
30. Seaman turns informer (3)
31. Snow loses nitrogen when spread (3)
32. Present won back (3)

Answers on Page 61

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DEFINITION OF A PUB

An attempt to distinguish a pub
from other licensed outlets

Recently, considerable discussion has ensued over the definition of a pub. After much consideration, and consultation with CAMRA branches the Pub Campaigns Coordinating Group has suggested the following. The aim being, to identify the essential features of what differentiates a 'pub' from other on-trade licensed premises where alcohol is sold:-

The licensed premises must be open to and welcome the general public without requiring membership or residency, allow free entry (1), serve at least one draught beer (2), allow drinking without requiring food to be consumed, have at least one indoor area not laid out for meals, and permit drinks to be purchased in person at a bar (3), without relying on table service.

- (1) Except when entertainment is provided on limited occasions
- (2) Includes cask or keg beer
- (3) Includes also a hatch or specific service point

INTERPRETATION OF THE DEFINITION The term 'pub', as defined, is not intended to refer only to a traditional pub. Bars of various types, including those attached to other uses, will qualify under the definition, provided they meet the criteria. In addition, hybrid bar/restaurants and café/bars could qualify, albeit in only part of the premises. The aim is to be as inclusive as possible whilst ensuring that the essential features of what constitutes a pub are available.

First: the premises must stock at least one draught beer, either cask or keg. A simple criterion to research before other factors are examined. Excludes cocktail bars, wine bars, champagne bars, spirit bars etc, where no draught beer is available. A very few pubs with low turnovers in remote locations where only bottled beers are available, and where exclusion from the pub database could threaten their viability, an exception might be justified, at the discretion of the Regional Director.

Second: in the case of hybrid pub/kitchens, bar/restaurants, café/bars, and gastro-pubs where food predominates, there should be at least one area made available to non-eaters. No specific floorspace figure or proportion of the premises for drinkers is recommended but preferably a separate room or bar area should be available. It is accepted that the amount of space available may vary throughout the day to reflect meal times and could even be reduced to stools at the bar at times. The area should be inside the premises and outdoor patios, gardens etc., would not in themselves be sufficient to qualify.

Third: customers should be able to approach the bar or hatch, and order a drink in person and for friends without being required to be seated and

served by waiting staff, as in many continental style bars and cafés. The resultant scrum at busy times may be annoying, but is an essential part of the pub experience. Premises calling themselves bar/restaurants and café /bars, where customers are confronted on entry by staff at lecterns insisting on seating them, and/or where the bar is only available to waiting staff, would not qualify, and would instead be classified as restaurants. Premises where table service is offered as an option, but not insisted upon, would qualify. In the case of a few very small pubs where it is apparent that bar space is very constrained, particularly at busy times, or in speciality Belgian style beer bars where it could be argued that table service is traditional, an exception may be justified, at the discretion of the Regional Director.

Other types of bars, clubs, etc. Bars attached to sports and leisure centres, cinemas, theatres, bowling alleys etc., would qualify provided they are open to the general public and not restricted to users of the particular facilities, and they fulfil the other criteria. Similarly hotel bars would qualify provided they are open to and welcome non residents. Clubs with membership restrictions and music venues with entry fees would not qualify, although if real ale is sold branches may keep a record of such places. Pubs or bars that charge entry fees when entertainment is provided, would qualify provided they are freely open to the general public for at least part of every trading day.

For reasons of space, the above is a slightly cut down version of the original document)



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'THE ONE THAT GOT AWAY'

A look back at The Beery Boaters
10th anniversary trip in 1990

The Beery Boaters 10th Annual trip: the Warwick Ring from Saturday 28th April to Saturday 5th May 1990, Rugby to Rugby, was notable for at least three remarkable events: the annual April canal trips went into double figures; the sun shone - in fact a heatwave with temperatures into the 80s; and someone managed to escape and get clear away. For these and the rest of the events read on....

Saturday 28th April. Early afternoon found ten of our number inside the Peacock Inn at Rugby, enjoying its excellent Hoskins beers, together with a couple of our CAMRA friends from the Rugby Branch. Our two boats from Willow Wren were to be Tern and Warbler; respectively crewed by Dave and Mike Green, Dave and John Underdown and a newcomer generally known as Tigger; and Ray Crane, Pete Simpson, Paul Weddell, Mike Lock and Jim Green (otherwise Hon. Commodore, unelected and author of this piece). Six more were to be picked up en route. After our ale we made our way to the boatyard to set off at about 4pm heading for Hawkesbury Junction. Here we met Jeff Waller who joined the crew of Tern and also Steve and Helen Bell on a hire-boat by the name of Moira. The evening's nutrition was taken at the Greyhound with M&B and Bass.

Sunday 29th April. Warbler set off at 5.45am, passing through the stop lock and round the tight 180° turn. In due course Moira came up to take station behind us, and shortly afterwards Tern was observed coming up fast. It passed Moira and came alongside Warbler. At which point Warbler's Secret Weapon came into play; a Second World War stirrup pump. The rest of Tern's crew dived below leaving Jeff on the tiller to take the full brunt of the spray as he accelerated past.

We moored up at Atherstone at about 10am, and Steve and Helen produced three Beery Boaters 10th year pennants which they had made, and which we fixed to the tiller arms. Phil Simpson appeared, briefly to offload his luggage, before taking his car to Rugby, and returning to Atherstone via train and taxi. He arranged to meet us at Davenport's Maid of the Mill at 1pm. Opening time found us at the Old Swan sampling excellent Banks's beer. We also ate, our numbers apparently waiving the pub's normal ruling of no meals on Sundays. Consequently, we did not meet Phil at the Maid until 1.45. Complaints were being voiced about a "big smelly bird" hanging up in the after toilet of Tern. It transpired that Dave Green had knocked over a pheas-



ant with his car and it was now being hung in preparation for the pot. On return to the boat it was transferred to the forward locker.

Afternoon was the short distance to Polesworth, with evening's refreshment partaken in the Royal Oak and the Bull's Head, both serving M&B and Bass. The Hon. Commodore produced the new Beery Boaters ties, which treasurer, Dave Underdown, then spent a happy evening extracting money for by selling to all and sundry. He also presented the special ten year version to the five members (including himself) who had survived all ten April trips. A singular diversion occurred at the Bull's Head when the door flew open, followed by various items of luggage, and the Hants and Surrey Borders contingent falling over it, and each other, into a heap on the floor. Peter Broberg (Cherub), 'Busy' Brian Bourne and Mike Ventham (Wedger) had been delayed by participation in the Farnham Beerex, Cherub, in particular, appeared to have been additionally delayed by disposal of the left-over beer, as he seemed to have a problem remaining on his feet.

This behaviour seemed to surprise Tigger, who Cherub had encouraged to come along, the two having only previously met in the relatively civilized environment of pub quiz matches. Later he said that he wanted to pop over to Tern and borrowed the key to the boat. Returning to the boats after closing time it was discovered that he, and his luggage, had gone! He did not come back! The only one to get away in ten years!!

Monday 30th April. A 6am start again. Shortly after the two Glascote Locks the two Willow Wren boats turned left onto the Birmingham & Fazeley Canal at Fazeley Junction, leaving Steve and Helen to continue to Fradley Junction, from where they returned to explore the Ashby Canal.

About a mile into the B&F is Drayton Manor swing bridge, and its overhead foot-bridge with castellated towers. Skipper Dave on Tern determined to show his crew how to open a swing bridge by giving it an energetic nudge with the bows. Unfortunately, the bridge opened towards them, not away, and I am told they had to recourse to attaching a rope and reversing, after which it refused to close once they had passed through. Sorry, British Waterways! We ascended the eleven locks up to Curdworth, mostly well spaced and well maintained, and a lock keeper who got us to sign a visitors book, with comments – angling for promotion? We tied up just after Curdworth Tunnel, side by side, it being so shallow at the canal edges that we could find only one feasible mooring spot, and departed for Curdworth village. The White Horse was closed for refurbishment, but we found Ansell's mild and bitter, and very tasty meals at the Beehive.

The afternoon found the suburbs of Birmingham closing in. At Salford Junction, under Spaghetti Junction, we found our original intended route along the Tame Valley Canal unavailable as Perry Bar Locks were closed. So we continued along the B&F and up the eleven locks of the Aston flight and the subsequent thirteen of the Farmer's Bridge flight to Cambrian Basin in the centre of Birmingham. On the way Tern got its keel stuck on the top sill as it left one of Farmer's Bridge locks. Water levels must have been low, and there appeared something jammed in the bottom gates, allowing the lock to empty faster than water was coming in.

Dave Green, on the lock above, let down water to raise the level but this only

caused the stern to go down and the bows up. Something had to happen and it did! Tern slid rapidly backwards into the lock and gave the bottom gates a resounding thump, which Dave said afterwards, he thought it would smash through. Fortunately they held, although lots of the boat's glasses and plates were broken, and the big smelly bird being cooked in a casserole dish in the oven ended up on the galley floor, though without spilling a drop. Cherub, on the tiller, denied that he had to change his underpants afterwards. Miraculously, no obvious damage was done to Tern, but unconfirmed reports later said the locks were closed for an unspecified reason the following day! Sorry again, British Waterways!

The last person to be picked up, Dick, now joined us and was consigned to Warbler, where-after we naturally went to the Prince of Wales in Cambridge Street, still the only building intact on that side of the road as the new conference centre was far from finished. The Ansell's mild was as good as ever. Back at the boats the lucky few had a small, tasty, portion of pheasant stew before turning in.

Tuesday 1st May. As the intended route through the Tame Valley and Walsall Canals had been denied to us, we decided instead to cruise down the BCN New Main Line and take Netherton Tunnel to the Windmill End, and the Little Dry Dock, then one of the iconic, eight or so strong and Black Country centred, Little Pub chain, owned by the appropriately named M.A.D. O'Rourke who ran his group from a mobile office in a double-decker bus.



Tern went ahead; even further when Warbler stopped to remove rubbish from the prop and then to top up the fresh water tank. Warbler's crew were amused by a sign on the wall of a church advertising 'THE CHURCH OF THE P-OPHESY', after one of the letters had fallen off. Ah well, simple things.... Windmill End, is a pleasant place with plenty of green hillside, and is overlooked by Cobb's Engine House, appearing all the world like the engine house of a Cornish tin mine.

We were moored on an embankment, above our intended venue, to which steps led down, and where at 11.30 we found ourselves the only customers. The chain's pubs being themed, the Little Dry Dock's was canals, with one bar counter constructed from part of an ex-working narrowboat. House beer was 'Lumphammer', brewed for the chain by Ind Coope, and there was also Ansell's mild and bitter. There was a varied food menu, with some unusual items, like black pudding thermidor, and the group speciality, 'Desperate Dan Pie' – steak & kidney and vegetables, topped with a pie crust complete with pastry horns. Anyone managing to eat one completely could claim a certificate for 'Sheer Gluttony'! The group's slogan was 'Please Drink Harder and Faster', and background music generally of the Irish folk variety.

We left at 3pm, back through Netherton Tunnel, to turn left at Dudley Port Junction

heading for Tipton. Just before Factory Locks we came across a 3 ft long grass snake, swimming in the canal, apparently totally unconcerned about boats, towpath walkers and children fishing with nets. We were also, amused by the antics of another hire boat crewed by an insignificant-looking man, his large, formidable, wife and a little boy. "Mr. and Mrs. Ramsbottom and Young Albert, their son", thought I. They seemed to be all over the place, and got stuck broadside across the cut!

Above the locks, we turned left onto the Old Main Line and tied up outside the Fountain Inn, famous for having been the HQ of the Tipton Slasher, sometime 19th century champion bare-knuckle prize-fighter of England. We settled down for half an hour of Holt, Plant & Deakin's Mild, Bitter and Entire, before deciding to make our way to the Royal, "a few hundred yards away" (but more like a mile), a Holden's pub in Bloomfield Road. En route some popped into the Old Bush, at Factory Junction, Banks and uninspiring, while the more fortunate visited the King's Head, under the Ma Pardoe's banner and then owned by the Wiltshire Brewery. A noisy pub, but the beers were good and the pump clip collectors had a field day. Despite the long walk the Royal was well worth going to, so we stayed there until after closing time and patronised various take-aways on our way back.

Wednesday 2nd May. Off at 6am again with Warbler in the lead, down the Old Main Line towards Birmingham, where in due course we moored up back at Farmer's Bridge Junction. Tern went to take on water while Warbler's crew finished their breakfasts. Our course now took us down the Worcester & Birmingham Canal, until at King's Norton Junction we turned left onto the northern part of the Stratford-on-Avon Canal. Warbler, in front, made a wide sweep to take the tight sharp turn, but Tern, coming up fast astern, cut through on the inside and cannoned past us, clout-



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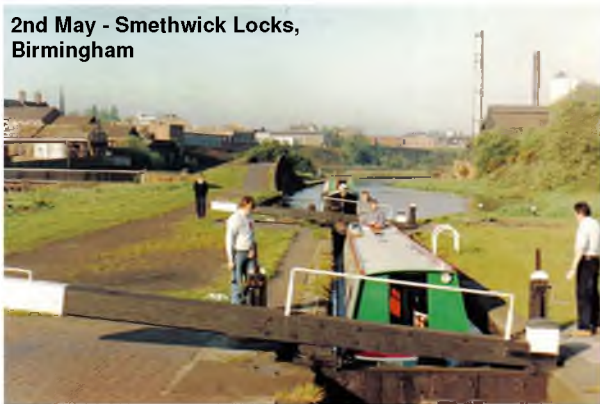
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ing the walls on both sides in straightening up.

At the swing bridge shortly after, Cherub, operating it from the non-towpath side, got left behind when Tern carried on to maintain its position in front and had to be rescued by Warbler, after Hon. Commodore did the Hon. thing and clambered on shore to help Cherub shut the bridge. Still, we consoled our visitor with a bottle of my

2nd May - Smethwick Locks, Birmingham



Chimay Grand Cru! The towpaths on this stretch were crumbling away, and in a couple of places were being worked on by contractors. At one boatyard we came across extreme 'slow down' syndrome. As we crept past a moored boat, scarcely making a ripple, an alarm went off. A boatyard worker just grinned and observed that we'd failed the test.

At about 1.30pm we moored outside the Drawbridge, Major's Green. The pub has become increasingly disappointing over the years. On our first visit in 1992, it sold excellent Davenport's beer, and we stayed all lunchtime. In 1987 it was turning into more of a restaurant, and when we passed it in May 2013 it had become a "fun pub." On this occasion there was only Davenport's Bitter, "no call for Mild!", and the food wasn't particularly appetising, either. Whilst there, Mike Green announced that he had seen "a turtle" in the Stratford Canal that morning. However, further interrogation revealed that it had been a rather small terrapin.

In the afternoon we carried on to Lapworth Locks, and moored for the night just past the 13th lock down near the Boot Inn (Whitbread/Flowers). Current CAMRA prejudice against Whitbread, owing to their unfortunate habit of closing breweries, saw us ignore the Boot and walk the half mile or so to the GBG accredited Navigation on the adjacent Grand Union Canal, then selling M&B Mild, Brew XI and Bass. Unfortunately, it is rather small and was rather crowded. So the majority decided to take taxis five miles to the Case is Altered at Five Ways. With the dark descending it was interesting to watch several bats performing their aerobatics around the canal bridge.

The Case is Altered was (and still is) to quote the 1990 Good Beer Guide, an 'unspoilt old farmers' pub. The bar billiards table only takes old 6d pieces and the beer is served through rare cask pumps'. It was also very full with people. The beer though, while in fine form, was somewhat uninteresting Ansell's (mild and bitter), Flowers and Ind Coope. Our return taxis dropped us a few hundred yards from the Boot. A nearby owl was in fine voice as we walked back to the boats.

Thursday 3rd May. Usual start at 6am. We completed the remaining locks to the short arm which links with the Grand Union Canal, where we turned right to go through Shrewley Tunnel and arrive at Hatton Locks, which, being 14ft wide, we

descended breasted up (tied side by side in layman's terms). A pair of working boats would traditionally expect to go through the 21 locks in two hours, which we just about managed, although they normally only had a crew of 3 whereas we had 15!

As we descended a mallard duck with eight ducklings entered the lock ahead of us, and while she and four of her brood, swam clear, as we left the lock, the other four came down into the next lock with us, and into the canal below. We threw missiles at them to chase them back into the lock, which once refilled, we opened the top gates to unite the family – and no doubt a lecture from Mum on the folly of going off with strange men! (*Sounds like a dubious interference with natural selection – Ed*).

We stopped for lunch above the two Cape Locks at Warwick, outside the Cape of Good Hope, a pub now with an excellent range of real ales, but in 1990 only selling Whitbread Flowers. So after a pint of cider we walked further into Warwick. We



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drank Ansell's at the King's Head and the Vine, and then most of us went on to the Dun Cow for some M&B, after arranging to be back at the boats at 3pm.

Unfortunately the Dun Cow was so good that we arrived 20 minutes late to find neither boat there. They had been taken down the two locks, and half a mile round a bend, where the perspiring latecomers eventually found them. Hon. Commodore, was among the foot sloggers, and naturally blamed his brother, on whom he attempted revenge later, by dropping a large clod of earth from a bridge. Dave Underdown, standing alongside, received the clod on *his* head instead – poetic justice as he later admitted that moving the boats had been his idea. And he was very lucky – the clod was a last-minute replacement for a large and very juicy cow-pat!



Having left the valley of the Avon, it was all up-hill through ten locks to moor at Long Itchington at about 7pm. At about dusk, we established ourselves in the corner of the rather crowded Harvester. We drank Hook Norton beer and ordered meals, which to our surprise, they served in the restaurant with rearranged tables so we could all sit together. We *had* thought about a celebration meal for our

10th year; now, purely by chance, we had one. We subsequently moved to the Green Man, where on our first trip, we stayed from 9 in the evening until 3 the following morning! The next year, full of optimism, we arrived to find a new landlord and we were thrown out at closing time. Now, with another change of landlord, we left a little after midnight. Formerly Davenport's, it had been taken over by Greenall Whitley, but the beer was still excellent.

Friday 4th May. As a special treat, Hon. Commodore allowed the crews a lie-in that morning until 7pm, although, it should be remarked, several members of both crews allowed themselves a lie-in *every* morning. Underway we ascended the two Itchington Locks, and eight Stockton locks, passing the Blue Lias pub and later the Boat, with its 1982 memories of "Mr Green, there's a telephone call for you". Details can be found in *Channel Draught* Autumn 2006 or, better bet, treat any of the Greens to a pint.

At Braunston Junction Warbler turned left towards Rugby, and moored up, the crew eyeing several scantily-clad items of scenic worth sporting themselves on some of the boats. Eventually Tern appeared at the junction, but carried on right. Later the Terns explained that they had merely gone to turn and moor as "the moorings are better there!" Naturally, the Warblers believed their story!! Spurning the canal-side Boatman then sporting an appendage with the appearance of a battered Mississippi paddle steamer, we took a short walk up the hill to the village, and the Old

Plough (Ansell's mild and bitter and Ind Coope Burton), and the Wheatsheaf, (Ruddles Best and County).

Setting off at about 3.30, Warbler ahead, it became obvious, once clear of moored boats, that Tern was trying to overhaul Warbler. But Hon. Commodore took Warbler's tiller and put his Hon. foot down. Eventually, I have been told, Tern's skipper studied Warbler through his binoculars, said to Jeff who was steering, "You won't catch them! Jim's on the helm!" and went below to get his head down. Passing an elderly gentleman tending his large waterside garden I obeyed Willow Wren's sign on the back door which encourages the steerer to smile and wave at everyone: whereupon I received in return something that resembled a Red Indian war dance. This ritual, I observed though my binoculars, was repeated when Tern passed him. It *could* have been some sort of North Oxford Canal rain-making ceremony, but I am more inclined to believe that he was just a member of the canalside MOB (Miserable Old Basket) brigade.

At Hillmorton we moored almost under the pair of railway bridges and went across to the Old Royal Oak for some Courage Directors, and to meet Rugby CAMRA Branch members and Steve and Helen Bell, who had just returned Moira. Later we walked the half mile to the Bell (M&B, Bass), and had a very enjoyable evening playing Northamptonshire Skittles. Sadly, Hon. Commodore did not repeat his impressive victory of the previous year but several of our lot, John Underdown for example, did remarkably well. Eventually we staggered back to the boats, some via a nearby Chinese take-away, some via Tern to partake of strong liquor.

Saturday 5th May. The final morning. Up at 7pm, we descended Hillmorton Locks, and after about an hour pulled up just before Rugby Wharf for breakfast and to clean up the boats, as we did not need to get back before 9pm. The elder of the boatyard staff proved the existence of the towpath telegraph by informing us that we had done well that week without us having told Willow



5th May - The end of trip curtain call at Rugby Wharf

Wren of our itinerary, and was suitably pleased by the half bottle of rum which Ray slipped into his pocket – 'maintaining good will'. A booking was made for two boats for the week commencing 27th April 1991, and after the traditional group photographs, we went our various ways.

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LAST KNOCKINGS

Welcome Stranger Elsewhere we briefly mention the now closed Welcome Stranger at Herstmonceux. Locally, however, there was another Welcome Stranger, in the small hamlet of Court-at-Street on the B 2067 between Lympe and Aldington. The pub lay just along from the junction with the road to Sellindge, and I first came across it in the mid 1960s, though I did not actually stop for a drink there until the late 1980s. A former Whitbread pub and one whose



The Welcome Stranger, Herstmonceux

sign, a stork carrying a new born babe, appeared in one of the brewery's series of pub sign cards, it was by then a free house, although on my various visits only selling Greene King ales on draught. Originally there were two bars, left and right from the entrance, but the left hand was always closed by this time, and only the right hand bar was in use, which was quite small with a bar counter in one corner and a



The Welcome Stranger pub sign

few tables and chairs. As well as beer and other alcoholic drinks, eggs could also be bought, and maybe other things as well; someone who lived there as a child reminiscing that sweets could be bought from the landlady at the back door – there being no shop in Court-at-Street. From what I recall parking provision was non-existent, as I always found myself parking alongside the hedge in front of the adjoining houses, while the toilets (gents at least) were a kind of lean-to at the side of the pub. Stopping one Saturday lunch-time some time in the 1990s I found the pub closed, and was about to get back in the car when the landlord drove up, and informed me that the pub was a pub no more. In due course the sign was taken down, and I understand that the building stood empty for many years before being demolished and replaced by the Welcome Stranger Cottages.

Modern Times Man walks into a pub and finds it's a restaurant – unfortunately all too common these days. The case in point is in mid Kent and shall be nameless. Technically it no doubt still qualifies as a pub, it still has a bar, and still sells real ale, a local micro brew and in good nick, but at £3.90 a pint mind you. However arriving at 10.30 one evening for a late night pint or two I

found a residue of diners getting ready to leave, or at the liqueur and coffee stage. A few steps inside the door, and I was accosted by a gentleman, who like most of the rest of the staff, appeared to be from the Mediterranean region or parts adjacent (nothing wrong with that, one of best pub landlords I've ever come across was Italian). He asked if he could help me. Evidently calling in just for a drink was not expected, and very possibly not encouraged. I bought my pint, the £3.90, and settled myself in a corner but felt distinctly out of place. There was no-one around the bar, and I appeared the only one there just for a drink. Two laptops occupied prominent positions, one in a small alcove that had been a favourite seat, and, judging from the attention paid to them by the staff, were monitoring the evening's income. Slim resemblance to a village local. I remember this same pub selling Fremkins Bitter, and run by a characterful landlord who had a large photograph of himself on the wall, and would chat and play cards with his customers on the large table in the middle of the bar. Perhaps its present incarnation is a response to Tony Blair's vision of introducing our country to café culture. Still it was attracting custom. At the end of the day I suppose we get the pubs we deserve.

And Times Gone By Locally a similar fate has befallen the Marquis of Granby at Alkham. After its refurbishment a few years ago, and renamed just *The Marquis*, it was declared a restaurant and bar. Now a recent piece in the local press describes it merely as a restaurant. Admittedly, as far as I am aware, at least one locally brewed real ale is normally available, and passers-by are welcome to stop for a pint. However, a country pub, albeit of late one heavily into food, it is not. Which is singularly disappointing because it is the one remaining establishment of the four pubs that existed around the Alkham Valley a few decades ago: the Carpenters Arms at South Alkham disappeared around 1970, the Newcastle at Ewell Minnis, a thriving pub in the 1980s, closed in the mid 1990s, while the Chequers at West Hougham hung on until late 2006.

Watch the Birdie As one who photographs a lot of pubs and pub events using the 'state of the art' digital technology – although in today's fast moving world, at over four years old, state of the art it probably ain't – I was reminded by a friend recently of the old fashioned joys of using film. With at best 36 prints a film, care was essential. No room for happy snapping without a calculation of how many exposures left before you needed to change films (assuming you had not forgotten to put one in your pocket), and the possibility of missing an important shot. And no preview checking, so each shot carefully composed, and fingers crossed that light and speed were right. Digital allows you to click away to heart's content, and delete what you don't want. Then of course there is the end product – glossy photos, which have to be developed, paid and waited for, versus instant electronic – and that's before the complications of getting them onto the computer, and thereby publishable, are considered.

Drink Driving Comment from a local landlord about his range of ales: I sell so-and-so and so-and-so, and Greene King IPA, because people reckon they can drink five pints and drive home afterwards. No names no pack drill.

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National Contacts

Nationally CAMRA can be contacted at:
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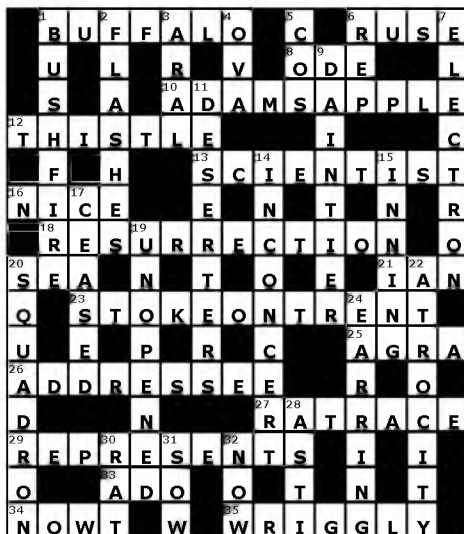
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CROSSWORD ANSWERS



Local Information & Useful Numbers

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And Finally.....Microbreweries are older than we think.

We might think microbreweries are a recent trend. However, archaeologists in western Cyprus are shedding light on ancient boozing habits after the discovery of a "microbrewery" dating back to the Bronze Age, about 3,500 years ago.

The excavation discovered a mud-plaster domed structure, which is thought to have been used as a kiln to dry malt. Various flavoured beers produced from grapes or figs would have been brewed and fermented with yeasts. The resulting brews may have had an alcohol content of about 5% ABV.

The University of Manchester's Dr. Lindy Crewe who has led the excavation, at Kissonerga-Skalia since 2007 said the discovery is quite significant. "It's extremely rare to find the remains of production preserved from thousands of years ago so we're very excited." Archaeologists believe beer drinking was an important part of society from the Neolithic period onwards and may have even been the main reason that people began to cultivate grain in the first place.

The Heritage and Archaeological Research Team decided to put the theory about the kiln to the test and brewed a Bronze Age beer by recreating a similar structure and employing traditional brewing techniques. Ian Hill, who led the effort, said that the resulting brews "were all pretty drinkable" It is understood they didn't cause any of the Neolithic behaviour sometimes ascribed to modern beer drinking.

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