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**CAMPAIGN  
FOR  
REAL ALE**

**Issue 61  
Autumn  
2014**

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

# CHANNEL DRAUGHT

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Photo: Paul Sinden

## **Channel Draught**

is published and  
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Deal Dover  
Sandwich & District  
Branch of the  
Campaign for Real Ale  
[www.camra-dds.org.uk](http://www.camra-dds.org.uk)

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15th December 2014

# **CHANNEL DRAUGHT**

**ISSUE 61**  
**Autumn 2014**

**W**elcome to Channel Draught Autumn 2014, which is also our 15<sup>th</sup> anniversary edition – our very first issue, a single A3 broadsheet, appearing in October 1999.

A lot of water has flowed under the bridge since then, as they say, and along with many other CAMRA branches, the profile of our branch area has changed radically over the period. Many pubs have closed (in Dover town about a third of the 1999 total), including leading real ale outlets such as the Mogul in Dover or the Yew Tree at Barfreston; a decline that has only just started to show some signs of reversal over the last two or three years.

Leading the revival have been the micro pubs, of which there are now about half a dozen in the branch area. But real ale has also been appearing in places that never sold it, or have not done for many years, and some former pubs have reverted to pub use – such as the Arlington in Snargate Street, and Hop and Huffkin in Sandwich. We have also acquired several micro breweries, and of course, thanks to the micro brewery movement, the choice for real ale drinkers has expanded immeasurably.

A list of existing and proposed Kent micro pubs, is included in this issue, although probably a few more have been added or projected since it was compiled. Also in this issue, we have more about classic unspoilt pubs, report on a revival of wooden barrels, and recount details of two more branch “expeditions”. From across the Channel we look at the problems that accrue from brewing a world famous beer, and have the latest from Stuart Roberts, with whom we spent a most enjoyable evening at the Mash Tun, one Friday in October, when he was visiting Kent.

*Martin Atkins*



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# EVENTS DIARY

- Mon 17 Nov** Branch Meeting, **Just Reproach**, Deal
- Sat 22 Nov** 'NouvAle' **Dover Micro-Pub tour** (see Branch Website)
- Sat 13 Dec** Branch Meeting & Christmas Meal, **Hop & Huffkin**, Sandwich (12 noon)
- Mon 19 Jan** Branch Meeting, **Admiral Owen**, Sandwich
- Mon 2 Feb** Festival Set Up, **Dover Town Hall** (9 am)
- Fri 6 - Sat 7 Feb** **WHITE CLIFFS FESTIVAL OF WINTER ALES 2015**  
**Dover Town Hall (Maison Dieu) - see page 49**
- Sun 8 Feb** Festival Take Down, **Dover Town Hall** (9 am)
- Mon 16 Feb** Branch Meeting & Fest Wash-up, **Louis Armstrong**

**Branch Website** [www.camra-dds.org.uk](http://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](mailto:john@ramblingrumbler.plus.com) or call 01304 214153.

Events marked \* are not organised by CAMRA



# SAVE OUR PUBS

Despite the recent local upsurge in micro pubs, traditional pubs are still disappearing at an alarming rate - 28 a week on the latest information - and one major factor is serious shortcomings in planning legislation. Now CAMRA has launched a hard-hitting campaign to urge government to close national planning loopholes.

The campaign, “**Pubs Matter: so why can't we have a say**”, aims to give power back to communities by ensuring planning permission is required before the change of use or demolition of a pub. Under current planning law, pubs can be demolished or converted into several other uses including supermarkets and estate agents without requiring planning permission. Research published in February 2014 revealed two pubs are converted into supermarkets every week.

CAMRA says allowing pubs to be converted without a planning application is ludicrous – and government must step in and close these loopholes as a matter of urgency. With a simple amendment to the General Permitted Development Order 1995, any demolition or change of use involving the loss of a pub would require planning permission. CAMRA says this small change would save hundreds of pubs from closure and give the power back to communities which are currently denied a voice in the process.

The September edition of *What's Brewing*, CAMRA's newspaper, reported that the campaign had already gained support from 44 MPs who have signed a Parliamentary Motion calling for the loopholes to be closed (see National News). CAMRA's interim head of communications Tom Stainer, said: “Popular and profitable pubs are being left vulnerable by gaps in English planning legislation as pubs are increasingly being targeted by those wishing to take advantage of the absence of proper planning control. It's time for the government to stop standing by while pubs are being targeted due to gaps in planning law.

Some progressive councils, especially those in London, where high property prices have been particularly detrimental to the survival of pubs, have, so to speak, taken the law into their own hands. In London, Westminster City Council has been considering a policy that would protect pubs, except where they have been vacant and actively marketed for at least twelve months at a reasonable price or rent, and that reasonable attempts to find an occupier have been unsuccessful.

Meanwhile in Tooting Bec, Wandsworth council agreed to issue an Article 4 Direction to protect the community orientated Wheatsheaf, following a year-long battle by locals to save it. However Article 4 Directions, which restricts what can be done to a property come at a price. There are administrative costs and the threat of compensation.

The Pubs Matter campaign, to give all pubs the protection of planning permission, will result in the public automatically getting a say in the future of their pub, and should as well see a diminished need for Article 4 directions. (see Channel View page 32)



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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](mailto:channel.draught@camra-dds.org.uk)

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

## DOVER

After some months of work the **Arlington**, Snargate St. finally reopened in September, as a micro-pub, following ten years or so as bistro/restaurant. Owner Pauline normally offers three real ales plus cider, wine etc. in a bar area, which now that the former bar servery has gone seems actually more roomy than under its former traditional pub format. A Saturday in mid October found a choice of Hop Fuzz Red and Green (green hopped ale) and Springhead Bees Knees, with Gadds No 5 having just finished and Ripple Steam IPA waiting to go on.

**First and Last**, East Cliff: Following the removal of door and window boards and works being undertaken, as reported in our summer edition, the pub was briefly open, but has now closed again.

**Mash Tun**, Bench St: Work was still under way, at the time our summer edition went to the printers, but now ex Blakes proprietors, Peter and Kathryn Garstin, have completed their revamping of the former Pier Three, complete with settees and armchairs, a piano and a pulpit – the latter being the pub's sole concession to provision of a bar counter. In true micro pub fashion beer is dispensed on gravity with barrels kept in a cooled side room. Cider is

also available and prices start at a very reasonable £2.60 a pint. Future plans include the provision of a micro brewery in the rear of the premises. Next door at the **Duchess** a couple of real ales are usually available with selection from both the major brewers and the micro sector. Opposite, down Mill Lane and across the river, the **Lord Nelson**, having spent several months being intermittently open, has now succumbed to shutters across doors and windows.

In Castle St. demolition work now appears complete on the former **Snoops/Images/ABC Cinema**, at one time intended by Wetherspoons as a Lloyds No 1. At **Blakes** four real ales and cider remains the normal choice, but around the corner in Russell St. no sign of real ale at the **Castle**, although at least the pub is operating and drawing in trade. At the **White Horse** Harveys Sussex remains standard alongside two guest ales and cider – recent beers having included Bateman's Black and White and St Austell Proper Job.

**Port of Call**, Market Square: Following its opening in July under the management of Steve and Trish from the Rack of Ale ownership was subsequently transferred to the landlord of the Park Inn. However, day to day operation remains in the hands of Neil Middle-

brook, who has retained the same format – four or five real ales on gravity, cider, wine, tea, coffee, etc. Ale is sourced locally and a visit in mid October found beers from Whitstable, Old Dairy, Goacher's and Time and Tide, a pint of Whitstable Oyster Stout proving superb. Food includes burgers, tapas, and other lighter choices. We hear that the proposed use of other parts of the premises as a hostel has been dropped.

Meanwhile at the **Park Inn** itself, an old face, Dave Hicklin has reappeared as manager – formerly of the Boar's Head he ran the Park Inn for a while six or seven years ago. Real ale appears to be mainly national brews with London Pride and Doom Bar both being seen. At the **Falstaff**, no change from our previous issue – refurbishment work apparently suspended.

A few doors along the road the **Rack of Ale** has just celebrated its first birthday, a well attended 'birthday party' being held on Friday 10<sup>th</sup> October. Four micro-brew real ales are normally available plus cider, wine, cheese boards, pork pies, etc. Our apologies for the error in our summer edition – the picture caption should of course have read Trish and Steve, not Debbie and Steve.

In Eaton Road the summer saw Bombardier Gold on the handpumps alongside Young's Bitter and Doom Bar at the **Boar's Head**, while in Folkestone Road real ale is normally available at the Priory Hotel. On York St. roundabout another facelift has accompanied the re-opening of the **Golden Lion** – or Green Lion as some are calling it, as it's external walls have been transformed from orange to a bright green. Connected, we understand, to management at the Prince Albert, one or two real ales appear to be the norm includ-

ing Doom Bar and Hobgoblin.

Around the corner in Worthington St. we await the opening of Dover's latest micro-pub, in the former amusement arcade on the corner of Queen's Gardens. The project of Debbie and Keith, who many will remember from the Rack of Ale, its intended name is the **Lanes**, after their surname.

In Charlton Green Kev and Nikki at the **Red Lion** appear to be having great success with Good Old Boy from the West Berkshire Brewery – a darkish and very tasty 4% ABV bitter. Other beers recently have included London Pride and Bombardier. At the **Louis Armstrong** the scaffolding of recent months disappeared in mid October to the reveal the old pub newly painted and spruced up. Following the make-over, and with real ale sales steaming ahead, landlady Jackie, has declared it Dover's first macro pub. Kentish Ales remain the norm with Hopdaemon and Gadds very much to the fore – the latter's 4.9% ABV Green Hop Ale proving most popular. Other Kentish brews include those from Goachers, Old Dairy and Westerham whose double stout has recently re-emerged from its summer hibernation. Occasional beers from more distant parts, often swaps with local Kent brewers, appear from time to time – Weltons Sussex Pride and Butcombe Gold in mid October being notable examples.

**Three Cups**, Crabble Hill: Concentrating on just one real ale currently, mainly Harveys Sussex Best and London Pride. Landlord Greg is particularly impressed with Harveys – never have to tip any away, and is ready to serve within the day. If a barrel comes in the morning it can be on the rack, tapped and spiled and cleared and on the pump by the evening. Being mainly a

lager pub micro brews can be a bit chancy – not always to everyone's taste.

**Fox**, Temple Ewell: Pride of Sheffield remains a fixture, together with two or three guests – Butcombe featuring regularly.

## **DEAL**

**Berry**, Walmer: As we reported in our summer edition the pub was once again chosen as East Kent Pub of the Year. However, unlike last year it failed to progress to Kent Pub of the Year, that title going to the Windmill at Sevenoaks Weald. In early October the pub held its annual Autumn beer festival. On the Strand, the **Lighthouse**, now seemingly open more days a week than its initial Thursday to Sunday set up, normally offers at least two real ales. Local brews are to the fore – both

Time and Tide and Ripple Steam appearing regularly. Recent months have also seen beers from Wantsum, Whitstable and Hop Fuzz, while from elsewhere Dark Star, Triple FFF and Oakham have all featured recently.

Heavy emphasis on local beers as well at the **Just Reproach**. Recent months have included ales from Goacher's, Ripple Steam, Hop Fuzz, Westerham, Hopdaemon, Pig and Porter and Old Dairy. Among those from other parts of the country a barrel of Kelham Island Pale Rider in late September was compared most favourably with that from the brewery tap: "I had.... Pale Rider a week earlier in the Fat Cat, Sheffield, and this was as good." And Pale Rider also, at the **Sir Norman Wisdom**, Queen St. in early September, where other beers have included Wychwood Hobgoblin, Greene King Abbot, Nelson

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**Prince Albert**, Alfred Square: More Kentish beers with Wantsum 1381, Westerham Finchcocks Original and Jammin Jack and Admiral IPA appearing recently. At the nearby **Ship Gadds** Ales are prominent – Nos. 3, 5 and 7 and Seaside all available at some time over the last few months. Regular appearances also from Dark Star Hophead and American Pale Ale and Caledonian Deuchars IPA.

**Admiral Keppel**, Manor Rd: A pub where real ale has been intermittent over the years, was selling Doom Bar in late August. In Mill Hill, as predicted in our summer edition, John and Mike duly left the **Mill Inn** in September and are now running the **Valiant Sailor** in Folkestone (see below). No news of their successor at the Mill.

**Saracen's Head**: Change of tenants this Autumn and the reappearance of some old friends – Richard and Opal Crocker, who some may remember from their time at the Castle Inn, Dover in the late 1990s. Around the corner in the High St. new bar **Bloody Mary's**, opposite the car park and formerly an off-license, is now offering one real ale – no other details at present.

In Mongeham, at the **Leather Bottle**, Dan continues to keep all his real ale in barrels on the bar with cooling jackets. In late October Oakham Citra was available.

In Kingsdown we say farewell to Pam and Ralph and their son John at the **Rising Sun**. Ex boxer and former British Commonwealth and European Welterweight Champion Ralph Charles took over the pub with Pam in 1988, which has subsequently proved a reliable outlet for good real ale. They were also stalwart supporters of the Dover

Beer and Brains Quiz League for many years, and we wish them well for the future. We understand the pub has been bought by the current tenants at the Zetland, and is due to be closed for a period while various alterations and refurbishments are carried out.

## SANDWICH & RURAL

**Wrong Turn**, Barfreton: When permission was granted three years ago for the conversion of the **Yew Tree** to a house, most of us thought we had seen the last of real ale in the village. Not so, local resident Ginny Timm, who has converted an outbuilding and former artist's studio in her garden into a micro



-pub – the first rural example of the genre any of us know. Our cover shows Ginny, (third left) with daughters Emily and Victoria and son-in-law Jamie Kemp, and pub sign ready to go up. (Photo courtesy of Paul Skelton's <http://www.dover-kent.com> website). As planned, opening duly took place in mid August. Sited opposite the old pie factory three Ales are normally available, plus cider. In September selection included beers from local's Gadds, Hop Fuzz and Wantsum and from further afield Dark Star, Rooster's and Potbelly.

**Red Lion**, Wingham: Currently closed,

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we understand it has been sold to developers and an application submitted and subsequently withdrawn to convert the property into flats. Meanwhile a local campaign has started to retain its us as a pub and obtain listing as an Asset of Community Value. Also currently closed is the **Chequers** in Ash, which we hear is being advertised for sale as a residential property, although no change of use application has been submitted.

**Crispin Inn**, Sandwich: A very comprehensive range of ales at this pub encompassing nationally available brands, micro-brews from near and far and the pubs very own dedicated beer from the Mad Cat brewery of Faversham. Peter Meaney from the brewery says: "This is a unique ale, not something else we brew and then re-badge. He (landlord Terry West) commissioned this ale from us and has helped us enormously in feedback and support in developing an ale which has sold over 8000 pints in his pub for now over a year. His locals have all moved on to it as their main tippie and we are grateful to him for the opportunity." And the brewing knowledge acquired has translated into benefits across their product range. Other beers seen recently have included Broadside, Doom Bar, Landlord, Andwells Golden Muddle and Canterbury Ales Merchants Ale. In late September Mad Cat also supplied EKG Green Hop Rye Pale Ale.

**Fleur de Lis**: Closed for some time, work was seen going on inside in early October and we hear that the pub/hotel has now reopened. No information as yet on real ale policy. However, nearby at 6 King Street an application has been submitted to convert the premises to a micro pub, to be called the **Laurel & Hardy Real Ale House**.

**Crown Inn**, Finglesham: A regular outlet for Canterbury Ales of Chartham, who deserve better representation in our branch area. Wife of Bath was available several times over recent months, drawing consistently appreciative comments, and in mid September the brewery provided Auburn Green. In late September the pub was selling Ripple Steam Green Hop IPA along with Hophead and Courage Best and in October Caledonian Golden XPA and Autumn Red.

**Plough Inn**, Ripple: Late September saw the pub offering a new ale from its Sutton neighbour – the citrus flavour Ripple Steam Pale, alongside its standard Ripple Steam Best Bitter. Other beers have included the pub's regular strong ale Fuller's ESB, along with Broadside, Old Speckled Hen and Young's London Gold.

**Hare & Hounds**, Northbourne: Three or four real ales normally. Harveys Sussex is regular and Hop Back Summer Lightning has appeared several times of late. Local beers have included Whitstable and Time and Tide. Another regular is Dark Star Hophead which on one visit was described as "fresh and couldn't be better" along with "first class food and service too."

**Lydden Bell**, Lydden: Late August found the all too rarely seen Whitstable Kentish Reserve on the handpumps – from memory an excellent beer, and if it is as good as it used to be it deserves wider circulation. At the **Hope** we await further news on the application for conversion to residential use, a proposal which has generated considerable local opposition.

**Carpenters Arms**, Coldred: The annual late summer daddlums match duly took place between the pub and our branch – particularly late this summer,

as due to other events, etc. it was actually held over until early October. Most of the pub team were new to the game and the Branch won the first match easily. The home team, however, soon got its measure and having beaten us in the second match thrashed us in the third, with what I think was a record score of 107. I blame the beer, most of us drinking the most excellent Pompey Royal from Gosport's Oakleaf Brewery. As always a great night and we look forward to the next time.

In St. Margaret's, as far as we are aware the **Hope** remains closed and up for sale, either leasehold or freehold, with windows and doors boarded up. A few doors away the **White Cliffs Hotel** had added Time and Tide to Gadds as the ale choice on a visit in early September, while at the **Red Lion** local ale was Hop Fuzz Driftwood. And more Driftwood also at the **Swingate**.

## FOLKESTONE

**Firkin Ale House**, Cheriton Place: A well attended event on 7 April saw the pub presented with the award for 2014 Branch Pub of the Year by Ashford, Folkestone and Romney Marsh Branch, after being chosen from a short list of eight. Bob Martin, Branch Chairman praised landlord Neil King for what he had achieved in less than 18 months. Runner up was the **Red Lion** at Snargate which has been run by Doris and her family since 1911.

**Three Mariners**, Hythe: Twice pub of the year runner up, the Three Mariners was this year chosen as Spring Pub of the Season. The presentation also hosted an initial brew from new micro "Range Ales": currently brewing in a kitchen, premises are being sought to allow full scale production. In mid September the pub was selling Tonbridge Rustic and Coppernod, Gadds She

Sells Sea Shells, Goachers Silver Star along with regular Young's Bitter.

Also in Hythe, we hear that the **Imperial Hotel** has recently been serving Grasshopper and Summer Perle from Westerham Ales, while late summer saw the opening of the town's first micro-pub, the **Potting Shed** at the Sandgate end of the High St. A new venture for Pete and Belinda, who have previously run **Botolph's Bridge Inn** and the **Britannia**, a visit shortly after, found beers from Gadds, Hop Fuzz and Harveys available. In Sandgate itself, the **Ship** was selling Abbot, IPA and IPA Reserve from Greene King, Hophead and Summer Lightning, and from the Long Man Brewery, American Pale Ale.

At **Harveys** choice at the start of September was Bombardier and Courage Best and at the **Happy Frenchman** Doom Bar. At **Chambers**, now offering up to five real ales and several ciders, the choice has included locals Time and Tide, Nelson and Ripple Steam as well as the old regular Adnams.

In the Bayle, as we announced in our Summer edition, Stuart and Gilly will still be at the **Guildhall** until March. In early September ales were Harveys Sussex, Greene King IPA, Old Speckled Hen, St. Austell Proper Job and Cotswold Spring. Meanwhile at the **British Lion** landlord Nick has purchased the pub from Punch and is now offering a choice of two ciders and several beers from Marston's. As well expanding the town centre's range of ales we understand that prices are some 30p less than when the pub was tied. At **Kipps**, port and stilton are now available in addition to ales and cider (see Ramblings and Rumbblings).

In the Harbour area, **Rocksalt**, more of a restaurant than pub, welcomes cas-

ual well behaved drinkers, and has also been offering local ales, recently Hop Fuzz and Gadd's. In mid September the **Mariner** was selling Harveys Sussex, Hobgoblin and Doom Bar, and the **East Cliff** Green Daemon and Ripple Best. More Green Daemon at the **Lifeboat** alongside Bombardier. Earlier in the month the pub had been selling Hop Fuzz Yellow Zinger, Seaside and Southern Pride.

**Valiant Sailor:** As reported above the pub is now in the hands of John and Mike, formerly of the Mill Inn, Mill Hill in Deal. A visit in late October found St. Austell Tribute and Doom Bar on the handpumps.

However, it is not all positive news. We hear that the **Richmond** is currently boarded up and that real ale is no longer for sale at either the **Royal Standard** or the **View** by the War Memorial, and still not at the **Raglan**, despite assurances from bar staff that it will be returning.

## CANTERBURY

In Wincheap the **Maiden's Head**, closed for a while, has reopened as a pub, although from observation, with a fairly limited range of real ales. In Rosemary Lane the **Blind Dog** (former Cardinal's Cap) is now the Limes Lounge and Diner, and if real ales are still available, they were not immediately apparent from a glance through the window. In Beer Cart Lane the **Beer Cart Arms** has now been converted to the Ambrette Restaurant.

Local brews predominate at the **Old Brewery Tavern**, seemingly particularly Wantsum and Hopdaemon. A visit in early October also found Ringwood Best available. At the **Cherry Tree** ales were Waggledance and Tonbridge Blonde Ambition and Rustic (very

good) plus Biddenden cider.

More local ales always at the **Bell and Crown** in Palace street. In late October the choice was Gadds No. 5, Old Dairy Gold Top, Whitstable EIPA and Hoppin Robin from Rockin Robin. In Best Lane the **Thomas Becket** was selling Hobgoblin, Doom Bar and Thwaites Old Devil.

Earlier in the Autumn the **Phoenix**, Old Dover Road, was showcasing local beers brewed for this year's Kent Green Hop Festival. Among them brews from Wantsum and Pig and Porter whose Strangely Brown green hopped porter was superb. Meanwhile the pub's microbrewery remains in abeyance.

Outside the city the **Black Robin** at Kingston has now re-opened and was selling Old Dairy Red Top, Summer Lightning and Doom Bar in early September. Old Dairy beers have also been seen at the **Duck**, Pett Bottom, the **Hop Pocket**, Bossingham where Gold Top was on alongside Adnams and Harveys Sussex in early September, and at the **Rose and Crown**, Stelling Minnis where Copper Top was available together with Thwaites Wainwright and Flowers IPA. At the **Rose**, Wickhambreaux the choice was ESB and Seafarers from Fullers, Green King IPA and Bombardier.

## ELSEWHERE

In Ramsgate we hear that the **Montefiore Arms**, put up for sale earlier in the year by owner Andy Breeze has been acquired by Eddie Gadd of Ramsgate Brewery. At Smeeth just off the Folkestone/Ashford road there is news of another new micro pub – the **Dog House** with the potential for a micro brewery



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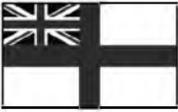


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# BAKING A CHRISTMAS CAKE

## ROYAL NAVY STYLE

*The following piece of naval tradition has recently come our way. It might not involve real ale, but rum is a good festive substitute, and with Christmas approaching with undue haste, now is the time to start thinking about those little things which make a good Christmas a great Christmas. We will leave it to our readers to decide if the following is one of them.*

For more than 300 years from before the days of Nelson, wooden ships and iron men, the Royal Navy issued a daily rum ration aboard His/Her Majesty's ships. This tradition, one of the longest and unbroken in the history of the sea and ships, carried forward from the year 1655 to August 1970; a sad day – commonly known as Black Tot Day. The tot, however, will not be totally forgotten as a further tradition of the HM Ships Xmas Cake still survives. So off you go to your favourite super-market to pick up the necessary ingredients for the following recipe:-

**Ingredients:-** 1 cup of self-raising flour, 1 tsp baking powder, 1 cup water, 1 half cup of treacle, 1 tsp salt, 1 cup brown sugar, 4 large eggs, butter, 2 cups of mixed dried fruit, nuts, lemon juice, 1 large bottle of dark navy rum (preferably Pussers).

**Method:-** Sample a cup of the Rum in order to check quality of same. Find a large mixing bowl and an electric mixer, before checking the Rum quality again. Turn on the electric mixer, mix the treacle with one cup of butter in the large bowl. At this point it is best to make quite sure that the Rum is still OK – just in case!

Add the flour to the mixer in the bowl and keep forking it. Fork it and mix it. Make sure that the Rum is still wet.

Turn off the mixer thingy. Break 2 eggs and add to the bowl and chuck in the cup of dried fruit. Pick up the fruit from off the floor, wash it and put it in the bowl a piece at a time, trying to count it. Mix on the turner. If the dried fruit gets stuck in the beaters, just pry loos with a drawscraper. Sample the Rum to test for consistency.

Shift 2 cups of salt or something, shift the lemon juice and strain your nuts. Add one table. Add a spoon of sugar or soefink, whatever you can find. Grease the oven. Turn the cake tin 360 degrees and try not to fall over. Don't forget to beat off the turner, throw the bowl through the window and finally finish the Rum.

Happy cooking, but probably best to make sure that She Who Must Be Obeyed is out shopping.



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# 7th Time CAMRA Branch Pub of the Year! 2008-2014



## GOOD PUB GUIDE SURVEY OF PUB BEER PRICES

**E**arlier in the year the Daily Mirror published the result of a survey of pub beer prices across the country, carried out by the Good Pub Guide. It showed that the average cost of a pint of bitter has risen by almost 3.5% in a year, from £3.20 to £3.31, and that generally speaking the further west and north you go the cheaper the beer.

Unsurprisingly London is the most expensive, where prices average £3.79 and £4 plus is not unusual, followed by much of the rest of the south east. The cheapest county is Herefordshire at £3.03 a pint with its neighbour Worcestershire at £3.09 close behind. Wales is fairly cheap, but Scotland tends towards the more expensive, and Western Isles at £3.50 would appear completely out of step, until additional transport costs are taken into consideration.

Good Pub Guide co-editor Fiona Stapley said: "Pubs in the South will charge more as their overheads are bigger and they pay more for rent and wages. Particularly significant is that the gap between cheapest and most expensive beer has risen 20% from 65p last year to 76p this year, and illustrates, that as with many other things, a divide is opening up between London and the rest of the country. The survey results are as follows and the categories as originally printed:

**Bargain Beer** Herefordshire £3.03, Worcestershire, £3.09, Derbyshire, £3.14, Cumbria, £3.14, Staffordshire, £3.14, Northamptonshire, £3.15, Northumbria, £3.15, Yorkshire, £3.16.

**Fair Priced Beer** Wales, £3.18, Shropshire, £3.19, Cornwall, £3.19, Somerset, £3.19, Lancashire, £3.19, Nottinghamshire, £3.20.

**Average Priced Beer** Cheshire, £3.23, Leicestershire and Rutland, £3.26, Devon, £3.27, Gloucestershire, £3.29, Lincolnshire, £3.29, Bedfordshire, £3.30, Wiltshire, £3.30, Cambridgeshire, £3.32, Essex, £3.32, Dorset, £3.33, Suffolk, £3.33, Isle of Wight, £3.34, Warwickshire, £3.36, West Midlands, £3.35, Scotland, £3.35, Hampshire, £3.38, Norfolk, £3.40.

**Expensive Beer** Oxfordshire, £3.43, Buckinghamshire, £3.43, Scottish Islands, £3.50.

**Rip Off Beer** Kent, £3.51, Hertfordshire, £3.52, Sussex, £3.52, Berkshire, £3.54, Surrey, £3.62, London, £3.79.

If the Kent figure of £3.51 might seem more than we would often pay locally, it does of course include the influence of London on the more western parts of the county.

*Martin Atkins*



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# WESTVLETEREN

## Is the renowned Trappist brew a victim of it's own success?

The brewing of a world renowned Trappist beer, should, one might imagine, be a quiet and contemplative process, unproblematic, and well away from the frenzied competitiveness of global brewing and international brands. However, for the monks who brew Westvleteren ale at the Sint Sixtus abbey in western Belgium, the truth, as a recent piece, courtesy of *Reuters* shows, is rather different.

From 1878 the monks have sold to the local community, but conscious of the Trappist code "Ora et labora" (work and prayer), production was limited so that it never took over the religious nature of their life or earned more than they needed. After World War II, fearing that more time and effort was being devoted to beer than prayer, they even stopped deliveries to local cafés, selling instead only at the abbey gates.

A simple and restrained system which worked well until it received the attention of modern media. Westvleteren produces three beers – a 5.8 % blond, an 8 % ale, and a 10.2 % dark ale, Westvleteren XII, which, sweet and rich in flavour, and with a taste that belies its strength, is the cause of both the Abbey's current fame and accompanying problems. Led by the internet and beer fan sites such as RateBeer, which ranks it as the World's best, Westvleteren XII has now been elevated to brewing's equivalent of celebrity status.

Today, all purchases must be reserved by telephone, when a "window" of two to three hours, sees calls received at the rate of 85,000 an hour, of which only 200 will get through. Thereafter, on most afternoons, cars arrive outside the monastery walls, where, after registration numbers have been checked, the drivers are allowed to purchase just two crates of the prized brew. The monks part with it for just over €2 a bottle, including deposit, asking buyers not to sell to third parties. But in Brussels, a Westvleteren XII can command €11 or more, and well over three times that further afield in places like Brazil.



Although they say they are unhappy about lining middlemen's pockets, the monks seem unable to stop it. Tim Webb, author of the *Good Beer Guide Belgium*, suggests that Westvleteren should follow other Trappists and sell via a wholesaler, accepting that the ale was a top quality beer deserving of a wine-like price. "People do not blanche at paying £20, £30 in a restaurant for a bottle of wine... You start putting up beer at £10-15, and it doesn't look too bad. I don't fully understand why they have this thing about keeping the prices down. I think they look on it as greed... but it's not. It's people paying huge compliments."

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# KENT SMALL BREWERY NEWS

**Hopdaemon Brewery**, Newnham 01795 892078 [info@hopdaemon.com](mailto: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](mailto:info@kentbrewery.com)

Biggest seller, Session Pale (ABV 3.7%), was the winner at the Kent Beer Festival in July with Cobnut (ABV 4.1%) picking up third place. Green hop beer, Green Giant (ABV 6%), and a porter will be available in October and beyond, in the latter's case. More single hop beers will be produced throughout autumn and winter.

**Mad Cat Brewery**, Faversham [info@madcatbrewery.co.uk](mailto:info@madcatbrewery.co.uk)

In operation for two years this autumn, Mad Cat now have a core range of five beers with Pow Wow (ABV 3.6%), a fruity balanced session pale using Wild West Cluster and Tomahawk hops, proving particularly popular and a big beer festival hit. Winter will bring us Jet Black Stout (ABV 4.5%), which uses roasted barley, black patent malt, chocolate malt and oats to create a well rounded dark beer, and Winter Warmer (ABV 5.2%), a delicious Brown Ale that apparently received complaints last year because not enough was made!

**Nelson Brewery**, Chatham 01634 832828 [sales@nelsonbrewingcompany.co.uk](mailto:sales@nelsonbrewingcompany.co.uk)

Kent Goldings were used in this year's green hop ale, Green Horn (ABV 4%), moving from garden to copper in four hours. 1085 (ABV 5%), a copper ale, is being brewed to celebrate Trafalgar Night on 21 October; Admiral Pumpkin (4%) should be with us for Halloween. A new member of staff has been taken on to keep up with demand.

**Old Dairy Brewery**, Rolvenden 01580 243185 [fineale@olddairybrewery.com](mailto:fineale@olddairybrewery.com)

Rugby special, Up and Udder (ABV 4%), will be available for the whole of the rugby season, and Snow Top (ABV 6%), which has delicious fruitcake and marmalade flavours, will be available for the winter season. The new brewery shop in Tenterden is open Monday to Friday 10am – 4pm. Brewery tours are planned for the end of the year.

**Pig and Porter**, Tunbridge Wells 01424 893519 [ask@pigandporter.co.uk](mailto:ask@pigandporter.co.uk)

Winners of the best named green hop beers, in my opinion, both Purest Green and Strangely Brown were brewed with lashings of East Kent Goldings. 'One off brew' Neither Nor (ABV 5.2%), a pale ale brewed with lager yeast, is in high demand: another batch will be available from October. Red Spider Rye (ABV 5.5%) was awarded Bronze in the New Brewery category at Peterborough Beer Festival – the brewery's first award. Honey Hill Witbier is a keg only production, which will hopefully make it down this way.

**Ramsgate Brewery**, Broadstairs 01843 868453 [info@ramsgatebrewery.co.uk](mailto:info@ramsgatebrewery.co.uk)

For starters, Eddie has taken over the Montefiore Arms in Ramsgate (well worth a visit). Look out for Cobnut Brown Ale (ABV 4.9%), a deep rich brown ale, apparently, the perfect beer for keeping the ever creeping autumnal damp at bay.

**Wantsum Brewery**, Hersden 0845 0405980 [wantsumbrewery@googlemail.com](mailto:wantsumbrewery@googlemail.com)

Four beers were brewed for this year's Kent Green Hop Festival, using freshly

picked hops from Haffenden Farm near Tenterden: Bramling Cross, Fuggles, Bullion and Challenger (all at ABV 4.5%). The popular oatmeal stout, Golgotha (ABV 5.5%), will be available for Halloween. New local micros The Wrong Turn, Barfreestone and the Mash Tun, Dover are being supplied as is the Hop and Huffkin in Sandwich; Fenwick's in Canterbury will have a large selection of their bottled beers in the run up to Christmas.

**Westerham Brewery**, Edenbridge 01732 864427

[sales@westerhambrewery.co.uk](mailto:sales@westerhambrewery.co.uk)

Recent brews include Bohemian Rhapsody (ABV 5%), a Czech style pilsner, and Hop Rocket IPA (ABV 5.5%), a deep golden ale hopped with First Gold, Fuggles, Bramling Cross, Progress and Goldings.

**Whitstable Brewery**, Grafty Green 01622 851007

[whitstablebrewer@bvconnect.com](mailto:whitstablebrewer@bvconnect.com)

This year's green hop beer, Grafty Green Hop (ABV 4.8%), was brewed with an 'enormous' amount of fresh East Kent Goldings for a 'beautifully balanced yet quintessentially English taste' (yum!). New single hop ales include Hallertau Blanc from Germany, and Kazbek from the Czech Republic.

*Richard Haynes*

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**Fun Quiz**  
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Sunday 9<sup>th</sup> November 6.30pm

**Andy Smyth Band**  
Saturday 15<sup>th</sup> November 8pm  
**Funkee and the Two Tone Baby**

Sunday 16<sup>th</sup> November 4pm

**King Sized Slim**  
Saturday 22<sup>nd</sup> November 8pm

**Fat Tuesday**  
Sunday 23<sup>rd</sup> November 4pm

**Bob Dylan Experience and Hendrix**  
Saturday 29<sup>th</sup> November 8pm

**Jo Hook**  
Sunday 30<sup>th</sup> November 4pm

**Surfer Lorenzo Joe & Band**  
Wednesday 3<sup>rd</sup> December 8pm

**Paul Purdy**  
Sunday 7<sup>th</sup> December 4pm

**Jed Grimes & Liam Fender**  
Saturday 13<sup>th</sup> December 8pm

**Crisis**  
Sunday 14<sup>th</sup> December 4pm

**Brad Pittance & the Bad Pirates**  
Saturday 19<sup>th</sup> December 8pm

**Diane Dunn**  
Saturday 20<sup>th</sup> December 8pm

**Black Pig Band**  
Sunday 21<sup>st</sup> December 4pm

**The Chimney Boys**  
Friday 26<sup>th</sup> December 4pm

**Gentlemen of Few**  
Saturday 27<sup>th</sup> December 8pm

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# The National News

By Martin Atkins

**Real Ale Boom** Real ale sales, the breweries that brew it, and the number of people drinking it are all increasing, according to the latest *Cask Report*. One pint in six bought in a pub is now real ale, and almost two thirds of ale sales – keg ale declining sharply. In volume terms real ale is outperforming the on-trade beer market by 4.5%. The number of beer festivals is ever increasing, and real ale drinkers are expanding from the traditional middle aged and older male regular pub goers, to include women, younger drinkers and more occasional pub users. New breweries continue to open. The *2015 Good Beer Guide* lists 1,285 in Britain – one for every 50,000 people, the highest number since the Second World War, and more per head than any other country. Over the last twelve months 170 breweries have opened, continuing an annual growth of more than 10%.

**London Leads the Way** For many years a laggard, as new breweries sprang up all over the country, recent years have seen a spectacular rise in the number in the capital. The latest figures show 52, a rise of 18% over the previous year, which itself had seen numbers almost double from the year before. For centuries London had been a centre of British brewing, with former national firms such as Courage, Whitbread, Charrington and Watney all originating there. However, the last few decades have seen all these disappear. Even that flag bearer for real ale when everyone was going keg, Young's of Wandsworth, closed its brewery and transferred its brewing

operations to Charles Wells in Bedford. Now the sole remaining representative of the old guard is Fullers of Chiswick.

**Smoke on the Water** "Everyone connected to Eastbourne felt the pain of seeing a fundamental part of our heritage going up in smoke," said Jamie Simm head brewer at the Long Man Brewery of East Sussex. His brewery had just joined forces with the Curious Beer Club of Eastbourne to support businesses damaged by the July fire which destroyed part of Eastbourne's pier. Long Man had been approached by the Curious Beer Club with an idea, and, using a "tweaked" recipe of its flagship brew Long Blonde, created Craft Pier from whose sales all profits up to £10,000 will go into a benevolent fund to aid affected firms.

**Early Day Motion** As we report on page 4 CAMRA's campaign to amend planning legislation in respect of pubs, is not without support in Parliament. Many MPs are aware of what is happening and are doing what they can to improve matters, and one means of attracting the Government's attention is the early day motion, which although carrying no statutory weight, relays feelings from the House. On July 2<sup>nd</sup>, Charlotte Leslie, MP for Bristol NW, tabled the following:-

"That this House believes that permitted development rights are leaving pubs in England vulnerable to demolition or conversion to a range of retail uses without planning permission; further believes, in the light of evidence from the Campaign for Real Ale, that two pubs a week are converted to

supermarkets, and that these planning loopholes are contributing to the loss of valued community amenities; is concerned that local people are being denied a say in the future of their neighbourhoods; and so urges the Government to bring forward amendments to the General Permitted Development Order 1995 so that any demolition or change of use involving the loss of a pub would require planning permission."

After just two weeks 41 MPs had signed up, and CAMRA urges its readers to lobby their own MPs to sign up as well, and to press Localism and Community Rights Minister, Stephen Williams, to bring the demolition or change of use of any pub within planning controls.

**Timothy Taylor Wins Again** Having already won four times in previous years, with its famous Landlord brew,

the Keighley brewer took the 2014 Champion Beer of Britain title at this year's Great British Beer Festival with a beer first brewed eighty years ago. Boltmaker, formerly Timothy Taylor Best Bitter, was first produced in the 1930s, to challenge Barnsley Bitter's position as market leader at the time. Described as combining hops, fruit and nutty malt with a lingering increasingly bitter aftertaste, it was renamed Boltmaker following a rebranding competition in 2012, the name deriving from the Boltmaker's Arms in Keighley, and suggested by the pub's landlord at the time. Oakham Ales Citra took silver, and Salopian Darwin's Origin (which we came across on this year's End of the Year Beery Boaters) bronze.



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# KENT MICROPUBS UPDATE

## EAST KENT

### ***ASHFORD, FOLKESTONE AND ROMNEY MARSH***

**Barbers Arms**, Wye, Ashford (June 2013)

**Firkin Alehouse**, 18 Cheriton Place, Folkestone (Nov 2012)

**Potting Shed**, 160A High street, Hythe Former café, owners Pete and Belinda – ex Botolphs Bridge Inn and Britannia (Sept 2014)

### ***DEAL, DOVER, SANDWICH & DISTRICT***

**Arlington**. 161 Snargate Street, Dover ex pub, recently a bistro (Sept 2014)

**Just Reproach**, 14 King Street, Deal (Dec 2011)

**Mash Tun**. 3 Bench Street, Dover. Formerly Pier Three (Aug 2014)

**Rack of Ale**, 7 Park Place, Ladywell, Dover (Oct 2013)

**Wrong Turn** Pie Factory Road, Barfreston – converted outbuilding in a property outside the main village centre (Aug 2014)

### ***CANTERBURY, HERNE BAY & WHITSTABLE***

**Black Dog**, 66 High Street, Whitstable – ex-delicatessen (Sept 2013)

**Bouncing Barrel**, 20 Bank Street, Herne Bay (May 2013)

**Butchers Arms**, 29A Herne Street, Herne Village – the 'original' micro pub run by Martyn Hillier (Nov 2005)

**Firkin Frog**, 157 Station Road, Herne Bay bar & small back room (Apr 2013).

**Tankerton Arms**, 139B Tankerton Rd, Tankerton, Whitstable (Mar 2013)

## ***THANET***

**Ales of the Unexpected**, Canterbury Road, Westbrook – former fishmongers, with bar (Aug 2013)

**Bake and Ale House**, 21 St Mildred's Road, Westgate-on-Sea – down an alleyway between the bookmakers and Carlton cinema (Apr 2011)

**Conqueror Alehouse**, 4C Grange Road, Ramsgate (Nov 2010)

**Four Candles Alehouse**, 1 Sowell Street, St Peters, Broadstairs (Aug 2012)

**Hair of the Dog**, 73 High Street, Minster – ex hairdressers with bar (Dec 2013)

**Harbour Arms**, Units 7 & 8, Margate Harbour Arm, Stone Pier, Margate Two small

former fishermen's stores knocked into one (May 2013)

**Hovelling Boat**, 12 York Street, Ramsgate (Mar 2013)

**Thirty Nine Steps**, 5 Charlotte Street, Broadstairs (Nov 2012)

**Wheel Alehouse**, 60 Station Road, Birchington (Mar 2013)

**Yard of Ale**, 61 Church Street, St. Peters, Broadstairs (April 2014)

## **SWALE**

**Heritage**, 17-19 Minster Road, Halfway, Minster on Sea, Sheppey – former old Post Office (Jan 2014)

**Paper Mill**, 2 Charlotte Street, Sittingbourne (Oct 2013).

-

## **WEST KENT**

**Past and Present** 2a Skinner Street, Gillingham (Aug 2014)

**Penny Farthing**, 3 Waterside, Crayford (Sept 2014)

**Door Hinge**, 11 Welling High Street, Welling (Mar 2013) Greater London POTY 2014

## **COMING SOON**

**Bexley** – The Broken Drum, 308 Westwood Lane, Blackfen; **Cliftonville** – Tap Room, Northdown Arcade; **Dover** – The Lanes, Worthington St; **Faversham** – 6A Preston Street; **Gravesend** – The Compasses; **Rainham** – No 1 Station Road; **Sandwich** – King St; **Tonbridge** – opposite Wetherspoons /Clintons – Lamberts Passage

## **CLOSED**

**Why Not Inn**, 3 Lymington Road, Westgate-on-Sea, Thanet

In addition, over recent years, a number of new pubs have opened, or been converted from existing licensed premises, that share certain similarities with micro-pubs, but do not have the true mico-pub format, tending to be somewhat larger and often selling food and spirits.

**Lifeboat Ale & Cider House**, 1 Market Street, Margate (2010)  
sells food, wines and spirits.

**The Chapel Bookshop & Bar**, 44-46 Albion Street, Broadstairs (Aug 2012)  
sells food and spirits / also a bookshop.

**Kipps' Ale House**, 11-15 Old High Street, Folkestone (2013)  
Three guest ales, bottled beers, cider and a number of wines

**Port of Call**, Market Square, Dover (July 2014)  
Former Bar Elle – real ale, wine and cider and limited range of food

**Bloody Mary's**, High St. Deal (2014) Opposite car park

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# RAMBLINGS & RUMBLINGS

**Sun 3 Aug - King & Queen, Wendover** (*Tring Sidepocket, Doom Bar, Youngs Bitter*) **Packhorse** (*Mole Valley Ale, London Pride, Summer Ale*) **Bree Louise, Euston** (*Stotfold Light + others*)

**Tues 5 Aug – Black Pig** Warm day, looking forward to a lunchtime pint, but tripped over new opening hours: closed on Mon, and 6pm opening on Tues **Red Cow** (*Pendle Pride, Ripple Classic IPA, Westerham Grasshopper, Doom Bar*)

**Thurs 7 Aug – Rack of Ale** (*Coquetdale Snitter Bitter, Northumberland Summer Gold, Ripple Steam best, Wantsum Black Pig*) Enjoyed my cherry cider

**Sun 10 Aug – Zetland, Kingsdown** (*Goldings, Whit Bay, Spitfire, Master Brew*) Superb location to watch surf on the Goodwins on the choppy sea. Views from inside the pub mainly of parked cars however. **Rising Sun** (*Youngs London Gold*) **King's Head** (*Goacher's IPA, Milestone Shine On, Greene King IPA*) Impressed with beer quality in the three Kingsdown pubs, a good Sunday evening.

**Tues 12 Aug: Visit to the Edge of the Conurbation – Sovereign of the Sea, Petts Wood Wetherspoon** (*Hog's Back HBD, + others, but all other beers 5% or more!*) **One Inn the Wood, Petts Wood Micro** (*Westerham Finchcock, Rocking Robin*) **Orpington Wetherspoons** (*Westerham Tripple Jump*) **Baring Hall Hotel, Grove Park** (*Deuchars IPA + others*)

**Fri 22 Aug – Phoenix, Canterbury** (*Pig & Porter Elders and Betters, Caveman Neandertal, Kent Cobnut, Nelson Trafalgar, Hop Fuzz 1914, Northern Star, Wantsum Millers Mirth*) **King's Arms, Elham** (*Golden Braid, Skrimshander, Harvey's Best*)

**Thurs 28 Aug – Fox** (*Box Steam Chuffin Ale, Wadworth Farmers' Glory, Pride of Sheffield*) For a change, thought I'd visit on a day other than Wednesday. I picked a very quiet Thursday. Beers good, though. **Rack of Ale** (*Hop Star Summer Daze, Ripple Steam Best, Bespoke Brewing Leading Light, Northumberland Main Seam Mild*) Good crowd of people, including touristy types. Who told them about Dover's micropub underworld I wonder? **Blakes** (*Whitstable Renaissance, Hallertau Blanc*)

**Sat 30 Aug – Market Inn, Sandwich** (*Whitstable Bay, Master Brew*) **Way Out, Westmarsh** No longer a pub alas, but tearoom open Saturdays and Sundays from 11 to 5 until end of Oct. Nice selection of Kentish scone teas with cream from Cornwall. **Hair of the Dog, Minster's Micropub**. (*Hop Fuzz Goldsmith, Gemstone Amethyst*)

**Sun 31 Aug – Chance** (*Bass*) The garden being deserted late afternoon, what a good opportunity to work on one's skittling skills! John nil - Camber ten. **Port of Call** (*Rudgate Ruby Mild + others*) Good welcome from nice barman who said we should have come earlier – there'd been music. A narrow escape maybe.

**Fri 5 Sept – PHAROS BEER FESTIVAL at Dover Grammar School for Boys**  
Most enjoyable. Will this start a trend I wonder?

**Thurs 11 Sept: Dover Micro Tour – Arlington** (*Ripple Steam bitter, Gadds 5, Doom Bar*) First visit, friendly welcome, but a bit out of the way, perhaps – really hope it works out **Mash Tun** (*Privateer Beer Dark Revenge + others*) **Port of Call** (*Goody Good shepherd, Gadds 5, Master Brew + others*) **Eight Bells** (*Westerham Spirit of Kent + others*) Quite impressed with standards of newcomers, and Wetherspoons didn't disappoint either. Is Dover becoming the Real Ale Mecca of the South?

**Fri 12 Sept – Cat & Custard Pot** (*Gadds Rye Pale, Master Brew*)

**Sun 14 Sept – Mash Tun** (*Privateer Dark Revenge, Northumberland Bucking Fustard, Wantsum More's Head, Dynamo + 5 ciders*) **Royal Oak Nonington** (*Goody Good Evening, Whitstable Hallertau Blanc, Wantsum More's Head*) Quite busy Sunday lunchtime, Unlike some foody pubs there is ample seating for drinkers, but 'pub feel' somewhat lacking. (*Good to see concentration on local micro ales though – Ed*) **Wrong Turn** (*Roosters Green -Yorkshire, Dark Star Hophead, Hop Fuzz Hopy Bomb*) First ever visit. Seem to be doing well. An unpretentious, welcoming little pub. I wish them well.

**Thurs 18 Sept – 39 Steps, Broadstairs** (*Orkney Northern Light + others*). **Hovel-ling Boat**, *Ramsgate (Saltaire Pride, Seaside)*

**Thurs 25 Sept – Red Lion St Margarets** (*Hop fuzz Zingiber, Cross Bay Spectrum, Doom Bar*) Good to see interesting beers. **Plough Ripple** (*Ripple Steam Pale, Original, Fullers ESB, Broadside*)

**Sun 28 Sept – Blue Pigeons** (*Rockin Robin Bitter, London Pride, Greene King IPA*) **Hair of the Dog, Minster** (*Nottingham cock Hoop, Pot Belly Pigs Do Fly, Mad Cat Auburn Copper*) Seized chance to visit somewhere a bit further away. Thanks to rail engineering works, direct service Dover/Minster today. Not normally a journey to be undertaken lightly!

**Tues 30 Sept: Folkestone Crawl – Pullman** (*Gadds 7, OD Red Top, Doom Bar*) **British Lion** (*Piledriver, Boondoggle, Marston's Empire*) **Kipps** (*Madcat Autumn Greenhop, Brentwood Best, Conway Moose Poose*) Couldn't help indulging in port and stilton too, very decadent. (*Rather short crawl, or did the port and stilton finish you off? – Ed*)

*Stroller*

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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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# CHANNEL VIEW

**PUBS MATTER** Our Summer edition applauded the success of the micro industry, both breweries and pubs booming, particularly here in Kent. However, that state of good health is not reflected over the industry as a whole. While the larger brewers, with outlets through supermarkets and the off trade, might be seen as doing very nicely, the state of many traditional pubs is precarious.

While local councils have generally been aware of the value of the public house and particularly of community locals, with policies supporting them, there often seems to be a reluctance to challenge “the free play of market forces”. Additionally, as we report on page 4, councils are not helped by the weak and inadequate nature of much of existing legislation, and its various loopholes. A CAMRA commissioned report from the Local Government Information Unit on the current situation concluded “both the attitude of local councils towards pubs and our planning laws need to change.”

Hence, CAMRA's campaign “Pubs Matter: so why can't we have a say”. At one time when pubs were everywhere, it did not seem necessary to differentiate between pub use and many other commercial uses, at least in terms of alternative uses of an existing pub. While change of use to a pub was almost inevitably required planning consent, change of use from a pub often was not.

Of course things have changed. Pubs everywhere are under threat. The seemingly once ubiquitous back street local, or pub on the corner are increasingly rare, while in town and city centres those that have survived often appear

more restaurant than pub, or have become club-like operations selling big name brands and exotic spirits to younger drinkers. In rural areas, villages with two or more pubs are an exception, many have none at all, and those that still exist, have as like as not, followed many of their urban cousins down the foodie trail. It is vital that we protect those traditional style pubs that remain.

As we have often pointed out before, for a part of our culture that is allegedly so close to our hearts, we regularly give it scant regard. In particular, it seems especially ironic, that when so much of our lives (far too much many would say) is controlled by one aspect or another of Government legislation, here there exists a notable absence, or at best inadequacy. Some would argue for the dominance of the market, that use of property should be at the discretion of its owner. However, that line followed to its logical conclusion would lead to all kinds of consequences that probably none of us would want. Even the most ardent property developer might balk at the complete removal of planning controls – while environmental and aesthetic considerations might not be of concern, the effect on land prices would be a very different matter.

CAMRA has for long fought for extension of controls, of which the current campaign is a continuation, and welcomes the support of those councils and MPs who are pushing for enhanced legislation. But the ordinary drinker can play his or her part as well. Pub campaigner Mark Bradshaw has

set up an E-petition as follows:-

“That the Government help protect community pubs in England by ensuring that full planning permission and community consultation are required before community pubs are allowed to be converted to betting shops, supermarkets, pay-day loan stores or other uses, or are allowed to be demolished.”

Running until 2015 it can be found at: [epetitions.direct.gov.uk/petitions/66572](http://epetitions.direct.gov.uk/petitions/66572). CAMRA urges everyone to sign it. Once 100,000 signatures are logged, a debate in Parliament is guaranteed. By mid July over 4,000 had already signed. And for more information on the “Pubs Matter” campaign, and how you can get involved, visit [www.pubsmatter.org.uk](http://www.pubsmatter.org.uk)

**OUR NATIONAL DRINK** As we report in National News real ale is currently booming, a fact, about which we in East Kent, at the heart of the micro-pub revolution, need no reminding. However, we need to make sure that the glad tidings are spread throughout the country, and that the media in particular keep it at the forefront of their reporting on a regular basis. We need also not to be distracted by internecine arguments about styles and types of cask ale, an occurrence which may not have appeared locally but has arisen elsewhere. The October edition of CAMRA's national newspaper, *What's Brewing* commented as follows.

Beer and cider drinkers and pub-goers tend to be a positive bunch, but there's even more reason for positivity at the moment. The newly launched *Cask Report* shows the reversal of real ale's fortunes continues and is bedding in – becoming a trend rather than a blip. Built into the growth of real ale is further positive news – young drinkers are

being recruited in greater numbers than ever, are more likely to be trying new ales and continue to drink great beers.

It might be too much to hope that all the time currently being spent trying to define “craft beer” or, worse, denigrate other breweries for not being “craft” enough could come to an end. But there may be a unifying message which everyone can get behind – cask beer is “craft beer” and everyone needs to do more to encourage more drinkers to try it and try it in pubs.

Another much awaited publication – CAMRA's *Good Beer Guide* – continues the positivity, highlighting the continued increase in breweries in the UK, and showcasing just how many great pubs are promoting real ale and cider across the country.

Media reaction to the *Good Beer Guide* launch, and CAMRA's Pubs Matter launch at the end of the summer further demonstrates the good feeling about pubs and beer seems to be spreading – and is a welcome counter to the anti-alcohol lobby, which has too often been championed without question by the mainstream media.

With so much good news about beer, cider and pubs, newspaper, radio and television will hopefully find it harder to ignore the message that beer is the UK's national drink, in moderation it is healthy, pubs are part of the solution to alcohol abuse problems and they should be devoting just as much space and time to ale as wine.





# FROM ACROSS THE WATER

Stuart Roberts reports from France

First I have an apology to make to my fellow branch members.

I did say that I would meet up with you if I could for a pint or three on my summer visit to Kent. I had already postponed my summer stay in Stelling due to delays in finishing pool contracts here in France, and it looked touch and go with my new dates. However, all fell into place, and on the night before my departure I emailed Martin and Ron with my UK mobile number and asked them to give me a call.

I'm not the kind of person to cold call so I waited for a contact which never came. I did feel a bit miffed on my return to France, but when I put steam on to start my PC I found absolutely no email whatsoever, and my outbox still containing my emails to Ron, Martin and several other people. It was another two days before a friend sorted the problem and by the time this is published I hope to have had said pints as I will be returning to Kent meanwhile.

I have to confess that I have been a bit stuck in my ways at my local, as I have not tasted the Perl de Bors (pale 4.0%) unblended since Arnie has gone Key Cask. Arn was out one night and the lass in charge wasn't sure how to change the barrel. As I'd just finished working, I had the thirst of a camel and opted for pure Perl meanwhile. It is Perl only from now on.

I must congratulate Martin on his strategic depositing of Channel Draught No.59. It was apparently near enough to the cross channel gateways for a couple of CAMRA members from other counties to grab a copy. On two occasions I bumped into these guys who had diverted by some 70 miles to visit La Cloche before heading to their holiday destinations. They thoroughly enjoyed the beers and commented highly on the magazine also. Is there an annual competition for best branch magazine?

Arnie also received a visit from Tony Matthews, former owner of Saffron Brewery in Saffron Waldon, Essex, once famous for Britain's most expensive beer which was brewed with saffron, then wax sealed, numbered, and sold in a presentation box for £25 a pint. Tony had the guided tour of the brewery, (stand in one spot and turn around, no offence Arnie) and was very impressed with Arnie's beers and is becoming a regular.

La Cloche now has its fourth outlet signed up for real British style beers, the Manoir Longeveau Golf Club. The bar is open to none-members but unlike the other three outlets is predominately British. As a one-man show, brewer, barman and cook, Arnie believes he has the capacity for one or two more small outlets without compromising delivery and beer quality. He gambled a year or two ago on solar panels and he is now seeing its benefits as the demand rises.

At the end of September we had the traditional meal of tomatoes presented in La Cloche by one of the regulars, Cedric Roy. He's a local young farmer who,

amongst other products (vegetable and fowl), grows 110 different types of tomatoes, from which once a year, he has the unenviable task of producing a three course meal. Variation is enough but when it comes to making a fruit, that is used mainly as a savoury, actually fit into a desert, well? But this year, helped by a local Chef of renown, it was the best ever, and interesting to see pint and half pint glasses on the tables (French also), with a few bottles of wine.

Who says the French don't like curry? I know from my own bar/restaurant that they do, and since I sold it in 2003 there has been much demand from Brits and French for someone to take up the mantle. What could be better than a 'Ruby Murray' with a pint of 'Pigs Ear'? – and real beer at that! Well, my friends, family and I had a splendid evening at the Royal Oak where three nights a week they have a small a la carte menu of Indian cuisine as good as some Brit restaurants and all washed down with 4.2% Old Clapper, (as Vieux Battant translates). Owner, John Bailey, serves the real ale well, though I still feel strange pointing at a keg tap and asking for the 'real stuff'. Once again a full house, a good mix of French and English knocking back the beer.

Sales will naturally die back for Arnie as winter sets in, but I think it has been a great success that on the quality of his real ale, word has spread to draw in many French. His passion for the product and scientific knowledge have kept him in touch with the industry, and enabled him to take on Key Cask without any trepidation. Out of all the changes that may affect real ale, cask breathers and Key Cask have done no harm, and indeed much good. I lament the passing of the oak cask and hope that one day the economics and sustainability will be there for someone to take up the challenge. After all the barrel - making industry is thriving in France and I'm constantly bending Arnie's ear on that matter for an occasional brew.

It was great to be back in Kent for my hols. I had a few pints at the Hop Fest in the day and on the same night enjoyed an evening of the weekend event of The Scavengers American Car Club at the Rose and Crown in Stelling Minnis where Charles Wells Eagle was as good as anything Stew serves. I had good beer and chat at the Butchers Arms micro pub and an evening pub crawl around Sandwich. As for the rest of my break I hunted out the new Kent microbrews in between pints.

*Stuart Roberts*

*Thanks Stuart, for the kind comments about Channel Draught. There are both local and national branch magazine competitions but we have never achieved any success. Re wooden barrels, please see One in the Wood page 38. Pure coincidence – written before we received your copy.*



Stuart's son (2<sup>nd</sup> from right) drinks IPA while his daughter in law "shields my granddaughter from the insipid remains of a Kronenbourg"

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# ...AND ONE IN THE WOOD

## The return of wooden beer barrels

"...and one in the wood." We all know the phrase which harks back to the time when all draught beer came in wooden barrels, and probably we've all used it at some time or other. Today of course, the traditional wooden barrel is now sadly rarely used for containing beer, and if we come across them at all it is usually as a bar feature – a supplementary table or just decoration. However, there is now growing interest in reviving its use for the original purpose, and a an article by David Litten that appeared in the July/August edition of the *Tyke Taverner*, the magazine of the Bradford CAMRA Branch, relates recent developments in their locality.

The impetus behind the current movement is a function of dramatic growth in micro brewers over the last dozen years or so, and the accompanying curiosity about all traditional aspects of beer and brewing. In the UK, Yorkshire is playing an important part, particularly Alastair Simms and his recently established White Rose Cooperage on the Thorp Arch estate near Wetherby, and Maureen Shaw and Neil Midgley at the Junction pub in Castleford.

Alastair Simms was born in Masham, North Yorkshire, home of Theakston's Brewery which he joined as an apprentice cooper in May 1979. After sixteen years with the firm and a further eighteen with Wadworth he returned to Yorkshire in 2013 to set up his own business. When he started working in the 1980s there were still around a hundred coopers in the country, but today the number is reduced to just a handful. However, he hopes that trade will be sufficiently successful, to allow him to take on an apprentice, and his wife Julie also plans to join the business. The long-term aim is to buy a few acres of land to build a cooperage and visitor centre so people can learn about this historic trade and watch coopers at work.



The Junction in Castleford

Currently, the Junction pub in Castleford is one of his principal customers. Having purchased the run down, empty and failed pubco pub, Maureen Shaw and Neil Midgley, transformed it into a traditional local with many unique features including handpumps originally designed to deliver the now long gone Melbourne ales. Backing this up was the gradual re-introduction of wooden casks, and now "wood only" is their mantra.

Over 100 of Alastair's casks have been acquired, and around ten local breweries regularly supply beers in the wood – the first and most consistent supplier being

Simon Bolderson and his Ridgeside brewery in Leeds. Experiments with spirit casks and “ageing in wood”, have demonstrated that wooden casks add a depth of taste to the stronger, darker beers which metal casks cannot, and recent trials with lighter beers also show that they add something extra to them too.

As well as wood imparting flavours into beer, so also can a wooden barrel's previous contents. In the old days, says the pub's website, “the taste of each beer was never exactly the same, because each beer had been infused with different flavour courtesy of the wooden barrel it was in.” You can never therefore be exactly certain what a beer will taste like, whether it will taste just the same as when you sampled that brew before.

Events at the Junction and the White Rose Cooperage have not gone unnoticed. Several progressive brewers in Yorkshire and a few from around the country have already purchased casks or placed orders, and Alastair has also carried out contracts and orders from traditional cider makers, and other pubs such as the Engineers Arms at Henlow. A new development has been the creation of glass head casks which allow the viewing of the activity and changes that occur when traditional real ales are clarified in wooden casks.

Interestingly, we are told that “one in the wood”, although it might be used elsewhere, is very much a local Kent saying. A good illustration being the recently established Petts Wood micro pub “One Inn the Wood.”

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# CLASSIC UNSPOILT PUBS UPDATE

**F**ollowing our article in the 2014 Summer edition of *Channel Draught* about Rodney Wolfe-Coe's list of *Classic Basic Unspoilt Pubs (CBUP)*, in late August we received further information from the list's author, in which he stresses that although the *National Inventory* emerged after his initial list, it was an entirely separate enterprise with a broader scope. The following is a shortened version of his letter, which of course was written before the Scottish referendum .

In 1991 I became aware of some eight or nine lists all claiming to be "the" list of "Divisional" pubs as (Roger) Marples always called them. So I decided "to put my little money where my big mouth is", and over the next three years visited the majority of contestants which resulted in the first CBUP leaflet in 1994. In 1997 I decided that constantly travelling around Great Britain seeking cathedrals, heritage railways and classic pubs was preferable to becoming a slave to the electronic communicates empire sprawling all around me – including work. So work had to go. At about the same time appeared in draught form what eventually became the *National Inventory (NI)*. My list, because of closures, tating up, etc., etc. was getting smaller – the *National Inventory*, with its vastly different agenda was getting larger.

The 2004 list was the last – it contained Luppitt, Leintwardine, Halfway House, Apney St. Peter, Cowden Pound (Elsie's), Netherton, Pontfaen, Elton, Bloxwich, Llandovery, Hay-on-Wye, Defford, from a list of 169.

The summer of 2012 saw the completion of visits to all NI pubs in England and Wales, so I rewrote, for my own use (a few others have copies) a list of CBUP then in being – Luppitt, Netherton, Cowden Pound, Pontfaen, Apney St. Peter, Elton, Bloxwich, Cemmaes Road, Defford – still very much, as, you have observed, many years previously, a bias towards Wales and the Borders (probably because of the high proportion of free of tie houses thereabouts). Cemmaes Road was a late find

– no real ale when of course the earlier RWC/CAMRA publications tended to exclude places with no real ale. Also mentioned are two no real ale outlets in Scotland that would almost certainly qualify now – Kincardine and Craigellachie. I propose to do both, probably in 2016 along with my remaining railways and cathedrals in that country, providing I don't have to renew my passport to do so!!

Of the nine 2012 entries I hear



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rumours that Cemmaes Road and Deford may no longer be with us – but have no concrete evidence.

Chris (Excell) and I went to Elsie's ten days ago. Everything does remain the same – including the quaint closing time 10.30pm Mon/Tues but 7pm Fri/Sat: "I don't want the lager louts from Edenbridge causing trouble on Friday and Saturday nights." I think the first change may revolve around later weekend closing times.



One final observation. I would be most surprised if Luppitt no longer sold real ale – I cannot see 90 year old Mary dealing with gas canisters, etc. And the locals wouldn't drink it – it's been Otter for twenty years.

*Rodney Wolfe-Coe*

*By Defford we assume that Rodney means the Monkey House. In which case we are able to confirm that it appeared in very good health on a wet Saturday evening last November (see Channel Draught Winter 2013/14). Meanwhile Luppitt's devotion to Otter was confirmed by a report in the Solihull Drinker (magazine of Solihull & District CAMRA) of a visit to the pub earlier this year – Ed.*

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# THE SOCIETY FOR THE PRESERVATION OF BEERS FROM THE WOOD

*(Elsewhere we relate a resurgence in the use of wooden barrels. The following is a very brief history of the association set up specifically to retain their use and promote the cause of real ale, several years before CAMRA was founded)*

In the era of mega brewery mergers and the rise of keg beer, and well before anyone thought up the name CAMRA, seven beer drinkers in the Rising Sun, Epsom, unhappy with the increasing use of gas pressure dispense and promotion of keg beers, formed, on 6th December 1963, the Society for the Preservation of Beers from the Wood (SPBW). They saw wooden casks as being synonymous with traditional draught beer in contrast to the "sealed dustbins" which contained the processed and artificially carbonated product.

However, whether its contents were pressurised, pasteurised and filtered, or left in their natural traditional state, metal casks very rapidly became the norm, and while there might be some effect on taste and flavour by using the traditional wood, the main battleground was soon identified to be whether or not the beer conformed to what ten years later CAMRA termed real ale. Within a few years, despite its name, the SPBW was forced to relax its criteria, and accept that the despised "sealed dustbins" were capable of containing good, cask conditioned ale.

By the end of the 1960s the SPBW had developed into 30 to 40 branches with several thousand members, and was evidently promoting a cause dear to British hearts. A certain amount of campaigning was carried out, of which probably the most high profile, with useful press publicity, was the holding of mock funerals at pubs where keg was in the ascendance. Increasingly the British public, were being awakened to the travesties that were being perpetrated on their national drink.

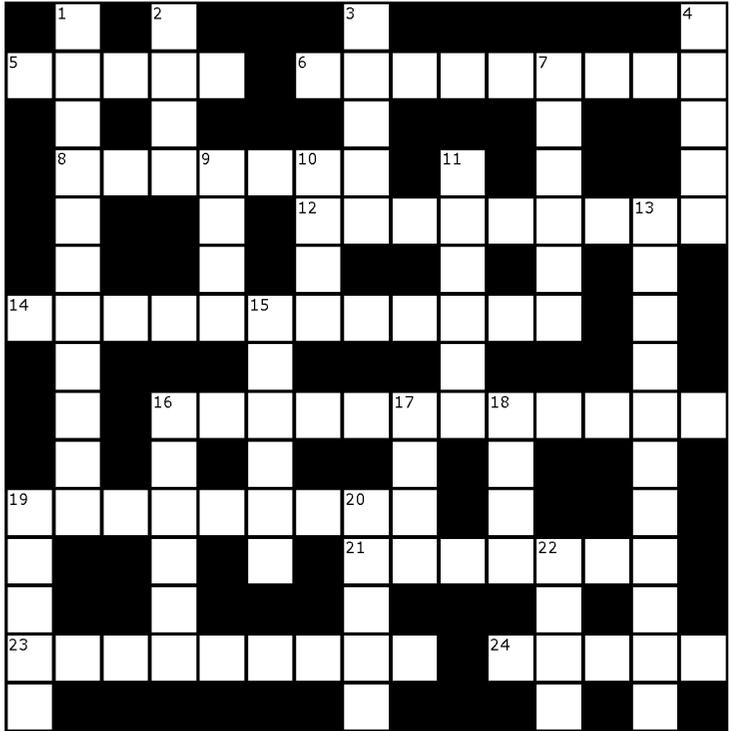
March 1971 was a watershed. Firstly, in Ireland, four young men on holiday from Britain, and increasingly disappointed by the prevalence of keg, put together a few ideas which proved to be the inception of CAMRA. Secondly, the *Sunday Mirror* published a survey that showed that many leading draught beers had been reduced in strength (See Last Knockings). A year later CAMRA held its first annual meeting, and by the end of the decade all the big brewers were espousing real ale, increasing strengths, and introducing new brews or resurrecting old ones.

Today the aims of the SPBW are much those of CAMRA. It recognises naturally-conditioned beer, drawn by gravity, electric pump or handpump, and rejects gas pressure dispense. However, its organisation is entirely voluntary, with the emphasis on activity within its autonomous Branches, which is mainly of a social nature, visits to breweries being particularly popular. The SPBW's National Executive Committee maintains contact with breweries and other relevant bodies on issues of concern. There is a quarterly magazine, *Pint in Hand*, and an annual 'National Weekend' which brings members together to areas of special beery interest.

*The Society's Website <https://www.spbw.com> provides a summary of its origins, history and current activities.*

# CROSSWORD

BY TRISHA WELLS



## Across

- 5. Saggy brewer's problem! (5)
- 6. One of the people not to disturb "while leaving the premises" (9)
- 8. Beer deliverer (7)
- 12. Big bottles of wine (9)
- 14. Small place for making beer (5,7)
- 16. Pale Ale from Time and Tide Brewery (12)
- 19. "Time ..... please" (9)
- 21. Type of bottle in Great Mongeham pub (7)
- 23. Comfy part of a pub (6,3)
- 24. One who drinks too much (5)

## Down

- 1. Redo me a pint (anag.) (11)
- 2. Fizzy water (4)

- 3. Kent village where the Butcher's Arms can be found (5)
- 4. What 14 does (5)
- 7. Flipping Mary's a new real ale bar in Deal! (6)
- 9. Dash back and forth (2-2)
- 10. A beer is just open (4)
- 11. Spanish pub (6)
- 13. Gin (7,4)
- 15 & 17. Strong beer (6,4)
- 16. Kent village, home of Ripple Steam brewery (6) (Hint: it's not Ripple!)
- 18. No bubbles (4)
- 19. Quarter pints (5)
- 20. Kent village, home of the King's Arms, the Rose and Crown and the Abbot's Fireside (5)
- 22. Small beer (4)

**Answers on Page 61**

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# TWO SUMMER WALKS

## Nonington to Wingham and Shatterling to Sandwich

**Nonington to Wingham** The first Saturday in August found the early afternoon country bus service from Dover to Canterbury trundling its way through the leafy lanes of East Kent – among its passengers, a group of determined ramblers from the Deal, Dover, Sandwich and District Branch of CAMRA, intent on a walk through several parishes, and a visit to the public houses along the way. For the moment the sun was shining and the sky clear, but for the last few days the weather had been changeable, and the outlook remained so.

Shortly after 1pm the bus reached Nonington and deposited the four of us – John, Dave, Mark and myself – outside our first stop, the Royal Oak. Here we found, already settled in, the remainder of our group: Tony and poodle Tiffany (who had come by car, courtesy of Tony's wife Trisha), together with Paul, and our leader and walk organiser, John Pitcher, both of whom had walked from Aylesham having caught the train from Dover.

We found a choice of three real ales; locals, Wantsum Imperium and Whitstable East India Pale Ale, together with Caledonian Flying Scotsman, while food was taken by those requiring sustenance. John allowing us an hour or so before setting off, we sat outside on benches overlooking the road, enjoying our beer and chatting – conversations which revealed that at least three of us were suffering infirmities to our legs and feet not conducive to a walk across rough countryside.

Departure time was 2.15, and saying goodbye to Trisha who would meet up with us again later, John led us from the pub and main road, down a narrow footpath and into the countryside proper – a pasture which our path crossed diagonally, sloping up towards the horizon. At first appearing empty, save for two young rams, as we progressed, we noted away down to our right a few cattle, among which appeared to be a bull. Although a few hundred yards away there was certain relief as we climbed the fence at the top.



Our route now skirted the grounds of St Albans Court, home to the Bruderhof Community, an American sect some of whom were standing by a gate into the property as we passed, and who with their wide brimmed hats and women wearing long dresses were reminiscent of the Amish people. Dave enquired as to whether they brewed beer. Apparently they did not.

Up, and across a field of cut corn, where a pair of buzzards circled above. Butterflies were everywhere, and at one point for no obvious reason half a dozen or more dragonflies had congregated. Eventually our path dipped down to meet with a tarmac road, which, after a short stretch, we turned off to follow a footpath alongside a

cricket field and into the cul de sac village of Goodnestone.

Mid Saturday afternoon, and everyone seemingly at home, at least there was no one else in the Fitzwalter Arms when we tramped in and spread ourselves around the public bar. Beer options were Master Brew and Whitstable Bay, this being a Sheps pub. After about an hour, talking to the landlord about the present state of the pub business and his own future plans, John called us to order and led us off once more.

#### **The Fitzwalter Arms, Goodnestone**



The sky had clouded over, and there was a rainy feel about the atmosphere. Still it remained dry as we plodded on; more fields and woods, and through a farmyard into what appeared to be a complete menagerie. Goats, sheep, pigs and horses grazed around us as we passed by. We were someway into the next field when someone remarked that we were not alone – four horses and two shaggy ponies were following us and slowly catching us up.

Paul, who knows and rides horses, appeared unconcerned, and I have been told subsequently that they were probably just looking for an apple or some other tasty titbit, however they seem awfully big when close beside to you, as they were by the time we reached the far gate. Once again there was a sense of relief as we negotiated ourselves around them to exit the field.

Now on the outskirts of Wingham, footpaths led now across playing fields and around the backs of houses, including at one point the twenty yards or so of the “shortest footpath in the whole world.” Eventually, coming into the main street, we found that the Red Lion was currently closed, and while some headed for the Anchor where we were to re-meet with Trisha, four of us called in at the Dog, home of the recently established Black Dog Brewery. Unfortunately, none of their “home brew” was available and the choice was just Doom Bar. We stopped for half an hour before joining the others at the Anchor, where we found Adnams, Nelson Revenge and more Doom Bar.

And that was that, another Branch walk completed, more good Kentish ale consumed, and more weary limbs – although those suffering infirmities all managed the whole route. In due course Trisha and Tony departed for Finglesham, and the rest of us went to wait for the bus to Canterbury, from where we could return to Dover: there being otherwise no alternative way back by public transport.

**Shatterling to Sandwich** Three weeks later, and with several walks having been completed over recent months, John apparently felt it was time to put our training to a real test. So a Saturday afternoon “stroll” was arranged over nine miles, starting at Shatterling and progressing through Staple, Eastry and Worth to Sandwich.

Our starting place was the Frog and Orange (once the Green Man) at Shatterling, where five of us (John Pitcher, Paul Skelton, John and Dave Underdown and my-

self) gathered at midday for a few swift halves of Doom Bar before setting off on our trek. It was fine, but increasingly cloudy, as we crossed the main road and turned down a narrow lane between hop gardens, and set the pattern for the day which saw spots of rain later on. After half a mile the lane ended in a group of farm buildings and our route now led across empty fields to come out into Staple between the church and the currently closed Three Tuns, or whatever it was called in its recent incarnation as a wedding venue.

From there, a succession of lanes took us another mile to the Black Pig at Barnsole, passing on the way a field occupied in places around its edges by guns, tanks and various other ex military equipment of what appeared to be WWII vintage. Just one beer on in the pub, but it was Ripple Steam Best Bitter, and we all looked forward to enjoying a lunchtime on one of our local brews. John Underdown, ahead of the rest of us, was already settled in with his pint, as the landlord pulled up another only to be met with spluttering and froth: "Sorry," he said, "No more real ale until 4 o'clock."

**The Black Pig, Barnsole**



While considering which of the various keg options might be the most acceptable, we noticed some dark bottles on the chilled shelves – bottle conditioned Wantsum Black Pig Porter – and very good too, although we would have preferred it not so cold.

Having drunk and eaten, our walk continued, John leading us up a path between houses opposite the pub, where on one side ripe plums hung thickly above us, and, apparently unwanted, fell onto the path, or the other side of the fence, to be snuffled up by a couple of Gloucester Old Spots. Into open countryside once more, along paths and over ploughed fields, and at one point past an empty deserted house, until at Hammill we were back on proper roads again.

Eastry was now not far off. At Selson the remains of Eastry Station could be seen, part of a long gone railway, which, before the widespread use of cars and buses provided local transport in a curving loop from Shepherdswell to Wingham. The Bull being closed and apparently destined for residential use, the Five Bells is now



**The Five Bells, Eastry**

the sole village pub and at about five o'clock we rolled in and gratefully took the weight off our feet. Beers were Greene King IPA and Bombardier.

Towards six o'clock Dave and John left to catch the bus to Canterbury, where they intended to spend the evening, while shortly after the remaining three of us continued our way towards Worth, taking a footpath down beside Eastry Church, to cross the bypass, and into

apple orchards with trees weighed down with fruit. We emerged almost opposite Worth village street and walked to the Blue Pigeons.

Real ale selection was the broadest we had come upon so far – London Pride, Directors and Bombardier, and from Maidstone's Rocking Robin Brewery Hoppin Robin. From recollection we all chose the latter. Thoughts now turned to the matter of getting home. There was now no direct bus back to Dover so it was either train from Sandwich or buses via Canterbury. John and I decided to go for the former at 8 o'clock, Paul the latter – in either case we needed to get to Sandwich, but there was still time for another pub and another pint.

A couple of minutes walk found us in the St Crispin, with a choice of London Pride, Master Brew and Broadside. We found places at the bar, beside the door to the garden, and enjoyed Broadside and conversation with the affable bar staff. Twenty minutes to Sandwich, reckoned John, along the straight tarmac path that led from beside the pub, and allowing half an hour, we duly finished our beer by 7.30., and set off on the final leg.

The clouds had started to clear over the last few hours, and our approach to Sandwich was suffused with the glow from a spectacularly red sunset. Shepherds delight? Well, the following day was OK, but the 24 hours after that saw approximately a month's rain. John and I said goodbye to Paul and had about five minutes to spare as we clumped across Sandwich Station bridge. And so ended this summer's walks, but I believe John might have something planned for the autumn.

*Martin Atkins*

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# A TOWN TOO FAR

## A look at the 1990 trip when the Beery Boaters fail to get to Bewdley

For several years after the 1990 Start of the Year Trip (see Channel Draught Spring 2014), I neglected at the time to write logs of the Beery Boaters' Canal Trips, so the following is what I can recollect from over 20 years ago. I apologise in advance for brevities and any inaccuracies that might occur in my scribblings. After all, lots of water has flowed, and lots of boats have cruised, under lots of bridges in that time (also lots of beer has been consumed in lots of canalside pubs!). Memories and photographs alone will have to suffice to remind me of events.

We had decided to return to Stroudwater Cruisers, from whom we had hired boats in April 1986, for an Autumn Cruise around the Stourport Ring. So on September 22<sup>nd</sup> 1990 six Beery Boaters arrived at Stourport-on-Severn, and after a few pints of Marston's at the Black Star collected our home for the week, narrowboat 'Jemma', of about 60ft in length. The crew consisted of Dave Underdown, Ray Crane, Mike Lock, 'Speed' (Andy Bushby), Dave Taylor on his first Beery Boater's trip and, of course, Hon. Commodore (Unelected). On the first afternoon we went just a few miles up the Staffs & Worcester Canal to Kidderminster where we moored above the lock by the church and visited several pubs, including the Little Tumbling Sailor, one of M.A.D. O'Rourke's group of iconic 'Little Pubs'. I recall the weather was clear and cold, with ice on towpath puddles in the morning.



From Kidderminster we went up the S&W as far as Stourton Junction, just past Kinver, to turn right onto the Stourbridge Canal. After the quartet of locks at the bottom end of the canal, we cruised through masses of tall reeds for the couple of miles to the bottom of the 'Stourbridge Sixteen' flight of locks, where a short arm goes off right to the centre of Stourbridge. However, we did not go there on this occasion, but continued up the locks. On the way, we passed the remarkable cone of the Redhouse Glassworks at Amblecote, and encountered a couple of locks where the pound between them is so short that you have to open the top gate of one and the bottom gate of the next up to go from one to the other, just like the well-known Bratch Locks on the Staffs & Worcs Canal. Not a normal flight, but not quite a 'staircase' either.

Memory is now somewhat unclear, but my photos show us at Windmill End,

Netherton, on the morning of the 24<sup>th</sup>, so we would have moored up for lunchtime ale at the bottom of the eight locks of the 'Delph 9' flight, and gone to the 'Bull & Bladder', otherwise the Vine, Batham's Brewery Tap. The evening would have seen us at another 'Little Pub', the Little Dry Dock, below the embankment at Windmill End, and I recall walking up to Ma Pardoes (the Old Swan) in the town, which at that time, owned, I think, by the Pitfield Brewery, had temporarily ceased brewing.

First thing Sunday morning we went down Dudley No. 2 Canal and through Gosty Hill Tunnel (the "Drainhole" inside which Brummagem Beauty had broken down in 1987 and had to be 'legged' out) to the current terminus at Hawne Basin. Once this canal continued through the 3808 yard long Lappal Tunnel, the 4<sup>th</sup> longest in the country, to join the Worcester & Birmingham Canal at Selly Oak, but a roof fall long ago put paid to that. So we turned at Hawne Basin, returned to Windmill End and turning right through Netherton Tunnel (a mere 3027 yds), proceeded to Tipton and the Black Country Museum.

We cruised the few yards along the start of the Dudley No. 1 Canal and tied up outside the Museum Pub, the Bottle and Glass, removed from somewhere else locally, and rebuilt on its present site. We paid admission fee at the bar and, after a quick look around the museum, returned to regale ourselves with Holden's beer ('No Lager Sold Here!'). For the evening we took Jemma round the corner to Owen St., Tipton and tied up near the Fountain, once the HQ of Bill Perry (The Tipton Slasher), a boatman who became Champion Prize-Fighter of England in the days of bare-knuckle fisticuffs, and whose statue stands beside the canal. The pub then sold Holt, Plant & Deakin beers, a tasty but sadly now defunct brew, and we spent most of the evening there.

For us, the usual way of doing the Stourport Ring would have left us with a lot of spare time for a week's cruise, so as a diversion we (or Hon. Commodore Unelected) decided that, having missed out on the Tame Valley Canal on the Spring trip owing to the closure of Perry Bar Locks, we should add that to the itinerary. The plus side, bits of canal new to us. The minus side, an extra



**'Jemma' on the Stourbridge  
16 flight**

**An atmospheric view of 'Jemma',  
early morning at Windmill End**



45 locks to Birmingham City Centre (no, you don't need to visit Specsavers [or even Nick Bailey – Ed.], I did say an extra 45 locks!).

The first flight, on Monday morning after we had left the New Main Line, were the eight at Ryders Green on the Walsall Canal. These, some of us had met before, on the 1987 End of Year Trip. The odiferous canalside chemical works by the locks, now thankfully gone, was still polluting water and atmosphere alike with Heaven knows what, and the Ocker Hill Cooling Towers hadn't yet been removed. A short way after the bottom lock, just after the Ocker Hill Tunnel Branch we turned right onto the Tame Valley Canal.

The Tame Valley Canal was just about the last bit of the BCN to be constructed, and it came about as a bypass to ease the flow of traffic on the busy Aston and Farmers Bridge Locks. For the first 3½ miles from Tame Valley Junction to the junction with the Rushall Canal it is boringly straight, going through cuttings and along embankments and accompanied by electricity pylons. Towards the end there is a slight kink after it crosses the Walsall Road Aqueduct. Here it accompanies the M5 Motorway for several hundred yards on one side, and passes above a large sewage farm on the other. At least it wasn't dark, raining and blowing a gale as it usually seems to be when I cruise this canal, but it was very rubbish-infested, something at least which has improved in subsequent years.

It might have been on this trip that we came across 'The Loch Ness Monster of the Tame Valley Canal'. Every time that we speeded up, we seemed to be followed by some sort of humped creature. Every time that we slowed down, it subsided. Eventually we found that several yards of convoluted metal tubing had attached itself to the rudder. We stopped and removed it and also lots of other debris which had become wound around the propeller.

The scenery improved somewhat after Rushall Junction and another couple of miles took us to the top of the 13 lock Perry Bar Flight, which are well spaced, and take the canal down to meet with the Birmingham & Fazeley Canal at Salford Junction, a 4-way intersection under the well-known Gravelly Hill interchange (aka Spaghetti Junction). Near the bottom of the locks, at Witton, we came across a pub which backed onto the canal. Being now lunchtime, and with no other obvious prospects of refreshment, we tied up outside the rear fence.

There was a back gate, but it was locked. However, there was a large hole in the wooden panels of the fence, climbing through which, Ray managed to inflict more damage on his venerable and long-suffering canal-trip-trousers, which had somehow managed to survive a multitude of adventures since the first trip in 1981! The pub was the Safe Harbour, a Mitchell & Butlers house, generally referred to as the 'Gravedigger's' owing to its proximity to the local cemetery. The beer was good and to make up for the lack of main meals there were plenty of well-filled rolls to eat.

Once at the bottom of Perry Bar Locks, the only way to Birmingham Centre was upwards, via the 11 locks of the Aston Flight followed almost immediately by the 13 of Farmer's Bridge. Somehow the throttle cable broke on the latter, but a temporary repair was effected and we moored at the top in Cambrian Basin, just outside the Longboat, a modern pub, subsequently renamed the Flapper & Firkin, then just the

Flapper. A photograph in my album shows that we tied up by the converted BCN Tug, 'Tipton', which we came across again at Keynsham on the 2014 Spring Trip. The Longboat lay on the route to the Prince of Wales, so we had to call in for a



'Jemma' in Diglis Basin, Worcester

pint or two of Ind Coope Burton bitter before continuing the extra few yards to our favourite pub in Birmingham Centre, then still under the care of the lovely Irish landlady, Nancy. By then just about the only building remaining from the original terraced buildings in Cambridge Street, with the new Conference Centre going up around it.

A late start on Tuesday, waiting for a fitter to arrive from Stourport with a replacement throttle cable. Our route now lay on the Worcester & Birmingham Canal, but by lunchtime we had only arrived at Kings Norton, just before Wast Hill Tunnel and where the Stratford Canal branches off. We tied up here and walked up the Road to the Navigation, then, I believe, selling Bass, and just beyond it the Bull's Head, M&B. If it hadn't been a school day, and if I'd known what I know now, I certainly wouldn't have moored there, and certainly not for an overnight stay as it seems to be one of the most vandal-ridden parts of the canal system anywhere. It's certainly



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not unusual to have stones and other missiles directed at passing boats. However, we were blissful in our ignorance and suffered no problems.

The afternoon took us to the top of Tardebigge Locks, all 30 of them. We had climbed up to the Birmingham plateau, about 475 feet above sea level, then down and up again, and now we were about to commence our final descent to Worcester. We started down in daylight, but night fell upon us rapidly, and we reached the bottom lock in complete darkness. So we probably stopped for the evening at the Queen's Head near the last lock, rather than continue for another mile and the half a dozen more locks to our more usual venue, the Boat & Railway at Stoke Wharf.

On Wednesday morning we still had another 26 locks and 12 miles before Diglis Basin in Worcester. Still, the bottom end of this canal is quite rural and pleasant. I can't recall stopping anywhere that morning, but if we did I'm sure that it would have been at Tibberton where there are a couple of Banks's pubs, the Bridge and the Plough. At Worcester we certainly visited the Anchor, a Banks's pub beside the basin, before walking into the city centre. I recall that we had a meal in the restaurant of the Cardinal's Cap, and no doubt patronised several other hosteleries. There are plenty to patronise in Worcester!

Thursday, our last full day and our first cruise on the River Severn; our previous attempt in 1986 having been thwarted by floods. No need for an early start, the two large locks from Diglis Basin down to the river are keeper operated and we had to wait for him to turn to. Stourport-on-Severn is just over 12 miles from Worcester with 3 locks, all keeper operated, but a boat can make very good progress on the river, even against the current, as we did. At the first, Bevere Lock, Dave U found a bookshop and went ashore to investigate it. Almost forgotten, he had to be rescued from the riverbank above the lock by means of walking the plank to the boat. This was the first use of the gangplank on the trip, but it was going to prove very handy later that day!

I'm sure that we had to wait at Holt Lock, the next one up, while the Lock Keeper took his lunch, and then some four miles on we took *our* lunch at the Hamstall Inn, Astley Burf, a riverside pub with a nice landing stage. Once the Hamstall Cider House, I can't recall any cider on our visit, but the beer was Banks's and Tetley's.

Now we were just over a couple of miles from Stourport and with one lock on the river and two up to Stourport Basin we'd be too late for lunchtime drinking and too early for an evening session. What could we do to while the time away? Someone had a bright idea. The official limit of navigation on the River Severn ends about a mile above the entrance to Stourport Basin, although in the Middle Ages barges used to go upriver to Shrewsbury or even further. We wondered how far we could get towards Bewdley, the next town further on from Stourport. True, the river wasn't quite as deep as it had been in the Middle Ages and several rocky shoals were reported on the way, but, we thought, let's give it a bash! (In retrospect, perhaps there *had* been cider at the Hamstall Inn!).

To start with, all went well. We waved goodbye to the blue 'Limit of Navigation' notice on the bank and pressed on regardless. Another mile and, through the crystal-clear water we could see that the river bed was becoming very rocky and, moreover, getting closer to the surface. Ray took the tiller while Hon. Commodore

perched on Jemma's bow like a ship's figurehead and piloted the way through the shoals.

Eventually we decided it would be foolhardy to go any further. Stroudwater Cruisers wouldn't exactly thank us if the river level dropped and stranded us beyond the Limit of Navigation, and our Accident, Damage, etc., Deposit would no doubt quickly evaporate. So Ray put the engine into neutral and let Jemma waft gently downstream with the current. Unpowered, the boat drifted down the Severn sideways.

After a while it was deemed time to turn and point the bows down the river. Ray engaged forward gear and Jemma moved ahead under her own power, only to ground her nice flat bottom on a nice flat shelf of rock. Getting a boat with a flat keel off a flat hard surface is no easy matter. Rocking, as one would on mud, or polling, were of no use whatsoever. If the water level dropped now, we'd be quite literally high



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and dry! Before long someone plucked up courage and slipped over the side to try to push it off. Still no joy! Soon there were three of us on the shelf of rock trying to free the boat; Ray and Dave Taylor went in fully clothed, but Hon. Commodore stripped down to his underpants, much to the amusement of a giggling gaggle of schoolgirls strolling along the path on the riverbank. And still Jemma remained firmly stuck!

Then inspiration! Where it came from I've no idea. It must have been something I'd read. Anyway, I asked to be handed the gangplank, slid it under the stern of the boat, levered up and Jemma slid off the rock with hardly any effort at all. Those in the water quickly clambered on board and we let the boat carry on drifting down away from the shoals before engaging gear again.

Having been thwarted in our efforts to get to Bewdley by water, that evening, with the boat safely moored in Stourport Basin, we went there by taxi and found it to be a very pleasant town with several fine drinking establishments, including another 'Little Pub', the Little Pack Horse.

And so, another canal trip over. Lots of locks, lots of beer, new canals and rivers to cruise, no rain and no untoward mishaps. Roll on 1991 and more Beery Boating!

*Jim Green*



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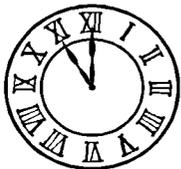
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# LAST KNOCKINGS

**What We Knew Already** Boldly going where other researchers perhaps fear to tread, a group at the Stockholm School of Economics recently organised a blind tasting of three European pale lagers – Budvar, Heineken and Stella Artois. 138 volunteers aged between 21 and 70 were each given three samples of beer, two of which were the same and one different, and asked to identify the odd one out. According to the researcher's report, the results showed that, "They cannot distinguish between three major competing brands." It continued, "Our results suggest that brand loyalty in this market is driven largely by marketing and packaging and not by underlying sensory properties of the competing products."

Real ale drinkers will be not the least bit surprised. We have long suspected that the vast array of pale golden brews that populate many a bar top are very much interchangeable once in the glass, the major distinguishing feature being the often elaborate font from which they are served. And of course it is not just lager where brand loyalty wins over taste and flavour. Similar blind tasting found supermarket brands rated above big brand ketchup and baked beans, a £40 champagne preferred to one at ten times the price, and Pepsi regularly chosen over Coke, even though in the US soft drinks market it comes third behind Coke and Diet Coke.

**Nothing Changes** The last decade or so has seen a succession of major real ale producers reducing the strength of some of their leading brands. Greene King's Old Speckled Hen and Ruddles County, Wychwood Hobgoblin, Shepherd Neame Spitfire, Charles Wells Bombardier and Bateman's XXXB have all seen falls in strength of between approximately 5% and 15%, while Wadworth's Bishop's Tipple dropped almost 20% from 6.2% to 5.0%. However, such cavalier treatment of big selling brands is not new. A report by the *Sunday Mirror* in 1971, related similar behaviour during the 1960s.

At that time duty was paid on a beer's original gravity, not its Alcohol By Volume (ABV), although the two are closely connected, the higher the original gravity the stronger the beer. Between 1960 and 1971 the original gravity of Ansells bitter dropped from 1045 to 1039, that of Watney's Special from 1043 to 1038, and Worthington E from 1042 to 1037. And the succeeding years saw further reductions. A CAMRA test in 1975 found Ansells down two more degrees to 1037, Charrington IPA which had stayed steady between 1960 and 1971 dropped from 1044 to 1039, and Bass reduced from 1043 also to 1039 – although it was shortly afterwards increased to 1044, as CAMRA's campaigning kicked in, and Bass Charrington needed a contender in the strong draught bitter market. Should they be surprised that we don't all love them?

**Autumn Abundance** By all accounts this year's apple harvest is proving to be phenomenal, and first hand observations bear this out – one of our Branch walks,

reported elsewhere in this issue, taking us along the edge of an apple orchard with trees weighed down by fruit, and the ground covered with windfalls. Hops, similarly, were hanging heavily from their wires by early September, and if the barley crop (not seemingly grown too much around here) is as good as the wheat has looked all summer, all promises well for next year's beer and cider. While it might be unrealistic to expect such abundance to be reflected in what we pay for a pint in the pub, it might help to offset some of the ever rising costs that brewers, cider producers and publicans are continually having to contend with.

**Snackonomics** How much for a packet of crisps? Of course it depends where you're buying them. Much cheaper in bulk from a supermarket than individually in a pub, but you wouldn't expect much more than 60 to 70 pence, and certainly under £1. How about £1.50 then, with pork pies available at £3.50. These prices were come across recently in a pub one Sunday lunchtime, and it wasn't in the middle of London, but on the outskirts of a midland town. There were no rolls, sandwiches, or other "lighter" options, but Sunday lunch could be had for about a tenner.

**Greene Kingonomics** Ever expansionist Greene King has evidently been eyeing up pubco Spirit Group, which if a successful take-over is completed, will further reduce drinkers choice in pubs currently operated by the latter. It will also, no doubt, see more pubs given the Hungry Horse treatment, Greene King's entrant in the family pub stakes, its equivalent of Brewers Fayre and Harvester. A fine example of the style, created, with

The Royal Oak, Hillmorton



substantial extensions, out of what had formerly been a canalside old boatman's pub, was visited recently by the Beery Boaters – the Royal Oak at Hillmorton on the edge of Rugby. On a main road, with large car park, and extensive outside seating area, there was not much of the old boatman about it. Inside everything was equally 21<sup>st</sup> century, a sprawl of tables and chairs, where, although real ale was available, food appeared to be very much the priority. It's difficult to fault the commercial logic of such operations – bland and characterless as they may be, they obviously generate the money. However, could not a small part be set aside for those who like pubs to be pubs? Twenty years ago we came across a similar canalside establishment one Sunday lunchtime, Marstons I think being the owners. Push through the foodie/family area and there was a small back bar with plates of cheese, pickled onions and sliced black pudding on the bar counter, crib and dominoes being played, and many a pint being downed.

*Old Wort*

# A Campaign of Two Halves

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## And Finally.....Legal drink driving to save pubs?

Kerry County Council in southwest Ireland hit upon an unusual way of trying to revive ailing country pubs (and ailing potential drinkers). It passed a controversial measure that would make it legal for some rural drivers to get behind the wheel after downing a few pints. A majority vote of councillors supported the creation of special permits to be used when driving in sparsely populated areas whilst intoxicated. The controversial move was at odds with a national crackdown on drunk driving in Ireland. The proposed permits in Kerry would allow rural residents to consume 'two or three drinks'

Kerry Councillor and pub owner Danny Healey-Rae, who spearheaded the motion, claimed that drinking and driving in rural areas had "never killed anyone" and that the permits would actually help prevent "a lot of them falling into depression. "Many these people are living in isolated rural areas where there's no public transport of any kind, and they end up at home looking at the four walls, night in and night out, because they don't want to take the risk of losing their licence".

However the move was doomed due to harsh criticism from both the Irish Transport Minister and the Road Safety Authority in Ireland together with a failure to convince Irish Justice Minister, Alan Shatter, to allow the issue the special permits.

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