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**CAMPAIGN  
FOR  
REAL ALE**

**Issue 62  
Winter  
2014/15**

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

# CHANNEL DRAUGHT



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### **THE STORY OF PUB SIGNS**

**A look at this  
unique feature  
of British pubs**

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### **THE GREAT BEER FLOOD A 19th Century brewery tragedy**

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## **THE LANES JOINS DOVER'S MICROPUBS**

**Worthington Street micro pub opens**



## **Channel Draught**

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Sandwich & District

Branch of the

Campaign for Real Ale

[www.camra-dds.org.uk](http://www.camra-dds.org.uk)

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# **CHANNEL DRAUGHT**

## **ISSUE 62**

## **Winter 2014/15**

**A**nother new year, another beer festival, and another Channel Draught – welcome to our Winter edition for 2014-2015, a change of year which, despite at the time of writing has every prospect of some very wintry weather, brings with some very positive expectations about the future of pubs and real ale.

Despite nationally, pubs continuing to close, just at the minute in our locality at least, we seem to be gaining more than we are losing, the micro pub phenomenon providing our Branch with currently half a dozen new real ale outlets, with one or two more intended. A very different story from much of the last ten to fifteen years, when all the news seemed about closure. So we applaud the opening of the Lanes in Worthington Street, the latest addition to the total and the 100<sup>th</sup> British micro pub, which since the middle of December has been offering us a warm welcome and some very fine ales and cider.

This year's White Cliffs Festival of Winter Ales will be our 22<sup>nd</sup>, and is just the start of a variety of events – country rambles, visits to other towns, bus trips – which our Branch organises throughout the year, to promote the pub and real ale. One new feature this year will be our Pub of the Season award (see page 26).

In the following pages, as well as local and national news and other regular items, we include the story of a great beer disaster in London, follow a long weekend seeking out the best local pubs, print the first of a series about pub signs, and relate the most recent exploits of the Beery Boaters.

*Martin Atkins*



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# EVENTS DIARY

<i>Fri 6 - Sat 7 Feb</i>	<b>White Cliffs Festival of Winter Ales 2015</b> Dover Town Hall (Maison Dieu)
<i>Sun 8 Feb</i>	Beer Festival Take-down, <b>Dover Town Hall</b> (9am)
<i>Mon 16 Feb</i>	Branch Meeting & Festival Wash-up, <b>Louis Armstrong</b>
<i>Fri 20 - Sat 21Feb</i>	Winter Beer Festival, <b>The Berry</b> , Walmer*
<i>Fri 6 - Sat 7 Mar</i>	<b>Roger Marples Beer Festival</b> , Royal Cinque Ports Yacht Club*
<i>Sat 7 Mar</i>	<b>Ramsgate Walk About</b> (details – see Branch Web Site)
<i>Mon 16 Mar</i>	Branch Meeting, <b>The Ship</b> , Deal.
<i>Thur 2 - Mon 6 Apr</i>	Beer Festival, <b>The Chambers</b> , Folkestone *
<i>Fri 3 - Sat 4 Apr</i>	<b>Planet Thanet Beer Festival</b> , Winter Gardens, Margate
<i>Fri 3 - Mon 6 Apr</i>	Beer Festival, <b>Five Bells</b> , Eastry*
<i>Mon 27 Apr</i>	AGM & Branch Meeting, <b>Royal Cinque Ports Yacht Club</b>
<i>Sat 2 - Sun 3 May</i>	Rotary Beer Festival, <b>The Fox</b> , Temple Ewell*
<i>Mon 18 May</i>	Branch Meeting, <b>Red Lion</b> , St. Margaret's.

**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



# MPs BACK PUBS

Recent years have at last seen CAMRA's pressure and campaigning beginning to pay big dividends. Communities now have the opportunity to declare their local pub an Asset of Community Value with the prospect of possibly purchasing it, should its continuing use as a pub be threatened, while the budget before last, saw the removal of the damaging beer duty escalator. Now MPs are further backing CAMRA and pressing for reform of the relationship between pubcos and their tenants, and for a closure of the planning loophole which allows pubs to be demolished or converted to other uses without planning consent.

In November last year the House of Commons voted to reform the relationship between the biggest pubcos and their tenants. A clause introduced into the Small Business Bill will require that pubcos with more than 500 pubs will have to offer tenants both a market-rent only option, and additionally allow them to buy beer competitively on the open market. It is hoped that the bill will have received Royal Assent by the end of January.

The reforms are directed at the larger pubcos with more than 500 pubs. Smaller pub companies and family owned breweries below the 500 cap will be exempt from the new regulations, allowing them to operate as before. If enacted the changes will be phased in over five years, alongside rent reviews, lease renewals or the sale of the pub. And support has come from the Federation of Small Businesses, whose chairman John Allan said: "The freedom to stock a wider range of beers will provide a boost to local economies while giving consumers greater choice."

At the time of writing, however, the change has yet to be enacted and CAMRA and other groups are working hard to ensure that vested interests do not succeed in overturning the proposal. The bill does not abolish the tie, as some have maintained, and the 500 cap will ensure that smaller pubcos and family brewers are exempt from its provisions. CAMRA also emphasises that the reforms will not lead to 1,400 pubs closing as has been claimed.

Meanwhile, 89 MPs have signed an Early Day Motion calling for the Government to take action against the present system which allows pubs to be demolished or converted to other uses without planning consent, and which is contributing to the closure of thirty one pubs a week. Currently the Government recommends that local authorities use Article 4 Directions, which restrict permitted development rights but these are expensive and time consuming. About forty councils have joined CAMRA in saying that planning rules need to be changed nationally to better protect pubs, and there is a very real chance that legislation may be enacted before the General Election on 7<sup>th</sup> May. For more information on saving pubs go to [www.pubsmatter.org.uk](http://www.pubsmatter.org.uk). (see Channel View)

And further help for pubs has come from the Chancellor. In his autumn statement George Osborne outlined plans for a further annual £500 business rate rebate for smaller pubs over the next two years, while also capping the inflation-linked increase in business rates to just 2%.



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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

Mid December saw the opening of the town's latest micro-pub, the **Lanes** in Worthington St. at the junction with Queen's Gardens. As we reported in our autumn edition the pub is owned by Debbie and Keith Lane and is a further addition to the growing number of micro-pubs in East Kent. Originally hoping to open in the Autumn, planning permission was not finally granted until December 18<sup>th</sup>, but all was ready, and the Lanes opened the following day. Three or four real ales are normally on tap, plus of course cider and wine. The opening night found a choice of RCH Old Slug Porter, Skinners Ginger Tossler and Alton's Pride. Since, many and varied beers have come and gone, including the ever excellent Dogbolter and, not quite as strong, a particularly tasty, bitter style ale, called Big Ben.

The delayed opening of the Lanes, of course, excluded it from the Dover 'NouvAle' walk-about on Saturday November 22<sup>nd</sup> – a stroll around the new and revised real ale outlets in the town centre. Incongruously, we began our trip at **Blakes** at around 11.30, hardly a new venue for drinkers of real ale, but those who wanted sustenance for the forthcoming hours said it was a good place to eat. Beers were Cottage Bentley, Adnams Lighthouse and Whitstable

Kazbek.

We then moved on to the **Arlington**, re-instated as a pub in September, after ten or a dozen years as a bistro/restaurant. Owner Pauline has set it out in micro-pub fashion, and we sat in "Hellfire Corner" – next to the door with WWII memorabilia – and drank from a choice of Goachers Mild, Whitstable Native, Hobgoblin and Gadds No.5. Older readers may remember that war-time memories are not new to this pub. In its days as the Avenue models of military aircraft hung from the ceiling.

Our path now led to the **Mash Tun**, Peter and Kathryn Garstin's re-working of the short lived Pier Three, where sofas and armchairs offer a particularly comfy welcome. Wantsum Black Prince, Liverpool Craft American Red, and the Mash Tun's House Bitter brewed for the pub by Hopdaemon were available. Across the road demolition had commenced on the back of Centurion House – not yet forty years old a fine illustration of transient modern culture, and which, a few weeks later, was to offer excellent entertainment as work progressed towards the frontage.

Next stop was the former Bar Elle premises, or at least the front part of it, now renamed the **Port of Call**. Since



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opening in the summer there have been various alterations of ownership although day to day management remained in the hands of Neil Middlebrook, with much beer sourced locally. However, at the time of writing the pub is closed, and we understand it has been sold – lease, freehold or what we do not know. Nevertheless, on the day of our stroll it was very much open, and offering Gadds No 5, Goacher's Gold Star and Real Mild, Time & Tide Smuggler's Stout, and Nelson Friggin in the Rigg. Outside, in the Market Square early festive season activities were in full swing, but as someone remarked the Port offered a fine haven from all that "Christmas fayre commotion."

Finally, as dusk descended, we made our way to the **Rack of Ale** where we found Goody Good Health, Canterbury Torpedo, Wantsum Black Prince Mild, Cornish Coaster and Ripple Black IPA. Recollection suggests that place was crowded, but seats were found and more good ale drunk. In addition to real ale, all five pubs offer a variety of ciders, about which, conversation in due course turned, particularly a discussion of the various additives, allowed or otherwise.....or accidental (see Bucolic Ballads, page 19).

Of course, while all the new real ale outlets give the town a new dimension there are many existing pubs already selling real ale. The **Park**, at the other end of the terrace from the Rack, usually offers two real ales, but concentrates more on national brews, London Pride and Doom Bar having been seen recently. The **Falstaff**, next to the Fire Station, is still closed with work apparently suspended, and in Biggin St. the **Prince Albert** also offers one or two real ales, visits at the end of last year finding Bombardier and London Pride. The recently painted green **Golden**

**Lion** is currently selling Doom Bar, while one real ale is usually available at the **Priory Hotel**.

In London Rd. the **Eagle**, **Sportsman** and **Old Endeavour** appear to be not currently selling real ale, but it can be found at the **Bull** at Buckland where there is regularly one handpumped brew. Visits in November found Hobgoblin and JW Lees Cask Bitter.

The **Red Lion**, Charlton Green, has been offering the excellent West Berkshire Good Old Boy, alongside usually Doom Bar, and there has been talk of bringing back Timothy Taylor Golden Best, which the pub sold for a period last year. Around Christmas Rocking Rudolph made an appearance. And more winter/Christmas ales at the **Louis Armstrong** over the festive period and into the new year, including Dark Star Original, Old Dairy Snow Top and Gadds Little Cracker. The last two, being respectively sweetish and rather bitter, encouraged some drinkers to try half and half mixed, when they were on the handpumps together for a few days – a combination which worked exceedingly well and rapidly acquired the name Top Cracker. The annual pre Christmas quiz proved a great success, the pub crammed with teams and £170 being raised for Crisis at Christmas.

The number of Christmas ales seems to expand every year, with many new names alongside the old regulars. A good selection could be found at the **Fox**, Temple Ewell, including Wadworth Dray Bells, Thwaites Yule Love It and Brain's I See Santa. While for the May Day Bank Holiday weekend the pub will be hosting it's now annual Rotary Beer Festival (See Branch Diary)

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FANTASTIC MENU

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about inspired a similar visit to the pubs of north Deal. Lots of changes here over recent years, and at one time we might have started at the Sandown Castle. However, some time ago it was demolished to make way for housing, meaning that the northernmost pub in the town is now the **Forester**, which is where six of us met up shortly after midday on Saturday January 17<sup>th</sup>. A cosy and welcoming pub, we sat at a couple of tables in the window and drank Shepherd Neame Whitstable Bay, looking out over a chilly sea.

With nine or ten pubs to visit we could not stop too long, or drink too much (mostly confining our consumption to halves throughout the afternoon), and around one o'clock headed for Alfred Square and the **Saracen's Head** for more Shepherd Neame and a bite to eat, courtesy of Richard and Opal.

Beers were Master Brew, Whitstable Bay and, all too rarely seen on hand-pump, Bishops Finger.

The **Prince Albert** being closed in the afternoon (except Sundays) we reluctantly had to give it a miss, although recent reports show the pub offering a wide selection of ales including many from Kent – Westerham, Wantsum, Canterbury Ales, Nelson, Kent and Whitstable all having appeared over recent months. Instead we moved on to one of Deal's newer bars, **Bloody Mary's**. Modern, and of wine bar style, it also offers real ale; that afternoon a choice of Gadds Seaside and Little Cracker, drawn straight from the barrel behind the bar.

Real ale is no stranger to its management. Many will remember one of its two proprietors, Geoff, from his years several decades ago, running the

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Plough and Harrow in Tilmanstone, and more recently the **Deal Hoy** – coincidentally our next stop. Here we found Master Brew, Whitstable Bay and Thatcher's Heritage on handpump, together with a Shep's beer unknown to us, Amber Ale. From there it was no distance to the **Alma**, around the corner in West St. where the selection was Harveys Sussex, Ripple IPA, Thwaites Wainwright and Timothy Taylor Landlord.

Back to the High St. for our next venue, and the cavernous vaults of **D's Steak and Dive Bar**, a restaurant and bar where casual drinkers are welcome. One or two real ales are normally available, on this occasion Adnams Southwold. Among the decoration are striking pictures of early rock and rollers Jerry Lee Lewis, Gene Vincent and Ritchie Valens (or maybe Ricky Valance) – whichever, very impressive.

A few yards further along the road lies **Borough Wines**, a combination of wine shop and wine bar smaller than many a micro-pub, but which also sells a variety of bottle conditioned beers and key keg ale from the Deal based Time and Tide brewery. We tried Pale Ale and Table Ale, and although the system used is CAMRA accredited, most of us felt the resulting beer was too cold and too gassy, although well flavoured (see below – Admiral Owen). Late afternoon and the place was crowded, largely we suspected by second home owners down from the metropolis.

Several of our number now decided to call it a day, leaving just three of us to finish off. First to the **Ship**, which perhaps by chance, but more likely by some sub-conscious calculation, we arrived at, just as the pub's 5.30pm happy half hour got underway. A pint of

Gadds No.7 at £1.20 took one back a couple of decades, though before of course Gadds was established. As usual for this early evening tradition the pub was rapidly filling up, but we found seats in the back bar by the window. As well as No.7 there was also from Gadds No.5 and Dogbolter, and from Dark Star, Hop Head and American Pale Ale.

Lastly to the **Just Reproach**, handy for bus and train as the three of us had to get back to Dover, and which we found as equally crowded as the last two venues – no call for real ale they say. Choice lay between T&T Spratwaffler, Ripple Black IPA, Kelham Island Easy Rider, and Dark Star American Pale Ale. We stayed for half an hour before leaving to catch our transport home.

Elsewhere in Deal the **Clarendon** in Beach St. remains closed with future uncertain/unknown, while a few doors away the **Bohemian** continues to offer three or four real ales with a heavy local emphasis – Ripple Best Bitter, Old Dairy Blue Top, Gadds No.3 and Whitstable Winkle Picker – though as someone pointed out the pub is especially notable for the fine selection of Belgian bottled beers.

At the **Telegraph**, sterling efforts by customers during November and December saw over £7,000 raised for the children's charity Make-A -Wish Foundation. The heart of the fund raising was a karaoke competition run over several weeks, but other activities and donations all contributed.

## **SANDWICH AND RURAL**

**Hop & Huffkin**, New St: As reported last year, the former Greyhound, converted to a restaurant some years ago, has now reconfigured itself into a restaurant and pub, offering a fine selec-

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tion of real ales straight from the cask with a heavy emphasis on Kent brews, although not cheap. Towards the end of the year we enjoyed a very pleasing few hours one Saturday afternoon when it hosted our December branch meeting and Christmas lunch. Beers included Pig & Porter Ashburnham Pale, Tonbridge Ebony, Wantsum Figgy Pudding and Gadds Dark Conspiracy.

The Branch's January meeting was also in Sandwich, at the **Admiral Owen**, where we accomplished a fruitful if constricted session crowded into the raised area at the top end of the pub. Among the beers was a fine brew from Rockin Robin of Maidstone, and Sam from Time & Tide Brewery joined us briefly to give us a rough outline of key keg, which left some of those present with a certain doubt about its acceptability alongside real ale.

In Wingham the **Red Lion** remains closed, and presumably still at risk from conversion to residential, one application for change of use to flats already having been submitted and withdrawn last year. A few doors along the road a hanging sign has reappeared at the **Dog**, but we have heard nothing of late about the in house Black Dog Brewery – any news gratefully received. At the **Anchor** good real ale and live music combine to offer a variety of beers and regular bands and performers. A brief visit one Sunday afternoon in January found an excellent guitar three piece, playing 'gypsy jazz'. Beers were from Gadds and Doom Bar.

The **Three Tuns** (or whatever it was more recently called) in Staple remains closed with a 'for sale' sign outside, while at Barnsole the **Black Pig**, closed for a period in the latter half of last year has now reopened. At Ash, to the best

of our knowledge, the **Chequers** remains closed, as does the **Charity** at Woodnesborough. In Eastry still no sign of any activity at the Bull, closed now for a couple of years, however plenty at the thriving **Five Bells**, base for last Autumn's real ale long weekend (see Five Nights at the Five Bells page 34).

At Etchinghill the New Inn, closed now for over a year, is due to re-open in March under the ownership of the current proprietors of the Jackdaw at Denton and Duke of Cumberland, Barham. It will be free of tie and offering local brews. It is also to be renamed the Gatekeeper after its new owners whose name is Gaskell, which means keeper of the gate. Visits to the **Jackdaw** and **Cumberland** at the start of the year found Broadside, Spitfire, Lancaster Bomber and 49er at the former and Greene King IPA, Harveys Sussex, Tribute and Landlord at the latter.

In Lydden, the **Bell** its doing its best to support local brews, Skrimshander and two beers from Wantsum being on the handpumps in late November. However the **Hope** will not now be supporting anyone, the battle to retain the property as a pub being lost just before Christmas, when permission was granted for conversion to a dwelling.

At the **Two Sawyers**, Woolage Green Adnams and Doom Bar were available in early December and at the **Bell**, Shepherdswell, regulars are Doom Bar and Directors. From time to time a guest is added to the selection. Meanwhile, in mid November a visit to the **Bricklayers** found Sheps' Whitstable Bay available, and at the **Wrong Turn** Hop Fuzz Zinger, Buntingford Squadron 92 and Gadds Dark Conspiracy. And there was more Dark Conspiracy here in the appropriately dark days be-

tween Christmas and New Year, along with Hop Head.

In St. Margarets Hop Fuzz ales appear a regular at the **Red Lion** – two Hop Fuzz brews on alongside Doom Bar in late November – and the brewery's very palatable Advent available just before Christmas. At the **Smugglers** Christmas selection was Charles Wells Good Stuffing and Greene King Reserve, along with Greene King IPA, and at the **White Cliffs Hotel** the choice was Gadds Little Cracker and from Table, Smugglers' Stout and Calista from Time and Tide. As far as we are aware the **Hope** remains closed and up for sale.

## CANTERBURY

**Thomas Tallis**, Northgate: If you have never heard of it, don't worry, at the time of writing it has yet to open, and you have not been missing out on a good real ale outlet – although it has every prospect of so being. The proposed pub is the latest project of Just Reproach owner Mark Robson and his daughter Bronwen, but with three rooms, and somewhat larger than a micro pub, they are describing it as an ale house. The name is taken from the 16<sup>th</sup> century English composer, with strong connections to East Kent, who is now probably best known for the Vaughan Williams composition based on one of his works.

**Phoenix**, Old Dover Rd: Local real ales much to the fore with Wantsum a main supplier – one or other of James Sandy's brews normally available, at the time of writing Black Prince and Black Pig being lined up. Gadds, Hopdaemon and Hop Fuzz also feature prominently, but more distant brews are not excluded such as Dark Star and Weltons from Sussex and Cottage from Somerset. In February the pub will be

celebrating Chinese New Year, and if any budding or redundant brewers are looking for work the pub's microbrewery is currently standing idle awaiting attention.

**New Inn**, Havelock St: Regular beer is Adnams Ghost Ship, but other popular ales include St. Austell Trelawny and Dark Star Revelation, which at 5.7% ABV is normally saved for the weekend. A barrel put on Friday evening will usually be gone by Sunday. And local ales are not excluded. Beers from Kent Brewery have proved particularly successful, and from nearer to home the likes of Wantsum and Old Dairy are often available. The last weekend of the month normally sees a special event, such as a range of beers from one brewery or, as is due at the time of writing, a selection of Scottish brews to celebrate Burns Night.

At Ickham a visit to the **Duke William** in early December found a clean sweep for Kentish ale, featuring beers from Old Dairy, Pig and Porter, Rockin Robin and Sheps.

## FOLKESTONE

Recent visits to the town found a pleasingly extensive selection of real ale. At the **Firkin**, Cheriton Place in mid November Burning Sky Plateau, Old Dairy Gold Top and Gadds Dogbolter were available, while at the **East Cliff Tavern** there was a choice of Gadds Seaside and Hopdaemon Leviathan, the latter in particularly stunning condition. And more Seaside across the railway line at the **Raglan** in Dover Road a month later, confounding fears that the pub might be dispensing with real ale. Alongside was Rosie's Pig cider from Westons.

Quality too was generally of the best, Rudgate Asgard at **Kipps** and Bath



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Ales Forest Hare at the **Guildhall** both attracting top marks. Further choice at the **Mariner** in early December with four ales available – Harveys Sussex, Doom Bar, Hobgoblin and Landlord, and at the **Pullman** where Black Sheep, Brains, Doom Bar and Sharps Atlantic could be found. At **Harveys** Courage Best and Bombardier were on the handpumps and at the **Happy Frenchman** Doom Bar and Harveys Sussex.

More variety in Hythe, where just before Christmas the **Carousel** was selling Young's Bitter and Rocking Rudolph, the **White Hart**, Greene King IPA and Skrimshander and Seaside and the **Red Lion**, Hook Norton Lion and Rocking Rudolph. At the **Three Mariners** beers from the Tonbridge Brewery are ever popular, a visit in early November finding both Alsace Gold and Rustic in excellent condition. Greene King IPA and Doom Bar were available at the **Hope**, and an all Kent selection of Caveman Citra, Incubus and Gadds 5, at the town's newest real ale outlet, the **Potting Shed** micro-pub.

At the **Ship** in Sandgate Long Man Beers from Sussex are still regular, alongside the more established Hop Head, Incubus, Summer Lightning and Greene King brews. At this time of year Long Man Old Man was the choice, and very good too, even though on one occasion it was waiting to come on, and there was a just a pre-taste courtesy of the pub.

Still closed however, is the Richmond, the Princess Royal and the forlorn Two Bells with seemingly an ever widening hole in the roof.

## ELSEWHERE

The proposed micro-pub at Smeeth, the **Dog House**, which we reported on

in our autumn issue duly opened in November. We gather that a micro-brewery has now been installed and a trial beer brewed. We also hear that at the adjoining village of Mersham, the **Old Forge Brewery**, based at the **Farriers Arms**, will now be supplying beers beyond the pub, and that in Ashford, **Spencer's Brewery** has been sold to an outfit called G2 Brewery, with planned production starting again in February.

On the Downs, the ever shrinking number of pubs, is threatened with another possible loss, the **Timber Batts** at Bodsham. With active opposition from AFRM CAMRA Branch, a first application for change of use to residential has been refused, but history predicts that this is unlikely to be the end of the matter.



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# BUCOLIC BALLADS

Jim Green

Towards the end of the 2014 Dover 'NouvAle' walk-about, in the Rack of Ale, conversation turned to the much-vexing question on whether additives should be allowed into what CAMRA defines as Real Cider. The rumour of the odd dead rat or two in traditional farmhouse cider came up, and it was suggested that a certain amount of meat was sometimes added to ciders, and why waste good meat when deceased rodents (or other creatures) would serve just as well to add some protein! The following is a folk ditty on that subject, of which there is an almost inexhaustible well, or perhaps vat, to dip into. It was originally written and sung by Trevor Crozier on the LP *Trouble over Bridgewater* and subsequently adapted and performed by the Yetties, in an album with the apt name of *Cider and Song*.

## DEAD DOG SCRUMPY

*In the year of sixteen forty-two, in a little cider mill,  
A poor old dog lay down to rest, 'cos he were feeling ill.  
He chose a most precarious perch above the cider vat,  
And in his sleep he tumbled in, and he drowned like a rat.*

*Chorus (after each verse):-*

*Dead Dog Scrumpy, Dead Dog Scrumpy, from the apple tree.  
Dead Dog Scrumpy, Dead Dog Scrumpy, full of Pedigree!*

*Which caused his master for to grieve, likewise his mistress too,  
Until their sorrows to relieve, they sampled of the brew.  
"Odzoön" cried Farmer Attwater, "The like I n'ere did sup!  
Go, summon all the neighbours round and bid them take a cup!"*

*So the neighbours came from far and near, the Parson and the Squire,  
The Blacksmith and the Gamekeeper, and daft old Obadiah.  
They wished the Farmer health and wealth and the Parson played his fife,  
While the Squire he filled three flagons up for to take home to his wife.*

*Now, every man that drank that night got drunk as drunk could be,  
And wondered how the scrumpy had acquired such potency.  
The Farmer kept his counsel as he took another drop,  
When suddenly the poor old dog come a-floating to the top!*

*Now, a silence come upon the room and every man did frown!  
They recognised old Bendigo, though he were upside-down!  
The Parson changed his colour and collapsed upon the floor,  
And the Squire he lost his britches in the fight to reach the door!*

*"Fear not!" shouts Farmer Attwater, "For in all his life I vow  
He never bit nor man nor child and he'll not bite no-one now!  
And this shall be his epitaph, 'Here lies poor faithful Ben,  
Who perished in a scrumpy vat, and quickly rose again'".*

*So if you're down to Dev'n, and you goes into a bar,  
Ask for Dead Dog Scrumpy, it's the best there is by far!  
Refuse all imitations, and you'll sleep like a log.  
You can always recognise it by the hair of the dog!*

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# KENT SMALL BREWERY NEWS

**Canterbury Ales**, Chartham 01227 732541 [canterbrew@gmail.com](mailto:canterbrew@gmail.com)

The core range of six beers is now available in bottle as well as cask. The single hop specials have proved very popular and will continue through 2015; the first one, using Polish hop Sybilla, will be available in February. To Martin's relief, assistant brewer, Rob, will be staying put despite being offered a job by Sharp's to brew Doom Bar! Martin quipped: 'He clearly knows a decent pint when he brews one....'

**Canterbury Brewers**, Canterbury 01227 455899 [thefoundry@live.co.uk](mailto:thefoundry@live.co.uk)

Following a successful Christmas – all the seasonals sold out before the big day! – a mini-refurb was completed in January. An early special in 2015 will use the recipe of the winner of the East Kent Amateur Brewers winter competition, Alistair Christie: Reverence (ABV 4.5%) is an American brown ale packed full of American hops and using Carafa for colour; apparently it is 'cleaner and crisper than most brown ales with lots of oats for mouthfeel'.

**Caveman Brewery**, Swanscombe 07900234644 [cavemanbrewery@gmail.com](mailto:cavemanbrewery@gmail.com)

The regular offering is down to four beers from seven because of the space issues of keeping seven beers in stock. The current range is now: Palaeolithic pale ale (ABV 3.8%), Citra (ABV 4.1%), Neanderthal best (ABV 4.4%) and Cavedweller porter (ABV 5.8%). A different yeast is being used to help the beers settle more quickly; this has the knock-on effect of less finings being used. A new member of the team has been taken on to help with delivery and distribution. Hopefully this will allow James to spend more time on brewing.

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

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

**Kent Brewery**, Birling 01634 780037 [info@kentbrewery.com](mailto:info@kentbrewery.com)

Fourteen beers were available over Christmas including Twelfth Night (ABV 7.4%) a 10 month aged Barley Wine, which won the London and South East regional final of Champion Beer of Britain, and goes forward to the finals in February. Coming up in the near future are a 'special' Imperial Stout, currently being aged, and the ever-popular Simcoe single hop pale (ABV 4.5%).

**Old Dairy Brewery**, Tenterden 01580 763867 [fineale@olddairybrewery.com](mailto:fineale@olddairybrewery.com)

Imperial porter, Dark Side of the Moo (ABV 7%), will be available in bottles from April for a limited period. Brewery tours will be starting in April at £10 a head for 1.5 hour tour. You can join the Old Dairy Top Club for a one off fee of £65! For this you will receive: an e-newsletter, bespoke Top Club polo shirt, invitation to Top Club events, 10% discount in the brewery shop, one brewery tour for two people and an Old Dairy Brewery glass.

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

A new lease on the brewery has been signed and business is booming enough for Sean to pack in his day job and work for Pig and Porter full-time. This is a big step up for the brewery as it will allow them to focus on distribution outside of the South

East. To look forward to in 2015: a prototype Coffee Stout (ABV 6%); a weaker beer to sit between Ashburnham Pale (ABV 3.8%) and Crab and Winkle (ABV 2.8%); and a new bottled beer to look out for in March, Gothic (ABV 7%+), a stout with a hint of sour cherry.

**Ramsgate Brewery**, Broadstairs 01843 868453 [info@ramsgatebrewery.co.uk](mailto:info@ramsgatebrewery.co.uk)  
Another 'interesting Year in Beer' is on the cards at Gadd's and it started in January with the traditional lagerale, Uberhop (ABV 5.2%) and Oatmeal Stout (ABV 4.6%). Eddie and his team are very much looking forward to the first-time release of Cobnut Brown Ale (ABV 4.9%) in February: 'a rich, deep and warming brew laced with nutty Kent goodness'...hmmmm!

**Wantsum Brewery**, Hersden 0845 0405980

[wantsumbrewery@googlemail.com](mailto:wantsumbrewery@googlemail.com)

Both Golgotha (ABV 5.5%) and current One Hop beer, Amarillo (ABV 4.5%), have proved so popular they've been added to the regular line-up. The next seasonal beer is Yellowtail (ABV 4.5%), which will be available from February. Also available in February is the next beer in the One Hop series, Bullion, which uses hops grown near Tenterden. A strong double hopped American IPA is planned for later in 2015: it is likely to have an ABV of about 6.5%. A brewery manager, Mark, has been appointed and will work closely with head brewer, James.

**Westerham Brewery**, Edenbridge 01732 864427

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

2015 has been declared the Year of the Hop by Westerham, and a range of ABV 4% single hop monthly specials has been developed to celebrate it, each packing 'a hoppy punch'. First up for February is a pale ale called Sovereign, the granddaughter of Pioneer hops, using hops grown in Kent. March will see the release of the next in the series, Herkules, which uses German Hops. Specials for later in the year can be found online at [www.westerhambrewery.co.uk](http://www.westerhambrewery.co.uk)

**Whitstable Brewery**, Grafty Green 01622 851007

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

The Single Hop Ale range is continuing into 2015. The next hops to be used are: the intensely fruity Citra, then Admiral (a powerfully flavoured English Hop) followed by the citrusy and floral Centennial.

*Richard Haynes*



**You can follow us on Twitter:  
@DDSCAMRA.**

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



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### HOWLIN MATT

Saturday 7<sup>th</sup> February 8pm

### CHARITY POKER NIGHT

Saturday 7<sup>th</sup> Feb (Anchor Arts) 8pm

### MIKEY KENNEY

Sunday 8<sup>th</sup> February 4pm

### HANNAH BUTCHER

Saturday 14<sup>th</sup> February 8pm

### ASH MANDRAKE

Sunday 15<sup>th</sup> February 4pm

### DESERT TURKEYS

Friday 20<sup>th</sup> February 8pm

### LUCKY JACKSON

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### JIM REYNOLDS

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### BANDE-APART

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### HIM n HER

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# The National News

By Martin Atkins

**National Pub of the Year** The hunt to find the National Pub of the Year 2015 is nearing completion, with the winner being announced in February, and with a Kent pub, the Windmill at Sevenoaks Weald being one of the four super-regional finalists. The remaining three are Freshfield, Formby, Merseyside and Cheshire; The Harewood Arms, Broadbottom, Greater Manchester; and the Salutation, Ham, Gloucestershire. And the Windmill is also through to the final of BBC Countryfile's Rural Pub of the Year 2014/15.

**Red Lion at Ampney St. Peter** Sad news from Gloucestershire, where we here of the death at 86 of John Barnard, landlord of the Red Lion at Ampney St Peter, a pub much loved by devotees of those places that eschew the trappings and conveniences of modern culture. The late Roger Marples description below follows a visit in 2009. The main drinking room has no bar, just one long table surrounded by benches and seats. There is an open fire and not a lot of room, but the atmosphere is friendly and cosy, and conversation flows. Incongruously, the beer comes all the way from Yorkshire, and is well kept Timothy Taylor's Landlord and Golden Best, and is delivered from two pumps in the corner of the room. We understand that the prospects of the property now continuing as a pub are not particularly good.

**West Berkshire Expansion** David Bruce's latest enterprise, the well regarded West Berkshire Brewery is seeking to raise £4 through the Government's Enterprise Investment

Scheme to build a new brewery. The company currently brews at Yattendon, having moved there in 2011, after starting in 1995 at Frilsham. However sales are growing rapidly, like for likes up 17% in the six months to September 2014, and the brewery is expecting to outgrow its present site within two years. Bruce said: "We have great ambitions for the brewery.....and are ready to take our high quality range of British brewed premium beers to a larger audience than ever before." West Berkshire also plans to purchase its first freehold pub as a showcase for its beers."

**Greene King Acquires Spirit** As widely anticipated Greene King has bought the Spirit Pub Company, thereby adding 1,200 pubs to its estate. At one time the Beer Orders would have required it to relinquish direct control of half of the total over 2,000, but those laws were repealed many years ago. Consequently, as the law stands, there is nothing to stop Greene King, Marstons or any other brewery growing to the gigantic proportions of the old big six, save the intervention of the statutory monopoly authorities. Will a merged Greene King/Spirit be good for real ale drinkers? – difficult to say, but as a further 1,000 plus pubs now have the prospect of being supplied by one single brewer the popular answer would probably be no. Interestingly most press and media comments on the takeover, including CAMRA's own *What's Brewing*, refer to Greene King in terms of its Hungry Horse and Loch Fyne chains – no mention of beer brands, real ale or otherwise.



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# PUB OF THE SEASON

**Aims of the Award** Many pubs in the Deal, Dover and Sandwich area sell good quality real ale and cider, supporting local communities and promoting the aims of CAMRA. However, not all of these can get recognition through our main 'good pub' publicity vehicle: the CAMRA Pub of the Year competition.

Therefore, as part of our work to promote pubs selling real ale and cider, 2015 will see the introduction of a Pub of the Season (POTS) Award. This is a simple way for CAMRA members to nominate and vote for pubs that they feel are making a contribution to local beer and cider, local communities or the work of CAMRA.

**Procedure** There will be three POTS competitions each year: Spring, Summer and Autumn (there isn't a Winter POTS competition as this is reserved for the CAMRA Pub of the Year competition).

You can nominate a pub for a POTS Award at any time but you will have to provide a reason for your nomination - why you believe the pub deserves to win the award. Some examples could be:

- started selling beers from a local micro brewery
- started selling real cider
- new landlord who has turned the pub's fortunes around
- wonderful beer garden
- great place to drink in winter

To nominate a pub all you have to provide us with is the following information:

- Pub name
- Your name
- CAMRA membership number
- Branch
- Reason for nomination

Although not carrying the significance of Pub of the Year and fairly light touch, the POTS Award is designed to recognise important qualities of the nominated pubs. We intend it very much to be member led, but each nomination will have to conform to certain basic eligibility criteria, which include:

- Pub serves good real ale (NBSS of three or more)
- Is not a current Pub of the Year winner or one of the runners-up
- Is not a current Cider Pub of the Year winner
- Has not won a POTS in the past twelve months
- A reason has been provided for nomination

Once nominations have been received members will be asked to vote for the pub that they think should be declared POTS.

**The First POTS – Spring 2015** The timeline for the 2015 Spring POTS competition is as follows:

- March Branch meeting – canvass for nominations (the Membership Secretary will email all members plus there'll be information on the website and social media)
- April branch meeting – shortlist announced and voting commences
- May branch meeting – final voting and announcement of Spring POTS winner.

**How do I nominate and vote for a pub?** You can nominate a pub at any time:

- At a branch meeting
- By emailing our Membership Secretary at [membership@camra-dds.org.uk](mailto:membership@camra-dds.org.uk)
- (or tel 01304 214153)
- By sending us a direct message on either Facebook or Twitter

NB you will need to give us the required information (see Procedure above).

Once the respective POTS shortlist has been released you can vote for a pub of your choice in exactly the same way as you would nominate; don't forget to include your name and membership number.

It couldn't be easier! Please get in touch if you would like more information or see [www.camra-dds.org.uk](http://www.camra-dds.org.uk) and click on the POTS link. Let's get nominating and while you're at it why not submit some beer scores for the pubs you think should be getting more recognition in our branch?

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## RAMBLINGS & RUMBLINGS

**Thurs 6 Nov – Fox** (*Butcombe Bitter, Ringwood 49er*) Lunchtime visit – lunch for a fiver, including dessert! Cheaper than staying at home. Then walk into town via: **Cricketers** (*Greene King IPA*), **Bull** (*Hobgoblin*)

**Fri 7 Nov – Ship, Sandgate** (*Dark Star Hophead, Incubus, Summer Lightning, Greene King IPA, Abbot, Longman Old Man*). **Three Mariners**, (*Tonbridge Alsace Gold & Rustic*). **Hope, Hythe** (*Greene King IPA, Doom Bar*) Grateful to find kitchen open at 2.15. **Potting Shed** (*Caveman Citra, Incubus, Gadds 5*) First ever visit.

**Sun 9 Nov – Archer** (*Brakspear Bitter*), **Kittiwake** (*Pedigree, Hobgoblin, Ringwood 4X Porter*) Quite busy for Sun evening doing family meals. Ample room for drinkers though.

**Thurs 13 Nov – Jackdaw** (*Spitfire, Thwaites Lancaster Bomber, Broadside, Ringwood 49er*) Surprisingly full for a weekday at 1.30, every table occupied. Food served all day now so had a late lunch at 2.30. Impressed with meal, which could explain pub's popularity. **Firkin, Folkestone** – (*Burning Sky Plateau, Old Dairy Gold Top, Gadds Dogbolter*). **Eastcliff** Wasn't sure exactly about opening times but went on spec late afternoon. Disappointed to find pub in darkness but as if on cue lights came on, Richard appeared and unbolted the door, dead on 5 o'clock. (*Seasider, Hopdaemon Leviathan 6% – (a strong beer with flavour for a change!)*)

**Tues 18 Nov** Walk over the hills landing at Crabble FC. Phone call to Fox told of no food there today, so made for **Dublin Man O' War** (*Broadside*) Nice to find adequate lunchtime menu, and enjoyed my home-made onion rings! **Bull** (*JW Lees Bitter*). **Old Endeavour, Sportsman, Eagle** (*all no real ale*) Quiet early evening, though seemed to be ticking over. Apart from lack of real ale, all welcoming and pleasant enough. But perhaps 'no real ale' in pubs where the demand is not so great, is not the end of the world. After all real ale drinkers in this part of town are only a brisk walk or bus ride away from many other superb real ale outlets, including the recently re-invigorated town centre.

**Wed Nov 19 – Eight Bells** (*RCH Pitchfork + others*) Treated myself to supper again. Apart from mad busy times service is reliable, food is more than OK, and good value for money. **Prince Albert, Dover** (*London Pride, Doom Bar*) Called in to check that beer was as good as reports said – and it was – though deafening racket not quite to my liking.

**Thurs 20 Nov – Plough, Ripple** (*Ripple Steam Orig, ESB*) Nice to see one or two people out for lunch quite early, at a time of year when pubs need support. **Hare & Hounds** (*Hop Head, Caveman Prehistoric Amber, Lacon's Legacy, Hobgoblin Weston's Family Reserve*) Fortunately just in time for food at 2.15. I'm usually better organised. After trek across fields, just managed to squeeze out last drops of daylight for 4.15 arrival at **Five Bells** (*6X, Greene King IPA*). Then bus to **Crispin** (*Crispin Ale – seems that Mad Cat have tweaked the recipe and removed some-*

what metallic taste – Adnams Ghostship & Old, Doom Bar). **Admiral Owen** (Time & Tide Canesta, Stout, Sprattwaffler, Gadds 5, Rockin Robbin Bitter)

**Thurs 27 Nov – Day Trip to Tamworth** High Speed trains now allow day trips to no end of exotic places. **Market Vaults** I suppose the nearest thing to a micropub where I don't think they've been invented yet, (*Joules Pale – most drinkable + others*) Called in at 11.45 - too early really, but keen landlord took pity and served us. **Bole Bridge Wetherspoons** (*Jennings Biggest Liar*). **Globe** (*Hardy Hansons Rockin Rudolph*).

**Mon 1 Dec – Week in Isle of Wight** Great time to visit - exclusive use practically. Very lucky with weather, got plenty of walking done before it got dark at tea-time. But what would we have done in the old days if we'd had to wait till 6 for a drink? Lots of pubs, lots of real ale. **Fri – Day Trip to Southampton**, one's first ever visit. Too many pubs to recall. **Tues – Prince Albert, Brighton** (*Burning Sky Plateau, Harveys Best + others*) Great pub, handy for station, with good menu selection.

**Fri 19 Dec – Arlington** (*Hop Fuzz Martello, Advent Christmas Festival Ale, Nelson Loose Cannon. Ciders: Cherry, spiced, Lily the Pink, Kentish Pip Elderflower, Weston's Country Perry, Family Reserve, Rosie's Pig*). **The Lanes** (*RCH Old Slug Porter, Skinners Ginger Tosser, Alton's Pride*) Opening Night, impressed, bigger than I'd expected.

**Sun 21 Dec – Rack of Ale** (*Ginger Star, Ripple Steam, Rudgate Ruby Mild, TTLL, Wantsum figgy Pudding + a mead @13% and ciders*) **Evening in Ramsgate** As Hovelling Boat was closed at 5pm (which I might have known about if I'd had a current copy of the GBG!) went to **Churchills** (*House Silver Bitter + others*) Always the way, looking forward to meeting up with old friend for chat but live music led to hasty retreat to **Sir Stanley Gray, Pegwell** (*Adnams Shingles, Gadds 5, Adnams IPA, Greene King Reserve*) Nice for food Sun evening. **Artillery** (*Long Man American Pale + others*)

**Mon 22 Dec – Fox** (*Wadworth Draybells, Brains I See Santa, Adnams Tally Ho, Pride of Sheffield*) After bingo players departure, very quiet late evening – the pre-Christmas doldrums?

**Tues 23 Dec - Port of Call** (*Nelson Pudding Ale + others*). **Lanes** (*Dark Star Hop Head & Festival, Bespoke Brewing Santa's Little Helper, Black Sheep Blitzen, Lighthouse*). **Evening outing to St Margarets: Red Lion**, (*Hop Fuzz Advent, Doom Bar*) **Smugglers** (*Wells Good Stuffing, Greene King Reserve & IPA*). **White Cliffs Hotel** (*Gadds Little Cracker, Time & Tide Table, Smugglers' Stout, Calista*). Then to **Blakes** (*Welton's Hurricane, Horsham Old, St Agnes Porter, Cottage Scrooged, Lighthouse + 4 ciders*)

**27 Dec – Chambers** (*Cottage Resolution, Canterbury Hosts + others*). Enjoyed AFRM Post Christmas Lunch

**28 Dec – Wrong Turn** (*Hop Head, Gadds Dark Conspiracy*) Bit of a squash fitting in large walking group, but it worked. Mince pies passed round by mine hostess. Do we still give marks for real fire? **Lanes** (*Hop Fuzz Zingiber, Loddon Hullaballoo + others*) After only a week in business I can confirm Lost Prop Dept functioning well. My scarf was duly returned, left on a previous visit.

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# CHANNEL VIEW

**A NEW DAWN** As we state in Local News, the newly opened Lanes in Worthington St. is number 100 in Britain's Micro-Pub Association, some achievement for a concept which effectively hit the consciousness of the pub using population less than six years ago. At CAMRA's 2009 AGM, Martyn Hillier spoke to the assembly, about the format he had devised to convert his Butchers Arms beer shop in Herne into a viable micro-pub operation, inspiring and encouraging many others to think about setting up micro pubs of their own. It is no exaggeration to claim that it has proved a watershed in the recent history of real ale and pubs.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, East Kent, Martyn's own locality, is proving the heart of the new movement – at the time of writing accounting for about a third the national total – and with another ten established, or in the process of being set up, in west Kent, almost half are located within our county's borders. Whether or not revolution is quite the right term, the micro-pub is probably the biggest change in pub style that most of us have seen.

What does all this portend? First micro brewers, and now the micro pub. A year ago, commenting on Martyn Hillier's recent remark that the UK could see tens of thousands of micro pubs, we suggested that if their increase matched that of micro brewers, we could easily see sixty in East Kent, which if multiplied across the country would give a total of something over ten thousand. At that time there were some fifteen in East Kent, now, as we state above, there are more than thirty – over half way to the

predicted sixty.

After several decades of somewhat hit and miss success, the micro breweries have now established themselves as a distinct and influential part of our brewing industry – Britain now has more breweries than before World War II. If the rate of growth of micro pubs continues and spreads across the country, together they promise to radically change the face of British brewing and the British pub.

Perhaps the most intriguing element in all this, is that it is happening at a time when the traditional industry is in the doldrums. Beer sales are generally down and, as we are constantly being reminded, pubs are closing. In fact British brewing is barely recognisable from that which existed when CAMRA was formed. The national industry of those times is all now in foreign hands, and much of what remains of their large tied estates are owned by pubcos, who often more resemble property companies than businesses with any particular interest in pubs and beer.

Although CAMRA had a major impact on the big brewers, there was always a feeling that their revitalising of real ale was done under sufferance, that there was almost an ideological problem. These were big companies of the late 20<sup>th</sup> century with a national presence, and their product needed to reflect that. Brewing beers for a local market, or even a national market, of a style which harked back to an era decades ago, can only have been in conflict with a world of national or global brands.

At the same time many real ale drink-



ers were somewhat less than happy with a beer, good as it might be, that was the outcome of corporate decisions taken in a boardroom possibly many hundreds of miles away. However much local identity and tradition were played up, we all knew it came from an organisation more interested in mass produced lager, and seemingly very often also, food rather than beer.

A similar philosophy attached to their tied estates. Beloved locals were gutted and converted to single bars, themed venues and neo-restaurants, or sold off to developers for other uses. To be fair this was not all their fault. Society was changing and the pub on the corner was not the natural home of the community as it had been once. However, there were, and still are, some appalling travesties and losses. Many a beer drinker and pub user felt they were being seriously short changed.

Both the micro-brewery and micro-pub movements were, and are, a response. Beer brewed locally, on a small scale by brewers we can actually speak to, and pubs devoted to real ale and conversation, sufficiently small to keep overheads to a minimum. Where this will all end up no one can say, but just for the minute there is a fresh wind blowing, and distinct air of regeneration suffusing the whole brewing and pub industry.

**A DAMAGING LOOPHOLE** (*From What's Brewing January 2015*) Don't supermarkets or coffee shops serve communities just as well as pubs? Its the challenge that just about every radio presenter or print journalist throws at CAMRA spokespeople nearly every time they're invited to speak about the Pubs Matter campaign.

The first issue is it doesn't have to be

one or the other. The two are not mutually exclusive in a town or village and the only reason it tends to be an "either" question is because developers see pubs as soft targets – they know planning loopholes make it much easier to open a convenience store on a former pub site applying for a change of use somewhere else.

In fact while many pubs can also offer community services such as running a post office or village shop – convenience stores and estate agents can't make the same claims. They can't act as focal points for their communities. They can't provide somewhere to celebrate a birth, toast a wedding or remember a loved one.

Beyond that, pubs also offer character, interest and a sense of place to a village or town. I've not seen many guides to historic estate agents or top 10 lists of Tesco Locals you must visit.

Are communities served by endless rows of identikit, nationally branded convenience store frontages, bookies and estate agents? And when there is no good reason for these shops to use pub premises – other than it's a bit cheaper and easier for the developers – why can't they exist alongside pubs?

Do pubs add more to a community than just the services they actually provide? Just how much do communities miss pubs when they've been lost forever? These are the questions that should be asked.





# FIVE BELLS WEEKEND

John Pitcher reports on a Real Ale Holiday weekend

***F**or many years, Bradford CAMRA have been running a Real Ale Holiday every July, which involves locals hosting a 5-day programme of pub crawls, walking, places of interest, curries and time permitting, more pubs! A great idea I think, which surprisingly, hasn't really caught on elsewhere. So I thought I'd do my bit to put together a short break for people to explore our East Kent towns and countryside, at the same time bringing a bit of business to local pubs and support for public transport.*



The Five Bells, Eastry

Having based the Break in Dover last year, a change of location meant covering a different area this time. The Five Bells at Eastry seemed ideal for our base. A good local pub with three comfortable guest rooms, in a village with a good network of footpaths, and bus services even in the evenings – a rarity round here!

So **Thursday evening 30<sup>th</sup> October** saw myself and Dick Bates on Sandwich Station awaiting the arrival of a couple from Birmingham, two chaps from Southampton, and a Londoner living in Holland. Our pal from Watford joined us later. Down a dark alley-way to the bus stop and a short wait for the 13a bus to Eastry, whose driver took £100 for five weekly bus tickets! Ten minutes later we were dropped near the pub where after settling in, a substantial meal was served washed down by Black Sheep Bitter, to set us up for tomorrow's healthy exercise.....

**Friday 31<sup>st</sup> October** dawned bright, ideal for a good walk across fields via Knowlton and the Bruderhof Estate, for lunch at the Royal Oak at Nonington. Good to see the pub maintaining local brews (Whitstable Native and Wantsum 1381) alongside nationals London Pride and Doom Bar. Suitably replenished, our way continued through parkland and woods to the recently opened rural micropub, the Wrong Turn at Barfreestone, for pints of Cottage Medusa and Wantsum Green Hop. Then a brisk stroll to Eythorne in time for the 1640 bus back to Eastry. A swift wash and brush-up saw us on the bus to Canterbury where after a brief stop at the Phoenix, supper was taken at the Ingoldsby, followed by visits to the New Inn and elsewhere. Beers included Whitstable Perle, Marston 4+20 and Adnams Ghostship.

**Saturday 1<sup>st</sup> November** turned out grey and cloudy but we decided to risk a train ride to Folkestone to walk along the Downs. From Central Station we just caught a bus up Canterbury Road to Creteway Down above the town. Then an exhilarating walk crossing over the main Coast Road at Roundhill Tunnel and the railway at the entrance to the Channel Tunnel, before arrival at the Cat & Custardpot 1½ hours later for a well-deserved lunch and Master Brew.

The afternoon stayed dry and after an hour we'd descended to Etchinghill, treated to views over Dungeness and the round hills on the way. The New Inn looked very shut, but luckily we soon caught a bus back into Folkestone. We visited Kipps and the Guildhall before getting the train back to Sandwich. To the Crispin for Mad Cat Three Sisters, and, brewed for the pub, Mad Cat Crispin Ale. After a superb evening meal, a quick dash to Guildhall Square just in time to take the 8pm bus back to Eastry.



**Sunday 2<sup>nd</sup> November** The idea had been to walk across fields to Goodnestone and Wingham but uninspiring weather brought Plan B instead. So we met up in Deal for a walk along the seafront to Kingsdown, where if the worst came to the worst, at least we wouldn't get muddy. Weather drizzly but not too bad. After dodging hundreds of runners we reached the Zetland at opening time. All tables were reserved but after a chat with the barman we drank Spooks and Whitstable Bay at a table where people had booked for a later lunch, promising to be away by 12.30. Then up the hill to the King's Head for that more traditional 'pub feel', and a choice of Goacher's Real Mild Ale, Bateman's XXXB and Greene King IPA.

We were booked in at the Five Bells for a late Sunday lunch so we soon made our way back along the seafront to catch the bus from Canada Road Walmer – There's no call for Sunday buses from Kingsdown it seems. But it would have been rude to pass so close to the Berry without popping in. The beer selection was slightly smaller than usual as pub was to close Tuesday for carpet removal. However Harveys Old, Dark Star American Pale Ale, Canterbury Brewers Seriously Saison and O'Hanlon's Firefly were all enjoyed. Then bus back to Eastry in time for a good lunch. The bus timetable would have allowed an hour's drinking at the Crown in Finglesham early Sunday evening but everyone looked a bit weary so it was decided to finish off the St Austell Proper Job in the Five Bells instead.

**Monday 3<sup>rd</sup> November** Torrential rain this morning so plans to walk to Sandwich quickly abandoned. Wet mornings are bad news. You don't really want to be knocking back beer at 10am even if you find anywhere open. But after a bus ride to Sandwich we found a nice coffee place on Guildhall Square before roaming round and sheltering in a disused church.

Then after more loitering, time to get the 11.52 bus to Ramsgate, or rather Pegwell Bay. Bus route confusing ow-



ing to road closures, but we finally found our way down to the Sir Stanley Gray (Gadds 5, Hobgoblin and Greene King IPA) where a good lunch was enjoyed. The rain had finally stopped and from the windows you could just make out that today's murky outlook would normally be a fine vista to behold. Nice to get out in the fresh air again for a short cliff walk to the Churchill above Ramsgate Harbour.

Then through side streets to the Artillery Arms, always a pleasure to visit. Our last call in town was to the Hovelling Boat near the Harbour, handy for the last bus back to Sandwich at 5.45. A quick call in at the Hop & Huffkin on arrival for Hopdaemon Green Daemon, Wantsum Green Hop Challenger and Gadds' No. 3, before wending our way to the Crispin again for our evening meal.

**Tuesday 4<sup>th</sup> November** A farewell crawl of Sandwich and discussions of where and when to meet up again: Dover in May and Derby in August were suggested. The Last Lunch was taken in the George & Dragon where beers were Butcombe Bitter, Otter Amber and local Wantsum Hengist, after which those finally remaining were escorted to the station for the trip homewards.

*John Pitcher*

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Saturday 28th March - **Steak Night** 6pm-9pm

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# THE STORY OF PUB SIGNS

Paul Skelton charts their history

The pub sign is always welcoming for me, especially if the pub is open and sells a fine real ale, and I assume this has been so for others, as far back in time as can be traced. I have found mention of such in Roman times where the "Tabernae" (retail unit selling bread, cooked food and wine) would hang vine leaves over their door. Most people, being illiterate, needed signs rather than words in those days informing them of what was on offer inside.

Of course, in Britain, vine leaves were in short measure, so they were substituted by small evergreen bushes. Hence one of the first pub names would have been the Bush. Premises that sold ale would also hang long poles or ale stakes used to stir the ale outside, so a pub showing a Bush and a Pole would sell both wines and ales.

In 1393, King Richard II passed an Act making it compulsory for pubs and inns to show a sign outside their premises, so that customers, illiterate or not, knew what was for offer inside. Another reason was to enable the Official Ale Taster to identify the premises and thus draw tax from them. The King's emblem, the "White Hart" would have been used for many pubs at that time.

Still one of the most common pub names is the "Red Lion" and this stems from 1608 when James I came to throne and ordered that his heraldic red lion of Scotland be hung on such buildings of importance. He was not only James I of England but James VI of Scotland. The "Royal Oak" is another you'll see quite prolifically, and actually refers to a tree at Boscobel, Shropshire, in which Charles II hid while fleeing from Cromwell's army.

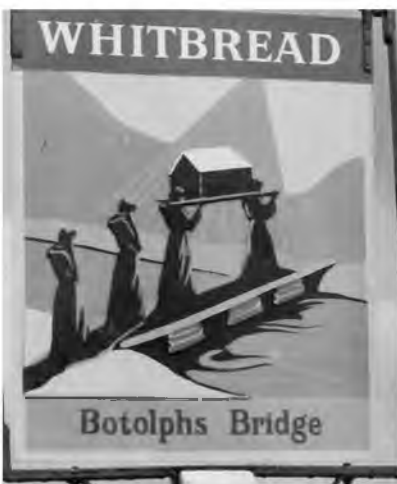
The signs can also tell a story regarding the premises, and some stories are as interesting as the beers supplied inside (*probably more interesting quite often* – Ed.). Many pubs were coaching stops where the horse-drawn transport could pause for refreshment and change the horses. These often had names such as the "Coach and Horses" or "Halfway House", the latter being situated half way between two towns. With the coming of the industrial revolution and the building of railway lines in the 1800s, many new public houses were built by the stations and given names such as the "Railway Hotel" or the "Locomotive", but the signs that I find the most interesting are the ones whose reason has been lost in time, or perhaps need a story behind the sign to explain their origin.



One such pub being the "Cause is Altered", Queen St., Dover, although the only

sign I have seen was of the Fremlin Elephant with the name the "Cause is Altered" underneath. The origin of the name is a little foggy. Originally called the "Carpenter's Arms" or perhaps "Blacksmith's Arms" before 1832, the name change has been suggested, when a new licensee taking over, wanted rid of the smugglers who used the premises, and so the cause of the meeting place had indeed changed and smugglers were no longer welcome. However, another suggestion is that its name was changed to appease Cromwell in 1649, but I believe that is far too early.

Situated by the Cow Gate, another suggestion states that this is the spot where farmers would rest or Halt their Cows for refreshment, and could be a colloquial term of the "Cows is Halted" and loosely applied as the pub name. The latest theory of the change of name has it as being a translation of the Spanish "La casa de alta", meaning "the house of high." Many Spanish being visitors to the port at the time would have probably described this pub as such, the pub being an upward hill walk along Queen Street. I haven't managed to find a decent image of the Cause is Altered pub sign yet, but it resembled one of Fremlin's temporary



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signs, as shown here, that used to be put up in the 1950s while the old one was being repainted. Just change the wording below.

In Biddenden, there is a pub called the "Three Chimneys." When I first drove past this pub I thought that perhaps the building had lost a chimney only seeing two on the roof, however, their sign depicted a sign post pointing in three directions. The building is actually much older than the name of the pub and dates from circa 1420. During the Seven years' War from 1756 to 1763, about 3,000 French prisoners were detained at nearby Sissinghurst Castle, but were allowed under supervision as far as the pub building. The locals used to refer to this area as the "Three Wents" or "Three Ways." Translated into French,

it is "Les Trois Chemins", and for some reason, the locals obviously mishearing, gave the pub the name of the "Three Chimneys."

Botolph's Bridge Inn, at West Hythe has shown interesting signs over the years, which also need an explanation. The various signs depict monks carrying a coffin across a bridge. It relates to St Botolph, who lived in the 7th century, and the story goes that when he died his body had to be kept safe from desecration by the heathen Danes, so some monks decided to carry him in his coffin to a place of safety. The night was dark and there was water to cross. Suddenly a shaft of light, which was not the moon, shone down from heaven and guided the monks and saint to safety. This sign depicts that incident.



Of course not all signs depict ancient stories, and some of the newer built pubs can be as interesting. One such is the "Belisha Beacon" in Rainham Mark. The Ministry of Transport started to add these amber-coloured globes named after Leslie Hore-Belisha to zebra crossings from 1934 to aid safety, and in 1938 Frederick Leney and Sons Ltd of Watlington decided to change the name of the "Crown" to the "Belisha Beacon" to honour this relatively new innovation. Another relatively modern day pub sign from a pub in Hempstead, called the "Flying Saucer", depicted two variations of the theme in the 1980s. One side of the sign shows



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the traditional flying saucer spacecraft, whilst the other shows a woman throwing a cooking utensil at her husband, for some reason.

Lastly for this article, and I do have a lot more to tell, I will say I was a little concerned over what I thought would be displayed at the next pub as a sign. I don't actually think it has a pictorial sign hanging there now, but can definitely remember being quite relieved when I visited the pub in the 1980s. The pub, of course being the "Hampton" at Herne. The pub sign was actually a Maze and unfortunately I haven't managed to find it yet. Well, what would you suggest they should display?



*Paul Skelton*

*(More history of ALL Kent pubs at [www.Dover-Kent-Com](http://www.Dover-Kent-Com)  
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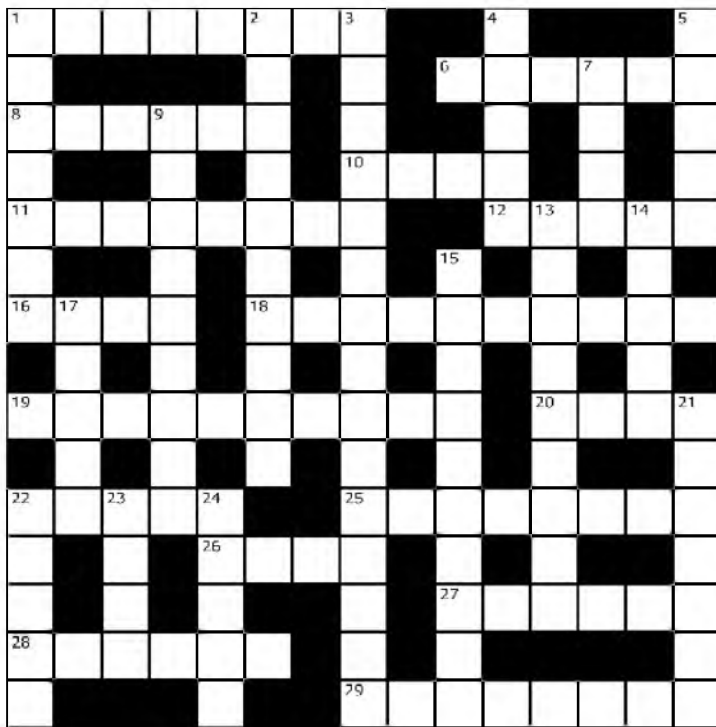
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# CROSSWORD

BY TRISHA WELLS



## Across

1. Sir stank (anagram) – ancient Indian language (8)
6. see 12 across
8. Dried grape (6)
10. Board game – ‘I play’ in Latin (4)
11. Talented musician (8)
- 12 & 6 across & 18 across & 19 across.  
Beer bash in February in Dover  
5,6,8,2,6,4)
16. Rail (anagram) – hiding place (4)
18. see 12 across
19. see 12 across
20. 18<sup>th</sup> Century farm reformer (4)
22. Dutch cheese (5)
25. Near dues (anagram) – submarine (8)
26. Barley that has been steeped,  
germinated and dried (4)
27. “..... the Nog” – 1960’s children’s TV  
program, with a remake in 1979 (6)
28. A scarf (anagram) - brawl (6)
29. Real Ale (4,4)

## Down

1. Wither (7)
2. Circle of volcanoes around the Pacific  
(4,2,4)
3. Tortuous ale clue (anagram) - 19<sup>th</sup>  
Century French painter (8,7)
4. Arm joint (5)
5. Offspring or matter in question (5)
7. Pacific group of islands – capital Suva  
(4)
9. Thoroughly soaked (9)
13. Rather hug (anagram) – small carpet  
(9)
14. Fish by trailing a line behind a boat (5)
15. Subversive insurrectionists (10)
17. Spanish-speaking friend (5)
21. Neophyte – especially at driving (7)
22. Embarrassing blunder (5)
23. Luna (anagram) – bone (4)
24. Capital of Jordan (5)

**Answers on Page 61**

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# THE GREAT BEER FLOOD

## A 19th Century brewery tragedy

As we know from Charles Dickens, life in early 19<sup>th</sup> century London was often violent and desperate, but it is unlikely that many would have considered the possibility of a beer flood being amongst the various trials and tribulations with which they would have to contend. However, just such occurred in the late afternoon of Monday October 17<sup>th</sup> 1814 at the Horseshoe Brewery of Henry Meux, off Tottenham Court Road.

Meux Brewery 1830



The Horseshoe Brewery was a brewer of that most popular London beer at the time, porter, and along with the other leading porter brewers, brewed it on an industrial scale. Henry Meux acquired the business with partners in 1809 after a fall out with former partners at another brewery, Meux Reid. Under his ownership production rocketed. In just a couple of years the 40,663 barrels produced in 1809 had risen to 103,502, and although far less than Meux Reid's 220,094 barrels, or Barclay Perkins's 1811 total of 264,105 barrels, it placed the company in sixth place in the London porter brewery league table.

Porter brewing was an immense undertaking in this period and the brewing equipment complimented the size of the business. In particular it involved the use of enormous vats to mature the beer, and Henry's father Richard, also a porter brewer, was one of the first to construct brewing vessels on this scale. A vat installed in his Griffin Brewery in Clerkenwell in 1790 stood 20 feet high and 60 feet across, and hosted a dinner for more than 200 people sitting down inside before its commercial operation began.

The flood of October 17<sup>th</sup> involved a 22 ft high vat in a storehouse at the back of the brewery, containing 3,555 barrels of ten month old "entire", porter, weighing 571 tons, and due, when fully mature, to be distributed to Meux's pubs for mixing with freshly brewed porter to customers' tastes. At around 4.30 in the afternoon a seven-hundredweight iron hoop, the smallest of 22 securing the vat, and about 3 ft from its bottom, fell off. The clerk on duty told the subsequent inquest that he was "not alarmed" at the hoop falling off, as it happened two or three times a year, and was "not attended by any serious consequence".

He wrote a note to a brewery vessel making business, asking for it to be mended, but just an hour later, before it could be delivered and with the note



The vat before it ruptured

still in his hand, the vat burst, demolishing the end wall of the storehouse, 25 ft high by 60 ft long, along with much of the roof. The escaping beer also smashed several further hogsheads of porter, and, in the cellar below, knocked the cock out of another vat containing 2,100 barrels, over half of which added to the flood.

Interestingly, or maybe disturbingly, the vat that burst appears to have been far from the largest in the brewery. The following is a description of the Horseshoe Brewery by novelist Mary Brunton in 1812. In Meux's Brewery everything is as filthy as steam and smoke, and dust and rust can make it; except the steam engine, which is as polished and as clean as the bars of a drawing-room grate.

The first operation of this engine is to stir the malt in vats of twenty-eight feet diameter, filled with boiling water; the second is, in due time, to raise the wort to the coolers, in the floor above. Then this wort is conveyed by leaden pipes into the tub where it is to ferment, and afterwards into the casks where the porter is first deposited. One of these casks, which I saw, measures seventy feet in diameter, and is said to have cost £10,000; the iron hoops on it weigh eighty tons; and we were told that it actually contained, when we saw it, 18,000 barrels, or £40,000 worth of porter. Another contained 16,000 barrels, and from thence to 4,000; there are above seventy casks in the store.

However, while not a vessel of the greatest capacity, the destruction wrought was sufficient to cause eight deaths, many injuries, and very considerable destruction to property. But this could have been far worse if the cask had a burst a few hours later or in the middle of the night. The brewery was situated in the notorious area around St Giles church, a district of slums and tenements much occupied by poor Irish immigrants and often known as the St Giles' "rookeries," and which was largely demolished by the building of New Oxford Street in 1847. At 5.30 in the afternoon most of the male population were still out at work.

Reports speak of a 15 ft high wall of beer flooding down New Street behind the brewery and into the backs of buildings in Great Russell Street to the north. It flooded basements and cellars, knocked in the backs of houses, and even washed people from first-floor rooms.

Rescuers and spectators very soon gathered, but there are very few authenticated reports of anyone drinking or collecting the escaped porter. One researcher could find only a single reference, in the *Bury and Norfolk Post*, nine days later. As there were no such reports in the London papers it would seem likely to be apocryphal, and very much in line with the myths that had "besotted mobs flinging themselves into gutters full of beer, hampering rescue efforts" and causing many to be killed, "suffocated in the crush of hundreds trying to get a free beer."

Similar stories told of a total of twenty or thirty deaths, a riot at the nearby Middlesex Hospital, where patients, smelling ale, thought the staff were



denying them beer being served elsewhere in the hospital, and that so many had turned up to look at the bodies of those killed, laid out for identification, that the floor collapsed under the weight, killing many more.

For the eight who actually died, a collection to support the families of the survivors, from amongst those coming to view the bodies laid out at a nearby pub, soon raised £33 5s 7d, while a further relief fund, set up by the parishes of St. George and St Giles against the estimated £3,000 in lost belongings, gathered £800 in a month. But of course the major monetary loss lay with the brewery itself – 7,664 barrels of porter had gone and Meux and Co claimed their estimate total loss to be £23,000 “at the lowest calculation”. They petitioned Parliament for a refund of the duty already paid, and an Act passed the following year allowing the partners to brew duty free an amount equivalent in duties to the duty on the beer lost, which saved them around £7,250.

The Horse Shoe brewery remained a leading London porter producer for the rest of the 19th century. It was the last to brew solely porter, production of ale not starting until 1872. Closed in 1921, it was demolished the following year, with production transferred to Thorne Brothers' Nine Elms brewery in Wandsworth, which Meux had bought in 1914. In 1927-28 the Dominion Theatre was erected on the site.

In 1956 Meux merged with Friary Holroyd and Healey of Guildford to form Friary Meux, which itself was bought by Allied Breweries eight years later. The name remained into the late sixties, and was revived by Allied when it was endeavouring to engender a local ambience around its pubs, before its own demise in the 1990s.



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# ANOTHER ATTACK OF THE WARWICK RING

## The Beery Boaters End of Year 2014 trip

Around about midday on Saturday the 20<sup>th</sup> September the car containing Martin Atkins, Dave Underdown and myself (Jim Green, Hon. Commodore Unelected) pulled up outside the Old Plough in Braunston, Northamptonshire for the initial stages of the final canal trip of the year – a pint (or two) of some excellent and very drinkable Wood Farm Webb Ellis. It was to be the Warwick Ring again, with a boat from Union Canal Carriers in Braunston, and going clockwise via Warwick, Birmingham, Tamworth and Rugby.

We were soon joined by four more of the crew, John Shepherd (Shep), Chris Baxter, Dick Savage and Bill Jones, and a pleasant half hour followed before proceeding to the boatyard, and meeting up with the remaining two crew members, Paul Skelton and John Underdown. Our boat, was the 70ft Pennine, which we had come across before, on our 2007 April Trip from Braunston to Leicester.

“Ha! Come back for more punishment, then!” remarked the boatyard fitter, as we loaded up – provisions that included several bottles of remnants from the Pharo-sian beer festival a few weeks earlier. He gave us a brief run down of the boat’s operation and facilities, before turning it round to face the right direction. “Never does what it’s told, this one!” he grunted, it taking a couple of shunts to achieve. Indeed, we quickly found that Pennine had a fairly slow response, but then, all boats are different and we soon got used to it (sometimes!!).

We set off just after 3pm; somewhat earlier than usual for the first day, but too late to reach Long Itchington, my optimistic evening destination. Instead we tied up at the top of Stockton flight opposite the Boat Inn. I think possibly I had not been here since the 1980s when an excellent drop of Bass was served. Now it was Hook Norton, Doombar, and a guest ale or two. Some of the crew walked down the locks to the Blue Lias, only to find that it had closed early. The rest were happy to stay put and enjoy a pleasant first evening.

Sunday morning dawned sunny, and we were away at 7.15. A quick descent saw us leaving Long Itchington bottom lock at 8.20. A mile or so later while waiting for two boat-loads of school children to come up the one pair of staircase locks on the Grand Union main line, we had our first meeting with a middle aged couple, their daughter and her dog in another hire





boat, Wild Hemlock, from Calcutt Marina. They accompanied us down the rest of the flight before pulling over at Leamington Spa. We carried on to the Cape of Good Hope pub and tied up right outside just after 1pm, for a two hour sojourn.

Just before setting off again Wild Hemlock passed us, and together the two of us tackled the double locks of the Hatton flight, the longest on the Warwick Ring, lifting the canal 147ft in 2 miles and generally

known as 'The Stairway to Heaven'. With sterling work from the lock-workers and no slower boats in front of us, we cleared the flight in two-and-a-quarter hours.

We left Wild Hemlock at the top of Hatton at about 6pm and after a couple of level miles came to the 433 yd Shrewley Tunnel, with its substantial bat colony, several of whose number fluttered about in front of Pennine's headlight. Shortly after, we encountered a small group of anglers one of whose rod bent almost double as we slowly cruised past – and a very large, flapping, fish was guided into a landing net. "What's that?" enquired Hon. Commodore: "Zander!" came the delighted reply in what sounded like an Eastern European accent. The zander, sometimes called a pike-perch, is a voracious, non-native and very edible species which is spreading throughout our waterways, preying on other fish. I had little doubt what the fate of this one was going to be.

With darkness falling fast we abandoned plans to stop at the Navigation at Lapworth, and tied up instead at Rowington, a couple of miles before, to see what the Tom O' the Wood had to offer. Just after we moored, Wild Hemlock cruised past. The usual advance party headed for the pub, only to find that on Sundays it closed at 8pm, i.e. in ten minutes. The barman said there was another pub "about five minutes away", across the canal. Chris, Dick, Shep and Bill set off in search of it, while Martin and Paul climbed the steep hill behind the Tom O' Woods in search of a club I knew about, the GBG listed Rowington Club.

Meanwhile Hon Commodore (unelected), leaned on the bridge railings and waited, dicky legs preventing him from climbing the hill, and suspecting that the other pub was the Fleur de Lys, Lowsonford on the Stratford Canal, five minutes away by car, perhaps, but certainly not by foot! A police car stopped for the occupants to ask if I was alright. "Yes", say's I, "But could you tell me where the Rowington Club is?" "No idea!" replied one. "We're Birmingham Airport Security".

However, as so often, the Beery Boaters emerged triumphant. Paul returned and announced that the club was about five or ten minutes away just beyond the cross-roads at the top of the hill, the other group were phoned and told of our calculation of the actual distance, and Martin retrieved the Beery Boaters wheelchair in order to propel Hon. Commodore in an upwards direction.

The club was an excellent find, with free entry for card-carrying CAMRA members,

and Wye Valley as the regular beer alongside the ubiquitous Doombar, a guest real ale, and cider. We were made hospitably welcome, and the very attractive Eastern European barmaid had some of the crew drooling into their beers. We eventually left well after midnight, with Hon. Commodore (unelected) suffering a hair-raising descent of the steep hill in the wheelchair, necessitating rum on the return to the boat to calm the nerves.

Monday, and the weather still fine. We watered up, and were away at 8.20, passing Wild Hemlock still moored up. They planned to branch off onto the Stratford Canal at Kingswood Junction for Birmingham City Centre, while our route remained on the Grand Union for the outskirts of Solihull and the Catherine de Barnes for lunch. An uneventful morning for most of us, although for Dave, the photo opportunity presented by a couple of waterway craft dredging the canal for assorted scrap metal might well resonate. Midday found us in the almost canal-side Boat, a Chef and Brewer establishment. The locals' back bar that I recalled from years back had gone, and there were only national beers, Charles Wells, Courage and Greene King, but they were in good form and we enjoyed the sunshine in the beer garden, staying until about 3pm.

From now on the suburbs began to encroach, and by late afternoon we were descending Camp Hill Locks, intending to moor in the Digbeth Basin (aka Typhoo after a tea warehouse once there) at the bottom. Just after six we entered the basin and it was immediately evident that this was a mistake. The only possible access to the bank was a short length of tow-path, busy with pedestrians, near its entrance which had neither bollards, mooring rings or anywhere to hammer in mooring stakes. The rest was dere-

**Approaching Camp Hill Locks**



lict – everything once standing demolished and access beyond the banks fenced off. Fortunately, Chris, on the tiller, had just room to turn round at the end. Pity, it would make a fine mooring place if developed, and we had been looking forward to visiting the nearby CAMRA National Inventory Woodman pub, recently reopened after several years of closure.

Rather than return up Camp Hill locks to where the Birmingham Canal Society had recommended moorings, we decided to continue to reputed moorings at the back of Aston University Buildings, by way of Ashted locks, which we had never ascended. The Beery Boaters had been down them once before in 1982, and half way up in 1994, when our progress towards the centre of Birmingham was impeded by a collapsed lock wall. How would our luck be on this occasion?

Pennine progressed up the first five locks and no problems. Then through Ashted Tunnel, really an elongated bridge, and one more lock. It had gone 7pm and was now dark. Then, joy to behold, a long range of mooring bollards beside a quiet tow-path – there were even CCTV cameras. A couple of hundred yards from the moor-

ings, we came across the GBG listed Sacks of Potatoes, with half a dozen Real Ales, cider and perry. A pub called the Gosta Green was nearer, but seemed to have no real ale.

While some of us stayed in the Sacks of Potatoes until closing time, Shep, Bill, Chris and Dick went off in search of the Woodman and curry. They found both and reported back that the pub well deserved its CAMRA CNI entry. They also texted Paul telling him how good the curry was. Too late by then to get there, it never occurred to him until the following morning to ask them to bring him back a takeaway – “after a few beers the brain goes to sleep.”

Tuesday, and off at 7.45 for the few yards to Aston Junction where a few shunts were needed for Pennine to get round the hairpin right-hander onto the Birmingham & Fazeley Canal. Down the eleven lock Aston flight and by 9.30 we were negotiating Salford Junction, a four-way canal junction above which, on piles lies the infamous Gravelly Hill Interchange, better known as Spaghetti Junction.

The B&F, beyond this point is one of my least favourite canals, passing the backyards of non-descript industrial premises, with banks overgrown and very shallow. We went aground several times. To add to our slow progress, a couple of the crew jumped ship to try to find a cash point, and were unable to be contacted by mobile phone (and vice-versa) – Paul, in Indian garb for the day, even contemplating smoke signals. Having given up waiting, we eventually found them completely by accident as they walked across a bridge while we passed under it.



Abandoning plans to get to the Dog & Doublet at Bodymoor Heath for our lunch-time ale, we pulled in at Curdworth, and headed for the White Horse – large, food orientated and somewhat bland it offered Brakspeare, Purity or Wadworth beers. Some also visited the Beehive, about 5 minutes away, where Bass, Marstons, a guest beer and cheese and onion rolls were available, and where the bar staff apparently did not fall for a wind up that some of the crew were a closely supervised outing from a care home.

Off once more at 3.20 to cover the eleven locks and half a dozen miles to the Coventry Canal at Fazeley Junction. Shep on the tiller, and the sky now overcast with the look of rain about it, nourishment was taken in the form of spiced rum, and what was left of the Pharosian's beer. Around 6pm we were passing the much-photographed Drayton Manor Swing Bridge with its castellated towers and footbridge above, and by 6.45 were tied up just before the junction, from where we soon repaired to the nearby Three Tuns just across the A5 Watling Street Bridge.

A very friendly and traditional pub, seemingly unchanged in twenty years, it sold Adnams and Bass, and Weston's Perry. A fine evening followed, with conversation

ranging across the usual suspects of beer, football and barmaids, and even venturing into politics. We finished off one of the ales, and several of our number entertained themselves by exploring the juke box for hits of yesteryear. On leaving the pub food was sought, but it transpired the half dozen takeaways in Fazeley, had all closed around 10pm, leaving Paul hungry again. That night I was woken by heavy drops of rain falling on the roof, but it was just a shower, the only one of the week

By dawn the rain had passed over, and after replenishing the water tank and Martin and Chris had been shopping, we were off sometime after 8.00. By 9.30 we were at the bottom of the two slow filling Goscote Locks at Tamworth. With plenty of boats on the move, including a couple in front of us, our progress was somewhat delayed, but the weather was staying fine, although quite a breeze had now blown up.

The itinerary now having gone by the board, we tied up at Polesworth at 11.45 and made our way to the famous Bull's Head, scene of the much recounted desertion by Tigger many years ago. Martin out on recky had spotted only Doombar, but he only checked one



Outside the Bull's Head, Polesworth



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bar, the other sold Pedigree and Methane, a very palatable local micro concoction at 5%. We didn't get under way again until 4.05, and I seem to recall that it was rather a good session!

The wind had dropped again as we cruised towards Atherton, a strong odour of curry emanated from the galley, where Shep and Chris were at work with the supplies purchased earlier. By 6.30 we were tied up for the night halfway up the eleven lock Atherton Flight, just before another Watling Street Bridge. The Kings Head opposite our moorings, being currently closed for refurbishment, we made our way to the town centre, stopping first at the Market Tavern with beers from the Warwickshire Brewery and a discount for CAMRA members.

A pub quiz was to be held, and while the others went elsewhere Dave, Martin and myself formed a team and occupied a table which must have been normally used by more regular contestants as we received a few black looks. Anyway, we didn't win, but had the benefit of an excellent buffet laid on after the match. Afterwards we crossed the Market Square to the Angel, which had recently reopened as a real ale specialist pub with half a dozen or so beers from micro-breweries and several ciders. We found many of the crew here, to finish off a good drinking day, and we slept well that night. And Paul at last got his curry. A meal for two with John that would have fed four, but nothing wasted – what was left was added to the boat's own curry pot.

Thursday. Off at 7.30 to clear the top lock at about 9.00. Past the Anchor Inn just after the BWB (sorry, now CRT) Yard at Hartshill, through Nuneaton with lots of canalside allotments, and at 12.20 passed the entrance to the Ashby canal at Marston Junction, which, if there had been time, we had intended to go up to Hinckley for lunch. Instead another couple of miles found as at Hawkesbury Junction, the start of the Oxford Canal, and the Greyhound, a famous old boatmen's pub, for Bass, Marston, Theakston, guest beers and cider.

Despite dire warnings about not leaving things too late, the boat didn't get away until 3.30 with Hon Commodore (unelected) sitting outside the pub, camera at the ready, to record Pennine attempting the very sharp 180 degree turn onto the Oxford Canal. Give him his due, Martin, steering, almost made it in one, but not quite! Then through the 6 inch stop lock before the eleven-and-a-half miles and no locks to Newbold-on-Avon. Dick decided to walk for a stretch, but somehow got well behind us, and we were just passing bridge 27 when he phoned to say he'd be waiting at bridge 25. It was too near nightfall to stop, so he ended up walking the whole distance, catching us up just as we had moored at about 7.30, immediately after Newbold Tunnel.

This, incidentally, is Newbold 'New' Tunnel, built in the 1820's when the northern section of Brindley's original 'contour' Oxford Canal, was straightened. The old tunnel entrance can be seen in Newbold churchyard, while mooring rings outside the adjacent Boat Inn and the Barley Mow, both now at an angle to the present canal, show that they were once canalside on the bypassed loop. The pubs are now one, the Barley Mow having taken over the Boat for use as a function room, etc. The beers were nothing out of the ordinary, but at least we'd got to one of the few canalside drinking holes remaining between Hawkesbury Junction and Rugby.

Friday, last complete day, and not away until 9.30 after watering up, as we now had the full day to get to Braunston instead of the half day as per the itinerary. Work at Hillmorton Locks meant that only one each of the paired trio was operating and we took forty minutes before leaving the top lock. Windlasses could now be stowed away, as these were our last locks. A little later around midday we tied up opposite the Old Royal Oak at Hillmorton, once just a nice canalside pub, it has for many years now been a Greene King 'Hungry Horse' establishment. Still, there was Real Ale, including a guest, but I would have liked a bar just for beer drinkers rather than everything aimed at the eating trade.

On the way to the pub Paul rescued a white dove that seemed to have 'pancaked' into the cut. Pulling it from the canal and placing it under a bush to dry out, he claimed he was the only one to pull a bird all week. Some of the lads walked the half mile or so to the Bell, but I don't think there was much more than Doombar there. While at the Royal Oak, the crew of 'Wild Hemlock' popped in for a quickie, having completed their route via the North Stratford Canal and Birmingham City Centre on time.

We eventually set off again just after 4pm on the last leg back to Braunston, where we arrived just before 6.00, and moored only a few yards from the road bridge. Hon Commodore (unelected) was once again installed in the wheelchair, and we proceeded to the first pub of the week, the Old Plough, by way of the footpath towards the hilltop church with its prominent spire, a landmark to canal users from miles away. The Wood Farm Webb Ellis still tasted as good, while the pub, quiet at first, livened up amazingly after 9.00. We managed to procure a large table to play

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dominoes, Paul teaching those of us who didn't know already how to play Chicken Foot. I don't recall leaving before midnight, in fact we felt we might be welcome half way through the night. However, with the return journey the following morning, we returned to Pennine much earlier than we might have done, to enjoy platefulls of the curry that had been maturing for the last couple of days, before turning in.

Last morning. Away late to complete the half mile to the hire base at the bottom of Braunston Locks, unload, hand Pennine back to its owners, and pose for end of trip photographs, before departing for home.

#### The Beery Boaters. Autumn 2014



*Jim Green*

*(with additional material Paul Skelton)*



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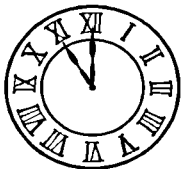
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# LAST KNOCKINGS

**Nigel Farage** Whatever you might think of UKIP, real ale drinkers cannot but be impressed by its party leader's willingness to be seen in a pub with a pint of beer in his hand. A nice contrast to many a PC conscious politician (which seems to be rather a lot of them), who, if they are ever seen in a pub, are wont to plump for those traditional 'British' lubricants, half a lager or a white wine. As we all know, concern with correct appearances is hardly new. In Harold Wilson's day, his much cultivated pipe-smoking man of the people image, apparently gave way to cigars once inside the door of No.10. He also, it is said, preferred whisky to beer, so maybe those famous 11<sup>th</sup> hour beer and sandwiches crisis meetings, intended to resolve this or that industrial conflict, included spirits as well.

It is of course possible, that Nigel Farage himself is playing an image game, but he does seem more prepared to 'mix it' with the ordinary man and woman in the street, or more specifically public house, than many others among our political leadership – deterred perhaps by pubs' general egalitarianism and opportunities for criticism and ridicule of the establishment. However, whether true or not, Nigel Farage's apparent liking for beer and pubs can only be applauded.

**Media Studies** Image, of course, is not confined to politicians, and real ale itself has to contend with some curious presumptions. Just before writing this I was listening on the radio to a satirical piece about the above party leader which had him calling for pints of a fictitious brew, named, I recall, Bishop's Scrotum – or similar. A reasonable parody of some of the fanciful names that real ales are given. However, one suspects that much of the media never get beyond names, fanciful or not. While wine receives pages of copy and wide respect, real ale, too often it seems is filed away in the drawer marked 'enthusiast' along with the fans of steam trains, riders of old motor bikes, and other groups and individuals who those in the media seem sometimes to regard as not fully integrated into modern society. Perhaps, disappointingly for them, real ale does not come with glitzy marketing and a global brand name, and is often made with restricted resources in confined circumstances by just such enthusiasts. But the truth lies in the name: real ale, a beer brewed by and for those who like good beer, not a concocted brew to satisfy the requirements of some marketing strategy.

**Beery Boating** Regular readers of this publication might have fallen under the impression that our twice yearly outing on the canals comprises a hazard free week dawdling from pub to pub along our chosen route under balmy skies: and of course such is often the case. However, narrow boats are hefty pieces of equipment, locks are deep, and water is ever a variable medium of transport, being, as it is, at the mercy of the vagaries of weather. The accompanying perils are well illustrated by the recent fate of the narrow boat Langton, one of our boats from last spring's outing on the Kennet and Avon. Out on hire on November 1<sup>st</sup>, and progressing down

Bath's Widcombe flight, in one of the locks its rudder was caught on the cill (the stone projection at the base of the top gates). Too late, presumably, its crew recognised the problem, and the bow was under water and the boat abandoned.

'Lock cilling' is not uncommon and there are various theories of how to retrieve boats so stranded, some more successful than others. An attempted recovery on the same flight in the previous March, using heavy lift equipment saw the boat slipping, and ending up sunk and later written off. In the case of Langton it was all done by ropes, pumps, and watertight sealed tarpaulins and covers. Secured by ropes and with further water entry prevented, the boat was pumped out and, as the lock refilled,



refloated and taken away for recuperation. Of particular note, might be reports that the lock, with Langton nose down, was awash with floating beer cans – an eventually completely foreign of course to the boating concepts of the real ale drinking Beery Boaters.

**Christmas Beers** With Christmas now well behind us, our pubs can revert to selling a more normal range of beers, without the need to include Santa's Pudding, Rudolph's Nose, or any of the other seasonal offerings that breweries seem to consider a required drinking at that time of year. Not that such brews are unwelcome, but some seem distinctly second rate. At one time dark, heavy and strong might have summed up the necessary requirements for a Christmas ale, with possibly some added spice, although the value and effect of this latter element has always been somewhat contentious. Of late, though, some breweries have taken to concocting beers, that without the seasonal name and decorative pump clip, appear hardly distinguishable from their general output for the rest of the year. Strength, at one time around 5% or more, is often now nearer 4%, the current norm for many a premium bitter, with some specifically downgraded to conform. Greene King's Rocking Rudolph, acquired with the takeover of Hardy and Hansons, and in their day a cracking beer at 5%, is now put out at 4.2% – I didn't try it. Thank goodness we can rely on such as Gadds (Little Cracker 5%), Old Dairy (Snow Top 6%) and Goacher's (1066 6.7%) to do the business.

**Conspiracy Theories** Speaking of Gadds I have just come across the brewery's projected brewing schedule for the coming year, from which I note the disappointing omission of that superb beer Common Conspiracy. I seem to recall that last summer it was around for several months. Meanwhile, its equally tasty sibling, Dark Conspiracy is due to be available just for November and December, when last year I am sure I remember drinking it throughout the whole winter. Surely one or other of these excellent beers deserve to be available right through the whole year.

*Old Wort*

# A Campaign

# of Two Halves

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Channel Draught 62 01/06

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## National Contacts

**Nationally** CAMRA can be contacted at:  
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For enquiries, phone 01727 867201

Web [www.camra.org.uk](http://www.camra.org.uk)



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## CROSSWORD ANSWERS



## Local Information & Useful Numbers

Dover Tourist Info 01304 205108

Folk Tourist Info 01303 258594

Dover Police Stn 01303 240055

Folk Police Stn 01303 850055

### Dover Taxis

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Central 01304 204040

Star 01304 228822

Heritage 01304 228888

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### Sandwich Taxis

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### Folkestone Taxis

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Chris's Taxis 01303 226490

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## **And Finally.....It won't put hairs on your chest but it'll certainly give you b\*\*ls!**

Rocky Mountain Oyster Stout beer has a very special ingredient, real bull testicles. Denver's Wynkoop Brewing Company has created this unique beer. Their chief promoter Marty Jones said the beer will be available in two-can packs. 'When a beer is made with ingredients like this there is really only one way to sell it - in pairs'

What started as an April Fool's Day prank quickly became reality when the first barrel was tapped. Wynkoop announced it to be the "ballsiest beer ever" via their blog. "We've been making ballsy beer for the past few years," Wynkoop brewer Andy Brown said. "And this is great proof of that."

The beer is 7% ABV and has 3 BPs. That's balls per barrel or 25 pounds of sliced and roasted bull testicles in each 8-barrel batch. So, what does the bull testicle beer taste like? Wynkoop brewery describes it as 'an assertive foreign-style stout, slightly viscous, with a deep brown colour. It has equally deep flavours of chocolate syrup, Kahlua, and espresso, along with a palpable level of alcohol and a savoury umami-like note. It finishes dry and roasted with a fast-fading hop bite'. Now when will Wetherspoons start serving it?

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We like to keep things simple. Our friendly, family run establishment has a garden with bench seating for sunny days, a large alfresco terrace for year-round drinking and dining, a bar for cosy evenings, and a restaurant for relaxed dining.

We stock the finest beers and cider; with ales from Stornaway to Kent, and beers from across the Channel. You can keep up to date with what's in our cellar by following us on twitter:

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