

The Deal Dover Sandwich & District Branch Magazine

# CHANNEL DRAUGHT

Issue 76

Free

Summer 2018



Inside:

## • THE DARKER SIDE OF HOPS

*Tales of crime, disease and disaster among 19th century hop-pickers*

## • AWARD WINNING PUBS

*Success for five local pubs—See Local News*



CAMPAIGN  
FOR  
REAL ALE

# CHANNEL DRAUGHT

## Issue 76 Summer 2018

### Channel Draught

is published and  
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& District Branch  
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sensibly!**

### Cover Photo

**The Anchor  
Wingham**

**Summer Pub of the Season 2018  
Good Beer Guide pub 2018**

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## BRANCH DIARY

Events shown in blue are not organised by CAMRA

Thur 6 Sept

Rural Ramble, **Romney Marsh**, Bus 102  
from Pencerster Rd, Dover 10.20

Sat 8 Sept

Kent Regional Meeting, **Ship Centurion**,  
**Whitstable** Start 11.30.

Mon 17 Sept

Branch Meeting, **Leather Bottle**,  
Mongeham.

Fri 21 Sep - Sun 7 Oct

**Kent Green Hop Fortnight** Across Kent

Fri 5th - Sun 7th Oct

Cider & Ale Festival, **Crabbe Corn Mill**,  
River, Nr Dover CT17 0UY

Fri 12 - Sat 13 Oct

Cider Festival, **Berry, Walmer**

Mon 15 Oct

Branch Meeting, **White Horse**, Dover.

Fri 19th - Sun, 21 Oct

**8th CAMRA Spa Valley Railway Beer &  
Cider Festival**, Spa Valley Railway, Royal  
Tunbridge Wells, TN2 5QY

Sat 17 Nov

Kent Regional Meeting, **King's Head**,  
**Bexley** Start 11.30

Mon 19 Nov

Branch Meeting, **Salvation**, Deal.

Welcome to the Summer 2018 edition of *Channel Draught*, the magazine of the Deal, Dover, Sandwich and District Branch of the Campaign of Real Ale, dedicated to protecting and promoting local pubs and good beer, and both of which, recent events would suggest, are in an increasingly health state.

Firstly, we congratulate The Lanes in Dover which, for the second year running, has been chosen as East Kent Pub of the Year, and which additionally this year has won Kent Pub of the Year as well. Also receiving deserved recognition was the Berry in Walmer, which was awarded East Kent Cider Pub of the Year, while the Anchor in Wingham received our Branch's own award as 2018 Summer Pub of the Season. See Local News for more details, plus also the success of the White Horse and Crown and Sceptre in Dover in competitions run by their pubcos.

Meanwhile, among other changes, and despite the loss of one or two pubs over the last few years, we welcome the opening of the Topsy Gardener in Shepherdswell, the relaunch of the Spires in Deal as the Salvation, and the retention of the Royal Oak in River, now as a free house. For the autumn we look forward to the reopening in Ash of the Chequer under community ownership.

Our two most recently established breweries, Angels and Demons in Capel and the Breakwater in Dover go from strength to strength, the latter currently undergoing a major expansion, while its taproom bar remains a continuing success. And in Deal, the second year of the Deal Hop Project has attracted substantially greater interest with well over three hundred people involved.

Further information on all the above elsewhere in the magazine. Also featuring, is this year's GBG Trail to visit all of the Branch's 2018 GBG pubs, further thoughts on our local bus services, some less salubrious aspects of hops and hop picking, and some revealing facts about current beer prices.

*Martin Atkins*



## LOUIS ARMSTRONG

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3 MINUTES FROM PENCESTER ROAD BUS STATION  
**CAMRA AWARDS**

#### DEAL, DOVER & SANDWICH BRANCH AWARDS

- SPRING PUB OF THE SEASON 2015
- AUTUMN PUB OF THE SEASON 2016
- PUB OF THE YEAR 2017
- PUB OF THE YEAR 2018

#### REGIONAL AWARDS

- EAST KENT PUB OF THE YEAR 2017
- RUNNER-UP KENT PUB OF THE YEAR 2017
- EAST KENT PUB OF THE YEAR 2018
- KENT PUB OF THE YEAR 2018

*DEBBIE & KEITH  
LOOK FORWARD  
TO WELCOMING YOU TO*

**THE LANES**

PHONE 07504258332 – 01304 213474



**KENT PUB OF THE YEAR 2018**







# LOCAL NEWS

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.

## EAST KENT PUB OF THE YEAR



Jeff Waller (centre),  
with Debbie & Keith  
Lane

For the second year in succession **The Lanes** in Worthington Street has been chosen as CAMRA East Kent Pub of the Year, and the afternoon of Wednesday August 29<sup>th</sup> saw the presentation of the award to Debbie and Keith Lane by CAMRA East Kent Area Organiser Jeffery Waller. He congratulated the couple on their achievement in just three and half years from first opening in December 2014, since when they have won a whole series of awards for the quality of their beer and character of their pub. With ale sourced from all across Kent, plus a few breweries in Sussex, and the occasional beer from elsewhere, they set a standard for others to match.

Five real ales is the regular choice and a snapshot across the recent selection has included beer from Romney Marsh, Long Man, Goody, Canterbury Ales, Hop Fuzz, Gadds, Rockin' Robin, Range, Angels & Demons, Oakham, Kent, Hopdaemon, Tonbridge, Musket and the recently established Iron Pier. All beers are kept in a cool room next to the bar, and served on gravity straight from the barrel. Meanwhile the pub's strong local affiliation applies also to the wine and cider it sells, all of which is of Kentish origin.

However, The Lanes success has extended still further, and in August the pub was also announced as CAMRA Regional winner and **Kent Pub of the Year**. It will now go on to compete in the super regional contest to be one of the country's four top pubs.

## DOVER

### More Pub Awards

As well as the Lanes a further two Dover pubs have recently won awards. In St James' Street at the **White Horse**, Stuart and Julian's turning of a critical review by a Google user to their own benefit, was voted by the pub's owners Ei Group, as the Best Marketing Initiative, at its inaugural Awards for Excellence. The review referred to the pub as expensive and more of a restaurant, and said there were posers sat the bar. Stuart and Julian posted a copy on Facebook and added: "To all our lovely customers; please feel free to step up to take credit for being the 'poseurs'." Considerable interest was generated, and #PoseursAtTheBar was added to the pub's social media pages. A sign,

"Poseurs at the Bar", appeared on the chalkboard above the bar – and subsequently locals, tourists and anyone else who might be visiting the pub have been happily posing for photos below it. Included in the award, also, was appreciation of the earlier



marketing initiative derived from Channel Swimming, and the swimmers' signatures on the walls, which have been posted on social media to reach an international audience. Harveys Sussex and Landlord appear regularly plus various guest ales and cider.

Also receiving recognition is the **Crown & Sceptre**. Many of you will remember Dave Hicklin from his time at the Boar's Head and Park Inn, and will be aware that he and his wife Jan are currently running the Elms Vale pub. They took over the pub in August 2016 and for their endeavours in reach-

The Crown & Sceptre, Dover



ing out to the local community and enhancing the customer base, have now won the Heart of the Community award from the pub's owner Shepherd Neame.

Among a variety of events and activities, the pub hosts five darts teams, a pool team and skittle team, and holds a monthly quiz night for the Dover Carnival Committee. There is also a monthly meeting by the Dover Cycling Club, plus regular live music. Dave said that the award meant a lot to them. The traditional nature of the Crown and Sceptre supported their 'old-school' pub philosophy of knowing their customers, being at the heart of the locality, and welcoming a broad cross section of people from all walks of life. And real ale sales are much improved, having at one time become somewhat intermittent – regularly Whitstable Bay with often with a second ale as well.

Elsewhere in the town Peter and Kathryn at the **Mash Tun** kindly hosted our Branch AGM in June, opening the pub for us on a Monday evening when normally they are closed. It proved a very good venue and all business was concluded successfully.

Beers were Canterbury Friars, Range Ales Beach Head Amber, Gadds Dogbolter and Dover Pale Ale from Breakwater whose brews have been prominent of late. With Dover Pale Ale proving particularly popular and receiving consistently good reports, Peter says so long as people keep drinking it, he'll keep selling it. However, drinkers' highest commendation was reserved for another of the brewery's beer, Samphire Gold, which one customer could only describe as perfection.

The pub though, remains a beacon of good ale amongst a fairly choice limited to keg and closed pubs. The **Funky Monkey** opposite has long since abandoned real ale while of late it has also disappeared from the **Duchess** (ex Flotilla) next door. And as far as we are aware also, no real ale either currently at the **Lord Nelson** now incorporated into the new St James' development. Meanwhile, the former Ellie/Port of Call most recently trading as **Burger Brothers** remains resoundingly closed and up for sale. At the **Roman Quay**, despite 2017's refurbishment by new owners Heineken and its projected opening as a "Gin and Ale House" towards last Christmas, signs of life have been largely absent, only just starting to reappear over the latter part of the summer.

With the **Castle**, Russell Street (also up for sale) still without real ale **Blakes** and the **Eight Bells** are the two nearest outlets. At the former, Millis Blakes Bitter, remains standard, usually accompanied by two guests – Sambrook Junction and Adnams Fat Spratt on a visit earlier in the summer, where our reporter seemed particularly impressed by: "Good food, and available mid-afternoon for those of us with unregulated eating habits"

At the **Eight Bells** Kenny is back in charge after a stint looking after the Sir Norman Wisdom in Deal. The pub offers a broad selection of nationals and micros, the latter including normally two or three locals. Among recent choices have been Ruddles Best, Doom Bar and Abbot alongside Black Prince, 1381 and Ravening Wolf from Wantsum, Nethergate Ruby Mild, Titanic Nautical Mild and White Horse Village Idiot.

In Priory Place, as far as we are aware, real ale has not returned to the **Golden Lion**, while the **Prince Albert** in Biggin Street usually offers a national choice, such as London Pride or Bombardier. At the **Priory Hotel**, one real ale is normally available from a selection that includes both national and local beers – recent examples being Doom Bar and G2 Sail. Back in June Abbot was on the handpumps at the very reasonable price of £3.

# BREAKWATER

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or Breakwater Taproom

And in Ladywell, there is still no sign of anyone taking on the now empty **Rack of Ale** – Trish, by the way, at the time of writing, is due to relocate to France in the near future. We wish her well. A few doors away, the **Park Inn** is now reconfigured as an Indian restaurant. However, the bar remains, along with a handpump selling real ale, in mid-June one of Breakwater's brews. According to one of the staff anyone calling in for just a drink would be welcome. Meanwhile, in late July **Les Fleurs** was selling Whitstable Bay and John Smiths.

At the Tower Hamlets junction real ale has yet to reappear at the **Eagle** despite indications that it was being considered. However, the nearby **Thirsty Scarecrow** usually offers two or three KeyKeg ales alongside its extensive cider selection – late July seeing Old Dairy Cattle Shed and Westerham Bohemian Rhapsody.

In Charlton Green over recent months the **Red Lion** has been selling the very palatable West Berkshire Good Old Boy alongside G2 Plough, while along the road at the **Louis Armstrong**, the pub maintains its selection of Kentish ale from its half dozen or so regular suppliers. One exception, much to the appreciation of the pub's real ale drinkers, was the appearance in July of a barrel of Jaipur from Thornbridge in Derbyshire.

With its beers increasingly prominent across East Kent, the **Breakwater Brewery** is currently undergoing a major expansion in capacity. New beers continue to appear, usually referencing some local feature or landmark – Samphire Gold, Grand Shaft, Drop of Redoubt – and the Taproom's hours of opening have recently changed to include Wednesday. A mobile bar, "lovingly crafted from a cattle transporter trailer" has recently been acquired. It has three pumps for cask ales, four Key-Keg taps, and a double tap for KeyKeg cider, and Sunday August 5<sup>th</sup> saw its inauguration in front of

the Taproom with a hog roast and live music. In July the quality of its beers was suitably reflected at this year's Kent Beer Festival where the brewery's Peanut Butter Stout was declared Kent Beer winner.

On Crabble Hill, a visit earlier in the year to the **Three Cups** found Marston's Royal Celebration on the handpumps, while in mid-July the choice at the **Cricketers** in Crabble Avenue the choice was London Pride and Fuller's Oliver's Island.

In River, over the summer, work has appeared to have started converting the **Dublin Man O' War** to residential with the site accommodating a variety of skips and building equipment, and the site fencing now bearing a builders/developers name board. However, more inspiring news from the **Royal Oak**. Now free of tie, a late June visit found a section of three ales from Adnams – Bitter, Broadside and Lighthouse. The pub also hosted our August Branch Meeting, obligingly opening for us one Monday evening, and where as well as the choice of three from Adnams there was also available Golden Shot from Range Ales at Lympne.

In late June the **Railway Bell** at Kearsney was selling Sharps Atlantic and Doom Bar, along with Greene King Abbot, while recent visits to the **Fox**, Temple Ewell have seen Ringwood Razorback and Cotleigh Fox appearing regularly. Other beers have included Three Piers Old Tram and Marstons 61 Deep and from Dover's own Breakwater Spring Tide and Breakwater Best. The annual Rotary Charity Beer Festival with fifteen real ales was held on Friday and Saturday 22<sup>nd</sup> - 23<sup>rd</sup> June.

## DEAL

**East Kent Cider Pub of the Year** In Walmer, more success for the **Berry**. Running a pub has sometimes compared to looking after a baby that never grows up – hard work that needs love, care and attention 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year. Dedication that has been successfully achieved by Chris Barnes, who since taking over the pub in 2005, as seen it feature in every CAMRA Good Beer Guide, and been a candidate in all of the Branch's Pub of the Year competitions, which it won seven successive times, as well as receiving numerous other CAMRA awards. Most recently, on Saturday 7<sup>th</sup> July, Chris received the East Kent Cider Pub of the Year Award for 2018. Presenting the award for the Branch Tony Wells said: "It's a fantastic achievement, and reflects the outstanding work and effort that Chris, his family and staff have put into the pub over the past 13 years". As well as substantially increasing the







Chris Barnes (left) of The Berry, Walmer receives his certificates from Tony Wells

number of real ales, real cider now forms a significant part of the pubs' offering alongside craft beers." The Berry was also runner up to the Cellars Ale House in Maidstone for Kent Cider Pub of the Year.

Meanwhile, elsewhere in Walmer, the **Royal Marines Club** on the Strand was selling Cotleigh Tawny Owl in early June and a recent visit to the **Stag** found a choice of Oakham Citra, London

Pride and Sharp's Atlantic IPA.

Up by Walmer station the site of the former **Railway** is now occupied by a terrace of houses nearing completion, although many local drinkers probably feel that the **Freed Man** on Dover Road, with its varying selection of ale is a fair swop. And a few doors along reports suggest that the **Thompson Bell** is back to selling Draught Bass.....as it was twenty or thirty years ago.

In Kingsdown recent visits to the **King's Head** have found Goacher's Special House Ale and a varying selection from Gadd's including Seaside, No 5 and She Sells Sea Shells. And down on the shore at the **Zetland** ale choice has included Master Brew, Spitfire and Bishops Finger.

**Bohemian**, Beach Street: A visit in early June found heavy involvement with Kent beers including Kent Brewery, Musket and Whitstable. At the **Rose** in the High Street, reopened earlier in the year after substantial refurbishment, the pub was offering Ripple Best, and at the **Taphouse Beer Café**, South Street, now furnished with a couple of handpumps, Skinner's Lushingtons was available early June: "Good head with pleasant taste, ideal for summer". At the end of the month the pub was selling Taphouse Pilsner and Northdown He-Brew.

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# The Chambers

## SUPPORTING KENTISH ALE & CIDER

The Chambers always has fabulous menus on offer with steak night every Tue's.

For more information please look up our website:-  
[www.pubfolkestone.co.uk](http://www.pubfolkestone.co.uk)  
OR  
 For weekly updates on all our events including live music every Thurs', Dj's every Fri', our famous monthly quiz & many other events, why not pop onto or FACEBOOK page - 'The Chambers'

In Queen Street the **Queen Street Tap** has continued with a choice from near and far, recent visits finding Kent Brewery Tap and Canterbury Pardoners along with Scarlet McCaw and Citra from Oakham. At the **Sir Norman Wisdom** the pub's wide and varying selection has included Whitstable Kentish Reserve, Great Newsome Holderness Dark and Long Man American Pale Ale.

**Spires:** The running of the High Street bar at the Landmark Centre, is now in the hands of Ian Goodman from the Freed Man, and saw a major relaunch in late July under its new name, the **Salvation**. Tying in with the local history of North Deal, it is reflected by the new pub sign, designed by local artist Nicki Vowles, which depicts a lifeboat going to a ship in distress. Ian hopes in due course to increase the two handpumps to four, and there will also be still cider. "I am aiming for a larger version of the Freed Man serving great ale, lager and cider in a relaxed and convivial atmosphere", he says.

**Just Reproach,** King Street: Continuing with its wide ranging and eclectic selection from near and far, Four Candles New Zealand Pale received particular praise – "this brewery is producing some really good beers" – as also did Mallinsons Nelson

Sauvin: "very tasty for a low strength beer". In early August Goacher's Beyond Reproach appeared – not a name we recognise from that brewery's normal line up.

**Ship,** Middle Street: Still maintaining strong links with Gadds, whose beers regularly occupy three of the pub's five handpumps, Festive, Seaside and the excellent value No 7 have been particularly prominent on recent visits. Hophead also features consistently and of late the line-up has included Landlord.

In late July the **Deal Hoy** had Master Brew, Spitfire Gold and Kansas Zesty Jester on the handpumps – "traditional back-street pub, well-worth a visit", commented one satisfied drinker. Meanwhile, around the corner in West Street at the **Alma** various visits found Landlord, Thwaites Wainwright and Harveys Sussex.

**Farriers,** Manor Road: Recent selection has included Ripple Farmhouse, St Austell Proper and Golden XPA from Caledonian. Meanwhile earlier in the summer the **Leather Bottle** was selling Romney Bitter and Goody Good Health.

In Sholden we understand that the **Sportsman** is still closed with work going on.



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## SANDWICH & RURAL

**Branch Pub of the Season** Early evening Thursday August 16<sup>th</sup> in Wingham, saw a small group from DDS CAMRA finding welcome respite at the **Anchor**, following a somewhat damp and muddy trek visiting a number of the Branch's rural pubs. However, as well as a much enjoyed pint or two from a choice of Gadds Festive, Doom Bar, Long Man American Pale Ale and Musket Ball Puller, they were also there to present the pub with the Branch's award as Summer Pub of the Season 2018. Branch Chairman Martin Atkins, congratulated landlady Michelle and manager Simon, on their success and on running a very popular and well patronised village local which as well as offering



good food, maintained a traditional pub atmosphere where customers could drink and chat. The award also reflected the pub's large attractive garden (not seen at its best that day), and its support for live entertainment for which it is currently one of six national finalists for Best Live Entertainment Pub in this year's Great British Pub Award competition.

In Sandwich Kentish ales are prominent at the Locale **Admiral Owen**. Among a variety of the county's beers, visits earlier in the summer found Canterbury Ales Hyper Hop, Mad Cat Festival Ale and Rockin' Robin Really Rockin' – "Top form. Fresh & lively on serving, well poured, superb taste with dry bitterness for this 5% pale ale".

Opposite in early July the **Crispin** was offering Crispin Ale, Festival Ale and Jet Black Stout, and in early August Crispin Ale along with Adnams Broadside and Nelson Pieces of Eight.

Elsewhere in the town among other beers Butcombe Bitter was available at the **Fleur de Lis**, Harveys Sussex at the **Kings Arms**, and Goody

Good Sheppard at the **Mermaid's Locker**. At the **New Inn** Courage Best is standard, with apparently fourteen barrels shifted each week, plus various guests – Old Golden Hen and Adnams Mosaic on visits earlier in the summer.

**Chequer**, Ash: Following the successful purchase of the pub earlier this year, at the time of writing, the village were looking for a tenant to run it. Campaigner Mathew Titterton said: "It's fantastic to know this wonderful historic pub....will now reopen. This time there will be no national pub company owning it, but instead a community passionate for it to succeed." The campaign to buy the pub, now has over 300 shareholders, and has been supported by a grant and a loan from the Plunkett Foundation. Reopening is expected in the autumn.

Earlier in the summer at Preston, Canterbury Reeves, Whit Bay and Master Brew were available at the **Half Moon Seven Stars**, while at East Stourmouth the **Rising Sun** was selling Dorking Pacific Gold, Cotleigh Barn Owl and 3D Hop Gun. At Plucks Gutter the **Dog and Duck** was offering Master Brew.

**Black Pig**, Barnsole: visits over recent months have found a varying selection including Hog's Back TEA, Harveys Best, Landlord, Wadworth Epic and Old Dairy Copper Pot, while in early June at the **Fitzwalter**, Goodnestone, the choice was Master Brew, Early Bird and a guest ale, Splendor from the Navigation Brewery in Nottingham. Later in the month Sheps beers were joined by Castle Rock Elsie Mo. And further Sheps' guests at the **Griffin**, Chillenden where St Austell Barracuda was available alongside Master Brew and Whitstable Bay during a visit in August.

At Nonington the **Royal Oak**, closed since late last summer reopened in early July, and in mid-August was offering a choice of Doom Bar and Spitfire. Meanwhile, various visits to the **Wrong Turn**, Barrestone, earlier in the summer found a range of ales including Breakwater Best, Angels and Demons Graham, Oakham JHB, and from Wantsum, Dynamo and Black Prince.

**St Crispin**, Worth: Doom Bar and London Pride appear regularly, often alongside one of Gadds beers, such as No 5 or Seaside. Meanwhile at the **Crown** Finglesham ale choice of late has included Navigation Patriot, London Pride, Dark Star Hop Head and the pub's house bitter from Canterbury Ales.

In Eythorne, recent visits to the other **Crown** have found Doom Bar, Old Speckled Hen, Caledo-

nian Bobbys, London Pride, Greene King IPA and Canterbury Pardoners. While more Doom Bar at the **Bell** in Shepherdswell where it remains standard alongside Courage Directors. Down the hill the **Bricklayers** is still boarded up with conversion to residential applied for. However, further along Coxhill the newly opened micropub, the **Tipsy Gardner**, offers an alternative. Currently open Thursday to Sunday, one or two cask ales are normally available, plus a selection of KeyKeg. Wantsum Red Raddle was available on a visit earlier in the summer and Wantsum 1381 when a Branch walk stopped there in late July. Swearing and phone calls are likely to incur a fine.

In Lydden, Father's Day weekend saw a Real Ale and Cheese Festival at the **Lydden Bell** with over twenty different ales and cheeses, a barbeque and a variety of accompanying events from bouncy castle to live music. A visit later in the month found Sharps Manu Bay and Breakwater Hellfire Corner on the handpumps.

**Jackdaw**, Denton: In late June beers were Tribute, Gadds No 5, Ringwood Razorback and Timothy Taylor. July saw the pub host our monthly branch meeting, where our deliberations benefited from the welcome provision of a separate room.

In mid-June the **Chance** at Guston was selling Bass and Greene King IPA, while in Ripple there was a choice of four ales at the **Plough** – Regulars Fuller's ESB and Ripple Steam Best Bitter, along with Old Speckled Hen and Crouch Vale Amarillo. In late May guests were Burton Bridge Top Dog Stout and Wickwar Platform 6.1. At St Margaret's Bay Whitstable Bay and Spitfire were available at the **Coastguard**.

In Capel there was Doom Bar at the **Valiant Sailor** and Master Brew and Greene King IPA in the **Royal Oak**. At the **Lighthouse** Angels and Demons Harry Hop has been selling well and the pub is looking at taking Graham in the future.

## CANTERBURY

In mid-July at the **Phoenix**, Old Dover Road, beers were Dark Star American Pale Ale, Canterbury Ales Pardoner's Ale, Gadds Summer Day and Tonbridge Golden Rule, and at the **King's Head**, Wincheap Greene King IPA, St Edmunds Golden, Old Speckled Hen and Hardy and Hansons. In Havelock Street the **New Inn** offered a choice of seven – Purity UBU, Summers Day and No 5 from Gadds, Arbor Shangri-La, St Austell Trelawny, Redemption Hopspur and a very palatable West Pier from Brighton Bier, just right for a warm summer's afternoon.

**Two Sawyers**, Ivy Lane: A recent visit found among other ales, Joseph Holt Humdinger (ABV 4%) at £4.30 a pint – "Seems to have changed hands, along with 'revised' prices", commented one drinker.

In Woolage Green, around Midsummer, the other **Two Sawyers** had Adnams and Hophead on the handpumps (we trust at more East Kent prices), and the bar filled with the mouth-watering smell of good cooking. On the other side of the A2 in Barham, the **Cumberland** was offering Black Sheep, Greene King IPA and Harveys, while there was Doom Bar and Purity Mad Goose at the **Black Robin**, Kingston. At the **Mermaid** in Bish-opsbourne there was Whitstable Bay, and Master Brew in Bridge at the **Plough and Harrow**.

In Ickham in early July a stop at the **Duke William** found Angels and Demons Bombay Social and Old Dairy Summer Top on the handpumps alongside Landlord, while at the **Rose** Wickhambreaux there was a choice of Greene King IPA, Gadds No 5 and Gales Seafarers. At Littlebourne the **Anchor** depressingly remains closed with boards across the windows – a long time for "reopening shortly" as stated on the side wall blackboard late last summer.

At Pett Bottom in the **Duck** there were two brews from Breakwater – Dover Pale Ale and Drop of Redoubt – and at the **Hop Pocket**, Bossingham, Adnams Ghostship together with Bulldog and Spirit of Kent from Westerham. The **Rose and Crown**, Stelling Minnis was selling London Pride and Youngs Bitter.

## FOLKESTONE

Don't let anyone tell you that dark ales are not appropriate for summer. A visit to the town in early June found superb examples at both the **Firkin** and the **Radnor Arms** (the revamped Happy Frenchman) – respectively God's Twisted Sister from Twisted Barrel and Hooker's Hooch from Tonbridge. Additionally at the Firkin the choice included Oakham OPA, Summer Wine Union Pale and Arbor Blue Sky Drinking. Meanwhile, once a home to TV screens and a venue for rock bands, the Radnor Arms now offers a more wine bar style ambiance. Up to three handpumped ales are available plus a variety of craft ales, gins and other assorted drinks. That day alongside Hooker's Hooch and also from Tonbridge was a light beer, Hooker's Liquor.

Around the corner at the **Bouverie** the choice was Rockin Robin RPA American Pale Ale and Reckless Robin Extra Special Bitter, and at **Har-**





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**veys** on Sandgate Road, Courage Best and London Pride. In Cheriton Place at **The Chambers** beers were Adnams Lighthouse and Ghostship, Canterbury Ales Jester and Hopdaemon Green Daemon. Meanwhile, if all went to plan, in July the street was due to acquire a third pub, **Junction 13** at the corner with Town Walk, with a line up including Old Dairy and Bexley beers.

At the **Guildhall** in the Bayle recently, there was Greene King IPA and London Glory plus the very tasty strong bitter, Sea Fury, from Sharp's. Three ales also at **Kipps** including two from Mad Cat – the house Pale Ale and Golden IPA – plus Pig and Porter Skylarking. And at the **Troubadour** in Tontine Street, the choice was Canterbury Ales Merchant's Stout and The Pardoner, alongside Breakwater Best Bitter.

Down by the Harbour in the **Mariner** there was a choice of Harveys, Doom Bar, Landlord, London Pride and Gadd's Seaside and at the **Ship** London Pride, Doom Bar, Youngs Bitter and Bombardier Gold. The **Lifeboat** was selling Canterbury Penalty, Bombardier and Hopdaemon Green Daemon, and the **East Cliff Tavern** Kent Session and Dark Star.

A trip along Canterbury Road noted the long closed **Two Bells** as still extant, if derelict with holes in the roof, and its walls receiving extensive attention from local graffiti artists.

Outside the town, the **Rose and Crown**, Elham was selling Master Brew and Whitstable Bay in early July, while round the corner in the Square the **King's Arms** appears to have dropped Skrimshander in favour of London Pride – the other two real ales though remain Harveys and Golden Braid. The front bar has also acquired a bar billiard table. At the **Gatekeeper**, Etchinghill the choice was Old Dairy Blue Top, Canterbury Ales Jester, Ripple Steam Bitter and Timothy Taylor Boltmaker.

In Sandgate in mid-July it was good to see two of their own home brewed beers on at the **Ship** one Saturday lunchtime, only they weren't. Featured on the blackboard, Amazing Cotter VC and Amazing Amber had both disappeared from the handpumps, obviously having found much favour with the pub's customers. Remaining choice was regular line up Greene King IPA and Abbot, Hop Head and Summer Lightning. Meanwhile, two Amazing ales also appeared at this summer's Tenterden Beer Festival. Across the road at **Inn Doors**, ales were Fife and Drum and Flintlock from Musket, Seven Deadly Sins from Scarborough and from Cattle Shed, Follow the Herd, a lagered vegan and gluten free

beer. We understand that the pub is now open on Mondays from 5pm to 10pm, and later on Sundays 12.30pm to 10pm.

In Hythe, where the town was awash with summer music, there was Doom Bar and London Glory at the **Carousel** and Box Steam Tunnel Vision, Gadd's No 5 and Range at the **Potting Shed**. The **White Hart** was selling Greene King IPA, Whitstable Bay and Seaside and the **Red Lion** Old Dairy Copper Top, Youngs Bitter and Romney Marsh American Pale Ale. At the **Three Mariners** beers were Woodforde's Wherry, Youngs Bitter, Old Dairy Gold Top and Ripple Classic IPA.

## ELSEWHERE

**Broken Drum**, 308 Westwood Lane, Blackfen, Bexley: The Society for the Preservation of Beers from the Wood (SPBW) has voted the Broken Drum micropub as its London Pub of the Year for 2018. It is one of a growing number of micropubs in south-east London, and takes its name from the inn in Terry Pratchett's Discworld novels (it cannot be beaten). Described as comfortable and basic, with no distractions from conversation, it was opened in a former nail bar by Andy Wheeler in April 2015, and serves three beers from mainly small local breweries, plus cider direct from casks in a temperature-controlled room at the rear.

**Pilgrims' Way Passports** Pubs on the Pilgrims' Way from Southwark to Canterbury are being asked to stamp walkers' and cyclists' Pilgrim Passports. The route, perhaps best known from Geoffrey Chaucer's Canterbury Tales runs from Southwark passed the Royal Oak in Tabard Street, down the Old Kent Road, where the Thomas à Becket (also known as Rock Island) was one of the first to sign up to the scheme, across Blackheath to Shooters Hill, and then to Canterbury via Dartford. The passport is available in a £1 pilgrim pack from Southwark Cathedral bookshop and it gives free admission to Canterbury Cathedral when presented filled with stamps from pubs, hotels and churches on the route.

Pilgrimages began in the years following St Thomas Becket's murder in 1170 and is hoped that most pubs on the route will be involved be the 850th anniversary of his death in 2020. The need for ale by pilgrims during the journey, resulted in Thomas being adopted as patron of the Brewers' Company.

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



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# The National News

By Martin Atkins

**Heineken Investment** The Amsterdam brewer is to spend £44m this year on its Star Pubs and Bars UK division, averaging £170,000 on each premises, and taking its total on UK pubs to £140m over the past five years. Reports suggest that their investment to date has helped to regenerate community interest and attracted back into pubs some who have not set foot inside one for years. And the Pub is the Hub described it as, "Good news for everyone". However, Heineken is not limiting its interest to just the buildings, fixtures and fittings. Its cask beer range is being expanded to more than 300. Following on from last year's deal with SIBA it means licensees will be able to choose from around 900 breweries.

**Minimum Pricing** From May 1<sup>st</sup> a minimum price of 50p per unit of alcohol has been in operation in Scotland. Originally passed by the Scottish parliament in 2012 but delayed by challenges from the drinks industry, it is claimed to act as a curb on binge drinking. There is a reasonable likelihood that in due course it will spread to other parts of the country, and earlier this year, the Welsh Assembly outlined similar plans. In England, findings from a government evaluation of MUP in 2013 were not conclusive, but the policy is kept under review, and its introduction had not been ruled out, said health minister Steve Brine.

CAMRA lobbied the Scottish government to keep the MUP to 50p a unit, where it does not unduly affect pubs, with any future increase linked to the Consumer Price Index, and will be extending lobbying to include the Welsh government. The Campaign will monitor the regulation closely, aware that MUP could potentially hit pub-goers' pockets should anti-alcohol campaigners call for a higher unit price.

**Women without Beer** Despite the craft ale boom, often seen as making beer more appealing to women, major recent changes, and the wider availability of different styles and flavours, a new report states that the UK has the lowest percentage of female ale drinkers in the world. Apparently the consequence of outdated sexist marketing, misconceptions about the calorie content, and negative perceptions about flavours and self-image, only 17% of women drink beer at least once a week, compared to 53% of men. "The

woman consumer either hasn't come on the same journey, or the beer industry just isn't addressing their female audience adequately", says Annabel Smith, a director of Dea Latis which undertook the survey, and whose remit is to inform and educate women about beer. Meanwhile, and somewhat depressingly, report co-author Lisa Harlow commented: "Perhaps we need some high-profile celebrity advocates to show women that it is acceptable to drink beer."

**Strong Beer Limit** The Portman Group has proposed a maximum of four units for bottles and cans of very strong beer in an attempt to deal with "problem" super-strength lagers and ciders. While welcoming the tackling of alcohol harm, the Society of Independent Brewers (SIBA) is concerned that a blanket four unit maximum rule "has unintended consequences for new, interesting, innovative styles of beer", and will impact on the brewing of historic styles of beer. They are working with the Portman Group to avoid detriment to brewing innovation, while still targeting problem products.

**Alcohol and Dementia** A survey of alcohol consumption by more than 9,000 civil servants aged between 35 and 55, and carried out from 1985 and 1993, has found that abstinence from alcohol in midlife was associated with a 45% higher rate of dementia in later life, compared with those who had consumed between 1 and 14 units per week – the latter figure being the government recommendation for maximum alcohol consumption per week. What the comparative percentage rates would be at higher levels of consumption is not revealed, but the statistic must be there, and as it appears to have been kept secret we can all draw our own conclusions.

**Tax Equality Day** To highlight the disparity between the 20% VAT on food and drinks in pubs, and zero rating for most shop food items, all Wetherspoon pubs in England, Wales and Northern Ireland will cut prices by 7.5% on Thursday 13<sup>th</sup> September – in Scotland this will be limited to just food, soft drinks and hot beverages. Meanwhile, UK Hospitality and the British Beer and Pub Association, both supporting the action, are calling on all pubs, bars and restaurants to join in.



# THIRST THURSDAYS

## On the road with the 2018 Good Beer Guide Trail

For the last few years our Branch's Membership Secretary John Pitcher has organised visits to all the current Good Beer Guide Pubs in our Branch area. Traditionally starting in mid-summer they would continue on into autumn at about one a month. However, this year, John decided to start earlier and finish earlier – April to August, on the first Thursday (Thirst Thursday) of each month. Previewing the trail, John said: "It won't be a race. Most of us aren't students any more so no prizes for guzzling the most pints in half an hour. All the pubs have been selected for their beer quality and should be ideal places to while away the time and soak up the ambience".

**5<sup>th</sup> April** So, this year's trail kicked off rather appropriately at our current (and last year's) Branch Pub of the Year, **The Lanes** in Worthington Street, Dover, where a small group assembled around midday on a bright spring morning. Beer choice comprised three Kent beers from Gadds, Kent Brewery and Hop Fuzz, together with a couple from Downlands Brewery of West Sussex, and while there we took the opportunity to present Debbie and Keith with the certificate for their Pub of the Year success.

An hour or so, and it was down the road to Pengester to catch the 13.25 service for Deal and Sandwich, which a good hour later delivered us to the **Five Bells**, Eastry, and a late lunch for those suffering the pangs of hunger. We drank from a selection of Wantsum Black Prince, Directors and Greene King IPA, and were joined by Linda Keene and Malcolm Cooper who cycled over from Denton.



The Five Bells, Eastry

The final pub that day was the **Farrier** in Deal. A return bus journey saw us arrive sometime after 4pm for a teatime session in a very busy pub. The late afternoon sun was flooding through the pub windows from across the churchyard opposite, and we drank from a selection including Ripple Farmhouse, the pub's house bitter, St Austell Proper Job and Golden XPA from Caledonian.

**3<sup>rd</sup> May** The second Thursday and a "Dover Stroll", visiting the town's four remaining Good Beer Guide pubs. Favourable weather once again as we met in the **Thirsty Scarecrow**, early afternoon. Basically a cider outlet the pub always offers one or more real ales, usually using the Key-Keg system, that day's choice being a very palatable Arden Pale from the new Faversham brewery.



The Louis Armstrong, Dover

An hour passed very quickly and we soon we were heading for the **Louis Armstrong** about five minutes away. A major contrast to the Scarecrow's micro format Dover's longest established live music outlet reflects the traditional pub, and offers three or four real ales, almost exclusively from Kent. We drank from a selection comprising Breakwater Dover Pale, Romney Dark IPA and Skrimshander.

From there to a further contrast at Wetherspoon's **Eight Bells** whose twelve handpumps offers the widest selection of ale in the town, sourced both nationally and locally. As our planned food stop, those needing sustenance took the opportunity to eat.



The Branch Secretary  
in relaxed mode.

Lastly, sometime after 5pm we made our way to another of Dover's new micropubs, the **Mash Tun** in Bench Street where four real ales and a substantial number of ciders are normal fare. Among the selection once again was Breakwater Dover Pale, along with Dogbolter, Wantsum Bulldog and Stag Red Imperial, and we spread ourselves around the pub to enjoy the final pints of the second day of this year's GBG Trail.

**7<sup>th</sup> June** The "Long Walk", and although by John's standards it was more mid-distance, it was quite long enough for those of us less accustomed to rural rambles. It started, easy enough, at the **Fox**, where about a dozen assembled around midday, with some preparing themselves for the day's exertions with an early lunch. Beers were Exmoor Fox, Mars-ton's 61 Deep, Old Hooky and Ringwood Razorback.

After an hour or so, John led us out along Lower Road, beside the start of the Dour, to Kearsney Station and a train to take us the few miles to Shepherdswell. Our destination was Barfrestone and Ginny Timm's micropub, the **Wrong Turn**, and following John's maxim that where footpaths exist, footpaths should be used, it was, once out of Shepherdswell, all across fields and through farmyards, scrub and woodland. Although overcast, it fortunately remained dry. Odd cows or groups of cattle watched our progress, at one stage following us to the gate as we left their field.

We arrived at around 3pm, staying for about an hour with a choice of Dynamo and Black Prince from Wantsum, and Breakwater Best, plus a considerable range of ciders. Towards 4pm we set off on the final stage, back towards Shepherdswell, and then on to the **Carpenter's Arms** at Coldred. More footpaths, but the sky had now cleared, and we walked the three

On the way to Coldred



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miles in warm sunshine. The pub door stood open as we crossed the green opposite, and after stopping for photographs in front we settled down inside with a choice of Rockin Robin Rockin Royale, Fortitude Amber Ale, and three ciders. Our day's walking now finished, we had a relaxing hour and a half before the early evening (and last) bus back into Dover.

**5<sup>th</sup> July** The fourth Thirst Thursday, and well into the heat-wave, with even those who enjoy hot weather, starting to find it becoming somewhat tedious. First stop was the **Just Reproach**, where at midday a small group could be found outside waiting for the pub to open. As usual there was a choice of four ales – from Westerham, Kent, Muirhouse and Northdown, with the latter, a pale hoppy 4.8% IPA, being possibly as near a representation of the 18<sup>th</sup> century original that you will find.

Our next stop being the **Crown** at Finglesham, a short bus ride away, we allowed three quarters of an hour before heading for South Street. Our bus however was delayed and we eventually reached the pub at around 1.30, but still with plenty of time to eat and enjoy one or two pints. And once again we were joined by Linda and Malcolm, who were sitting outside as we arrived. Beers were Hop Head, London Pride and very pleasing house bitter from Canterbury Ales.

A further bus trip took us back to Deal and our final venue the **Ship** in Middle Street, which we got to mid-afternoon. Landlord, Hophead and three from Gadds, including the excellent value No 7, were on the handpumps, and we settled ourselves in the back bar overlooking the garden, with the door wide open to take the edge off the heat. A couple of pleasant hours ensued, with in due course people starting to drift off to make their way home.



The Just Reproach,  
Deal



**2<sup>nd</sup> August** The final day, and holidays, prior engagements and hors de combat with a garden shed and an adder reduced attendance from our Branch to just two. However, support from Ashford, Folkestone and Romney Marsh Branch and our Area Organiser saw our numbers eventually swell to six.

First stop was the **Crispin** in Sandwich, tucked in beside the medieval Barbican, where with the heatwave still continuing, we found seats in a corner out of direct sunlight and drank the pub's Crispin Ale. We stayed until around 2pm when bus or train (depending on individual preference) transported us to our next destination, the **Freed Man** in Walmer.

A tiny micropub on Dover Road, beer is drawn up by an antique beer engine, and comprised that afternoon Three Piers Summer Breeze (which we all chose), Bus Man's Bitter from 4Ts, and West of the Sun from Potton Brewing. Around 3.30 John ushered us outside to catch the bus for the Strand and our

very last pub, the **Berry** in Canada Road. We sat round the table in the window opposite the bar and chose from the pub's extensive selection, including Redemption Pale Ale, Salopian Fat Cat and Oakham Hawse Buckler. Just before 5pm those of us returning to Dover departed to catch the new and highly convenient 90 bus service.

And so our 2018 GBG trail finished. 5 excellent days, 16 excellent pubs and however many excellent beers. Roll on 2019.

Martin Atkins





**Dayle & Donna**  
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# DEAL HOP FARM 2018

**D**eal Hop Farm – the local Community Hop growing project in and around Deal – is building up to its second harvest period in September. Having expanded by 60% it now has 210 sites and about 330 people involved

Members are planning multiple harvests in September which should mean a lot more of Ripple Steam Brewery's 'Hopping M.A.D - Made Around Deal' green hopped beer should be available in October.

Growing conditions with the drought have not been ideal but the survey of its sites in August are showing a good response. Harvest dates will not be known until late August and hop pickers are most welcome

The Group has also been awarded a National accolade in the form of 'Horticulture Week's Custodian Award for Best Community Initiative'. We were put forward by English Heritage who are part of the project at Walmer Castle and this year are allowing the Farm to grow hops at the Captain's Garden at Deal Castle.

Full details at FB Page and Twitter [@DealHopFarm](#)

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# RAMBLINGS & RUMBLINGS

## By Stroller

**Fri 1 Jun – Berkhamsted. Boat** (Fuller's Oliver's Island @ £4-20) Food looking a bit on the pricey side, party adjourned to **W'spoons Crown** (Tring Sidepocket). **Rising Sun** (Riser – house beer from Tring Brewery) Very popular canal-side pub on a sunny late afternoon. Free snacks too! + 10% CAMRA discount. **Euston Station, Exmouth Arms** (Pitchfork Golden @ £4-60) Glug, gulp. Only noticed CAMRA discount notice on leaving. Bree Louise, missing you awfully!

**Sat 2 Jun – Shepherd & Crook, Burmarsh** (Old Dairy Red Top & Copper Top, Wantsum 1381). **Dymchurch – Seawall Tavern** (erstwhile City of London) Ascertained that it would not be showing football so adjourned to the **Ocean Inn** (Courage Best & Directors, Timothy Taylor Boltmaker, Hobgoblin) First visit, nice to be in a traditional maxi-pub for a change. Two bars catering for everyone, ample seating outside too.

**Sat 23 Jun – Fitzwalter, Goodnestone** (Master Brew, Castle Rock Elsie Mo) Leaving at 8pm, a 50 minute stroll across fields led to the **Anchor, Wingham** (Mad Cat Platinum Blonde, W Berkshire Mr Chubb's Lunchtime Bitter, G2 Sail, Doom Bar) A good traditional pub. Adjacent restaurant but front bar for drinking locals. Got chatting to a steam engineer from France as you do.

**Thurs 28 Jun** Planned on watching England/Belgium at the Star, St Mary-in-the-Marsh but bus delivered me to Ashford instead, a bit of a culture shock!! **County** (Westerham Grasshopper + others) **John Wallis** (Butcombe bitter @ £2-85, London Pride). Lively sports bar, good beer reasonably priced, great ambience!

**Fri 29 Jun – Chance, Guston** (Bass) White Cliffs Ramblers Skittles Evening with good buffet laid on. Summer weather early evening slowly deteriorated to winter conditions as 'fret' rolled in off the sea!

**Sat 30 Jun – St Crispin, Worth** (Seasider, Doom Bar, London Pride) Not huge crowds watching France/Argentina in back patio late afternoon but pub quite busy in garden still. **Taphouse, Deal** (Taphouse Pilsner, Northdown He-Brew) Handy departure lounge in South Street. Not the sort of place we're used to, but nothing wrong with that. Continental, or American style? Pleasant staff and one real ale at £3, I think.

**Sat 7 Jul – Sandwich. Crispin** (Crispin Ale, Festival Ale, Jet Black Stout). **New Inn** (Courage, Adnams Mosaic) Packed, England/Sweden, but squeezed in at **Admiral Owen** (Mad Cat Fest. Ale). Football-free by contrast.

**Thurs 12 Jul – Bradford CAMRA Real Ale Holiday. Jacobs, Bradford** Welcome pint from mine host.

**Fri 13 Jul – Ilkley** Walk over drizzly Ilkley Moor to **Flying Duck** Outer Bradford CAMRA POTY 2018. Former farmhouse built in 1709. Then visit to Wharfedale Brewery in barn at rear. **Crescent Inn** Smart town centre hotel bar. **Friends of Ham** Trendy wine bar-cum-deli.

**Sat 14 Jul – New Inn, Marsden** After visit to Standedge Canal Tunnel and walk over moors. **Magic Rock Brewery Tap, Huddersfield** Vast trendy place, hot, crowded and loud music. What a relief to find, down the road, the **Slubbers Arms** Traditional boozier. **Bradford – New Beehive** Heritage pub, bar lit by gaslight. **Castle Inn** Few punters for Sat night to enjoy 60s/70s disco.

**Sun 15 Jul – Bolton Arms, Leyburn** having visited nearby Bolton Castle, and then on to Skipton. **Early Doors** Crowded noisy micro. **Devonshire** Large 'Spoons handy for food early Sun evening. **Beer Engine** Friendly micro – perhaps these places will catch on after all, and we're a long way from Kent! Back to Bradford to **Fighting Cocks** traditional boozier on an out-of-town industrial estate.

**Sat 21 Jul – Star, St Mary in the Marsh** (Whitstable Native, Youngs bitter, Directors, Ringwood 49er) By unusually indulging in alcohol well before midday, managed to catch the last bus back to civilisation (a term loosely applied to New Romney) at 1225.

**Sun 22 Jul – Bell, Ivychurch** (Hook Norton Haymaker) Pump clip looked innocuous, but turned out to be 5%, not exactly a session beer! **Star** Grateful to stop here on hot afternoon, A good number of cyclists from the **Smugglers, New Romney** also in attendance. **Guildhall** (GK London Glory, Ghostship, Abbot)

**Mon 23 Jul – Saracens** Not open until later so adjourned to the **Ship** (Hop Head, Gadds 7, Seasider) Excellent place to recover from warm walk from Sandwich.

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TUESDAY

THURSDAY

FRIDAY

SUNDAY



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# CHANNEL VIEW

## A PINT OF BEER AND A PACKET OF CRISPS

If you recall this as a single from some forty years ago, it isn't. That, we are reliably informed was actually *Two Pints of Lager and a Packet of Crisps, Please*. No, the reference here, is to the "very affordable" price of admission to the Proms, at the time of writing then in residence at the Albert Hall. And that very affordable price, being promoted by a classical musician one Friday morning on Radio 4? – £6. £6 for a pint of beer and packet of crisps? If you were charged that round here you'd feel you were being ripped off, and you would have been. But this is London, and all things are different there.

Anecdotes are aplenty, not a few appearing in recent editions of *Channel Draught*. A visit to East London late last year finding not much under £5 a pint (but of course that was ultra-trendy and fashionable Hackney), reports of prices around Euston Station not much less, and the much quoted £13.40 a pint in a pub near London Bridge (see *Stop Press*)

Meanwhile, this summer, a £10 note was insufficient to buy two pints of Adnams Southwold in a pub overlooking Greenwich Park – 40p more being requested the barmaid. A figure more or less exactly in line with recently published survey by CAMRA, which revealed the average price of a pint in London as £5.19.

By contrast the cheapest places to get a pint are as follows:-

1. Carlisle	£2.35
2. Chelmsford	£2.60
3. Newport	£2.75
4. Armagh	£2.78
5. Salisbury	£2.80
6. Lancaster	£2.80
7. Newry	£2.80
8. Stoke-on Trent	£2.89
9. Salford	£2.90
10. Dundee	£2.92

And, while those living in Carlisle might leave the rest of us feeling distinctly envious, CAMRA's research also revealed that across the country one in four drinkers believe that the price of a pint of beer is unaffordable, leading the Campaign to the belief that is driving people away from pubs.

In London, if the average is £5.19, and we know that some parts of capital are not radically different from East Kent, that Wetherspoons will be substantially cheaper, and that Sam Smith's Old Brewery Bitter retails at £3.20 just a stone's throw from Charing Cross, it suggests that elsewhere £6 - £7 cannot be unusual. Not exactly the kind of price appropriate for what had always been the drink of the ordinary working man or woman.

Obviously there is a strong link between property prices and prices in the pub, and of course landlords have to cover their costs. However, the disparity between prices in the capital and the rest of the country (especially the ten places shown here), and which seems to be increasing, is somewhat disturbing. It reinforces the popular concepts, much espoused over the Brexit argument, of metropolitan elites, London oriented thinking and the centre not understanding the rest of the country.

£5 or £6 in pint might be acceptable to the well healed in central London, but to the less well heeled, and to the rest of the country it is far from acceptable. However, we know that some in the business are intent on establishing beer as a "premium product", further pushing up price, while there have also been references to beer as an affordable luxury.

CAMRA must take a clear stand against such philosophies. Beer is neither a premium product nor a luxury. It always was, and remains, the traditional drink of the country, and alongside pubs, at the heart of British culture, a part of everyday life. We must campaign to keep them there, however without active support from the Government it often seems an uphill struggle, and despite warm words and appreciation, often, little seems to come from that direction. Britain has one of the highest levels of beer tax in Europe, while business rates cripple many an otherwise healthy business. Reductions in both could transform the industry, and with recent figures suggesting that Treasury income is surprisingly healthy no better time than to act now.

**STOP PRESS.** Late in August, *The Times* reported that Britain's most expensive pint costs **£22.50**. The US brewed Speedway Stout weighs in at 12% abv and is available at the Craft Beer Company pub in Old Street, London. Patrons usually buy it in third of a pint glasses.



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**Thurs 13th September - Clairvoyant Evening**  
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**Fri 28th Sept - Quiz night including a Cask Ale round**  
(entry £2 per person) 8pm start

**Sat 29th Sept - Charlie - 8pm**

**Sat 6th Oct - De Frenchy - 8.30pm**

**Sat 20th Oct - Flailing Angels - 8.30pm**

## CHRIS 'PODGE' POLLARD

As we go to press we have received the sad news that **Chris 'Podge' Pollard** has passed away. Chris was the full time organiser of Podge's Belgian Beer Tours and a regular advertiser and supporter of *Channel Draught* for many years. He was the author of several beer books, notably 'LambicLand' (2004 & 2010), 'Around London in 80 Beers' (2008) and 'Around Bruges in 80 Beers' (2006, 2009 & 2013). He had over 30 years of beer festival organisation and event management experience and would often be found running Belgian Beer bars at festivals all over country as well as generally helping out at beer festivals. His guided beer tours in Belgium and further afield offered something for every beer enthusiast from novice to expert. Podge loved organising and running the tours and loved people enjoying themselves, especially if it involved beer. Chris had been treated for cancer 8 years ago and sadly this returned last year. Chris remained active to the end, discussing the 2019 tours with Siobhan and planning new ideas to work on. The Channel Draught Team and the Branch send their condolences to his partner Siobhan for her sad loss.



Chris wanted Siobhan to carry on his tours and she is happy to do so and is looking forward to continuing Podge's legacy.

# Podge's

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## THE DARKER SIDE OF HOPS

**In the 19th century, the autumn influx of hop-pickers often led to crime, disease and disaster**

**A**t one time in many parts of Kent, September and October saw an influx of large numbers of people to engage in hop picking. It was among the best paid agricultural work, and it is calculated attracted between 80,000 and 150,000 per season. Described by Dr. Michael Winstanley, in *Life in Kent at the Turn of the Century*, as “a motley crew”, it included those who walked out daily from local towns, those from further afield who stayed in huts provided by the farmers – most notably East Enders, – and a sometimes “dangerous and disorderly” element comprising “gypsies, diddikais and tramps”.

However, motley or otherwise and with the passing of time (machinery having largely replaced human labour by the 1950s), it is now generally regarded with a considerable degree of nostalgic romanticism – maybe by its final decades in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century with some justification. In earlier years, though, things were rather different, and sometimes tragic.

In 1849 in East Farleigh fifty one hop pickers died following an outbreak of cholera at the very start of hop packing, forty three being buried in East Farleigh churchyard where they were commemorated by a wooden cross erected by the lych gate. At the time London was suffering a serious outbreak of the disease, and a report in mid-September in the *Maidstone Journal, Kentish Advertiser and South Eastern Gazette* described the hop pickers, which it identified as principally Irish and estimated to be between 1500 and 2000 in number, as mostly existing in squalid destitution, filth and wretchedness:

“They live....crowded together in hovels in which cleanliness and ventilation is out of the question. Indeed a well from which a great number obtained their supply of water for drinking and cooking was absolutely the chosen receptacle for their slops. This would be enough to poison the whole community but in addition a quantity of putrid fish has been sold to the poor creatures at prices too tempting to be resisted.”

Even allowing for the taste of the contemporary press for sensationalism and the over dramatic, it suggests conditions at some distance from the more romanticised picture, and in which cholera would likely have thrived.

Disease, however, was not the only threat and the vagaries of British weather could be equally dangerous. In 1853, four years after the cholera outbreak, severe flooding was the cause of another tragedy. This occurred at Hartlake Bridge on the Medway, a few miles downstream from Tonbridge, when a group of forty gypsies, employed as hop pickers, were being transported by wagon after a day's work from hop gardens in Hadlow to their lodging huts at Tudely.

According to the *South Eastern Gazette* the water was so high that those guiding the loaded wagons had to ride on the horses. At Hartlake Bridge one of the horses lost its footing causing the wagon and its occupants to be flung against the wooden fencing, which being defective gave way and pitched them into the fast flowing water.

Thirty were drowned and a local guide book at the end of the century, recalled that people seeing the

Hartlake Bridge over the Medway



laid out recovered bodies remarked on the beauty of the gypsy girls. It also reported that gypsies from all over the country came to view those dead. The inquest, held at the Bell Inn, Golden Green, recommended replacing the wooden bridge with a stronger one of brick or stone, and as with the cholera victims, a memorial was considered appropriate, and took the form of a pyramid shaped tablet in Hadlow churchyard.



As well as involvement with a number of tragedies, hops, being a valuable agricultural commodity, also attracted criminal interest, and a typical example is illustrated by records from the Kent Lent Assizes in March 1846. It involved the theft of a pocket of hops valued at £9, and to place that in context, fifty years later in the 1890s workers in hop gardens were reported to earn £3 a week at certain times during the season, an excessive amount some considered, and several times higher than the average agricultural wage.

This particular case, involving a number of well known local pubs, started on the Medway at Maidstone where bargeman Robert Rose was approached by a couple of men handling hop pockets on Simmond's Wharf. They asked him if he knew of anyone interested in buying a hop pocket, as they could lay their hands on one. Distinctly interested Rose said he would ask around and arranged to meet the two men a few days later.

Business took Rose to Rochester, and stopping at Aylesford on the way back, he came across, in a local pub, William Kite, a man who was regularly involved with activities of dubious legality on the river, and who, true to form, agreed to buy the hops. Back in Maidstone Rose met up with the two men at the Waterside Tavern, and arranged for the hop pocket to be picked up at the Barrack Field in the small hours and transported by water to Allington Lock. There, Kite would have three men to meet them, hand over £4, and take the hops by road to the Lower Bell where he would be waiting.

A present day view of the Lower Bell, Aylesford



Subsequently, the hops found their way to the Eagle in Rochester, Kite having found a purchaser for half the pocket for £4 in Chatham, while the remainder were left at the house of an acquaintance, John Smith, who he met in the Blue Boar. However, the law was not now far behind. The hop pocket was stolen from a warehouse in Maidstone, and was one of eighteen belonging to hop grower John Wood of Headcorn. There had been a spate of hop thefts and the local police were on the alert, and information soon led them to John Smith.

Kite, and later Rose, were both arrested, and when brought to trial, found guilty and sentenced respectively to fourteen and seven years transportation. In Kite's case, being then sixty six, it was unlikely that he would see England again. Whether or not this was a one-off robbery, or a regular activity by Rose and Kite cannot be known, but it seems that hop thefts appeared to cease after their arrest.

**Martin Atkins**



# PUB CRAWL IN SHEFFIELD

**Jamie Thompson and David Semmens visit  
523 Sheffield pubs - all in the name of research**

**N**ext year Jamie Thompson hopes to publish a book on the history of Sheffield pubs. In the meantime, however, and no doubt in the interests of research, he and his drinking companion David Semmens, have visited every drinking establishment in the city – some 523 in all. Speaking to the *i* in June, he said that visiting all kinds of pubs, quite a few of which he would not normally use, had taught him a lot about himself, his city, and the world at large. And the extended crawl he summed up in half a dozen major conclusions:-

1. George Orwell, in his celebrated essay, *The Moon Under Water*, was right in his observation that the critical element in a pub's success was atmosphere. "A mixed clientele is key", says Jamie.



Fagan's, Broad Lane, Sheffield



2. Contrary to the generally held belief good pubs are thriving. A number had closed since they had visited them, but of those, the vast majority were not very good, including one in which they were offered drugs almost as they crossed the threshold. Somewhat revealingly he commented, "The independents that are well run and well loved – like the Sheffield Tap – are still doing a really good trade".

3. In pursuit of visiting every city pub, friends, and sometimes themselves, could not always understand why they might be visiting "some horrible little dives out in the middle of nowhere", when there was the alternative of a party or guaranteed night out in pubs they knew and liked.

4. However, you meet a lot of people and make a lot of friends, some of whom you will stay in touch with. And when people found out what you were doing they always wanted to know how their pub rated – sometimes drawing a hopefully tactful "Well, it's got....character".

5. Just because you visit some of the more notorious pubs in the daytime does not mean you will avoid violence, and in fact they only came across trouble once....at 2pm – two men throwing punches and then a glass.

6. There is no better way to understand a city than to visit its pubs, and all the history, anecdotes and stories should make a great book – *Sup Up We're Going*, due out 2019.







### JAMIE'S TOP FIVE SHEFFIELD PUBS

**Gardeners Rest**, Neepsend Lane – *Beautiful garden & vintage bar billiard table*

**Fagans**, Broad Lane – *“Best snug in Sheffield” and unchanged 1950s interior*

**The Blake**, Blake Street – *Impressive range of beer and dogs*

**Bar Stewards**, Gibraltar St. – *Cask and craft ales, and chips can be brought in from shop next door*

**Three Tuns**, Silver St. Head – *Triangular shaped busy daytime pub on street corner*

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## TO THE PUB BY BUS

Continuing the debate about local bus service reductions making it harder to enjoy a pint by bus

Following my piece on this subject in the *Channel Draught* winter issue, it was good to see some response from readers in the spring edition.

I learnt from Barry O'Brien's letter of the efforts made by Regent Coaches to publicise their Dover evening services on route 61 and 90 of which I was unaware. Thank you for telling us about that, and the information has indeed been posted on bus stops now.

Some interesting comments from Mr Wolf Coe too. Yes, it's correct that Staple, Northbourne and Tilmanstone do retain one or two Stagecoach services, though mainly intended for schoolchildren on schooldays only. I didn't find any other buses serving these villages when I looked on line. But then happened to notice a timetable on a bus stop in Deal, indicating that yes, all three villages were indeed served by the KCC services 541/544. I persevered and went on line again and did discover occasional services operating on one or two days a week. I had almost forgotten about these routes, which must qualify as one of East Kent's best-kept secrets! But I will try to make use of them when doing pub walks in future.

I was not intending to 'direct ire' at anyone in particular. There has already been plenty of that regarding buses in local media anyway, but I was trying to point out that some pub visits were still possible even with the new service patterns. I forgot to mention though the handy bus back to Dover from the Carpenter's Arms, Coldred at 1839 (Mon-Fri only). I easily managed to get there by walking from Shepherdswell, arriving for 5pm opening time, which gave me a good 90 minutes drinking time.

Since the Stagecoach revisions last September we've now had yet another good shake-up in June, so here we go again. Now Nonington too has joined the villages without a regular bus service. But maybe other journey opportunities will now arise, or disappear. One benefit I have noticed is that there is now one late afternoon journey back from near the Berry, Walmer through to Dover on Saturdays too, so please use it!

Yes the subject of bus services these days is a tricky one, and it's clearly difficult to justify running services carrying few if any passengers. Regarding the 87 bus through Tilmanstone, the closure of bus access to the village from the north by order of the Coroner would not have helped matters. This followed some nasty accidents – not involving buses – but resulted in south bound buses having to travel a good two miles extra.

But I do welcome improvements Stagecoach has made to services such as the Coastal Route Dover/Folkestone/Hastings and the Service 16 from Folkestone to Canterbury. And as Mr Wolf Coe pointed out they do deserve credit for running some quite marginal services too. But perhaps we need to find a new way of arranging bus services, particularly for outlying areas, and I think everyone would welcome more buses running in the evenings. Other places manage this so why can't we?

**John Pitcher**

*By other places John might well be referring to London, which seems to inhabit another land with regard to the provision of public transport. I remember some years ago late in the evening sitting on a narrow boat in the Limehouse Basin. The Docklands Light Railway passes the basin to the north, and every five or ten minutes (it could have been more often) a train, with seemingly few occupants would pass along the track.*

*In the capital, regular bus and tube services often mean people having to wait no more than a few minutes, while the general transport largess is continually upgraded and improved – Crossrail the new east/west underground link is due to open shortly, and it now appears that plans are afoot for a similar north/south venture. Apparently funding per head is much higher in London than the average for the country. Any reason why this is so? A more even distribution could immeasurably improve our services. Ed.*



# THE BARGE INN

**Locals fight to save one time Beery Boater's favourite pub in Wiltshire, known as 'Crop Circle Central'**

**B**ack in 1998 the Beery Boaters, for the one and only time in their visits to the Kennet and Avon Canal, left the lowlands of Bristol, Bath and Bradford and negotiated the Caen Flight to Devizes and the chalk downland beyond. However, other than Devizes, an excellent town, we were not generally impressed with what we found, with the notable exception of the Barge Inn at Honeystreet.

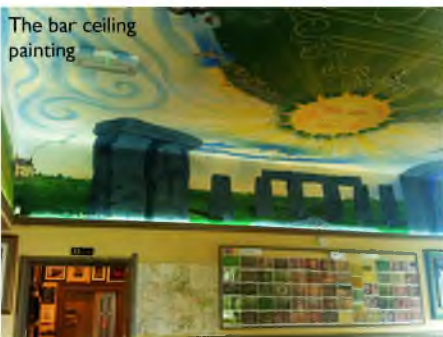
Since last January though, the pub has been closed and its owners have announced that they plan to sell it, with the likely result, conversion to a house or houses, and the village left without a pub – a distinctly unwelcome outcome for local residents and boaters. In an attempt to retain the pub for the future, it has now been listed as a community asset, and a group formed with the intention of buying it.



A fund raising event in Pewsey, at the end of March, raised £4107.69, sufficient to get their group registered and have a valuation done. And by mid-May they were established as a Community Benefit Society registered with the FCA (Financial Conduct Authority) and Cooperatives UK. Reports suggest that the group will need to raise in the region of £1m if the purchase is to succeed.

Speaking earlier in the summer local boater and organiser Andy Lingard said, "We want to buy the Barge Inn and run it as a pub and community hub for the benefit of locals". At the time he was particularly interested in hearing from anyone with property or conveyancing experience. He can be contacted on 07834 719211 or via the group's website, [thebargehoneystreet.co.uk](http://thebargehoneystreet.co.uk).

The group say, "The Barge Inn has been a centre for crop circle enthusiasts, lovers of live music and local people for many years. Our vision is to return the pub to its former glory with lots of live music, a campsite, good pub grub and a friendly, welcoming ambience. This not only means we need to acquire the property and run it, but also embark on much needed repairs which have been neglected for many years."



The bar ceiling painting

Originally built in 1810, the pub burnt down in 1858 leaving nothing but the cellar, but was rebuilt within six months as the building that exists today. At one time in addition to its licenced trade it incorporated also a mini-brewery, butchers, slaughterhouse and smokehouse. Today, as well as a popular canal side pub much loved by boaters it is famed for its association with crop circles, which during the summer regularly attracted thousands of crop circle enthusiasts from all over the world, and made it for many years the topic's unofficial world headquarters.

The painting on the bar ceiling is the work of Vince Palmer, which he completed in the summer of 1997 lying on his back on scaffolding, and which he undertook just because he loved the atmosphere of the place. In 2011 he came back to touch it up and add a couple of bits. Allegedly there are nine aliens hidden in it, although one person commented that despite hours of looking they had only ever found three.



# UNCRYPTIC CROSSWORD

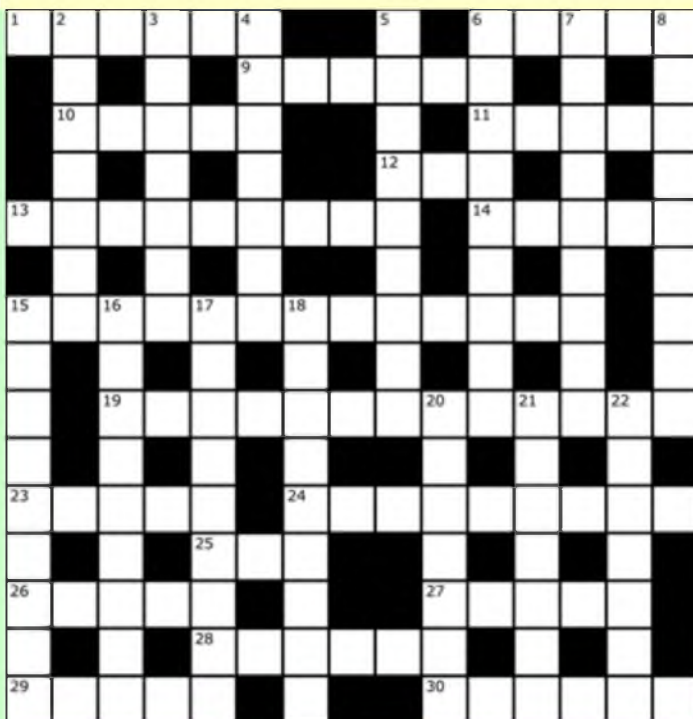
By Trisha Wells

## Across

1. A litter of pigs (6)
6. A preliminary version of a piece of writing (5)
9. Unit of electrical current, named after a French scientist born in 1775 (6)
10. What a boxer throws in when he wants to surrender (5)
11. A small saw for precise work (5)
12. Compete eagerly (3)
13. Describing an illness that's untreatable (9)
14. An unpickable lock named after its 19<sup>th</sup> C inventor (5)
15. The CAMRA 'bible' (4,4,5)
19. Mississippi river boat, for example (6,7)
23. Spherical bacteria (5)
24. One who finds fault in a pedantic way (3-6)
25. Useless (1,1,1)
26. An inhabitant of islands off Western Alaska (5)
27. Eighth letter of the Greek alphabet (5)
28. Actor who played Lawrence of Arabia (1'5)
29. US boxing champion beaten by Lennox Lewis in 2002 (5)
30. Capital of Saudi Arabia (6)

## Down

2. Title character of 'The Merchant of Venice' (7)
3. Put a tape back to its original state (7)
4. Born in 1279, Scottish national hero depicted in 'Brave Heart' (7)
5. Edges that don't unravel (9)
6. Plain-clothed policeman (9)
7. Seemingly forever (2,7)
8. British Prime Minister from 1997 to 2007 (4,5)
15. Former name for Ghana (4,5)
16. African birds that sit on the backs of cattle,



- zebra, and other large mammals feeding on parasites (9)
17. Game involving a shuttlecock (9)
18. Band leader with the same name as the lead character in the TV series 'Doc Martin' (9)
20. Man who gives hints about the possible outcome of horse races (7)
21. The 'science' of converting base metals to gold (7)
22. Bright green precious stone (7)

**Crossword Answers  
on Page 45**





## DOWN TO THE DREAMING SPIRES

### THE BEERY BOATERS' REPRISER THEIR VERY FIRST TRIP, A JOURNEY DOWN TO OXFORD

**F**or the Spring 2018 Beery Boaters' Canal Trip we followed the same route as we did on our first cruise way back in 1981, at least as far as Aynho where in 1981 we turned back. And we didn't have any snow in 2018 (but there were some large hailstones) and, in 1981 the oldest of us were in their forties and the youngest in their teens. In 2018 the oldest of us was in his mid-seventies and the youngest had just turned sixty! Tempus fugits somewhat!

We had hired a boat from Union Canal Carriers at Braunston, the 68 foot (approx.) narrowboat Pennine, the very same that we had taken to Leicester in Spring 2007 and used on the Warwick Ring in September 2014; like us, a bit long in the tooth maybe, but Pennine had been continually updated and including now a 230 volt inverter. It was a bit heavy on the handling, but the 3-cylinder Lister engine was absolutely reliable and always started at the first turn of the key, although being prone to smoke a bit (in common with all 3-cylinder Lister engines).

Everyone arrived at Braunston around 1 o'clock, although I had some doubts about getting there at all. Martin A's car, my usual means of transportation, having broken down and he going by train to Rugby, I had planned to travel with Alan Hodges, but he signed off sick at the last moment. Fortunately Steve Greyland offered to squeeze me in with Dave and John Underdown, and as he has a commodious box trailer, we could manage all the luggage, including my wheelchair. So the crew of Pennine were nine, Martin Atkins, Paul (Topsy) Turvey, Peter (Cherub) Broberg, Martin Prime, Robert Miller, Steve, Dave and John and Hon. Commodore (Unelected) Jim Green.



'Pennine' in Napton Bottom Lock

So we set off early at 2.15 on the afternoon of Saturday 21<sup>st</sup> April, Martin P steering slowly past all the moored boats down to Braunston Turn where the Grand Union Canal joins the Oxford Canal for a few miles before the two diverge at Napton – the former going off right towards Birmingham and the latter continuing to Oxford. Here there was a brief shower of rain, but by the time we reached the bottom of Napton Locks at 5.10 the sun had reappeared.

As usual, there was nowhere to moor below the flight, so we went up the bottom lock and tied up above it. Already there were Dick Bates with his

boat Annie Wright and Chris Baxter as crew, and Shep with his "lads and lassies" and narrowboat Louise hired from Napton Narrowboats. Everything secured, we enjoyed a good first evening's session at the Folly Inn at the bottom of the locks, the only canalside pub in Napton now open: although, when we passed it earlier with work in progress, the Napton Bridge, closed a couple of years previously, looked like it might be undergoing renovation rather than conversion to domestic use.

Sunday 22<sup>nd</sup>, first full day. Hon. Commodore took the tiller and we set off around seven in the morning up the remainder of the nine Napton Locks. As we got near to the top, the famous Napton windmill came into view on the neighbouring hill, reminding me of an old boatman's tale: there were once two windmills on Napton Hill but they had to take one down 'cos there wasn't enough wind to blow both of them round. Pennine left Napton Top Lock at 8.35 and started on the Oxford Canal summit pound, the most 'Brindley-ish' of Brindley's contour canals.

From the top of Napton Locks to Fenny Compton it's only about six miles as the crow flies but about twice that distance by water. James Brindley seemed to do everything to avoid locks, cuttings and tunnels. The canal snakes around Wormleighton Hill in such a way that when it regains the intended direction after

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2 miles, you can walk for just over half a mile across the fields to where this massive meander started. Wormleighton Radio Mast appears in front, behind and on either side at regular intervals. Some of the bends are extremely tight and it's hard to avoid hitting some of the numerous bridges. Challenging and enjoyable to steer in fine weather, not quite so much in the rain, as we were to find on the return journey. We tied up outside the Wharf Inn at Fenny Compton just before midday. In 1981 it was the George & Dragon and sold Bass, now it had Adnams, Marston, Brakspear and some guest ales and ciders, and also offered good food.

Away again at 3.05, following Louise and still in fine weather, and shortly after, through the straight stretch which had once been a tunnel and is still known as such. Then Boundary Lift Bridge on the Warwickshire/Oxfordshire border, the first of the South Oxford's iconic lift bridges, mostly now, thankfully left open to boat traffic, followed by Claydon Top Lock at 4.25. In 1981 we tied up hereabouts on the first lunchtime to walk uphill to Claydon village and drank at the Sunrising, a lovely little Hook Norton pub, sadly no more.



'Pennine' & 'Louise' at Banbury

Nine locks took us down to Cropredy, Cropredy Lock where we arrived at 6.05 being the last. The moorings immediately below the lock were crowded, but we managed to tie up just before Cropredy Wharf Bridge. This was convenient for the Brasenose Arms where we enjoyed Hook Norton beer and our evening meals, and later took part in a pub quiz. The village's other pub, the famous Red Lion, closed early, so didn't benefit from a Beery Boaters' visit.

Monday 23<sup>rd</sup> April, St. George's Day. Set off from Cropredy and tied up above Banbury Lock to take on water and do some shopping. The two other boats were with us here, but this would be the last that we saw of Annie Wright until the return journey. Pennine left Banbury, before Louise at about 10am, passing back under the M40 motorway and through several locks and open lift bridges before we reached Aynho Weir Lock just before 1pm.

The River Cherwell accompanies the canal from Banbury to Oxford and crosses it just above the lock, which is one of the very shallow, diamond-shaped locks on the South Oxford, the shape being dictated by the need to hold enough water to compensate for the next 'normal' lock, Somerton Deep, which with a fall of 12ft is the deepest on the Oxford Canal, and one of the country's deepest. Hereabouts, we saw our first swallows of the year, we always seem to see our first swallows on the spring canal trip. We also saw quite a few buzzards and several red kites, which seem to be spreading westwards from where they were re-introduced in the Chilterns.

We didn't proceed directly to Somerton Deep Lock, though, but moored at 1.25 at Aynho Wharf, luckily finding a space among the crowded moorings, immediately after Aynho bridge, over which we hastened to Hook Norton's Great Western Arms. We sat in the courtyard at the back with our beers and food, the surrounding outhouses full of more twittering swallows building their nests. Shep and his crew arrived soon after, having moored their boat outboard of ours, shortly followed by a lady from the boatyard before the bridge, demanding that they move it because it was blocking the bridge arch. As far as I could see, Louise wasn't impeding the passage of boats through the bridge at all, but Shep moved it right down to the end of the moorings anyway.



The Bell Inn, Lower Heyford

We stayed for a couple of hours, our swallows

for a time joined in the sky above by half a dozen buzzards and a solitary kite circling over the pub. Eventually Pennine set off at 4pm, leaving Shep and his crew to finish their beer, and went through Somerton Deep Lock at 4.30. We stopped for the night at Lower Heyford, tying up just after the mechanised lift bridge at 6.30. Perhaps, because there were no mooring rings, no other boats were moored here, but we used our mooring pins and walked up to the Bell. In 1988 it had been closed, so this was the first time any of us had been to the pub even though it's a regular entry in the Good Beer Guide. And a well-deserved entry. I think it was our best pub of the week. The regular beer was Salopian, one of my favourites, the food was good and we were made to feel most welcome. The crew of Louise arrived, and as Shep remarked, how marvellous it was to spend St. George's Day in this most English of English villages!

Tuesday 24<sup>th</sup> April. Pennine away at just after 6.45. Still fine and a bit overcast, but the wind which had got up a bit on Monday had dropped. Around 8pm there was some light rain, but this soon cleared. At 8.35 we came to Pigeon's Lock, and then passed the Rock of Gibraltar pub with its usual crowded moorings: just as well we hadn't tried to get there on the previous day. After Baker's Lock, we were on the River Cherwell for a mile until we arrived at Shipton Weir Lock, the other shallow, diamond-shaped lock, where the Cherwell went off to our left and we went back onto the canal.

We passed the pretty village of Hampton Gay and under the railway bridge where 34 lives were lost on Christmas eve 1874 when nine carriages of a train crashed over into the canal, and on to Thrupp with a sharp right-hand turn just before a lift bridge. The sun re-emerged at Roundham Lock, and after Kidlington Green Lock and Shuttleworth's Lock, we turned off the canal onto the Duke's Cut, which leads to the Thames. We had decided to go this way into Oxford, and tie up at the East Street Moorings above Osney Lock, while Shep's crew stayed on the canal and moored down towards Sheepwash Cut, the other link to the Thames.

Duke's Cut, is a twisty, reedy, route which leads to the river almost immediately above King's Lock where a notice proclaimed 'Self-Service'. It is the last of the manual locks on the Upper Thames, or Isis, and is worked by what resembled ship's wheels. Through King's Lock and on to Godstow Lock where another 'Self-Service' sign greeted us. Although mechanised, boaters now had to work it themselves. Then past Port Meadows into Oxford, with some rowing 'fours', accompanied by their trainer in his ski-boat, passing us down-river and then coming back up again. The river narrowed as we approached the city and we passed under Osney Bridge to the East Street Moorings.

The last time that we had been there, lots of boats had been tied up. Now there was only one! Steve just managed to turn the boat above Osney Lock and we went back and moored outside the Punter, on my first visit there, years before, the Waterman's Arms, where most of us went to sample some not inexpensive XT beers. We stayed for about an hour, then untied the boat and moved up to the other end of the moorings near Osney Bridge, more convenient for the city. The Kite, in a nearby street on the other side of the river, where we had spent much time on previous visits, was now a foody establishment called the Porterhouse, and did not seem worth a look, so we moved on to the Royal Blenheim, a White Horse Brewery pub and the Chequers, the former being generally considered the best pub, and we likely might have stayed there had not a noisy crowd turned up to watch some sporting event on TV. .



Wednesday morning, and a traditional 6am start, because we wanted to get to Banbury for the evening. Through the Sheepwash Channel and Isis Lock, and back onto the canal. For the moment, it wasn't raining but the sky clouded over sometimes. We had intended to take on water at Thrupp, but Shep's boat, ahead of us, was tied up there and also needed a pump-out, so we decided to carry on and water-up at Lower Heyford. This was at about 10 o'clock, and the last time that we saw Louise on the trip.

The rain started at about 12.30 while we were at Dashwood's Lock; from now on it would be April showers, including the aforementioned hailstorm which occurred at Somerton Deep Lock and, later, a spectacular rainbow.



We took on water at Lower Heyford and decided to forgo our lunchtime ale as otherwise we would not get to Banbury before dark. In the event, we arrived at the town around eight o'clock in the evening, and moored above Banbury Lock and past the swing bridge, on the other side of the canal from Annie Wright, which was already there. That made about 28 miles and 18 locks in one day. Not bad at all for a bunch of old codgers!

The evening was spent in the Olde Reindeer, where we met up with Dick and Chris, and the White Horse. Some looked for the new micropub, the Old Town Ale & Cider House, but found that the owners were away on holiday and it wasn't open.



Only needing to get to Cropredy for Thursday lunchtime, we didn't get away from Banbury until about 10am. For the moment, the sky had cleared and it was sunny. Louise, now a half day behind us didn't get to Banbury on Wednesday, but tied up for lunchtime at Lower Heyford and went to the Bell for another decent session. We moored at Cropredy at the same place as on Sunday at 12.20 and spent several pleasant hours at the Brasenose Arms again, enhanced by the landlord having tuned his radio to some station playing 60s/70s music – his era and for many of us, ours too. Some of the crew *did* go to the Red Lion again, only to find it closed for the lunchtime.

Off from Cropredy at 3.05 and up the nine locks to the summit level. A lot of the pounds between the locks were very shallow. The weather still wasn't too bad and the wind had dropped again, but the forecast for Friday wasn't encouraging. We tied up at Fenny Compton, about 200 yards before the Wharf Inn, at 6.40, meeting up once more with Annie Wright, which had gone on ahead. Then on to the pub for ale and food, while some walked the mile into the village and the Merrie Lion.

Friday. The last full day, and raining, as forecast. Not hard, but steady rain. We replenished our water tanks and then set off along the twisty summit canal, with first Steve steering and then Yours Truly. Still raining at the top of Napton Locks at 10.20, but it looked like it might be easing off a bit. Among the moored boats between the two top locks I saw Knackered Navy, a boat owned by two old friends, Roger and Sue Burchett, waterways restoration enthusiasts, with whom I had been boating some thirty-odd years before. The rain *did* indeed stop, then it started again about half-way down the flight. A lock keeper told us that rain was forecast for the rest of the day. We tied up between the bottom and second lock just before midday, and departed to the Folly Inn. Some interesting beers, including one called Bad Dog, probably from the Bank Top Brewery, which I found most acceptable.



Off from our moorings at four, in the rain, with Cherub on the tiller. At Braunston, the moorings were very crowded, but Martin P knew of some moorings for disabled boaters (distinguished by red-painted tops to the black bollards) only a couple of hundred yards from our boyard. They were free, and with a convenient tarmacked path leading up almost to the Old Plough. We tied up at 7.10 and proceeded to the village, Hon. Commodore (Unelected) propelled up the steep hill in his wheelchair. We all went to the Old Plough first for ale and a meal, and then, some of us, from there to the Wheatsheaf, which appeared seemingly very popular with the villagers.

And that was it for the 2018 Beery Boaters' Spring Trip. Saturday morning, clean up the boat (although Martin P had kept it clean through the preceding week), back to the boyard (in the rain, of course), offload the baggage and away home again.

Jim Green



# BEER MATS

Of all the paraphernalia of pub culture the lowly beer mat is probably the least considered. A concoction from the wood pulp industry halfway between paper and cardboard it absorbs spilt beer, protects pub tables from the hard edges of drinking vessels, and provides more youthful drinkers with handy missiles when the constrictions of adult behaviour start to pall.

Normally bearing the name of a beer or brewery, millions have been produced, and continue to be produced, but whereas once the reverse side was often left blank, words and logos now proliferate here as well. Of no concern perhaps to the average drinker, but of most particular concern for those for whom sitting with a pint in a pub is likely to set the creative juices working.

Writers, artists, musicians and inventors can no doubt all lay claim to inspiration induced by good ale and the conviviality of a good pub. No doubt too, inspiration has probably also extended to political theorists, criminal masterminds and religious zealots, but then everything has its downside. However, what to do when the muse strikes, if there isn't about one, the odd back of an envelope or piece of paper to record the creative moment.

Once the plain back of a beer mat would have sufficed but, as we explain above, these days unlikely. A deficiency which has much exercised **Peter Smith** who offers the following thoughts on the subject.

## BLANK (OB)VERSE

**Good ale and conversation does imbue**

**A somewhat different view.**

**Like a dream, nebulous, hard to hold**

**Of ideas ne'er before to mind**

**Yet now so obvious to unwind.**

**So, with pen I reach to draw**

**Those images fanciful just before.**

**But have I nowhere to write?**

**This beermat I turn hast not white.**

**But what if in years gone by had**

**Mitchell or Wallis on my dreamy seat**

**Lost that chance to grasp**

**An inkling of**

**Salvation?**

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Not enough scorers  
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**Enough scores  
Enough scorers  
A GBG Candidate**



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**See <http://www.camra-dds.org.uk/nbss.pdf>**



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# LAST KNOCKINGS

*Old Wort*

**CO<sub>2</sub>** The anticipated shortage of CO<sub>2</sub> earlier in the summer once again found much of the media displaying its somewhat limited view of the nation's drinking habits. Would there be sufficient canned lager to sustain the long hours of World Cup viewing (and no doubt also provide the necessary sedative when England in due course were ejected), and without effervescing tonic, would our gin come with just a slice of lemon, or flat fruit juice? No mention that those of us who enjoy our beer drawn by handpump from the cellar or straight from the cask, anticipated service as normal. Unless of course, the CO<sub>2</sub> drought was so protracted that our own supplies came under pressure as fizz drinkers moved over to real ale.....but then, not a few were likely to have been pleasantly surprised. Could have been the greatest campaigning success ever.

**Fremfins Revived** Do you remember the seventies – kipper ties, platform soles, glam rock, flares – well beer had its defining character too.....mainly keg. However, towards the latter part of the decade, the first green shoots of something different started to appear. Having spent the previous ten years or so, trying to persuade us of the merits of Tankard, a straight keg, or more recently Trophy, which confusingly could be almost anything from keg to the local brewed bitter re-badged (which to us meant Faversham brewed Fremfins, normally sold under top pressure), Whitbread suddenly “discovered” local hand-pumped beer. And alongside the reappearance of one of Kent's traditional ales under its traditional name, appeared a new 4.6% strong bitter, Tusker, although many maintain it was just the old County brew from some years previously, retitled. The Fremfins name remained for the next twenty years (until roughly the demise of Whitbread's themselves as a brewer), although brewed in other places after Faversham's closure, and sadly, mostly without the excellent Tusker, which was summarily dispensed with after a few years, and replaced by the considerably inferior Flowers Original.



**All at Sea** That icon of all that is hip in modern brewing, craft ale, is now abroad on the ocean wave, and being brewed at sea. Cruise firm Carnival's latest ship Horizon incorporates an on board craft brewery – Guy's Pig & Anchor Bar-B-que Smokehouse/Brewhouse. Four beers are planned, from a full bodied porter to a hoppy and “intense” west coast IPA, but we assume that following current trends, and as sea and real ale don't mix the resulting brews will not be CAMRA compliant.

**Listing of Pubs** CAMRA has recently expressed concern over the emphasis on grandeur and theatrics



when listing modern pubs. However, older buildings that do not display overt historical or architectural features are often also ignored. In Dover there would be a good case for listing the Bull at Buckland, the Golden Lion in Priory Place and the Cinque Ports Arms at the Western Docks. All would appear to be of substantial age. The Bull, built on several levels, suggests an old building added to over the years, the dimensions of the Golden Lion match very much those that might be found in a traditional timber framed building, while the Cinque Ports is full of old beams and was found to possess a 17<sup>th</sup> century fireplace during renovations a few years ago. Leaving aside Dover Castle, Maison Dieu and medieval churches, WWII and commercial development has left the town, unlike Deal and Sandwich, with very few pre 19<sup>th</sup> century buildings. It should be a priority that what remains should be preserved.





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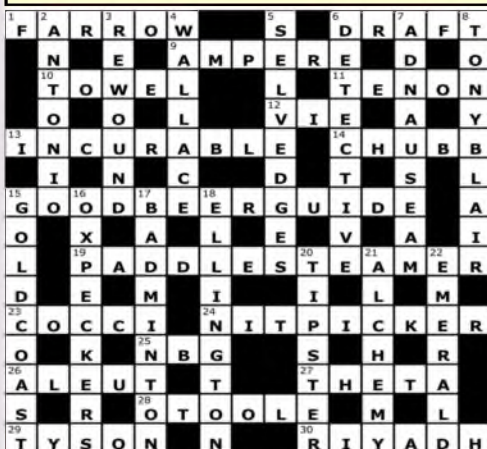


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