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# Chalkers Draught

The Newsletter of the Deal Dover Sandwich & District  
branch of the Campaign for Real Ale

Issue 8 Summer 2001

ASK IF  
IT'S CASK



## Branch Diary

### Branch Meetings

(All start at 8pm unless otherwise stated):

20 August	<b>Alma</b> , Deal	The branch <i>normal</i> meets on the third Monday of each month. Please consult 'What's Brewing' to confirm venues if travelling.
17 September	<b>Flotilla &amp; Firkin</b> , Dover	
15 October	<b>Green Berry</b> , Walmer	
19 November	Venue tba	

### Forthcoming Events & Festivals

(Please check before travelling)

31 July – 4 August	<b>Great British Beer Festival</b> Olympia, London
1-5 August	<b>CAMRA Tent at Kent Cricket</b> St Lawrence Ground, Canterbury
5 August	<b>Dover Lions Publicans' Walk</b> 10am Clock Tower, Dover Seafront
19 August	<b>Branch Pub of the Year presentation</b> <i>The Mogul</i> , 3pm approx
8 September	<b>Maidstone Festival</b> at the Museum of Rural Life, Cobtree, Sandling.



*Channel Draught* is Published and © 2001 by the Deal Dover Sandwich & District Branch of the Campaign for Real Ale. The Branch supports the campaign to retain Real Ale in pubs in White Cliffs Country. Please drink sensibly!

## In this Issue



Welcome to the eighth issue of Channel Draught. My apologies for this issue being a bit later than promised but a multitude of things have conspired against us (again!)

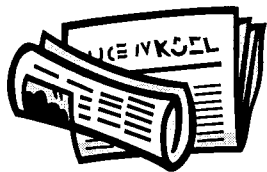
Congratulations to Charlie and Frank at *The Mogul* for being awarded the Branch Pub of the Year for the second year running. The presentation is on 19<sup>th</sup> August at 3pm. We wish *The Mogul* every success in the county competition.

Anyway, there is the usual mix of articles. Please don't forget that if you've any comments about Channel Draught, you can always write (address on page 33). Please make sure you specify if you don't want your letter published!

*Topsy*  
Editor

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## *The Local News*

A fair bit this time round but we'd especially like to hear from landlords who have a change of beer range or other news to give us. Anyway, onto the news:

### Dover

Nothing more on the **Eagle** (aka Olde Irish Times) to date and still advertised for sale. The buildings either side are being renovated and the whole site is identified as a "regeneration" area by Dover Town Council so it should eventually be restored instead of becoming a different sort of site like some of those in the area between St.James and York Street. Speaking of that area, **Cruisers** is still vacant since closure last Christmas.

Progress though at the **Renaissance** (formerly Alma). Fairly ambitious plans for alterations and improvements were put to the Council planners some time back and work has just restarted. The owner/manager has been in town lately and is quoted as estimating reopening before the end of the year. Watch this space.

Courage Best quickly disappeared from the **Sir John Falstaff** but Directors is usually on these days – the pumpclip faces out towards the window. The **Park Inn** now concentrates on premium ales, currently Bombardier, Pedigree, Ruddles County and Old Speckled Hen and their prices are now clearly displayed in chalk. The Swale Ales did not stay long; however their Kentish Admiral (3.8%) has just started to make a series of regular appearances at the **Mogul** in the same way that others, notably Oakham JHB and Moorhouse Black Cat, have done in the past.

Some months ago Punch Taverns boss Hugh Osmond described the Firkin Brewery tag as "knackered" and was expected to start the process of "debranding". However there is no sign of this happening at the **Flotilla & Firkin** although Burton Ale had to give way to Draught Bass. Fortunately Marston's Pedigree remains on their list of guest ales so no change there.

Big news from the **White Horse**. For many years there have been plans for major alterations with the obvious intention of moving into tourist-oriented food trade.

## THE YEW TREE INN

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Or visit our website:

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Yet the moment that Whitbread sell off all their pubs (to Morgan Grenfall) so it closes for refurbishment! Due to reopen later in the summer but it is not yet clear whether it is to be tenanted or managed. Either way it will be interesting to hear the reactions of long-lost ex-regulars (ourselves included!).

At the time of press (mid-June) the **Prince of Orange** was due to change hands. The new tenants are first-timers but are coming in with ideas of how to turn around business in this long-underused, and occasionally closed, pub which is owned by Pubmaster. The two surviving handpumps (there were once five) have not been used for years and may be unusable. The expectation here is that there will be a new pump (or two?) initially offering Greene King IPA.

At the **Prince Albert** Tolly Cobbold EKB has been taken off for good without direct replacement but the rest of the range is unchanged. At another ex-EKB outlet, the **Sportsman**, Wadworth 6X has been joined by Nimmo's Castle Eden Ale.

Up at the **King Edward VII**, sales of real ale have been a bit slow recently and have had to be taken off for a while. However the handpump is still there and there are hopes of something suitable reappearing, possibly Pedigree. That other Avebury Tavern stalwart, the **Golden Lion**, continues to rotate its beer range. Brain's (Cardiff) Arms Park ran through the end of the rugby and soccer season while Pedigree and Greene King IPA remain favourites here.

Down at Dover Marina, **Cullins Yard** stills does Adnams Bitter & Broadside but sadly not (given its fish menu) Fisherman's from the same brewer. The distinctively sharp Erdinger Weissbier is chilled and pressurised but is believed to be cask-conditioned first so this is technically classified as top-pressure cask.

Meanwhile up at the **Old Endeavour**, Shepherd Neame's Early Bird lived on into early summer. A case of early birth but not early bath? Summer Goldings should be out by now as the seasonal replacement. Also with Sheps, the **Lord Nelson** is once again doing Spitfire.

The **Louis Armstrong** often has Rother Valley Spirit Level @ 4.8% but this year has seen some seasonal offerings from its other regular & occasional suppliers. These have included railway-themed names from Cottage Brewery including the most appropriate for Dover, being Golden Arrow. Also the ultra-pale Otter Bright, but for a real verbal challenge how about Thwaites Swashbuckler – if can still say it then you can have another one.

At the **Boar's Head**, it is reported that Dom and Claire are off to Spain for their retirement and have sold the pub. More news next time.

Finally for Dover, at the **Eight Bells**, the summer selection of up to 55 guest ales is underway with up to 5 on at a time by recent experience. The list includes the multiple award-winning Summer Lightning from Hop Back Brewery, but bar staff tell us that this likely to feature permanently in place of Greene King Abbot.

### *Deal & Walmer*

Some of your roving reporters were in town for the "car-free" day. Officially we were there to ride around on the old buses (and we did) but called in on a few pubs around the Deal/Walmer "border".

The **Cambridge Arms** does a varied selection. On the day there was Pedigree, Bass and Master Brew but also Swale's Kentish Admiral. The **Green Berry** appropriately sticks with the Greene King range. The new image Ruddles County @ 4.3% was alongside the IPA. Another GK outlet, albeit with IPA & Abbot, is the **Brickmakers**.

The **Oak & Ivy** has had some redecoration work done recently and is now selling Draught Bass and London Pride.

Meanwhile the **Alma** continues to offer the unexpected including some which have yet to appear (or ever) in the Good Beer Guide, whilst the **Ship** keeps up the Kentish line-up from Swale, Sheps and sometimes the other local micros.

### *Sandwich*

Pubs here tend to stay with a regular range but two which occasionally change one of their beers are the **George & Dragon** which has had Old Hooky and the **Crispin** where Everards Tiger and London Pride have been on recently.

### *Rural*

At the **Fox** (Temple Ewell) the third handpump is for a guest ale. Recently Smiles Maiden Legover has been in residence.

No joy yet concerning the **Chequers** (West Hougham). The **Plough** nearby (Church Hougham) should, as a Beefeater, have been excluded from the great Whitbread sell-off – watch this space, but in the meantime it still doubles as a pub with three ales including Pedigree.

The **Royal Oak** (Capel-le-Ferne) has had Morells Varsity amongst other guest ales whilst at the other end of the village the **Valiant Sailor** has switched from Brakspear Special to Fullers London Pride.

At the **Yew Tree** (Barfreston), real cider from Biddenden is now on handpump rather than from a bar-top drum. Flagship continue to supply from Chatham Maritime. On our last visit their brew was Crows Nest. In the next village, the **Royal Oak** (Nonington) is in new ownership. Here expect Greene King IPA and Boddingtons (increasingly rare in its cask form) plus one or two others. Taylor's Landlord was on when your editors last called in and there is a promise of other guest ales literally in the pipeline.

The **Two Sawyers** (Woolage) does Flowers OB plus Tolly Cobbold EKB from East Anglia. However note the opening hours out in these parts – generally closed during Mon-Thu afternoons but if in doubt then give them a call first. If you are visiting Barfreston but don't fancy driving then try a weekend trip on the East Kent Light Railway. The Yew Tree is about 20mins walk from Eythorne (longer from Shepherdswell).

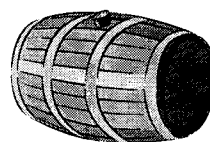
The **Endeavour** (Wootton) has two ales at a time, recently being Batemans XXXB and the increasingly available Adnams Bitter. Nearby at the **Jackdaw** (Denton) Mild from Swale Brewery featured during May whilst the house beers come from Flagship. We tried Old Dog @ 3.9% and, given the pub's appearance in the 1960s Battle of Britain film, the appropriately named Hurricane @ 4.4%.

The **Coastguard** (St.Margarets Bay) carries on after plans to close as a pub were thwarted by DDC whilst the **Clyffe** (St.Margarets-at-Cliffe) has had genuine guest ales alongside their Sheps range. Abbot Ale seems to go down well at the **Smugglers** just up the road.

One of our more remote pubs is the **Chequers** (Sandown), being some way north of the housing estate on the golf course. Its newspaper adverts offer "Adnams Ales" – has anyone been out there to try them? Curiously the latest ad appears alongside, and in the same style, as Cullins Yard (q.v.) – is there a connection?

### *Swale Brewery*

Our most high-profile local microbrewery is on the move again! The bad news is that the combined Tun, Vine & Press operation which we featured earlier did not work to the satisfaction of all concerned and the brewery has moved out. The good news is that it has another pub, having leased the **Blacksmiths Arms** (Wormshill) which is several miles to the south-west of the TVP pub. Brewer John Davidson has found new premises at Grafty Green near Lenham and should be brewing there shortly. In the meantime JD is brewing his own recipe beers at the Pilgrim brewery in Surrey to keep his customers happy during the summer months.

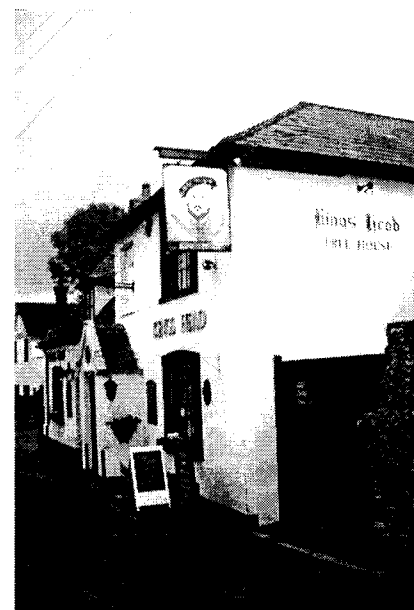


## THE KING'S HEAD KINGSDOWN

The quiet coastal village of Kingsdown supports three pubs: the Zetland, on the foreshore, the Rising Sun at the bottom of the hill and the King's Head (probably the oldest -the date 1743 is inscribed under the rendering over one of the doors), halfway up the main street. Andy and Brenda Crook have run the pub since 1989, when, having viewed pubs all over Kent they found the King's head, practically on their doorstep.

This was their first (and only) pub together, and while Brenda had been in the pub and catering trade for some years, it was a new departure for Andy, who, other than lending a helping at the Hotel de Ville in Margate, had spent the previous 25 years as a high voltage cable jointer. Initially tenants of Bass Charrington they became freehold owners in 1992. With three traditional timber beamed bars, quiet secluded garden, and darts and skittles teams it epitomises the traditional English country pub -although only a couple of miles from the centre of Deal.

My first acquaintance with the King's Head was just about the time that Andy and Brenda took it over, when, in the summer of 1989, as part of the White Horse quiz team from Dover we found ourselves in the same quiz league. That year and for several succeeding years, when playing at the King's Head in the summer, it became our custom to walk to the pub over the cliffs. Leaving the *White Horse* between 5.30 and 6.00 pm we had time for a pint at the Granville (now demolished) in St Margaret's, before reaching the King's Head just in time for the start of the quiz. Since then I have been a regular, if intermittent, customer. Drop in any evening or weekend lunchtime (modern trends having seen the weekday lunch trade dissolve) and you'll find a warm welcome, good conversation and excellent beer - the pub having appeared regularly in the Good Beer Guide for many years.





Current opening hours are weekdays 5-11pm, and weekends 12-3.30 & 7-11pm (10.30 Sun), with food being served Wednesday to Sunday. Ale range is normally Bass and Greene King IPA as standard, plus guests. Interesting features include the rediscovered (and now renovated) fireplace, long concealed behind a gas fire and plasterboard, the two antique muzzle-loading shotguns in the lower bar, and the frosted glass entrance door bearing the words "Thompson & Son Ltd., celebrated Walmer Ales & Stouts". Thompson having been the former local brewer who lost its independence to Charrington in the 1950s.



However nothing remains the same and Andy and Brenda, having spent twelve to thirteen years at the King's Head, feel the time has come for a change and have put the pub on the market at the price of £250,000. We wish them good luck for the future and hope that whoever takes it on will maintain their high standards and success.

*Martin Atkins*



## THE BEERY BOATERS GO WEST

The 21st annual waterborne pub crawl of the Beery Boaters took place this year, as in all previous years, on a week towards the end of April. The route was from Bristol to Devizes and back, so on Saturday the 21st nine of us assembled in the Nova Scotia Hotel at the seaward end of the Floating Harbour and in view of Clifton Suspension Bridge for a few excellent pints of Smiles before setting off on two narrow boats. But not far, as we had decided to spend the first night in Bristol, and we found quiet moorings in a little basin opposite the Ostrich Inn, from whence we crossed the bridge to the city centre and, in particular, the pubs in Welsh Row.

In the morning we carried on up the River Avon, which is tidal as far as Hanham Lock. We had intended to spend lunchtime in Keynsham (who remembers Horace Bachelor?) but a lot of the moorings had been damaged by last Autumn's floods and we carried on (in the rain), to the Jolly Sailor at Saltford, and our first of many pints of Abbey Bellringer.

The evening saw the company in Bath with more Bellringer at the Star, so eloquently described by Phil in the last Channel Draught He didn't do it adequate justice! It is a 'must' for anyone visiting Bath.

Monday morning dawned fine and sunny. The Kennet and Avon Canal proper commences at Bath and, after ascending six locks proceeds on the level to Bradford-on-Avon. This, to my mind, is one of the most attractive parts of the canal. Coming out of Bath there are some fine views of the Georgian town. Then the canal follows the Avon some sixty feet above the river, mainly clinging to the left side of the steep valley, crossing once to the other side over the Dundas Aqueduct and back a couple of miles further on over the Avoncliff Aqueduct. All very rural, and we saw several buzzards circling high over the valley.

The Cross Guns Inn at Avoncliff is in a spectacular setting, nestling into the side of a cliff; its site makes it rather touristy, but we had to stop here to pick up the tenth



member of our party who alighted, on time and as arranged, at the little station on the other side of the gorge. Then on a further mile to Bradford-on-Avon (pretty but traffic-ridden) and a further mile to the Beehive, an old favourite, on the outskirts of the town.

Tuesday saw us at our destination. We didn't quite go all the way to Devizes; *you* have to go up a flight of thirty locks to get to the town centre, and I didn't fancy doing the Grand Old Duke of York act, so we wended (i.e. turned) at the bottom of the flight, went back a mile to the Three Magpies at Sells Green and after a meal and a couple of pints of Wadworth's got the bus to town. We said 'hello' to the Wadworth dray horses, had some more 'Waddies' at the Lamb, some of the assorted range of beer at the British Lion and got a bus back to the Three Magpies before closing time.

Wednesday lunchtime, back to the Beehive. Well, I had missed my duck and cherry pie on the way up (the cook being off) and anyway, there's a good table for dominoes! We had planned to go to the Hop Pole at Limpley Stoke for the evening, this is across the valley between Avoncliff and Dundas Aqueducts, but we couldn't

take the direct route as the towpath hereabouts was closed because of the foot and mouth epidemic. So we moored by Dundas Aqueduct and after a rather lack-lustre pint of Courage at the Viaduct Inn carried on for another mile and a half back to the Hop pole and better beer!



Back to Bath, and confusion! Down the locks, and to the moorings on the river. A lunchtime session in the Old Green Tree (the next best pub in Bath), and back to the boats. There was a message waiting asking us to ring our hire company. A sudden flood was expected, and we were to take the boats back above the locks on the canal and, on Saturday morning, leave them at a local boat yard. Up the locks, moor, and off to the Star. Revised plans for Friday included a bus trip to the Tuckers Grave at Faulkland and another session at the Star (of course!).

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Late on Friday morning, before catching our bus, I decided to telephone our hire company to confirm arrangements. Consternation! The manager had been away the previous day; now he was back and told us that there was no problem with the river. We decided that we could get down to Hanham Lock (and the Old Lock and Weir pub) for the evening if we set off at once. So back on Bath Locks for the fourth time. The lock keeper congratulated us for running in his new paddle gear on the lock gates!



More Bellringer at the Jolly Sailor at Saltford on the way down river. We reached Hanham Lock at about half past six. There are two pubs next to each other here, the Old Lock and Weir (GBG 2001) and the Chequers. The only moorings available are those for each

pub. They had both been damaged in the floods; the first pub had demolished theirs for rebuilding whilst those belonging to the Chequers were tatty but useable.

We tied up alongside these, intending to patronise both establishments. Having nicely secured our craft, we were assailed by an overbearing gentleman who turned out to be the proprietor of the Chequers. Yes, we could use his moorings, but only if we used his pub exclusively and if no-one set foot in the Old Lock and Weir. We could, however, do what we liked if we paid him a mooring fee of £50! No way were we going to be blackmailed by this fellow who was immediately voted *'The Most Obnoxious Landlord of the Week'*, so we untied and motored back about three miles to Keynsham where we managed to tuck ourselves in just above the lock and fifty yards from the Lock Keeper pub. This proved to be an excellent decision; the pub had just been taken over from Smiles by Youngs and stocked both ranges of beer. And the food was excellent as well. So our money was spent there, instead of the landlord of the Chequers getting a share! A case of 'cutting off one's nose to spite one's face'.

And back to Bristol on a showery Saturday morning with ideas already in mind for the next Beery Boaters' Canal Trip.

*Jim Green*

## The Admiral Penn Free House

This tastefully Dutch Style decorated Pub  
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While enjoying your Traditional Real English Ales  
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There are also  
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Specials are Dutch Kopstoot and Jagermeister  
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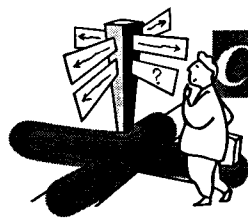
79 BEACH STREET

DEAL

KENT CT14 6JA

UNITED KINGDOM





## Country Pub Walks No.4

FINGLESHAM to RINGWOULD  
via Northbourne and Ripple  
(about 9 miles)

Most of the footpaths are now open again so time to walk off all those winter calories!

This walk starts from the Coach House, Hacklinge (or Burgess Green as it appears in Stagecoach schedules). This is on the main road between Deal and Sandwich accessible by Compass bus 100 which runs hourly every day (though early finish Sun evenings) from Pencester Road at 40 mins past the hour and from South Street at 05 minutes past the hour.

From Sandwich bus 200 leaves Market Square at 52 past.. There should be a direct path across the marshes from the Coach House to the Crown, Finglesham, but in early June this was overgrown following months of closure. I am told that it should be cleared by July but in the meantime a bit of road walking may be required.

From the Coach House go along the main road in the Deal direction taking the first road on the right called Burgess Green. Follow this for about ¼ mile to a road on the right signposted to Finglesham which soon brings you to the **Crown**

### THE CROWN, FINGLESHAM

Courage Best	Weekday opening 11 to 3; 6 to 11pm
Courage Directors	Sundays 12 to 3; 7 to 10.30pm
Shepherd Neame Masterbrew	food available every day before 2, and
Charles Wells' Bombardier	until 9.30pm.

Leaving the Crown, turn left for a few yards along lane, then opposite Lower Farm take footpath on the right which crosses field diagonally, then goes through trees to a road. Cross over and turn left for a few yards, then at layby go sharp right along another path between trees.

At end of path join the former colliery access road, straight on towards red brick building ahead. The line of path goes straight ahead, but at time of writing (early June) the path was diverted around demolition workings. For the diversion go through barrier on right along road for a few yards, then left into another road in direction of traffic arrow. Shortly afterwards go left at the phone box around Betteshanger Social Club, and you are now back 'on line.'



## STRAND'S

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*Ales usually available are:*

*London Pride, Shepherd Neame*

*Master Brew & Spitfire plus Guest Ales*

**Listed in the 2001 CAMRA**

**Good Beer Guide**

With an electricity sub station on your right proceed ahead through barrier. Follow path for about ½ mile to Northbourne Church. Into churchyard and around the church to gate at far side. Through gate along driveway which leads out onto 'The Street'. You will see the **Hare and Hounds** ahead on the right.

#### THE HARE & HOUNDS, NORTHBOURNE

Bass	Weekday opening 11 to 3; 6 to 11pm
Shepherd Neame Masterbrew	Sundays 12 to 3; 7 to 10.30pm
Shepherd Neame Spitfire	Food available every day at any reasonable time
Harvey's Sussex Best	

Leaving the pub turn right along road to the thatched cottage, where head left along Deal Road ignoring Mill Lane on the right. Walk downhill for about ¼ mile to a footpath sign on right. Follow path as it crosses field diagonally and you will eventually arrive at a stile into a field at Little Mongeham Farm. Cross stile and go half left making for a gate by a pond. Over stile by pond then right through another gate to the road.

Go along road for a few yards then take path on the right by a wooden house. Two paths start from here but take the one on the left alongside garden of wooden house to a telephone pole. Here where paths split again take the left option uphill which leads directly to Ripple. You are allowed a short pause at top of hill to take in the splendours of Richborough Power Station, Pegwell Bay, Mill Hill Water Tower and the village of Ripple downhill ahead. At top of hill go ahead through line of hedgerow and down a steep bank, along path to lane at Ripple by 'Linden Lea'. Turn right here then left at T junction. Proceed along the road, ahead at cross roads to soon reach the **Plough** on the left.

#### THE PLOUGH, RIPPLE

Fuller's London Pride	Mon/Fri opening 11 to 4; 6 to 11pm
Shepherd Neame Masterbrew	Saturday 11 to 11pm Sundays 12 to 10.30pm
Shepherd Neame Spitfire	food available 12 to 2; and 7 to 8.45
	(except Sun evening, Monday all day, and Tues lunchtime.)

Leaving the Plough go right to T junction ahead, where turn left along lane. After passing Ripple Vale School on the left, turn left at a Royal Mail letter box along track leading to an isolated cottage. (This is a right of way despite lack of footpath signs, as our county council has repeatedly been informed!)



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FOR REAL FOOD

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*At La Cuisine Paysanne  
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**Just the thing to soak up  
all that wonderful real ale!!**

*Menus are seasonal,  
reflecting the fresh produce available  
at that time of the year!*

**Hearty fayre, Happy service**

*Look forward to seeing you  
John et Florence*



**La Cuisine Paysanne**  
269 London Road, Deal, Kent Tel: 01304 373238

# PICKWICKS

London Road, Kearsney  
Telephone 01304 822016

11am-11pm, Sundays 12pm-10.30pm

Four Real Ales, currently inc. Abbot Ale

Flowers Original, London Pride & Greene King IPA\*

Large Car Park at rear & Beer Garden

Food available daily

Families welcome to 8pm

Sorry no dogs

\* Ales are Subject to availability



# THE LYDDEN BELL

Winner - White Cliffs Tourism Association Pub of the Year 2000

Canterbury Road, Lydden

Telephone 01304 830296

12-3pm & 6-11pm Sundays 12-4pm & 7-10.30pm

Join us for a theme night! Booking essential! Please phone!

Sunday "Weekend Recovery" with drinks promotions

Monday "Eat all pay ½"

Tuesday Curry & Ale - cask ales £1.50

Wednesday Steak Special

Thursday Tex Mex

Friday Fish night

Up to five Real Ales! Including\*

Charles Wells Bombardier, Greene King IPA,

Greene King Abbot Ale, Courage Directors

\* Ales are Subject to availability



Francis & Catherine welcome you to both of our pubs

At the cottage continue your direction ahead passing cottage garden hedge on your left to go through a hedge into a large field. Follow path straight on until you meet a crossing path at a telephone pole. Now turn right along crossing path and head towards trees. At corner of wood keep ahead, the wood now on your left. Continue straight on, crossing the railway, then a lane, still keeping ahead with wood on your left. Note Ripple Mill ahead. Just before reaching the road you'll meet a cross path where turn half right.

Now cross road and take right-hand path uphill to trees where the view can be admired from a handy seat. Now maintain your direction passing waterworks fence on your right, with the Deal/Dover road audible and just visible over to your left. Straight ahead to the trees where the path now continues between fences. Arriving at a lane go straight ahead into the churchyard along the path to pass St. Nicholas Church on your right. Leave by a lychgate and follow path downhill to a lane, passing tourist information board. Turn left to the **Five Bells**.

## THE FIVE BELLS, RINGWOULD

Bass	Mon/Fri opening 3 to 11 Saturday 12 to 11 Sundays 12 to 10.30
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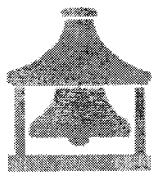
Bus 200 leaves Ringwould hourly for Dover at 19 mins past the hour with last one at 2219 (1919 then 1949 on Suns).

Bus 100 leaves Ringwould hourly for Deal and Sandwich at 57 mins past the hour with last one at 2057 (1957 on Suns).

Please note that these bus times are in operation at present in early June, but as times can change without warning please check before you travel! Bus enquiries: 0870 608 2608

For those who prefer to be 'led' I will walk this walk on **Sat 4 August**: Meet at Coach House, Burgess Green at 11.20 am. (Bus 100 leaves Pencester Rd at 1040, South St at 1105. Bus 200 from Sandwich Guildhall at 1052)

*John Pitcher*



## The Clyffe Inn

High Street St Margarets-at-Cliffe  
Tel. 01304 852400 Fax 01304 851880

[www.characterinns.co.uk](http://www.characterinns.co.uk)

Open 11am-3pm & 6pm-11pm (Mon-Sat)  
12pm-2.30pm & 7pm-10.30pm (Sun)

*The Clyffe Inn is a Pub, a Restaurant and has Accommodation, with a good range of Real Ales and Wines. There's an excellent Bar Menu and an even better Restaurant Menu specialising in local Seafood and Game. We have a large car park and garden*

*The Clyffe Inn dates from the 16<sup>th</sup> Century and has been a Granary and a School House. There are original ships timbers in the ceiling of the Bar.*

### 1999 Pub of the Year

(Deal Dover Sandwich & District CAMRA)

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## Letter to the editor

### A Matter of Good Taste

“Old Wort” observed (Channel Draught 7) that he had recently found Shepherd Neame Masterbrew to lack taste.

I found that Shepherd Neame Masterbrew began to lose taste, gradually, about five years ago. Before this time it was, to my palate, a beer of exceptional character with good body and a pronounced hoppy taste. To my mind, a beer to be revered is a beer which leaves the taste of hops in one's mouth after leaving the hostelry in which the drink was consumed. This could once have been said of Shepherd Neame Masterbrew. It was one of my favourite beers and could, locally, be beaten only by the even hoppier Best Bitter from the same brewery.

After the Master Brew lost its taste the Best Bitter soon followed suite as did Bishop's Finger which left Spitfire, the other regular draught beer, as the only one with the former strong Shepherd Neame character. At about the same time, Shepherd Neame discontinued their bottle conditioned Spitfire and replaced it with a pasteurised carbonated version. The character of this draught beer also seems to wane.

The next change in taste was the appearance of an unpleasant 'biscuity' back taste. This was present in all of the Shepherd Neame draught beers including the Porter.

Obviously I can only write to me own taste and I have no doubt that others will disagree, not least Shepherd Neame. I feel very strongly about this brewery as it is my 'local' brewery and as their beer had so much character they had farther to fall. However I do find that many of the larger breweries who once produced beers of great character now brew beers with a lack of taste (or perhaps it is just I who have lost mine).

Many of the larger regional and national breweries would appear to rely upon large amounts of money being spent on advertisements proclaiming the merit of their products instead of spending this money on the best quality ingredients and relying on 'word of mouth' to sell their beers. As many of the smaller breweries cannot afford these large sums of money for advertising, in an effort to guarantee instant success, they take the course of brewing their beers to reflect the character of the high quality of the ingredients that they use, and long may they do so.

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on Deal 01304 374 843

Some of our brewers use solely malt and hops without adjuncts. We take it for granted that they all use water and yeast. Shepherd Neame once confidently advertised "All Ales Beers, Stout and Porters brewed from malt and hops only". They no longer use this slogan. Goachers of Maidstone do proudly state in their advertisements "All Malt & Hops".

Various brewers do use and have been known to use invert brewing sugars, glucose, torried wheat, flaked maize, rice and even potato starch. It is little wonder that some of us wake up with a bad headache or stomach ache after an evening consuming some of these brewer's beers.

The only way forward, to my mind, is for the Government to insist on all ingredients used in beers to be listed at the point of sale. One could then choose one's beer by way of glancing at the relative size of the pumpclips - the bigger the clip the greater the number of ingredients, the smaller the clip the purer the beer. I jest. No doubt that sterling upholder of the large brewers' interests, the Brewers Society, would oppose this most vehemently, as they have with proposed legislation for a full-pint.

To reminisce, I remember Boddington's Bitter as a splendid, hoppy, bitter for which dedicated drinkers would travel many miles to drink. Courage Directors bitter was equally as sought after in the early 1970s and could, unlike today, be found in few locations. Before this Flowers brewed a distinctive hoppy beer that enjoyed an excellent reputation. Wadworth's 6X was limited to its local area of Wiltshire and immediate environs and was justifiably popular. Even John Smith's bitter had a certain amount of these. Perhaps this was at the time that William Hague drank 14 pints a day (or was it 16 pints) of this product. It must have been exceptional .... If one can ever believe a politician !!

One beer which I find still has character and is brewed by a national brewer is Draught Bass. Another notable large brewer that is much featured in the national press these days is Wolverhampton and Dudley, brewers of Banks and Camerons beers. I sincerely hope that the new owners of this company will maintain the high standard of brewing. Unfortunately, judging on recent history, this is a vain hope.

Although I avoid drinking most of the large regional/national beers, a large majority of beer drinkers ensure that they are the most widely available draught beers, so perhaps I am wrong. Alternatively, it would be that as these brewers restrict choice in their own tied houses to, in most cases, their own products. Similarly, the new public house chains limit themselves to the beers they can buy in at the cheapest possible price.

I would however raise a glass of good characterful ale to the many 'Micro' breweries and the long established breweries such as our neighbours over the border in Sussex, Harveys & Co who still brew a tremendously diverse range of beers, stouts and porters using top quality ingredients.

Will they in turn go the way of their larger bretheren and put cost cutting before consumer choice and taste? I hope not. Should this be the case I trust there will also be someone to take their place and to quench the palate of those of use who passionately care about our long heritage of Good English Ale.

### *Roger Marples*

Since writing this piece, Roger has been in correspondence with Shepherd Neame through the press. This resulted in Roger being invited for a private tasting session at Faversham with the head brewer and the senior brewing staff. Roger hopes to write more about his afternoon at Shep's for the next issue.

*Editor*

# THE FOX

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*Steve & Alyson*



## National News

In case you are wondering, still no result about the closure/takeover plans of Wolverhampton & Dudley Breweries. Wolves' directors are to try to "buy back" around £100M in company shares which should push its share value up to a point where unwelcome bidders Pubmaster would have to raise its offer (financial press quotes £4.80 per share as a benchmark figure). If Pubmaster succeeds then say goodbye to four breweries, including Marston's which retails Pedigree to the nation.

Interbrew have yet to integrate Whitbread and Bass and are resisting attempts to prevent completion of the Bass takeover. They do however own all of the brands including Draught Bass which came with last years' buy-outs. If the Bass takeover is ruled illegal then six more breweries are at risk – no other likely purchaser is going to keep them going. All they want are the brand names and market penetration.

Yes, you all read in the newspapers that pubs are to open all day and all night. That was the pre-election "promise" to get you out to the polls on 7<sup>th</sup> June and in place by Christmas. What was not made clear at the time was the timing and that there are to be certain strings attached. The Christmas referred to is actually December 2002 which is the earliest possible implementation time given that any Licensing Bill will have to be included in *next year's* Queen's Speech.

The Government however wants to transfer control of licensing to local authorities. So whereas the licensing benches have until now effectively controlled permitted hours as part of their law and order role over many years, they are to be stripped of these responsibilities, which are to be handed over to the local authorities which have 1001 other things to do. One ominous proposal is that licensees will have to present a "business plan" (whatever that means) in order to obtain agreement to open at whatever hours may be applicable. Opposition comes from a powerful alliance, notably Sheps and Wetherspoons, with a "it ain't broke, don't fix it" line.

In the meantime CAMRA continues its stance to support sensible and responsible drinking at times which suit the customer, the licensee and the community. Why do we have to "drink up" at 11pm at every pub with the inevitable result that everyone is on the streets at the same time (or be fleeced by clubs with a 2am licence).

*Dave Routh*



## Swale Brewery: On the Move Again

Last autumn, Swale Brewery and Syndale Valley Vineyard merged their businesses to form Tun Vine & Press Ltd (see Channel Draught 5). This operation was based at Parsonage Farm, Newnham. Unfortunately this merger was not a success and to quote Alan Bolton of Swale Brewery "The grape and the grain do not mix". Tun Vine & Press Ltd are now no more and Swale has moved back to its former premises at the D2 Trading Estate in Sittingbourne. There is still two years before the lease expires on these premises but as the main reason for moving to Newnham was lack of space at Sittingbourne, the stay here is likely to be short.

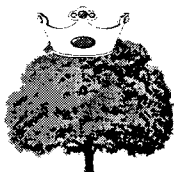
Swale Brewery no longer has an interest in the TVP Bistro at Newnham and this is now run and owned by the Abbs family (Syndale Valley Vineyard). The name has been changed to 'The Tapster' and although a choice of draught beers are offered, none are from Swale Brewery. When I visited The Tapster, in early May, the beers tasted as though they were served with a blanket of carbon dioxide.

Swale Brewery have taken the Blacksmith's Arms at Wormshill, which is between Sittingbourne and Maidstone, on a six year lease. I must be one of the most difficult public houses in Kent to visit by means of public transport. The Blacksmith's Arms was closed in October of last year and managers have been appointed by Swale Brewery to run their establishment. They plan to sell beer from handpumps and four direct from the cask. The pub will open 'all day' seven days a week and, according to John Davidson of Swale Brewery, will be a "public house rather than a restaurant, but will sell food".

I understand that the Blacksmith's Arms, comprising of two bars, one of which is divided into two has not been ruined by having its interior 'improved'. If you do intend to visit by public transport, there is a long walk from Hollingbourne station. You might petition KCC for a bus service!

*Roger Marples*

### THE ROYAL OAK



CAPEL-LE-FERNE

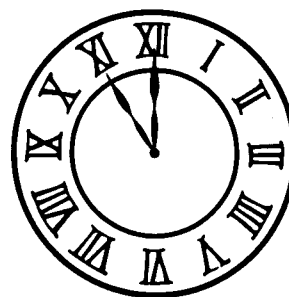
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Selection of 3 Ales

Friendly atmosphere

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## LAST KNOCKINGS

The original bastions of the Campaign for Real Ale continue to fall by the wayside. Once proud and independently minded Greene King, who not so long ago would not deliver outside a set mileage from their brewery, seem now hell bent on following the accountant lead, profit orientated policies pioneered by the national brewers in the sixties and seventies. Having swallowed Moreland and Ruddles in one gulp "repositioning" of brands is now afoot; and, after failing to make an impact with the very drinkable 4.5% Triumph (complete with motorcycle trademark), Ruddles County is to be allocated the flagship bitter slot, but at the reduced strength of 4.3%, and with a poster campaign showing a countryside that bears not the slightest resemblance to its native county, Rutland. The new brew may be excellent but it won't be the County that was brewed last year, and certainly not the County that was brewed 30 years ago. A sad end for a former front runner in the campaign against keg, and a disappointment to all those who hoped that Greene King might not go down the path of brand manipulation.

Meanwhile Greene King's East Anglian neighbours, Adnams, traditionally renowned for their robust hoppy bitters appear also to have allowed marketing considerations to hold sway. Their long running and simple pumpclip bearing the knight logo has now given way to an over-elaborate, glossy replacement displaying a character who more resembles a fireman than a knight. The award winning "Extra" has been axed and a new chilled bitter (no doubt to appeal to the younger drinker) introduced. Now information has emerged that Adnams have acquired conical fennenters which, if not obliging bottom fermentation, usually seem to produce a smoother, sweeter, less distinctive brew. Certainly a well-established real ale drinker who recently tried a pint of Adnams bitter described it as very bland.



However, all is not despair. On their recent expedition to the western end of the Kennet and Avon Canal (see elsewhere) the Beery Boaters had the good fortune to find themselves amongst a wealth of local brews. The likes of Smiles, Bath, Butcombe, Abbey and Wadworth were everywhere and often with brews, never, or only rarely, seen in this part of the world. The pubs too were generally excellent as typified by the Nova Scotia in Bristol where the trip started. Traditional and without fuss, and serving good food and beer to a diverse clientele, it should be held up as an example to those who allow their pub style to be dominated by the themed marketing concepts of the large brewers and pub owners.

Enterprise Inns has just bought 439 former Whitbread pubs from Morgan Grenfall and according to their chief executive, Ted Tuppin, would be happy with owning up to 6,000 (by my calculation roughly 10% of the country's total). This was the kind of ownership level enjoyed by the large brewers twenty or thirty years ago, and that led to the beer orders of the late eighties; and, as far as I can see, is as equally likely to lead to monopoly abuse again (whether the owner is a brewer or non-brewer), if it is allowed to develop. It would make a lot of sense if the Government were to put a cap on the number of pubs in single ownership; and a good starting point might be the limit of 2,000 proposed by the original Monopoly Commission report and which the then Secretary of State, Lord Young (before he changed it) was initially 'minded' to accept.

As you may well be aware that fine old public house, the White Horse in St. James' St., Dover, is (at the time of writing) currently closed and undergoing the refurbishment that has been on the cards for so long. No doubt this will be undertaken with much care and at not inconsiderable expense, but will it be a pub or just another eatery/leisure experience. One hopes the latter will be avoided. Those of us who remember the pub in its heyday, remember a lively and invigorating establishment, drawing customers from all over the town and port, as well as attracting tourists and others passing through on their way to and from the continent. As one regular used to say if you stayed in the White Horse any length of time you'd likely meet anyone looking for a drink in Dover.

*"Old Wort"*

## Local Information

If you have a dispute concerning ale bought in Dover, Deal or Sandwich, please bring it to the attention of Martin Atkins (see Page 33). You may want to take the matter up yourself and we advise you to contact any (or all) of the following:

Trading Standards Office (East Kent)	01843 223380
Gwyn Prosser MP (Dover)	01304 201199
Dr. Steven Ladyman MP (Thanet South)	01843 850315

## Useful numbers

<b>Dover Tourist Info</b>	01304 205108	<b>Kent Police</b>	01304 240055
<b>Train times</b>	08457 484950	<b>Buses</b>	0870 2433711
<b>KCC Bus/Train line</b>	08457 3696996		01304 240024
<b>Dover Taxis:</b>		<b>Deal Taxis:</b>	
Taxi (A1)	01304 202000	Taxi (Deal Cars)	01304 366000
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Address \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Postcode \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

I/We enclose the remittance for:

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\*Date of birth required  
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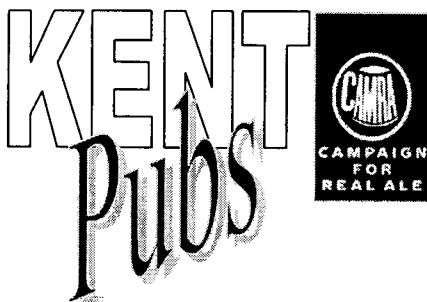
Send your remittance (payable to CAMRA) to:

The membership secretary, CAMRA,  
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AL1 4LW.

For enquiries, phone 01727 867201

*Channel Draught 8*

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## Branch Contacts & Info

If you have any queries about CAMRA in White Cliffs Country then please contact **Martin Atkins** (Branch Chairman) on (01304) 872484 or 201870 or **Dave Routh** (Area Organiser – East Kent) on 07932 525345

### Editorial Team:

Paul Turvey, Dave Routh  
& Martin Atkins

### Editorial Address:

33 East Street, Dover  
CT17 0DS

Mobile: 07966 155316 (editor only)

### Advertising & Distribution

Martin Atkins  
(01304) 872484 or 201870

### E-mail:

dds.camra@topsy.demon.co.uk

### Web:

[www.topsy.demon.co.uk/dds\\_camra](http://www.topsy.demon.co.uk/dds_camra)  
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**Channel Draught** is the Newsletter of the Deal Dover Sandwich & District Branch of CAMRA.

*Please note that views expressed herein are not necessarily those of this branch or CAMRA Ltd.*

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