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



**CAMPAIGN
FOR
REAL ALE**

**Issue 35
Spring
2008**

CHANNEL DRAUGHT



INSIDE

NEW CIDER MAKER IN EAST KENT

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looks at Broomfield
Orchard
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CRABBLE MILL

The history behind
the venue to next
month's Crabble
Mill Beer Festival.

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BERRY NICE!

**THE BERRY, WALMER , IS
2008 PUB OF THE YEAR**

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CHANNEL DRAUGHT

ISSUE 35
Spring 2008

It's spring once again, and in Britain with spring comes The Budget. Not just any old budget but the British Government's budget, designed to provide an economic framework for running the country for the following twelve months. This year's Budget was judged by most opinion to be an innocuous affair, except in one particular matter, the increases in duty on alcohol and specifically those on beer. Incredulity was the general response from the trade and their customers to the swingeing increases, not just this year, but written in for the next four years as well. Many are still reeling from what could justifiably be seen as an outright attack on traditional British beer and the traditional British pub, for whom things were often bad enough already. In Local News we highlight the plight of many Dover pubs.

However on a more pleasing note real ale sales appear to be holding up well. Nationally over the first part of the winter Wetherspoon's found that a 3.2% fall in sales was largely accounted for by a drop in demand for spirits and premium lagers. Real ale, by contrast was up, and their winter beer festival saw a 25% increase over last year's, with the principal beneficiaries the micros. Similar reports come from many local landlords who note increasing real ale sales and often sluggish demand for the once big selling lager brands.

Certainly there seems no problem selling real ale at beer festivals, of which there appear to be more and more. As well as Wetherspoon's regular events, the last few months has seen festivals at the Royal Cinque Ports Yacht Club in Dover, the Berry in Walmer and Chambers in Folkestone, as well as CAMRA's own White Cliffs Winter Ale Festival in February and the Easter weekend Planet Thanet festival. And more are planned for the next few months – see Branch diary (page 3). Also planned for spring is another branch bus trip, plus more of John Pitcher's increasing popular Saturday walks.

Martin Atkins (Editor)

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EVENTS DIARY

Sat 17th May	Diamond Route Bus Trip , starting Eight Bells, Dover, 10am
Mon 19th May	Branch Meeting , Fleur de Lis, Sandwich.
Thur 22nd to Mon 26th May	Beer Festival* , New Inn, Havelock St., Canterbury
Fri 23rd & Sat 24th May	4th Crabble Corn Mill Beer Festival* (see page 41)
Sat 31st May	Walk: Deal Hoy, Crown, Three Horseshoes – Meet 12 Deal Hoy, bus to Crown followed by walk to Mongeham (about 3 miles)
Mon 2nd June	Pub of the Year Presentation , Berry, Walmer 7.30pm
Fri 6th & Sat 7th June	Rare Breeds Beer Festival , Woodchurch
Sat 14th June	Walk: Eagle, Fox, Louis Armstrong – meet 12 Eagle, bus to Fox, walk through Kearsney Abbey 1½ miles, bus back to town.
Mon 16th June	Branch Meeting , Plough & Harrow, Tilmanstone.
Sat 28th June	Walk: St Crispin, Fleur de Lis – Meet St Crispin, Worth 12.30, then easy walk to Sandwich 2½ miles
Sat 12th July	Walk: Berry, King's Head, Plough – Meet Berry 1145, bus to Kingsdown, walk to Ripple and walk back to Walmer

Branch Website www.camra-dds.org.uk

Branch meetings are normally held every third Monday of each month and start at 7.30pm.
For full details about pub strolls, please email john.pitcher@ic24.net or call 01304 214153.

Events marked * are not organised by CAMRA

Interested in joining CAMRA? Come along to one of our meetings!

Not Tonight, Darling

CAMRA has wholeheartedly condemned the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Alistair Darling's decision to increase beer duty by 4 pence a pint in this year's Budget; as well as the annual increases of 2% above inflation for the next four years, despite what happens to UK pubs and the beer market. We believe that the consequent substantial price increases on a pint over the bar, will further fuel pub closures and increase unregulated drinking as more choose to drink at home or on the streets. This is the first time ever that beer tax has increased by 4 pence – a rise of 13%. Our recent surveys have found that 57 pubs are lost permanently every month as the price differential between pubs and supermarkets widens.

Pubs provide a regulated environment for people to enjoy alcohol socially and responsibly. Mike Benner, Chief Executive of CAMRA said, "The Chancellor has failed to recognise that well-run community pubs are the solution to Britain's binge drinking problems. This budget will do nothing to stop binge drinking, but it will lead to pub closures on a huge scale, widen the gap between supermarket and pub prices and encourage smuggling and cross-border shopping. It's a great big nail whacked ruthlessly into the coffin of the British pub." He added that the vast majority of community pubs are run as small businesses that produce a modest profit for their owners, and are defined as local services in the Sustainable Communities Act of 2007. This budget, however, gives no consideration to their continued viability, and shows a disregard for our national drink and for the 15 million people who enjoy it responsibly.

Pubs and beer also employ 600,000 people in the UK, he said, "According to the British Beer and Pub Association every pint sold in a pub nets the Government £1.14 in duty, VAT and employment taxes." That tax revenue is now at risk, as also are people's jobs, with hard pressed consumers turning increasingly to the supermarkets. Conversely they look set to benefit from the duty increase as higher pub beer prices makes discounted alcohol even more attractive: unlike pubs supermarkets to not rely on alcohol sales to make a profit."

CAMRA had called for a cut in beer duty in the Budget to help pubs compete with supermarket prices; while the industry was looking for at least a freeze, to compensate for falling beer sales (down by over 8% last autumn), and the rocketing cost of raw materials and energy. Both, however, the Chancellor appears to have been completely ignored, as he has also, it would seem, the 26% rise in beer duty since 1997. Arguing that the price of alcohol has not kept up with inflation (a bottle of supermarket wine in real terms is 45p cheaper now than in 1997), he has, with seemingly complete irrationality, increased beer and cider duty by 13p and 14p a pint, but raised wine and spirits duty by just 10% – the duty increase since 1997 on these two, by the way, being respectively 16% and 3%. British consumers now pay the highest rate of duty on beer in Europe. On a 5% ABV pint the Germans pay just 4 pence, the French 5 pence and the Dutch 17 pence. Even in notoriously high duty Scandinavia the Swedes pay a comparatively modest 30 pence, modest that is compared to the whacking 42 pence that we in Britain have to fork out.

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DOVER PUBS

AN ENDANGERED SPECIES

The sad state of some of Dover's once popular pubs



The boarded up Hare & Hounds, Folkestone Rd.



Above: The closed Falstaff in Ladywell



The forlorn Orange Tree, Folkestone Rd

Below: The Engineer, Folkestone Rd awaits it's fate.



Left: The closed Castle in Russell Street





The Local News

Contributors - Martin Atkins, Anne McIlroy, Roger Marples, John Pitcher, Tony Wells, Andrew Bushby, Malcolm Birt and Di Jones etc.

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

If you have any news about a pub in your area – new beers or different beer range, alterations to the pub, beer festivals or anything that may be of interest to our readers, please email:

channeldraught.pubnews@virgin.net

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

DOVER

Question: how many pubs will there be in Dover in five years time? A dozen, half a dozen....or, if present trends continue, perhaps none. At the time of writing, a fifth of the town's pubs are either being converted to other uses, appear destined for conversion or are just closed with future uncertain. To add to those already in a state of limbo January saw the **Castle**, Russell Street, and the **Hare and Hounds**, Folkestone Road, both close, and while the former still looks as if it might be waiting for someone to take up the reins the latter is barely recognisable as a pub – all windows boarded up and signs removed. For the last year or two it had been run by Chrissie Coomer and Stephen Lowrie who are taking another pub in Paddock Wood. A spokesman for owners Shepherd Neame said, "We are currently considering our options," although as it occupies a substantial site retaining it as a pub is probably not one of them. CAMRA believes that, as the only remaining pub in the area, and with the nearest alternative 15 minutes away, it should be retained and will be opposing any change of use. With the **Orange Tree** now also boarded up and earmarked for housing development for

several years, and the **Engineer** (now sporting a sign stating acquired for residential use) closed since 2006, the road has just one single pub remaining.

At the time of writing in Ladywell the **Falstaff** remains closed as does the **Prince of Orange**, New Street, which is being advertised for sale at £250,000. Its owners Admiral Taverns claim that it no longer fits in with their pub portfolio, although as a non-food basic boozer just off the main street, one would have thought it fitted precisely. In Coombe Valley Rd. the housing development on the site of the **Primrose** is well under way, the conversion of the **Westbury** into flats is near completion, and the **King Lear**, Aycliffe, awaits its turn with permission having been granted for flats and houses.

Elsewhere the new year has brought other cutbacks. **Blakes** in Castle Street, recently voted best Dover restaurant by the Dover Locals website, has had to make staff cut backs. Owners Peter and Katherine Garstin say the business lost £35,000 last year with poor restaurant trade being the main culprit. They are now placing greater emphasis on their drinks trade, with a

reduced food menu made by themselves. Not necessarily a bad thing, one of our correspondents being particularly enthusiastic about Katherine's bread and butter pudding, whose ingredients included prunes soaked in rum. There has even been talk of converting the restaurant into a bar with music, though presumably not on the lines of a Lloyds No 1 that Wetherspoons proposes for Blake's near neighbour, the ex-nightclub, **Snoops**. However, whether this will ever take place must be open to speculation. After years of uncertainty and the flurry of revised interest in late 2006/2007, save for remedial work on the frontage last summer, all is again silence.

Also facing lack of custom has been **Crabble Corn Mill** whose visitors last year were a quarter of those that they had been the year before. Mill general manager Ant Reid said "We had an appalling summer last year, people were not going on holiday and that affects every attraction in Dover." He urged more local people to use the mill and go along to the events they put on. Overheads were increasing every year, insurance alone being £150 a week. "In previous years the beer festival has got us through" he said, "We are meeting with the trustees to look at ways of trying to get more money in the door. It is not just important to Dover, this is Kent's only working water mill and one of Europe's finest." Recent events have included folk nights, a quiz night and a sell-out Abba theme night which made £500 profit. In May the Mill will host their 4th annual beer festival – see advert.

Golden Lion, Priory Place: Variety as usual from this very traditional pub. Recent months have seen Greene King Abbot and IPA, Marston Pedigree and

Ugly Sisters, an old favourite Brain's Rev. James, as well as Brakspear's Bitter, Bath Ales Barnstormer, Bate-man's Rosey Nosey, Young's Bitter and Henry's IPA from Wadworth.

Fox, Temple Ewell: The winter months saw a fine selection of Christmas ales including B&T Santa's Slayer, Spring-head Rudolf's Ruin, Archer's Xmas Pud and Greene King Fireside, in addition to the more regular Greene King Abbot Ale, Caledonian Deuchar's IPA and Young's Bitter. From Shepherd Neame came Spitfire and Tin'ale. The pub has also joined the ever growing local fans of the Westerham Brewery with British Bulldog in January and William Wilberforce Freedom Ale in March.

More Westerham ales at the **Louis Armstrong**, where Jackie Bowles has added the brewery to her list of regular suppliers. CAMRA's Community pubs week at the end of February saw the Deal, Dover, Sandwich and District Branch organise a dadlums evening at the pub. It proved a great success, particularly with one of English Heritage's staff from Dover Castle, who reprised the event a month later for his work colleagues: Jackie hopes to make dad-



Landlady Jackie Bowles plays Daddlums at the Louis Armstrong

lums evenings a regular feature at the Louis. Two more unusual recent beers were Silver King from Osset Brewery (well known to Beery Boaters) and Shere Drop from Surrey Hills Brewery. Both appeared well liked.

White Horse, St. James St: More dark beers in March with Dark Star Old Ale and Elgoods Thin Ice appearing in the first week of the month. The pub normally offers four real ales, Timothy Taylor Landlord plus three micro brews as well as Biddenden, Black Rat or other real cider, and now, Westons perry as well.

DEAL

Berry, Canada Rd: Congratulations on winning Branch Pub of the Year (see page 42). The pub is rapidly establishing itself as one of the best real ale outlets in Deal and Walmer. Regular bitter is Harvey's Sussex, alongside which Chris offers two or three guests. Of particular note this winter has been the superb Harveys 4X old ale, a firkin of which was normally put on Friday night, and gone by Saturday afternoon.

Bohemian, Beach St: As reported in our last issue the pub is selling up to seven different real ales at a time (watch out Eight Bells), and so far all reports suggest quality has not suffered. Mid December saw at least twelve different beers on sale over one five day period, with nearly all those sampled rated good or very good. One of our contributors commented great range, excellent quality and nice new pub, but couldn't remember what he'd drunk although it was superb. **Dunkereys** a little way along Beach St. was selling St Austell Tribute in late February, apparently acquired through Shepherd Neame, who apparently had supplied the same beer to the **Dover Sea Angling Club**. Are Sheps moving into

guests ales, and will they be appearing in their own tied estate?

Prince Albert, Alfred Square: Also increasing its real ale selection the Prince Albert now offers a choice of four. As always the range is ever changing with considerable representation from Kentish brews – Nelson, Gadds and Westerham all featuring during the winter. From further away Dark Star and Cottage are quite prominent and it was good to see Wadworth's Henry's IPA and Brakspear's Bitter on sale locally, both breweries traditionally tending to restrict what they send outside of their own area to their flagship premium bitters. On the other side of the square the **Saracen's Head** was another outlet for Shep's Porter during the winter, alongside Master Brew and Spitfire, and rated as excellent by one of our members.

Ship, Middle St: While still heavily involved with Gadds the pub has been expanding its range in other directions – e.g. Goacher's Gold Star and Dark Star Original. Gadd's No 7 remains a regular and receives consistently impressive comments. Nearby the **Three Compasses**, more restaurant than pub continues with a single real ale, in mid January Highgate Stocking Filler which was rated very good by one of our correspondents.

Mill Inn, Mill Hill: The pub was selling Harvey's Sussex Best Bitter in January. Not known to us as selling real ale of late we would appreciate any further information. Meanwhile we hope they persevere and it proves a success.

Middle Deal Rd. now contains no operating pubs, the **Five Ringers** being just a memory with its site occupied by houses, and the **New Plough**, at the other end remaining closed. Although

last year's application for conversion to two dwellings and erection of a terrace of four houses was withdrawn, a new application for a similar proposal has just been submitted. Meanwhile there appears activity at last at the **Lifeboat** in Walmer, closed now for several years, which we presume must be the long threatened conversion to residential use. In the High St., the **Strand** is selling Bass and Worthington 1744, a pint of the latter receiving a very poor rating during a visit in January, a fact which may not be unconnected with the beer's absence, for some years now, from the list of Worthington beers. Further to our winter edition we understand that the Adnams at the **Courtyard**, Sondes Road, is on some type of pressure dispense.

Three Horse Shoes, Mongeham: Emptying their charity bottle just before Christmas, Alison and Graham Adcock,

found that during the four months since the August funday the grand total of £473.40 had been collected. It was donated to the Deal Corps Salvation Army for its Christmas Day Meal Appeal and they thank everyone for their very generous contributions. The pub provided a good venue for our March Branch meeting where we had the choice of Adnams bitter, Landlord and Weston's Old Rosie cider.

Leather Bottle, Mongeham: Landlord Dan Warwick tells us that Bombardier and Bass have made appearances alongside the usual Flowers IPA and both have gone down well. In early April the pub was undergoing an exterior facelift to restore the fine old Victorian building to something like its former glory. The work includes a new slate roof, general repairs, repainting and new signage and lighting. Once he's "stopped shaking" after writing the



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cheque for that lot, he intends to have a go at the interior.

SANDWICH & RURAL

Fleur de Lis, Sandwich: Real ales are Greene King IPA and Wadworth 6X plus one guest, which is always sold cheaper than the other two. Many of the guests are requests and recommendations from their customers. Gadd's Oatmeal Stout in mid February was superb.

Volunteer, Ash: New owners/landlords are Raj & Gina Lennon. The beer range has altered too, real ales having changed from Flowers IPA and Greene King IPA to Flowers IPA, Shepherd Neame Spitfire and a guest. The village's other pub (in the mid 1970s there were five) the **Chequers**, at the time of writing is closed and apparently up for sale.

Plough, Ripple: A change of management here also earlier in the year. We hear the new landlord is from Maidstone, and has been in the trade before, but some time ago. One Friday in late February the pub had a selection of six real ales: Shepherd Neame Master Brew and Spitfire, Fullers ESB, Adnams, Harveys Sussex and Goacher's Mild.

Black Robin, Kingston: Seemingly tied down largely to restaurant trade of late, a recent visit found, as well as the food side, a dart board and bar billiard table – the community element promised when the pub changed hands last year. Normally two real ales, the likes of Master Brew, Landlord and Flowers Original.

After nine months of uncertainty Jenny and Peter Clayton finally said farewell to the **Charity** at Woodnesborough at new Year. By February serious refurbishment was underway, which subsequently led to its re-opening in mid-March as Turners Inn & restaurant.

Also in line for the builders is the **High & Dry**, Waldershare, where permission was granted in January for two storey and single storey rear extensions, including additional staff accommodation. However, the nearby **White Horse** at Eythorne remains heavily boarded up with now no advert for a business opportunity, just a "For Sale" sign. Also still up for sale, we understand, is the currently closed **Butcher's Arms**, Ashley. A third application for change of use to a dwelling was refused in March.

Yew Tree, Barfreestone: Following Chris Cruse's departure at Christmas through ill health, the pub remained closed for several months. In mid-February a skip appeared outside, and in due course quantities of cream paint were observed, being taken inside. Finally re-opening around Easter and newly decorated, traditionalists will be relieved to find the internal layout remains unchanged. However, there is a more serious emphasis on food, the main bar operating more as a restaurant, with no bar stools – drinkers being encouraged to use the smaller rear bar. Mild has also been dropped (so no sign of Alan) with real ales now usually a choice of three from Gadd's and Hop-daemon.

Further refurbishment at the **Marquis of Granby**, Alkham, closed since shortly after Christmas and not due to reopen until the summer. Works include a single storey rear extension, conversion of first floor to bed and breakfast accommodation plus various internal and external alterations. Over the hill at West Hougham the application for demolition of the **Chequers** and erection of five houses has been with-

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drawn, but the pub still remains boarded up and looking forlorn, surrounded by wire mesh fencing. We understand that another application is likely.

Greyhound, Aylesham: Popularly known as the Dog and closed for some time, an application to convert to a day nursery has now been turned down by Dover District Council, the grounds for refusal including that it had not been adequately marketed as a pub. Meanwhile the Branch's other **Greyhound**, that in New St. Sandwich, remains seriously boarded up and shows no sign of re-opening. Up for sale with a price tag of £450,000 most opinion assumes its days as a pub are over.

Royal Oak, Nonington: Before Christmas the pub seemed as much closed as open, a visit in December finding it temporarily open that day, had been

open the day before, but, according to the barmaid, not fully open until the following weekend. Things now appear more settled – open all day weekends, we understand, but evenings only during the week. Real ales normally number three or four – Landlord together with a selection largely drawn from nationals – e.g. London Pride, Bombardier, Old Speckled Hen, Tanglefoot.

CANTERBURY

Skippers, Bridge: Back to its old name again in March, the "Malkins" experiment seemingly having failed. Signage as before, but the wine bar/bistro format appears to have been retained – at least there is still a proper bar in operation.

New Inn, Havelock St: The change of hands reported in our winter issue is now imminent, and may well have hap-

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pened by the time you read this. The new owner, however, intends to keep things much as there were, including the annual beer festival over the Spring Bank Holiday weekend.

Old Brewery Tavern, Stour St: This relatively new establishment occupies a rear part of the old County Hotel, the whole premises, apparently, being owned by British cinema institution, Michael Caine. A welcome addition to the City's real ale selection, visits so far have found up to four ales available, most recently a combination of Kent and Cornwall with Gadds and Whitstable contrasting with Skinners and Sharps.

FOLKESTONE

Lifeboat: Now sporting seven hand pumps, a visit in early March found Landlord, Harveys Sussex, Bombardier, London Pride and more dark stuff – Freeminer Porter and Everards Pitch Black Stout. The redecorated **East Cliff Tavern**, complete with new blue and yellow sign, proved to be another East Kent outlet for Westerham in mid-March, with a barrel of Grasshopper on tap alongside Skrimshander. At the **Three Mackerel**, The Stade, the absence of any real ale at recent visits seems perhaps to vindicate our original thoughts on its prospects in this pub (see last winter's edition). By all accounts the Harvey's Sussex that was on pump throughout last year was excellent, and was joined towards Christmas by Old Speckled Hen. However the handpumps remain. Any further information gratefully received.

In the Bayle, the **British Lion** is still offering an interesting selection of guests – Daleside Leg Over in early April, together with Sheps, as Bishops Finger was on as well. Variety also at

the **Guildhall** with Wadworth Horizon, Thwaites Lancaster Bomber, Bath Barnstormer and again Bishops Finger. At the **Pullman**, renovation and refurbishment has now ended. Real ale policy still seems mainly one on at a time. Last visit to **Harveys** found just two real ales Bombardier and Courage Best.

Chambers, Cheriton Place: Easter saw the now regular beer festival, this year celebrating the pub's 10th anniversary. Reports have been very favourable with particular mention of Westerham Freedom, Dark Star Spring Equinox and Uley Pigs Ear. Unfortunately the 5% Decade Dance, that Hopdaemon were specially blending to celebrate the ten years was not available, and was replaced by a very feisty chilli flavoured brew, Haba-Beer-O. However, pride of place must go to Eddie Gadds No Tomorrow. A pale 8% bitter, sold only in halves, it was given a 5 rating on the National Beer Scoring System by one of our members whose sole comment was "very moreish."

In Tontine Street, the **Brewery Tap** remains boarded up, as does the **Two Bells**, Canterbury Road and the **Martello**, Dover Road, while apparently no change at Cheriton where all ground floor doors and windows on the former **White Lion** are sealed with breeze blocks.



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TONY'S TAPPINGS

The perambulations and musings
of our Pubs Officer, Tony Wells

Quote

"Give my people plenty of beer, good beer and cheap beer, and you will have no revolution among them". Queen Victoria

Price Survey

Every year CAMRA carries out a price survey across the country, recording and comparing the prices of different types of draught beer and cider. Below are the results of our branch survey collected before the budget, and, in many instances before the raw material increases had worked through.

2008	Real Ale	Real Cider	Keg Lager	Keg Bitter	Keg Cider	Keg Stout
Max.	£3.10	£2.70	£3.20	£3.00	£3.30	£3.30
Min.	£2.00	£2.30	£2.60	£2.50	£2.60	£2.70
Ave.	£2.62	£2.45	£2.81	£2.70	£2.88	£3.00

From our sample of 23 pubs we found that it continues to be cheaper to drink cask beer, keg bitter averaging 8p more a pint. Real cider and keg cider is even more of a difference at 43p.

So how does this compare with last year? 2007 price survey looked like this (sample size 15)

2007	Real Ale	Real Cider	Keg Lager	Keg Bitter	Keg Cider	Keg Stout
Max	£3.00	£2.70	£3.00	£2.90	£3.20	£3.20
Min.	£1.95	£2.35	£2.50	£2.40	£2.60	£2.60
Ave.	£2.58	£2.53	£2.73	£2.63	£2.83	£2.90

Over the year, the price of a pint of real ale has gone up by about 1.7%, and the price of a pint of keg by just under 2.9%. Last year the average difference between the two was 5p, so there has been an increase in the price difference.

Wetherspoons' Eight Bells in Dover was not taken into account when compiling the statistics above, as we felt that their prices were not representative of typical pub prices across our branch. For the record, however, average Wetherspoon prices, at the time of this year's survey, were:

Real Ale	Real Cider	Keg Lager	Keg Bitter	Keg Cider	Keg Stout
£1.89	£2.10	£2.30	£1.79	£1.79	£2.29

The Volunteer, Ash



Delivering CAMRA and real ale material to pubs across our branch enables you to keep in touch with what's going on in the area.

On this occasion a visit to the Volunteer Inn, in Ash, to deliver The Diamond Pub Guide (the branch's guide to real ale on Stagecoach's Diamond Bus Service) found a new landlord and landlady behind the bar. Raj & Gina Singh took over the Volunteer at the end of November 2007. Although they had not run a pub before they saw the potential in the pub and having run a shop in Margate High Street felt they had the experience of knowing what the customer wants.

Raj tells me that business is picking up and he has managed to attract one of the local football teams as regular customers. At the time of the visit, the pub was bustling, with a game of pool under way, a group of football fans watching England's somewhat dubious performance against Switzerland and a good number of locals talking at the bar. Through the year he intends to hold charity events in aid of the Special Care Baby Unit.

Minor changes to the pub are being made and Raj has plans to refurbish the cellar, having already been on a cellarmanship course. Outside, the missing Volunteer sign has been sent away for renovation and will shortly be re-hung. A simple bar menu has recently been introduced and Spitfire added to the Volunteer's regular Flowers IPA. At the time of our visit there was a guest beer on as well – a good pint of Wadworth's 6X. Raj is interested in CAMRA and real ale, including CAMRA's Community Pubs initiative.

Approval for a new pub in Deal

Dover District Council has given approval for a Smith & Jones outlet in Deal, at the old Job Centre in Queen Street. The applicants and owners are Barracuda group, whose pubs are described as upmarket an authentic, offering an appealing menu, an excellent range of wine and beer delivered through top quality service in classic, comfortable surroundings. Details of licensing hours, opening



hours, food etc, are currently being worked on, but it is hoped that the pub will open later in the year, perhaps at the end of summer. Currently the nearest Smith & Jones pubs, are The Phoenix in Ashford, opened in July 2006, and The Sovereign, Ramsgate, opened last year. Both pubs serve real ale. You can find more information about Barracuda at: <http://www.barracudagroup.co.uk>

Change of pub name

The Charity in Woodnesborough, well known for its value-for-money meals, has undergone significant renovation work. The pub was reopened as Turners Inn & Restaurant on Easter Sunday, by television celebrity Christopher Biggins. We have no news yet on whether it serves real ale, but I hope it does, as it is one of the real ale pubs easily accessible by bus.



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Beer Garden Piano Darts

GRAND UNION CEASES BREWING

Sudden end for brews that were popular in Kent

Many of you will now be aware of the sad demise of the Grand Union Brewery at Hayes. They were regular suppliers to our area especially after their takeover of the Old Kent Brewery from West Kent several years ago. Beers from their excellent one hop range (4.5% ABV) – pale yellow bitters each displaying, as the name suggests, the characteristics of a particular hop – were often to be found at the Louis Armstrong where they proved extremely popular. They also appeared at the Royal Cinque Ports Yacht Club. Our Branch Secretary, Jim Green commented, "Sad! One of their beers was House Beer.... for a while after they took over a Kent brewery and was well appreciated."



Further information came from North Surrey (Bob the Binman) in late January: "For fans of Grand Union (Hayes) this will be bad news. They will be closed within 10 days. Final brew was completed in the last few weeks and approx 40 casks of beer still to shift - the final 4 casks of Honey Porter snapped up by Phil at The George, Staines (along with Brass Monkeys) this afternoon. The Bitter and a One Hop are currently on sale today at The George. I'll try to organise a 'wake' at The George when the final Honey Porter comes on!!! The 10 barrel plant is moving North to a start-up in the Liverpool area, however the recipes and brand name are still up for sale!"

Locally Dartford Working Men's Club were lucky enough to get their hands on some of the last brews. Bob Belton (Gravesend and Darent Valley Branch) sent us the following on Jan 30th: "The Dartford Working Men's Club tapped the last cask of Honey Porter yesterday and it is wonderful."

The last remaining cask of Grand Union Stout will be on sale very soon, when the Whitstable Oyster Stout runs out. Let's hope the recipes can be continued." I think the above is a fair indication of the respect and affection with which the Grand Union Brewery was viewed, and I think all of us will echo Bob Belton's final sentiments – perhaps one of our own micro's might be interested in acquiring some, or all, of the recipes.

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The National News

By Martin Atkins

Drugs Now Cheaper than Beer

Following the Chancellor's 4p rise in duty, official Government figures now show illegal drugs to be as cheap as, or cheaper than, beer. The average pint of beer in Britain is now £3.00, the same as a line of cocaine, and a hit of heroin at £3.50 is now cheaper than the average London pint at £4.06. Meanwhile, the Independent Drug Monitoring Unit which provides street drug price information for evidence in court, calculates that a line of speed or the cannabis resin for a spliff now costs the same as two cigarettes and ecstasy pills can be bought for as little as £1.

Last of the Old Nationals

After what seems like years of speculation it appears that Scottish & Newcastle has eventually succumbed to the attentions of its European rivals Heineken and Carlsberg, and accepted their offer of £7.8 billion for the business. If the takeover goes ahead it is intended that S&N's British operations will pass into the hands of Heineken while Carlsberg will acquire the bulk of their overseas operations, including the 50% stake in BHB, the rapidly growing joint venture in Russia and the Baltic states, that they don't already own. The deal would also see the end of independence for Britain's old national beerage, all of which will have then passed into foreign ownership following the

curtailing of their power by the Beer Orders of the late 1980s. Understandably there are concerns about the company's 3,300 British workforce and speculation over the future of its 2,200 pub estate and remaining interest in real ale, now largely confined to Tadcaster, where it brews John Smiths and contract brews for Theakstons.

24 Hour Drinking

24 hour drinking has now been in operation almost two and a half years, and in February the government published a review of the 2005 Licensing Act under which it was authorised. First of all, however, the term hardly reflects the true state of affairs. Statistics gathered between April 2006 and March 2007 show that 5,100 venues had 24-hour licences. However 3,300 were hotels, which always held the right to serve their guests 24 hours a day, and 910 were supermarkets. Of pubs and clubs just 460, less than 1%, held a 24 hour licence, and for many of those it was just for special occasions. For the rest roughly 20% stayed with 11pm closing, 50% opted for opening until midnight and 30% for opening until 1pm. However, as with 24 hour opening, in many cases the extra time was held as an option, and often not used.

As to the effect on anti-social behaviour, the government review

found that fears of an increase in violence had proved unfounded, although neither had there been any discernible lessening in crime and disorder as a result of allowing pubs and clubs a variety of closing times, supposedly one of the act's objectives. Alcohol related crimes between 3am and 6am were up 22%, with alcohol fuelled hot spots deteriorating, although total alcohol related offences were down 3%. Significantly there were substantial variations across the country. Additionally, it concluded that the "southern European style drinking culture" that the new regulations were supposed to inspire has shown no sign of materialising – probably to the surprise of no one except perhaps Mr Blair.

Glimmer of Hope from Tories?

In an interview with the Publican, David Cameron set out the Conservatives' thinking on tackling alcohol problems and duty levels, and his own thoughts on pubs, beer and binge drinking. On duty the proposals are quite radical – increase duty on ready-to-drinks (RTDs) and high-strength lagers and ciders, while reducing it on normal beers and ciders by around 8p. Responding to the government's claim that RTDs cannot be singled out for tax rises, Cameron pointed out that the Germans did it on alcopops. "Instead of saying 'no we can't', the government ought to spend more time working out how we can," he said. He also offers a more logical and realistic definition of a binge drinker: someone who buys 3 litres of

such as White Lightning with the object of getting off their head, not as the present Government would have it – someone who drinks more than three or four pints in an evening at the pub. But then Cameron does seem to have an interest in beer, and real ale at that. You always have to be wary of politicians alleged preferences, but his volunteered expression of liking for Sharp's Doom Bar, a choice many of us would agree with, does ring true.

Jonathan Neame Slates Budget

Commenting on the duty rises in this budget, Jonathan Neame, chief executive of Shepherd Neame and chairman of the duty panel of the British Beer and Pubs Association said, "We believe this will massively accelerate the problem of binge drinking and will drive a significant number of pubs nationally to the wall. It is astonishing and disappointing that the Government tries to annihilate one of the things that should be a growth sector for the country." He added that while supporting any Shepherd Neame licensee who choose to join those publicans banning the Chancellor from their premises, his company would like to see Alistair Darling and Cabinet colleagues in their local pub so that they could witness the enormous contribution pubs make to the community. "The current taxation policy is encouraging those who abuse alcohol, such as binge drinkers and alcoholics to purchase their alcohol in the off trade. These individuals are not drinking traditional ales, they are buying high-strength

cider and hard liquor, such as vodka."

Marston's Buys Wychwood

The start of April saw Marston's announce that, for an undisclosed sum, it had acquired Refresh UK which owns the Wychwood Brewery, brewer of Hobgoblin, Brakspear and the classic brown ale Mann's. The acquisition is consistent with Marston's strategy of developing a portfolio of premium beer brands, and follows the purchase of Jennings in 2005 and Ringwood in 2007. The brewery says that it is committed to continuing the brewing operation in Witney.

Alistair Darby, managing director of Marston's Beer Company said: "We are delighted to welcome Refresh to Marston's. We plan to develop the brand as part of our desire to meet increasing consumer demand for premium ales with strong provenance and heritage. We are looking to repeat the successes of the acquisitions of Jennings and Ringwood." Refresh UK was formed in 2000 and brews 50,000 barrels of beer a year, and is the third largest supplier of premium bottled ales to supermarkets. In the year ending May 31 2007 the business turned over £24.9m, making a profit of £1.1m.

Questions the average real ale drinker will be asking:-

How long before Marston's bid for the Brakspeare estate?

How will the takeover affect the Hobgoblin pub chain?

How long will Marston's be happy to brew in Cumbria, Ringwood and

Witney, as well as their Midlands heartland?

What is the benefit to the ordinary drinker?

Help Save the Bass Museum

As some you will already be aware the Bass Museum (now the Coors Visitors Centre) faces closure after the American brewing giant decided that it could no longer afford its £1 million yearly running costs. For hundreds of years, the historic town of Burton upon Trent has been recognised as the capital of British brewing and the town's rich brewing history has been kept alive in what is, for many, Britain's only national brewing museum.

The Burton Mail has launched a campaign to save the museum from closure by calling on the Government to secure it charitable status - opening the door for potential new funding sources.", and have set up a petition to save the museum. There is now a link to this petition on CAMRA's website (<http://www.camra.org.uk/page.aspx?o=whatsnew1>).

Please sign the Burton Mail's online petition to help save the Brewery Museum in Burton upon Trent!





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Kent Small Brewery News

By Roger Marples

Westerham Brewery Co. Ltd., Crockham Hill, Edenbridge 01732 864427

sales@westerhambrewery.co.uk

Each month, or so, Westerham plan to produce a single hop beer. The first one, which has nearly sold out, is Goldings. This is a 4.0% brew, bittered entirely by Golding Hops. The hop for the next brew has yet to be decided. A special I.P.A. has just been brewed to commemorate the 500th. brew. This contains five different varieties of Kent hops and is 4.8% ABV. Westerham brew a special I.P.A. every 100 brews. British Bulldog was promoted for St. Georges day, with special offers. Bottle conditioned William Wilberforce Freedom Ale, at 4.8%, won the Silver Medal at the S.I.B.A. National Exhibition. Recent Outlets:- Louis Armstrong- Dover. Blakes- Dover, Coastguard- St. Margaret's, Bohemian- Deal, Prince Albert- Deal, Berry- Walmer, Chambers- Folkestone, East Cliffe Tavern- Folkestone, Fox-Temple Ewell, Three Horseshoes- Mongeham.

P & DJ Goacher, Tovil, Maidstone 01622 682112

The second oldest brewery in Kent will be celebrating its quarter of a century of brewing, in May. A special brew that ,Silver Star, will be produced, and will be 4.3%. It will be in the style of Gold Star, but using Goldings rather than Fuggles. This event is still being planned, as we go to press.

Ramsgate Brewery Ltd., Broadstairs 01843 580037 info@ramsgatebrewery.co.uk

A special brew in April was Dragon's Blood ESB, a big powerful bitter ale for St. George's Day. May will see the well known Gadd's Mild return, which was champion beer of Britain finalist. Eddie might "add something interesting", this year. In June the tersely named Dr. Sunshine's Special Friendly Wheat Ale will return. A bitter-sweet summer amber ale, with a plentiful supply of Kentish hops, is planned for July.

Hopdæmon Brewery – Newnham 01795 892078

The new seasonal beer for April, was Cuckoo, and is described as a deep golden bitter, clean and crisp, with a grapefruit character. It will be 3.8%. Two gold medals were won at the SIBA South East awards. These were for Greendaemon in the bottle, and Golden Braid, on draught.

Whitstable Brewery – Grafty Green 01622 851007

A new beer has been produced, and is named Pearl of Kent at 4.5%. It is a golden ale and was available at the Margate (Planet Thanet) beer festival. It was also extremely popular at The Man of Kent Ale House, in Rochester. So much so that after ordering a firkin, they promptly followed this with a kilderkin! The Whitstable beer festival will coincide with the Oyster Festival, and will commence on either 23rd. or 24th. July until Sunday 27th. July.

Nelson Brewing Co. Ltd., Chatham 01634 832828

sales@nelsonbrewingcompany.co.uk

No news at time of going to press.



CIDER MATTERS

Well, here we are at the start of the run-up to spring and summer. Yes, I know it's technically spring already, but it's chucking it down outside so it still feels like winter. Anyway, as the weather improves, so should the availability of cider, or at least the temptation to go out and find some. Sadly, the petrol station opposite the *Ren-naissance* still hasn't re-stocked with Monk's Delight, even though they've had a delivery of Biddenden cider. Maybe if a few more people go in and ask for it they might be more likely to get some more in. Mind you, if selling out isn't a good enough reason to stock it, I don't know what is.

There seems still to be some confusion as to just what is "real cider". We set out CAMRA's definition in our autumn issue, however the current stumbling block seems to be that real cider should be made from juice, not juice concentrate, as is used by big producers for their fizzy cider. Why would they go to the trouble of using full juice for a tiny proportion of their output?

A different take on perry came in the *White Horse* one evening, when someone asked for a taste of the Weston's Perry from the fridge, then proclaimed that it "tasted like Chardonnay". That led to a polite discussion, which at times reminded me of a *Monty Python* sketch ("That's nothing like a willow. That's never a willow!"), until someone who claimed to have "drunk quite a lot of Chardonnay" assured the discussion's instigator that the flavour was nothing like Chardonnay. At which point he said he meant the "crisp mouth-feel". I hope the producers of Chardonnay will appreciate having their product compared to a quality drink like perry.

Anyway, on to local events. The cider bus trip was a great success, probably the busiest bus trip we've ever had (see page 35). There were a few people drinking beer rather than cider, but it was still good to have their support, and we're already looking forward to the next trip – keep your eyes on the branch website! Don't forget that as summer comes around, there's more cider at beer festivals. I'm told that the Planet Thanet festival was as good as last year, if not better, and there are still the Rare Breeds and Kent festivals to look forward to, plus a cider festival at Swan Inn, Wittersham (23 – 26th May) with 30-40 ciders; so get out there and try some! You might remember from October last year that CAMRA's National Cider & Perry Pub of the Year, was a pub in Scarborough. This year's competition has already started, and I can confirm that more than one local pub has been nominated, and we'll be keenly watching to see how they get on.

On a much sadder note, I'm sure you're all aware of how unfairly alcohol was treated in the Budget; it seems strange to me that drinks with a higher ABV had their duty increased less than lower ABV drinks. The increase in duty on cider

may cause real problems for medium-sized producers, as they do not benefit from the 7000 litre duty exemption of small producers, but do not have the economies of scale of the huge producers, who will be able to absorb the increase, and keep pumping out their fizzy product that does nothing to help the image of cider. Don't presume that just because you haven't heard of a particular producer before, they don't matter. Now, of all times, the medium-sized producers need our support, so if you see cider by someone you haven't heard of before, give it a try – particularly if you are in or near the West Country. But don't forget to drink sensibly, you wouldn't want to be thought of as a cider binge-drinker, would you?

The following is an update to our list of Kent Cider Producers that we published in our Autumn 2006 issue.

Badgers Hill Farm, Chilham (01227 730573) open 6 days a week, no wholesale, £ 60 per 5 gals

Biddenden (01580 291726) Usual range available

Broomfield Orchard (see article on page 45)

Castle Cider Co., Chiddingstone (01732 455977) locally only, don't supply festivals

Chafford, Fordcombe (01892 740437) 600-700 gals per year, 5 gallons £ 30

Crippledick, Boughton (01227 751537) Medium & Dry (6.5%), 26 pint boxes (£ 1.80/pt)

Double Vision, Boughton Monchelsea (01622 746633) Medium, Dry & Perry – litre bottles, 10/20 litre boxes or 5 gal containers. Single varieties in 500ml bottles – Cox, Gala, Katy

Johnson's, Isle of Sheppey (01795 665203) blended cider, plus now, small quantities of cider from own orchard

Neal's Place Farm, Canterbury (01227 765632) cider in bottles only

Pawley Farm, Painters Forstal (01795 532043) Dry/medium/sweet/spiced – only in bottles

Pippins, Pembury (01892 824544) No cider currently available – possibly starting again in autumn

Brogdale – still waiting to hear what they are doing

Applejack



WHITE CLIFFS FESTIVAL OF WINTER ALES 2008

Once again the first weekend in February found the Deal, Dover, Sandwich and District Branch of the Campaign for Real Ale in residence at Dover Town Hall, and offering a selection of winter ales that you would be unlikely to come across all together anywhere else – over 70 firkins of stouts, porters, old ales, strong bitters and milds, with strengths ranging from 5-10% ABV. All were cask conditioned (i.e. not pasteurised, filtered or otherwise tampered with), and all were served direct from the barrel. As ever there were many colourful and exotic names which would have done credit to the cast list from the latest Jack Sparrow adventure, or at least the ring names of professional wrestlers: Wildcat, Black Mass, Rampage and Hell Fire mixing it with Black Widow, Roaring Boy and Skull Splitter and contrasting with the more domestic and seasonal, such as Fireside, Winter Fuel, Thin Ice and Frostbite. There was also the usual selection from the real ale bestiary – Santa Paws, Wobbly Bob, Pink Elephant, Bête Noire, Old Jock, etc.

The beer's here, where are you?



To help avoid the traditional Friday evening queues, we again opened at 1pm and sold advance tickets, and as last year it seemed to work. We had to restrict entry for an hour or two from about 4.30 but, by then early comers were starting to leave, and nobody had to wait too long. Price per pint this year we raised to £2.50, having held it at £2 for the last seven years, but still, we felt, offering good value for beer which started at 5% plus ABV and much of which was considerably stronger. Friday night entertainment having been absent for several years was revived again, in the shape of Buddy G with a selection from Buddy Holly and other vintage rock 'n' rollers, and proved most successful. Beer of the festival, the first barrel emptied (some time late Friday afternoon), was, pleasingly, Target IPA from Acorn of Barnsley, sponsored in memory of local CAMRA member Steve Callacher, who died last summer. However there were many others of particular note including the 2008 National Winter Beer, Station Porter from Wickwar of Gloucestershire and the superb 7.6% Spingo Christmas Special from the famous Blue Anchor of Helston. By the end of Friday evening some seventeen barrels had been finished and most of the rest had well under half their contents remaining.

Saturday, as usual was much quieter, but with steady



A beer and a T-shirt in
fond memory of Steve
Callacher



the last couple of hours which left the toilets in darkness, but Thanet Leisure, the Town Hall operators spiritedly let the festival carry on with the use of the public facilities in Maison Dieu Gardens.

Otherwise the festival ran very smoothly. A very nice atmosphere, was a repeated comment. Typical was Alan Styles from Maidstone who e-mailed us the following:

"Just to let you know, I visited your Beer Festival recently, for both the Friday and Saturday sessions, and thought it was again top class. This was a long awaited return for me here, my last visit being way back in 2003? The selection of ales on offer was excellent, and I noted a good crowd was in attendance for both days. Well done to you and all your staff for all your efforts."

And from Deal, Michelle Bowles, who came with her husband Nathan and their two young sons, commented;

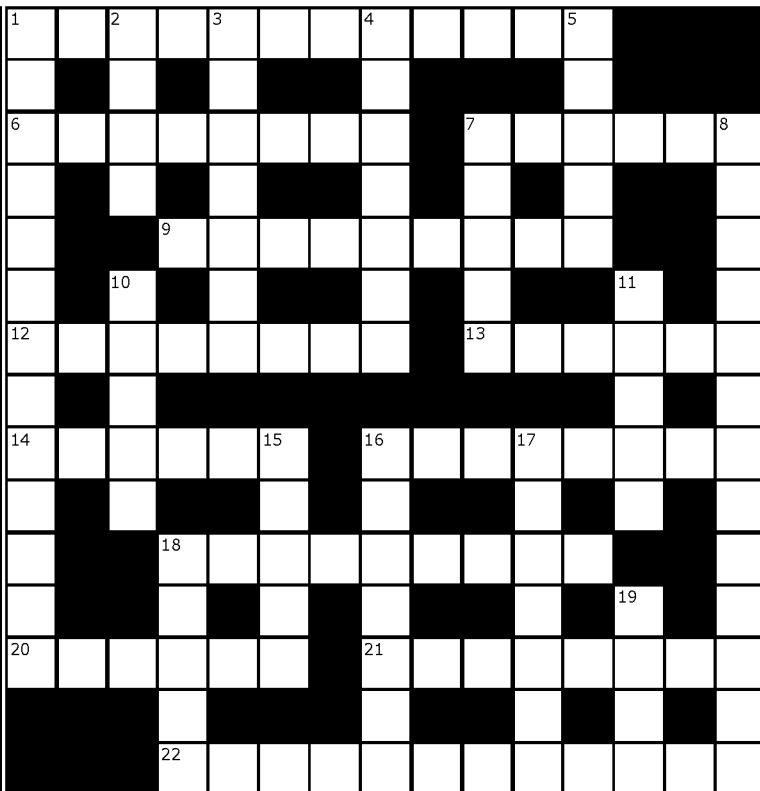
"We used to come every year before we had kids, but now we go to family-friendly festivals. We have good fun as a family, the boys like it, we bring toys and games along for them and they love it when there's music. We have been Campaign for Real Ale members for 15 years. Nathan and I used to travel all over the place to go to festivals. It used to be about the drinking but now with the kids, it is a social thing and a good day out."



A fine demonstration to the Government and those campaigning for increased restrictions on alcohol that beer drinking need not be associated with irresponsible drunkenness and anti-social behaviour. Like the vast majority of the country's drinkers those attending our festival just want to be left alone to enjoy good ale and good conversation in the company of their friends.

As always we would like to thank our sponsors and supporters, in particular Dover District Council, Dover Town Council, Thanet Leisure, Rochester's Man of Kent and Adams Printers; also everyone who volunteered to help; and of course all those who turned up and enjoyed themselves, and without whom the festival would not be possible. Thank you all very much and hope to see you again next year.

BEERWORD



Across

1. The top of the milk from West Country city makes a good aperitif (7,5)
6. To hang up, put it down! (8)
7. 007's bowler-hatted adversary does occasional tasks (3,3)
9. Not manual. Wheel it to Macau (9)
12. Kind of grill – about five feet high for me! (3-5)
13. Gas setting in reverse or mix glue inside (6)
14. Waist centre (6)
16. Run out following serious sun hat (8)
18. Master confused mad, mad city (9)
20. Harvey's ale from Southern county (6)
21. Valuable literary island? (8)
22. 19th century consort for Deal pub (6, 6)

Down

1. IPA King's home city (4,2,7)
2. Move slowly in imperial measure (4)
3. Accolade for St. Austell's beer (7)
4. Cram ale mixture into toffee (7)
5. Found home doctor in French wine region (5)
7. Aquatic mammal at Devon brewery (5)
8. Richard on right, in tent, in Midlands brewery town (6,2,5)
10. Top letter near the end is intoxicating (5)
11. Columbus establishes hidden transport (5)
15. Blonde girls' county (5)
16. He doesn't believe Charles in festering state (7)
17. Tool makes Mr. Pitt change law (7)
18. Fabled Greek writer (5)
19. Found emu leading beast of burden (4)

Answers on Page 61

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CHANNEL VIEW

KICK IN THE TEETH

"No such thing as society", Margaret Thatcher famously declared, (or didn't, according to whom you listen), but whether she did or not, it would seem to be a sentiment that finds much resonance with the present Government. Seemingly not content with the Competition Commission's blind-spot over the often malign influence of supermarkets, the decimation of our post offices and the prospect of further village school closures our Government is now adding the humble public house to its list of targets. With staggering irony, the day after the Prime Minister welcomed Lord Goldsmith's report on Britishness and the encouragement of citizenship, his Chancellor did his best to finish off what many of us would consider to be a central feature of that same Britishness.

It is hard to recall a more damaging budget decision. The last few years have been dreadful for the pub trade, and that was before the smoking ban and the unprecedented rise in the price of malted barley and hops, which saw a 10-20 pence rise in the price of a pint over the winter months. Meanwhile supermarkets continue to discount beer to levels far below the pub price. The lobbying from Trade associations and CAMRA cannot have left the Treasury unaware of the industry's problems, but one might well think we had said nothing. In response to Jonathan Neame's criticism of the budget (see National News), the Treasury bluntly retorted that alcohol was 25% more affordable now than a decade

ago – as if alcohol constituted just one market. Anyone who uses pubs will be perfectly well aware that while the price of wine, spirits and supermarket lager may have fallen, in real terms the price of the pint over the bar is as high as anyone can remember.

CAMRA's research shows that currently 57 pubs are closing permanently every month. However, depressing as this is, it may be an underestimate. Some calculations suggest that the true figure might be as high as 27 a week. The 4p a pint rise in duty this year (10 to 20 pence at the bar), together with the 2% above inflation increase written in for the next four years, will inevitably see a further tranche of public houses putting up the shutters, locking the door and closing for good. At best it would seem reckless and a snub to our concerns. One might at least have expected some recognition of our arguments, "I have listened to the representations etc., etc.", or some acknowledgement of the industry's problems. Instead it was settled with just a couple of terse sentences. On the basis that a bottle of supermarket wine, in real terms, is now 45p less than in 1997, he has, with all the finesse of a binge-drunk yob, effectively raised two fingers to our worries, and followed up with a kick in the teeth for good measure.

However, as equally worrying as the duty rise itself, are the reasons behind it. The Chancellor's assertion that it is merely a matter of revenue raising sounds distinctly disingenuous. Media comment, for weeks before the budget,

suggested that the Chancellor was coming under considerable pressure from health campaigners to introduce just such increases. It would not only be conspiracy theorists who might note that within months of the formation of the Alcohol Health Alliance, and its call for a 10% rise in duty, our Government raises duty on wine and spirits by....wait for it, 10%, and beer duty by 13%.

Certainly health lobbyists seem cock-a-hoop. Typical is the somewhat myopic view of Vivienne Nathanson, head of Science and Ethics at the BMA, "It is very important that tax increases on alcohol are part of a larger plan to reduce problem drinking. The evidence tells us that the cheaper and more accessible alcohol is, the more people will drink." Which, of course, is the complete opposite of what we find in Europe where the comparatively cheap alcohol and problem free Mediterranean contrasts with the expensive and restrictive problem drinking countries of the north. Indeed if alcohol is so price sensitive, those seeking intoxication must surely be attracted to the easily available and extensive supply of illegal drugs, now starting to undercut it. While at the moment these remain very much on the margin, the debacle of prohibition in 1920s USA shows how easy it is for mainstream society to be infiltrated by illegality and organised crime.

Getting the health lobby off one's back while finding an additional source of revenue might seem like a smart political move, however, at the other end of the equation lies the traditional local – largely dependent on the wet trade, and without the cushion of food, tourism and the weekend "circuit". The kind of pub which not so long ago

stood at the heart of those very working class communities from which the Labour Party drew much of its support and which, over the years, had hosted political meetings, provided headquarters for election campaigns, and a refuge during industrial disputes. Bitter irony, then, for some of the Party's older supporters, who find that even if they can still afford their traditional pint, there is nowhere to drink it. Meanwhile the supermarkets and large town and city centre bars will barely notice, with the former likely benefiting as the price gap with the on-trade widens. Similarly it does very little to curtail the Government's stated areas of concern - bingers, the under age, and the middle aged wine drinker at home - and everything to promote bootlegging and unregulated drinking as more choose to drink at home or on the streets.

Our forefathers knew a thing or two about alcohol and its problems. After several centuries a regulative formula had been devised which we know as the British public house. It tended to be small, and split into several bars that could be easily monitored. Often family run, the landlord (or landlady) would normally be older rather than younger, while the premises were viewed by the brewers, who owned most of them, and by the licensing justices who regulated them, as a means of selling beer in a responsible and controlled fashion. Perhaps equally important, the off-trade was limited mainly to dedicated off-licences, and there was certainly no selling of discounted canned beer by the case load. If the Government really wants to solve the country's alcohol problems they might care to re-acquaint themselves with the benefits of the traditional pub – just the kind of establishment their present policies seem destined to destroy.

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CIDER BY BUS AND A GREAT DEAL OF WALKING

The beginning of 2008 saw a very busy social calendar for our branch, including a number of beer festivals, a daddlums evening, a cider bus trip, and two Deal walks. The beer festivals and daddlums are dealt with elsewhere: here's a write up on the others.

CIDER BUS TRIP – 16TH FEBRUARY. Following our successful pub bus trip last year we decided to follow up with a cider tour, that is cider as defined by CAMRA as “real cider”.

Breakfast at the Eight Bells, Dover, saw the start of our Trip and the largest gathering of branch members for one of our social events. At 10.00am it was a bit too early for most of us, but one person did manage a liquid breakfast.

It was then off to Canterbury on the 15 service and a pint in Wetherspoons' Thomas Ingoldsby, a short walk from Canterbury bus station, where we were joined by another member, taking our numbers to 19. Wetherspoons is a very good outlet for cider, often having three ciders on tap and more available in bottles.



We then caught a bus to Wingham and the Anchor, the sole remaining pub in the village selling cider, in this case Biddendens Dry, which it sells regularly alongside Fuller's London Pride. The Anchor is a no-frills drinking pub and food is not normally available on a Saturday. However, the landlord offered to put on some simple fare for us – anything with chips!! Another short bus trip took us to the Three Tuns in Staple, where there's always a friendly welcome from the bar staff with their selection of three beers and one cider. Biddenden's Bushells was on offer with Greene King IPA, Gadds No.5 and Greene King Fireside keeping us beer drinkers happy. I found out, during this visit, that the MG Owners club meets there on the first Monday of every month.

The fourth bus of the day took us into Sandwich. As we got onto the bus one of the elderly passengers say to her friend “Oh look, the school children are getting on the bus”, and I realised that the level of verbal noise and enthusiasm had been steadily increasing as the tour has progressed. Sandwich has no pubs selling draught real cider, although the Place Brasserie, on the quay, does serve real cider in bottles, so we called into the Fleur de Lis for a excellent, and particularly scrummy, pint of Gadd's Oatmeal Stout.

The last two legs of our trip were to Deal and then back to Dover. We stopped at the Coach and Horses, Hacklinge, (Weston's Vintage Cider), and then finally the Bohemian on Deal Seafront, with Jonathan's recently increased range of real ales, ciders and perries on offer. One of our number got left behind in Deal, looking for his temporarily missing brother, and had to make his own way back, while another, from Folkestone, apparently turned up at the Richmond later that evening looking "somewhat strange."

Draught cider outlets in our branch area. Regularly available from: The Bohemian, Deal; Blakes, White Horse, Prince Albert and Eight Bells, Dover; Three Horseshoes, Great Mongeham; Coach & Horses, Hacklinge; Three Tuns, Staple; Coastguard, St Margaret's Bay; The Berry, Walmer; and the Anchor, Wingham. Please let us know of any we've missed.

A DEAL PUB CRAWL – 1ST MARCH. This was a relatively simple walk around Deal visiting some of the town's best real ale pubs. We met at Dunkerleys, for a quick pint of St Austell's Tribute, before walking to the Deal Hoy, a great pub if you want somewhere to go for a quiet drink and a chat, read the paper, or browse the web on the PC situated in the bar.



Dunkerleys, Deal

Next it was the Ship, Middle Street, also good for a chat or reading the paper. Here we took over the bar, having arrived before the locals, and partook of Caledonian Deuchar's IPA, Gadds Seasider and No 7 and a couple of others which I can't remember. It was then back along the seafront to the Bohemian to finish off with the wide variety of beers, ciders and perries they have on offer.

A DEAL & WALMER SEAFRONT STRAGGLE – 15TH MARCH. For the second, and more lengthy, instalment of the Deal Pub Walks, a group of dedicated real ale drinkers met up again at Dunkerley's. With pints of Tribute, from St Austell's all round, we sat inside, in the comfortable lounge, and outside, basking in glorious spring sunshine, planning future walks and other social events.



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Listed in the 2008 CAMRA Good Beer Guide

The Port Arms, Deal



The Kings Head, Deal



Then a very short walk to the next two pubs, the Port Arms and King's Head; some to one and some to the other, and some inside and some outside – hence the title of this article. A mix of beers were available: from the King's Head Master Brew, Spitfire, London Pride and a good pint of Harvey's Sussex Best Bitter; and at the Port Arms Spitfire again and Greene King Abbot. Next to the Lord Clyde and Lord Nelson. Unfortunately both pubs were serving indifferent pints, of respectively Master Brew and Bass, so we quickly moved on. Far better at the Stag, where we were treated to decent pints of Greene King IPA and Bass while watching England beat Ireland.

The final stop of the day, not quite on the sea front, was a return to the Berry. Here the beers included Elgoods Original, Harvey's Sussex Best Bitter and Gale's HSB, plus now, as we mention elsewhere, Weston's Old Rosie.

Officially, this was the end of the event, however three of us headed in the direction of the Three Horseshoes, Great Mongeham, where Alison, the landlady, was having a bit of a bash to celebrate her 40th birthday.

A POSSIBLE FUTURE EVENT. We're in discussions with Swale branch about organising a pub crawl in their area. Nothing firmed up as yet but we would like an idea of numbers. If you're interested please mail our branch's Social Secretary at pubs.officer@camra-dds.org.uk or telephone 07518 949587.

KEEPING IN TOUCH. Remember that the branch's website, www.camra-dds.org.uk, is kept up-to-date with events in our area. So check it regularly to find out what is going on. There is also a diary page of the events available on the website, which can be downloaded and printed off.

Tony Wells



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THE HISTORY OF CRABBLE MILL

A look at one of Dover's historic buildings

This May sees the fourth annual Crabble Mill Beer Festival, now an established event in Dover's social calendar and a proven success.

The current building dates from the time of the Napoleonic Wars but there was probably a mill on the site at least as early as the 13th Century, records stating that in 1227 Henry III gave to the Abbot of St Radigund "the site of the mill called Crabberhole" from which he received an annual rent of twenty shillings. Over the years ownership changed several times. Records suggest that it, or a subsequent structure, was burnt down in 1664, but apparently soon rebuilt, and by the end of the 18th Century it was in the hands of the Pilcher family, who also owned Kearsney Corn Mill. At that time it was a two storey building with a breastshot wheel capable of driving two pairs of mill stones, and according to an insurance policy of 1790 was valued at £1,200 plus £700 for utensils and trade.

Things changed radically with the coming to power of Napoleon and the prospect of a French invasion. Thousands of troops were drafted into the area, and to feed them, the Army's Victualling Dept. directed that a number of large commercial flour mills should be built along the Dour and subsidised local millers to construct them. As well as Crabble Mill the new mills included Lower Buckland Mill, Stembrook Mill, Charlton Mill and Dover Town Mill. The new six storey mill was built alongside the old mill, which was subsequently demolished, and constructed largely of cheap Baltic timber, with a three storey brick base. Its breastshot wheel was seven feet across, eighteen feet in diameter and contained 68 paddles, and drove five pairs of grindstones. It contained the latest automation, and the miller had no need to handle the product between the loading of the grain into hoppers at the top and bagging up of flour at the bottom. This style of milling cut production costs by up to 50%, and for most of the time Crabble Mill was staffed by just three people, two at the mill and one to make deliveries of flour, although at busy times village girls were employed to assist, and acquired the name "Mill Dollies". However the developments of the industrial revolution were not without risk, and while, with some cause, we currently complain about the excesses of health and safety, the absence of regulation had its own costs. Records of the early 19th century describe how one of the millers, John Croft, lost two sons in accidents at the mill; one fell into the 9ft deep cloth-mill hopper and was smothered, while the other four years later became entangled in the machinery and was crushed. A less tragic accident occurred in 1817 when a farmer's servant, unloading a wagon of wheat, was drawn up to the top of the mill by his thumb after it was caught by the hoist rope. Apparently both thumb and man emerged unscathed.

In 1842 John Webb Pilcher was declared bankrupt and ownership passed to the Mannering family who had bought the Dover Town Mill in 1836 and subsequently

bought Lower Buckland Mill in 1865. Once again technological developments brought about changes and late in the 19th Century the Mannerings installed a steam beam engine, and a turbine to replace the water wheel at Lower Buckland. So dramatic was the increase in production that they could supply all their customers from the one mill and in 1890 the other mills including Crabble were closed. Buckland continued until 1957 when the Mannerings business ceased. However, although not working, Crabble Mill was not demolished or dismantled and remained very much as it was until by 1972, after the wear of many years, it became unsafe and needed £50,000 for restoration. Its ownership passed to the Cleary Foundation and by the following year was back in full working order. The then Dover Corporation agreed to lease the mill and accept responsibility for its maintenance but twenty years later it was again declared unsafe with £160,000 of essential repairs needed. It was agreed that Dover District Council, who had succeeded the Corporation as lessees in 1974, should relinquish the lease, and in 1988 it was passed to the Crabble Mill Trust on July 26th, with funding from English Heritage, the Cleary Foundation and Dover District Council. Subsequently it re-opened for stoneground flour production at Easter 1990, one of the few automated water-powered mills to survive the industrial revolution and unique in Kent.

Martin Atkins
(with thanks to John Roy)



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THE BERRY

Walmer

Deal, Dover, Sandwich & District Pub of the Year 2008

As usual choosing the pub of the year was a close run affair. The short-listed finalists were, in alphabetical order, The Berry, Walmer; The Coastguard, St Margaret's Bay; The Crown Inn, Finglesham; Fleur de Lis, Sandwich; and the White Horse, Dover. By a short head The Berry emerged the winner, but our congratulations also go to the other four pubs that made it into the final selection – not an easy feat in itself. We also extend our heart-felt thanks to the six judges who took part in the POTY selection process.



"Exciting news, I've sorted the prices on the till out." These were the words uttered by Chris Barnes, the Berry's landlord, to one of his barmaids shortly after we had told him the good news. Initially he looked somewhat bemused at the announcement: "I don't know what to say!" were his first words. However, a certain amount of pride soon appeared, and that pride is well-deserved.

Chris took over the pub just over three years ago, since when he has become a regular GBG entry, as well as a previous Pub of the Year candidate, before winning the award this year, and what a successful year it has been! As well as the above award, he has just celebrated serving his 200th different real ale, and in February, he held his first beer festival, as a result of which, he introduced real cider as standard.

His regular beer is Harvey's Sussex Best Bitter, while the three other hand-pumps serve beer that Chris has selected based on his own taste and knowing what his customers like. Before taking over The Berry just over three years ago, Chris worked as an assistant manager at the Prince of Wales, near Hampton Court. A Greene King pub, he commented that the training offered by the brewery on real ale was very good.

Chris is a Norwich City supporter and it appears there is a relatively large underground movement of Canaries supporters in the Deal area, including the landlord of The Bohemian. (Is a Canaries supporter called a "perch"?) His partner, Harriet, and mother and father, Malcolm and Bev, regularly help out behind the bar. We briefly talked about the political side of running a pub. On the smoking ban, he has seen an upturn in his business since it came into effect, but we didn't discuss his thoughts on the recent tax rise on beer as he suspected his comments would have

been unprintable.

The Berry is an unpretentious pub just off the seafront in Walmer. There is a large, carpeted, well-lit room with bar, darts board, television, and a selection of games including devil among the tailers, shut the box and shove ha'penny. At the back there is a smaller room with a pool table, which opens on to a small, decked area.

Downstairs is a function room, which can be hired, and in which we've held a number of Branch meetings. It provided the venue for Chris's first real ale festival on Saturday February 23rd. There was an excellent selection of 11 beers and 2 ciders, all at £2.50. This included the last cask of Harveys seasonal beer "Kiss". A simple ploughman's and soup were available if you got peckish, and if the conversation got boring, the rugby was on offer upstairs. Out in the pub's small car park was an exhibition of bubble cars. As a result of his success with cider at the festival, Chris has now put Old Rosie on permanently.

Having won branch pub of the year the pub will be put forward as a candidate for East Kent Pub of the Year. Meanwhile we wish Chris well in his endeavours of adding further quality real ale to Walmer and Deal. We will be arranging an awards evening at The Berry sometime in the near future, so watch out for an announcement on the branch's website: www.camra-dds.org.uk.

Tony Wells

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June

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Monday 9th - Wine and cheese tasting
Thursday 12th - Thai Night
Sunday 15th - Fathers Day
Monday 23rd - Charity Quiz Night
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BROOMFIELD ORCHARD

Roger Marples looks at East Kent's
new cider producer

A new cider producer in East Kent is Broomfield Orchard at Herne, but, if I may be permitted to digress a little, before I write about this excellent producer, I would draw the reader's attention to a beer house of exceptional character, which is situated nearby.

The Butcher's Arms is located in the village centre at Herne, on the southern outskirts of Herne Bay. There is a convenient, and frequent, bus service 4/6, from and to Canterbury, which stops a few paces away from the Butcher's Arms. There is only space for 12 people to be seated, no noise pollution, and by virtue of the fact of its size, a necessity to converse with the other customers. The name of this establishment derives from its former use as a butcher's shop. Two chopping blocks serve for tables. Martin, the genial and individualistic landlord, is always on hand to provide the appropriate spur, on the very rare occasion that the conversation might flag. He is almost fanatical about the quality of his beer. Dark Star Brewery, Hop-head is usually available with, understandably, a large following, and Harvey's Sussex Bitter is also on sale as is Fuller's ESB. For those who have not driven to the Butcher's, JW Lees, Harvest ale might be of interest. In short, for a rare pub of character you will have to go a long way to beat the Butcher's.

On leaving the Butcher's Arms, turn right and proceed along the road for just under a mile, and you will find, on the right Broomfield Orchard. Robert Riley is proprietor, and he and his wife sell their apples, of many different varieties, apple juice, and cider. They have been producing cider for about two years, and while Robert admits to not being a drinker, he is determined to perfect his cider, and has undertaken much research to this end. Each year, they produce 10,000 litres (if you will excuse this foreign measurement) from their home grown apples, with apple juice the biggest seller. Three types of cider are produced – sweet, medium and dry. The medium is the most popular, but I have tasted all three types and can recommend them all. The cider is at present not pasteurized, and is stored initially in 50 litre containers. It is then broken down into 30, and then 15 litre containers before being put into small casks ready for selling. Sales are by plastic bottle, and one is encouraged to taste before purchasing. Opening times are limited, and vary according to the time of the year, so it's best to telephone the orchard first before visiting. The owners are very friendly, and will be only too pleased to help.

It is very encouraging to see a new cider producer in this traditional cider producing county, and it is incumbent on us to see that all assistance is given to the Rileys to guarantee its success.

The address is Broomfield Orchard, Broomfield Road, Herne, Herne Bay 01227 362279



HOW TO SPOT A DRUNK

Before last winter's "Festive Season" the Home Office issued the police with a set of guidelines to enable them to identify a drunk, the specific objective of which is "to present such compelling physical evidence of the person's level of intoxication that it would be impossible for a court to accept that the person who conducts the sale did not know of this fact".

Evidence police have been told to look for includes:

A noticeable change in behaviour: Bad tempered, aggressive - Offensive language - Loud - Boisterous or disorderly - Physically violent - Incoherence - Slurring, or making mistakes in speech - Argumentative.

A lack of judgment: Being careless with money - Annoying other persons - Inappropriate sexual behaviour - Drinking quickly or competitively ('down in one')

Clumsiness & loss of coordination: Swaying - Staggering - Difficulty with walking - Falling down - Bumping into furniture - Spilling drinks - Difficulty in picking up change - Fumbling for cigarettes, or other items

Decreased alertness: Drowsiness, dozing or sleeping - Rambling conversation - Loss of train of thought - Difficulty in paying attention - Not understanding what is said - Glassy eyes - Lack of focus.

Appearance: Unkempt - Dishevelled

Whether or not the police were also to be issued with tick box forms so as to enable them to collate the various signs of drunkenness was not stated, but one can't help the facetious thought that any policeman who observes all the signs will be able to claim an "I-Spy a Drunk Badge" from Big Chief I-Spy.

Unsurprisingly, the guidelines received short shrift from readers of *The Publican* when the magazine published them. Several landlords said they and their customers at first thought it was a joke e-mail or an early April Fool's, and others suggested that nearly all the characteristics could be observed in one or other of their customers before they'd had a drink, and might also apply to not a few MPs and other dignitaries.

One ex-policeman, now a licensee, said normal police practice relied on just unsteadiness on the feet, slurring words, eyes fixed and dilated, and the smell of intoxicating liquor. No one thought the guidelines of any assistance and many that it was a fine example of more time wasted at the taxpayers' expense.

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THE NAVY LARK

A LOOK BACK AT
THE BEERY BOATERS'
1984 TRIP

Having found in 1983 that nine people in a 56ft boat was a bit too much like living in a sardine tin and desiring to get away from a diet of Tetley, Tetley and Tetley then prevalent in Yorkshire, we decided for the 1984 trip to cross the Pennines to Middlewich, hire a larger boat and undertake the Cheshire Ring. Contrary to the pontifications of some “more experienced private boat owners” in the waterways magazines, rings need not encourage thrashing along too fast, muttering, “Can’t stop! Got to do the Ring!” With sensible advance planning, and making best use of the hours of daylight a ring can be easily tackled. Over the next couple of decades we used Middlewich Narrowboats several times, as we did also our boat for this trip, the 70ft “Sycamore”. A former working boat its engine was in front of the steerer’s position, instead of underneath as normal, and to reach the tiller you had to go through the engine room. The weed hatch was under the exhaust, which needed to cool before “baggus plasticatus” and other debris could be removed from the prop, and the cover was held on with twelve bolts instead of a clamp. But the boat had few other vices, apart from being rather heavy on the steering.



Our crew of ten met at the Boar’s Head, by the canal, a fairly regular GBG entry at the time, with Robinson’s beers on electric pump, and apart from myself (Hon. Commodore), comprised Ray Crane, Mike and Dave Green (Skipper), Phil Simpson, Dave Underdown, Dave Routh, Andy Wells, Roger (Dodger) Millbourne and Jeff Waller. In addition Roger Corbett and Roger Marples came to see us off – as well as some of our duty-free spirits. After suitable refreshment we loaded up at the boatyard and set off for our first evening’s destination, Wheelock, tackling the ring in an anti-clockwise direction. Originally we had planned to go clockwise, deviating from the normal route via the Anderton Lift, the Weaver and the Manchester Ship Canal, but the Anderton Lift having just been declared unsafe (we didn’t use it until 2006), we settled on the opposite, reasoning that as the guide books also went clockwise there would be less chance of being held up by boats in front. In the event, we saw very few other boats on the move at all.

Unfortunately, Hon. Commodore cannot comment much upon either Wheelock, or the rest of the day. Having already consumed several pints of beer and a few rums,

I had got off to work locks when I was confronted by Roger Marples leaning out of Sycamore's centre hatch clutching a bottle of rum. The ensuing substantial tot I downed in one when shouted at by the Skipper to stop idling and set the lock, and a subsequent photograph showed the Commodore being dragged back on board by his feet. I am informed that the rest of the crew spent the evening drinking Bod-dington's at the Commercial Hotel, while the fitter called out to sort out a problem with the water pump later declared he thought the boat to be haunted on hearing the groaning coming from my bunk.

Next morning, Sunday we made our normal 6am start and our first acquaintance with 'Heartbreak Hill', the 7 mile flight of 26 locks to Hardings Wood Junction, most of which are neither close enough together to make lock-wheeling easy, nor far enough apart for a decent cruise. Reaching Hardings Wood, well before opening time, we wandered up the Congleton Road to the village of Butts Lane, where, wait-

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ing for the pub to open, we were hailed from the open window of the Butts Lane Working Man's Club. We were made to feel very welcome, and drank Wilson's, settling ourselves at a couple of out of the way tables, until various odd remarks intimated to us that they were used for Sunday dominoes. Needless to say, we moved. One of our number also found that the toilet cubicles were not equipped with individual rolls of paper, but one's ration had to be collected first from a big roll on the wall. I'm afraid that we let him stew for a while before hurling some paper over the top of the door!

In the afternoon, we joined the Macclesfield Canal, turning back across the Trent and Mersey by Red Bull Aqueduct, and headed towards Congleton, on the way passing the now closed Bird in Hand at Kents Green, where beer was brought from the cellar in a jug. In 1984 we knew nothing about it or we might have gone there for lunch, although we did manage to visit it the following year. At the end of the afternoon we moored just past Congleton and walked half a mile to the Good Beer Guide listed Robin Hood at Buglawton, a Marston's pub where we enjoyed good food, and a good evening, enhanced by not leaving until 1am.

Next morning saw our usual early start, and we were soon up the 12 Bosley Locks and passed Macclesfield to moor at Bollington aqueduct where a steep flight of steps leads down 60ft to street level. The Holly Bush (Robinson's) was just opening its doors as we arrived, and we had a couple there before carrying on up the hill to, the Spinner's Arms (Boddington's). At the time all of Bollington's then 19 pubs sold real ale. However, we stuck to the Spinner's, and regaled ourselves with steamed black pudding and some very tasty beer. In the afternoon we covered the easy eight lock-free miles to the junction with the Peak Forest Canal where we moored opposite the British Waterways yard at Marple Junction. The evening saw visits to the Pineapple (Robinson's), the Bowling Green and Jolly Sailor (both Wilson's), and then on a strange whim of Ray's (he said that he had never tasted Chester's beer), and after what seemed like a ten mile trek, the Otters Pool. And when we got there the beer definitely wasn't worth the hike! We swallowed up quickly and trudged back to the Bowling Green.

Tuesday started by taking Sycamore down Marple's 16 lock flight at the beginning of the 8 mile Lower Peak Forest Canal, across the very scenic river Goyt by way of the Marple Aqueduct with its parallel railway viaduct and through two short tunnels, Hyde Bank and Woodley, until with the canal becoming ever less rural we eventually found ourselves ensnared in the industrial tentacles of Hyde. At Dukinfield Junction we turned left onto the Ashton Canal, with the then derelict Huddersfield Narrow to our right, and 2½ miles more brought us to Fairfield Junction and a prop-full of rubbish and the subsequent fun of trying to get it off. Here the main line of the Ashton Canal bears left while the disused 4½ Hollinwood Arm used to bear right to the Rochdale Canal. We took on water and I bought a BWB anti-vandal key from the resident lock keeper. The canal from here down to Manchester has the reputation of being the most hooligan-infested in Great Britain, with all the lock paddles secured by handcuff type locks – although having used it several times in the past 23 years I've never seen any trouble. However, I wouldn't fancy mooring here overnight. Having done our own topping up – Wilson's beer at the Commercial Hotel in Droylsden – we descended the 18 locks, and moored for the evening in Dale

St. Basin, the BWB key I had just bought, added to the boat's own saving us a lot of time. Our first call was the delightfully dilapidated Coach and Horses, a free house opposite Piccadilly Station, now unfortunately demolished after a long fight to keep it open. We drank Timothy Taylor's and then went to the Grey Horse in Portland Street for Hydes, followed by more Hydes at the Jolly Angler in Ducie Street, my first visit to a pub which has subsequently become a favourite watering hole.

On the Wednesday morning we had an enforced lay-in as we needed a special licence before proceeding down the then privately owned Rochdale Canal. When we did set off we found the canal dry between the first and second locks and had to



let in water from the basin, after which for the rest of the descent it poured over the tops of the gates as well as leaking through them copiously. There were also problems ashore where in some places there was no access between the Manchester streets and the towpath other than dropping down an eight foot wall. Anyway, we soon arrived at the bottom of the locks where we joined the Bridgewater Canal, and with plenty of time in hand, decided



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to go a few miles up the Leigh Arm to see the Barton Swing Aqueduct, or “tank” which carries the Bridgewater Canal over the Manchester Ship Canal.

However the winding hole beyond, where we planned to turn round, was occupied by two Leeds and Liverpool Canal Short Boats, so, after a few apposite words, Dave set off with Sycamore to find the next place to turn while the rest of us went for a closer look at the “Tank”. Before Dave could return the keepers of the aqueduct arrived, and explained that



Crossing the Barton Swing Aqueduct

a couple of Royal Navy minesweepers were due to pass up the Manchester Ship Canal shortly and that the aqueduct needed to be open. We crowded into the control cabin and watched them operate the ornate Victorian brass levers. Guillotine gates descended to seal off both ends of the aqueduct trough. Then, with the “tank” still full of water, it swung on its central pillar until parallel to the Ship Canal: we were now marooned! No one seemed to know when “shortly” was, but while waiting, the canal staff told us an interesting story the accuracy of which I cannot verify. The Anderton Lift, which connects the Trent and Mersey with the Weaver, had been in the charge of an elderly chap who was often to be found in the nearby Stanley Arms. Unexpected arrivals might therefore find a certain delay, and the BWB began receiving complaints from the more impatient. Eventually he was moved elsewhere and replaced by a younger operative, who although keen and efficient “buggered up the lift!” Whilst sorting out the problems, structural defects were discovered, and the Anderton Lift was closed for major repairs in 1984 and did not re-open until the next millennium.

If there's a moral here, it's “take your time on the canals!”, which is what we had to do, because when Sycamore had returned there was still no sign of any minesweepers. Further customary comments from the Skipper and we trudged off to the King's Head, in the shadow of the aqueduct, and the odd pint or three of Boddington's. The minesweepers eventually arrived about mid-afternoon, looking as if they could have passed under the aqueduct without it being opened, and we were able to get back to the main line of the Bridgewater Canal. We stopped for the evening at Sale and an excellent choice it proved, firstly at the Railway (Robinson's) just across from the canal and subsequently at the

A Royal Navy Minesweeper on the Manchester Ship Canal



Legh Arms (Holt's), Sale Moor, about ½ mile from our mooring. They were both in the 1984 Good Beer Guide and are still there in the 2008.



Thursday lunchtime we spent at Lymm. The Golden Fleece by Lymm Bridge we established, after peering through the windows and examining empty casks in the yard, sold no real ale so we adjourned to the Spread Eagle for some excellent Lee's ales, followed by equally pleasant Hyde's beers at the Bulls Head. Departing Lymm at about 3.30pm we cruised eight miles to Moore where we tied up within sight of the suspicious-looking Scientific Research Estab-

lishment at Daresbury. A short track and a railway footbridge brought us to the Red Lion, a pleasant village pub with good food and good beer, especially pleasing as it was Greenall Whitley, not the most sought-after of ales. Some of the party later went to the Ring o' Bells in Daresbury, also Greenall Whitley and, they affirmed, also good.

In 1984 the Anderton Lift was closed and out of use



Friday was our last full day and also Dave Underdown's birthday, which we decided to celebrate properly later on. A couple of miles from our overnight mooring, we turned left back onto the Trent & Mersey, leaving the Bridgewater Canal to continue the five miles to Run-corn, but where formerly a paired flight of 10 wide locks led down to the Manchester Ship Canal and the River Weaver.

Through the 1239yd Preston Brook Tunnel and Dutton Stop Lock, and then for about five miles alongside and above the River Weaver a couple of hundred yards to the right. For lunch we tied up at the bottom of the Stanley Arms canalside garden at Anderton, from the top of which there are excellent views of the Lift, the River Weaver and the ICI chemical works, still in operation then, on the far side. We sat outside in the sunny weather, drinking Greenall Whitley beer and trying our hands at the pub's putting green.

Underway again we started Dave's birthday celebrations. The cook produced a trifle which refused to set on account of the amount of alcohol in it, and Ray discovered a bottle of rum. These were disposed of as we made back towards Middlewich, mooring near the back entrance to the Newton Brewery pub, to which in due course we retired for the evening, to sample Marston's beer. Dave Underdown and Mike Green were early casualties and after propping each other up for a while

staggered back to the boat, while the rest of us supped on until closing time, when we went for fish and chips. Ray got involved in conversation with an itinerant folk musician called "Trampas" and invited him back to the boat, where more spirits were produced, also a penny whistle from the pocket of Trampas and a mouth organ from my locker. Dave and Mike revived and came to join the fun, but the Skipper retired to his



bunk, and when, a little later, Trampas suggested that he go off and fetch his clarinet, a loud voice from the Skipper's bunk suggested where the instrument might be put if it appeared on board! We decided that we'd better put an end to the party.

Saturday morning we cleaned the boat, took it up the remaining three locks and handed it back to the boatyard, and after loading our various transports and the usual group photographs went our diverse ways. The Dover group of eight, packed into Dave Green's Land Rover and Dodger's car, for an evening in Stamford and bed and breakfast and proper night's sleep at the Crown Hotel.

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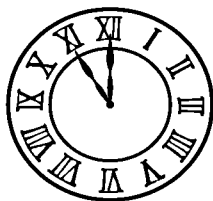
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LAST KNOCKINGS

To the great distress of its owners InBev, Young's has decided to drop Stella Artois in favour of a selection of other lagers which they feel have a more 'premium' image, and while this may be of no more interest to the average real ale drinker than the finer points of competition tiddlywinks, the accompanying rhetoric is illuminating. Quoted in *The Publican*, Young's retail director Patrick Dardis said the premiumisation drive was an effort to keep the company ahead of the game in a changing market, meeting "the needs of customers who are visiting Young's pubs for the quality of the service, the offering and the overall experience." Others, however, apparently feel Stella to be quite sufficiently 'premium'. One commented enthusiastically on "the stunning new font, the chalice glassware and.....cinema style adverts," while another, "a humble student", as part of his degree was investigating "life cycles of brands, social impacts, leased/managed pricing, supermarket pricing, the shift in drinking patterns, smoking ban impacts, etc." All of which leaves the humble real ale drinker wondering where, amongst all this branding and marketing gobbledygook, might he find any mention of taste.

Luckily he or she need look no further than our local pubs, which last winter provided some particularly fine examples of dark ales. In Folkestone, Chambers had been offering Gadds 5.6% Dogbolter for much of the year, but were joined around Christmas by Bateman's very tasty Salem Porter (4.7% ABV) appearing at least twice at the British Lion, followed in mid January by the Guildhall selling the superb Adnams Old (4.1% ABV). The same beer also appeared several times at the Bohemian in Deal, while in Walmer the Berry has been taking a firkin of Harvey's Old every week. In Dover at the Louis Armstrong, Gadds Dark Mild went down very well in November, and at the White Horse among a number of dark beers the ginger flavoured Dark Star Winter Meltdown re-appeared regularly. Nelson's Purser's Pussy Porter returned again and again by popular demand at the Eagle, which also shifted a barrel or two of Hart Brewery's Val Addiction Stout. Meanwhile Blakes and the Royal Cinque Ports Yacht Club continue to run Crown Imperial Stout as a standard. In February, as if not content with Dogbolter and the extra strong stout that we saw at the White Cliffs Festival, Eddie Gadd came up with a superb Oatmeal Stout. Among other outlets it was available at the Fleur de Lis in Sandwich and the RCPYC beer festival.

Recently, in a radio talk, celebrated playwright, Alan Bennett, commentated on the benefits of alcohol in stimulating creativity. In his case not a lot though, a

quarter bottle of spirits would do, far less he said than might be consumed by his contemporaries. Already, however, I hear the tut tutting from officialdom and the health brigade. A quarter bottle of spirits equates to eight units of alcohol, and has not the Government itself declared eight units of alcohol to be the threshold of binge drinking? Of course, Alan Bennett is not the only creative spirit to resort to the bottle, or other stimulant or intoxicant. The connection between writers and alcohol is well documented, while in Paris smoking was as essential to the Left Bank café society of Sartre and Beckett as was their wine, coffee or brandy. It may be unpalatable to those who concern themselves with our health, but without tobacco and drink our society's culture might well be much the poorer.

Recently in France a case was won against a newspaper article on wine because it carried no health warning. It was brought by representatives of a teetotal organisation and the court took the view that because the piece was of an adulatory nature it was covered by the law applying to adverts which requires a health warning to be included. On the basis that what happens in one part of Europe is likely to appear elsewhere the implications are disturbing. Are we to expect that any piece of writing will have to be analysed to establish whether or not its content is deemed to be insufficiently critical, whereupon a health warning will be required – that praising a motor car would also require reference to its fatal capabilities or a glowing report on a seaside resort would need to remind its readers of the risk of drowning?

This probably isn't the right place to bemoan the loss of a non-real ale but I for one will miss the passing of English Ale, which apparently has now ceased production. At one time pub shelves would be stacked with a selection of bottled ales: the brewer's own selection of pale, light, brown, stout, strong bitter, etc, the national brands, such as Guinness, Mackeson or Double Diamond, and if you were lucky a bottle conditioned brew, most commonly White Shield Worthington. Normal measure being half pints, they would often be mixed with a half pint of draught beer – e. g. brown and mild, light and bitter. Now the shelves bulge with bottled lagers, alcopops and fruit juices, and, depending on the tastes of a pub's older customers, you might just about find light ale or brown ale, and until recently English Ale. A low sugar brew suitable for diabetics, the story goes that it was originally created by Fremains for one of the brewing family members who was himself diabetic. At 5.4% ABV it was mid brown in colour, full bodied with a nutty flavour, and, because most of the sugar had been brewed out, without the cloyness that often accompanies stronger ales. As I said it wasn't bottle conditioned but to my taste held itself very well against most other beers, real or otherwise, and was a lot more palatable than certain reals that I could, but won't, mention.

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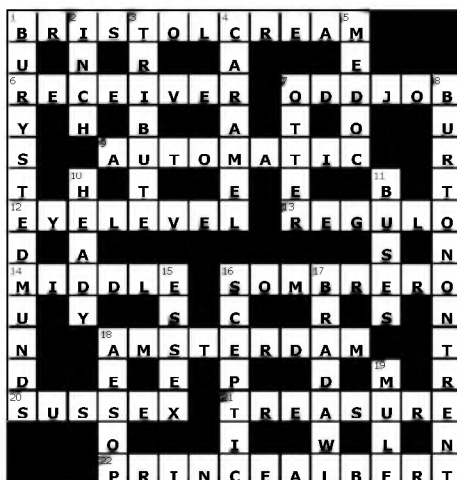
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And Finally.....

BEWARE OF 'SEXY' STOUT.

The spirit of Victorian prudishness is alive and well at the anti-drinking group 'Alcohol Concern'. The organisation reported the Wye Valley Brewery in Herefordshire to the Portman Group on the grounds that labels and pumpclips for Dorothy Goodbody's Wholesome Stout were "sexually suggestive" and "explicit". The Dorothy Goodbody image is a cartoon character in the style of the curvy blondes that American airmen would paint on their planes in World War Two.

The Portman Group, the brewing industry watchdog that oversees promotions for alcohol, considered the complaint. It ruled that the brewery had not crossed the line from acceptable to irresponsible marketing. A spokesman said the complainants had "let their imagination get the better of them".

Wye Valley Brewery said it was "delighted" with the decision and that the Dorothy Goodbody brand was intended to be a light-hearted image capturing the "spirit of 1950s rural Herefordshire". Vernon Amor, managing director, said he was "surprised" that a complaint had been made. He added: "If you were to ban Dorothy Goodbody, where would it end? Next thing you know there would be a ban on all the Carry On films and British seaside postcards." Oooo errr, bottoms up everyone!

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