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**CAMPAIGN
FOR
REAL ALE**

**Issue 43
Spring
2010**

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

CHANNEL DRAUGHT



INSIDE

UNSPOILT PUBS

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goes in search of
the pubs
untouched by
time
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SHEPHERD NEAME'S PILOT BREWERY

**The Faversham
microbrewery
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PICK OF THE CROP

**Chris Barnes and The Berry take Pub of the Year
for the third time in a row**



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CHANNEL DRAUGHT

ISSUE 43
Spring 2010

Welcome to the Channel Draught Spring Edition 2010.

By the time you read this the government of the country for the next four or five years will have been established.....or, in view of the closeness of the major contenders, quite possibly not. However, whether we end up with a clear winner, a coalition, or irreconcilable disagreements and the prospect of a second election before the year is out, our particular concern will be the impact on real ale and pubs, and, as we point out elsewhere in this issue, at the moment that remains very much an unknown quantity.

At least, at the time of writing, interest in real ale continues to grow, while the spate of pub closures appears to have abated, and we have even gained a new one, the Kittiwake at Whitfield, due to open as we go to print. Although, hard pressed licensees will hardly be viewing the prospect of imminent government spending cuts and tax increases with equanimity. With duty on beer having already risen substantially in recent years, the price of a pint in the pub is already well out into uncharted waters. If the local is not to be priced out of existence, whoever ends up in Downing Street needs to adopt a vigorous strategy of support.

As well as all the regular items, this edition includes a brief look at Dover pubs in the 1950s, some thoughts on the origin of 'painting the town red', a summery of this year's White Cliffs Festival of Winter Ale, and Roger Marples' visits to Shep's microbrewery and some of the country's more traditional pubs.

Martin Atkins

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EVENTS DIARY

| | |
|-----------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Mon 16 May | Branch Meeting – Charity Inn , Woodnesborough. |
| Sat 22 May | Walk – Upstreet to East Stourmouth. Meet Canterbury Bus Station 11am. |
| Wed 26 – Mon 31 May | Beer Festival – New Inn , Havelock St., Canterbury* |
| Fri 28 & Sat 29 May | 6th Crabble Corn Mill Festival (see page 11)* |
| Fri 28 - Mon 31 May | Beer Festival – Haywain , Bramling* |
| Fri 28 - Mon 31 May | Beer Festival - Rose Inn , Wickhambreaux* |
| Fri 4 – Sun 6 June | Barham Beer Festival – Jackdaw , Denton & Cumberland , Barham * |
| Sat 5 June | Pub of the Year presentation – Berry , Walmer. 3pm. |
| Sat 12 June | K & ESR Beer Festival , Tenterden |
| Mon 21 Jun | Branch Meeting – Coastguard , St. Margaret's Bay. |
| Sat 26 Jun | Evening ramble – Wingham to Preston. Meet Anchor 5.45pm |
| Tue 6 July | Evening of Daddlums & Morris Dancing – Louis Armstrong , Dover. |
| Sat 17 July | Walk – Hacklinge to Mongeham. Meet Coach & Horses 11.20am |
| Mon 19 July | Branch Meeting – Black Pig , Barnsole. |
| Thur 22 – Sat 24 July | Kent Beer Festival – Nackington |
| Mon 16 Aug | Branch Meeting – Kings Head , Kingsdown. |

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 rural rambles & pub strolls, please email john.pitcher@ic24.net or call 01304 214153.

Events marked * are not organised by CAMRA



Anger over Duty rises

Alistair Darling's March budget brought dismay and anger to beer drinkers and publicans. In line with the formula set out at his first budget in 2008, duty on beer, wine and spirits was raised by 5% – 2% above the level of inflation. While the Treasury said this would mean an increase of just 2 pence a pint, the industry pointed out this was based on wholesale prices, and that a typical pub pint would rise by 8.2 pence. CAMRA calculated it could be anything up to 20 pence. An even heavier increase on cider was abandoned owing to the Election, although in due course might still be applied. And, as a further blow, the 2% above inflation rise was extended for two more years to 2015. These increases are in addition to the 8% duty increase – imposed initially to compensate for the VAT drop to 15% in late 2008 – that accompanied the return of VAT to 17.5% in January.

Responding to the budget, the British Beer and Pub Association pointed out that a record 2,365 pubs had closed in 2009, and that while there had recently been signs of improvement, the rises, particularly the extension of the 2% escalator for two more years, will put hundreds more pubs and thousands more jobs at risk: "The Chancellor's claims that this is a budget for investment and growth are hollow," said Chief Executive, Brigid Simmonds. A view that was echoed by Ted Tuppen, boss of pubco Enterprise, who contrasted the £160m generated from the duty rises, with the £4.3m aid for pubs announced the previous week (see National News). "I think it perhaps noteworthy that after thirteen years in government with three months to go to an election they appoint a minister for pubs," he said – "a late conversion" that "just looks a hollow announcement".

For CAMRA, with the ink on the Government's recently announced pub package barely dry, Mike Benner commented: "CAMRA is totally at a loss in understanding how a government that recognises the community value of pubs can impose such draconian beer duty increases. Today's duty increases have stamped down on the survival hopes of community pubs across the UK. The budget is a charter for large supermarkets who irresponsibly promote alcohol as a loss leader at the expense of our nation's community pubs, real ale and responsible pub goers."

Locally, views were equally robust. In Dover, where over a dozen pubs (more than a quarter of the total) have closed since the Millennium, Pater Garstin of Blakes, speaking to the *Dover Express*, said that during his almost five years running the pub the government had done nothing but harm to the trade. He felt that selling alcohol below cost should be illegal, and commented: "It seems every action the government takes to try and curb the misuse of alcohol does nothing to curb the sale of cheap booze, but does everything to disadvantage controlled venues where people can come and have a drink under the watchful eye of a landlord."

Similar views came from Richard Munden of the Chequer at Ash. "Unfortunately beer prices are going to have to go up. We are a small village pub," he said, "and we can't afford to take these losses. The suppliers will pass it on to us and the bottom line is it goes to the customer's pocket. I personally believe binge drinking has nothing to do with pubs. That comes from the cheap alcohol from supermarkets."

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The Local News

Contributors - Martin Atkins, The McIlroys, Roger Marples, John Pitcher, Tony Wells, Jim Green and Mike Sutcliffe etc.

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

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

channel.draught@camra-dds.org.uk

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

DOVER

White Horse, St. James St: After a few turbulent months, things appear to have settled down at Dover's oldest pub. The start of March saw us say farewell to Jim and Jo who had run the place since Jill and Jack's departure in the winter, and welcome Mandy Richards, from the Park Inn, who has taken on the lease, and Jeanette Harper, who will be looking after the pub's day-to-day management. Jeanette, whose bar experience, started with the Louis Armstrong, some 22 years ago, is convinced that the move was a good idea, knowing the White Horse's good reputation, the number of loyal locals and the pub's business potential. Real ales will be constantly changing, although Landlord is a regular and Loddon's Ferryman's Gold available more often than not. When asked how the real ales are

chosen, she replied, "it's all in the name", one example being Tring's Side Pocket for a Toad. At the time of writing real cider wasn't available, however they are considering introducing Weston's cider. Food has been brought back, and the pub now offers traditional home cooked meals using fresh ingredients. Plans for the future include a beer festival. Contact: White Horse, St. James Street, Dover, CT16 1QF. Tel: (01304) 206981.

Blakes, Castle St: Adnams Bitter has now replaced Harveys Sussex as the pub's standard real ale, and other Adnams brews have been making an appearance including a very drinkable stout, the dark reddish brown brew Gunhill, and the very well received Lighthouse. Particular pleasing was a barrel of Adam's Extra, resurrected by the brewery after being discontinued some years ago, although whether as a permanent addition to the range or a one-off, is not certain. However local brewers are not being ignored. Hop-daemon Dominator made a welcome return and Whitstable Winkle Picker and Gadds 80/- both proved very popular. Brews from the new Wantsum brewery have featured regularly, although they don't necessarily suit everyone – "Great Black Pig" was one drinker's comment, but "Wantsum's



1381 - not to my taste - overly hoppy". Among beers from more distant parts Purity Mad Goose received much acclaim.

Royal Cinque Ports Yacht Club: The first weekend of March saw the club once again hosting a mini beer festival. In total a choice of fourteen beers were available, split between a stillage of nine barrels erected under an awning on the verandah at the front of the club, and the handpumps on the bar. Local Kent brewers Hopdaemon, Wantsum, Westerham and Goachers were all represented, Westerham's brews proving particularly popular, and supplemented by additions from Dark Star and Crouch Vale. The festival proper started Friday evening and ran throughout Saturday from 12 noon to 11 pm. Any beer still remaining on the stillage by Sunday lunchtime being available at the very reasonable price of £2 a pint. A particular point of interest arose in the festival's latter stages, when Goacher's Gold Star replaced Crouch Vale's Essex Boys' Bitter on the fourth hand-pump, to display a line up of four Goacher's beers – an arrangement otherwise only ever regularly seen at the Black Lion, Lynsted, south of Faversham.

At the end of the month the club hosted the Branch's presentation of £500 to the Dover War Memorial project from the proceeds of this years White Cliff's Festival of Winter Ales.



Cullin's Yard, Cambridge Rd: The pub/restaurant has added St Austell HSD to its existing regulars Adnam's Bitter and Adnam's Broadside.

Orange Tree, Folkestone Road: We note the 'for sale' sign has disappeared from outside the property, but otherwise nothing else appears to have altered. However as we go to print we hear that a planning application for conversion to a single dwelling has been submitted – permission already exists on the site for residential development. At the **Hare and Hounds** work is progressing on conversion to a dwelling, while at the **Engineer** the residential conversion appears complete with little evidence remaining of its former pub use. Further towards the town centre, planning matters appear to have been sorted out at the **Renaissance** which has now reopened as a café. Fortunately, the **Golden Lion** in Priory Place is still operating, and in mid March was selling a very good pint of Cotleigh Tawney Owl. On the handpumps alongside was another West Country beer, a celebratory brew from Exmoor to proclaim thirty years of existence. At the start of April the pub was selling Cotleigh Honey Buzzard, a honeyish dark bitter at 4.5% ABV, together with Hydes Original and St Austell Proper Job. Opposite the Priory Station, the **Priory Hotel**, which last year had reintroduced real ale, had none available during a visit in early March.

Louis Armstrong, Maison Dieu Rd: Such is the demand for real ale, that of late, landlady Jackie Bowles has been supplementing her normal Kent beers with brews from further afield. In February drinkers were treated to beers from Potbelly of Kettering, Cottage and West Berkshire – the latter coincidentally encountered by Roger Marples last year (see Unspoilt Pubs, on page 34). Par-

ticularly popular were Wickstead Heritage and Old Berkshire Ale, respectively from Potbelly and West Berkshire. In mid April drinkers were able to enjoy a barrel of Dark Star's feisty 5% Festival. Returning to more local sources, two barrels of 5.1% Dominator from Hopdaemon, supplier of the pub's house bitter Skrimshander, proved very successful, as did a couple of barrels of Turbulent Priest from newcomer Wantsum. From time to time Jackie has had the opportunity of acquiring pins of ale from Goacher's. Set up on the chill cabinet at the back of the bar, they made a fine impression, and so far we have enjoyed Crown Imperial Stout, and the deceptively strong but easy drinking 1066 Old Ale (6.7% ABV).

Three Cups, Crabble Hill: Excellent venue for our March branch meeting, and probably the first ever held there. Three real ales including Exmoor Fox, which was very good and which most of the company stuck with. In London Rd. both the **Endeavour** and **Kingfisher** have changed hands: the occupants of the former having moved to the latter. No information whether either will be re-introducing real ale. Changes also at the **Boars Head** where Tony, who's run it for a couple of years has relinquished control. Apparently the Young's Bitter has been retained. And at the **Edward VII**, real ale is now standard since John Townsend brought it back a year ago. On the Thursday night quiz evening in March we enjoyed a very pleasing mid range bitter from Hydes.

DEAL

For those interested in pubs of earlier days a new book by Steve Glover and Michael Roberts will probably be a must. Entitled **The Old Pubs of Deal and Walmer** it is due to be on sale

from the end of May.

Berry, Canada Rd: For the third year in succession The Berry won the award as Deal, Dover, Sandwich and District CAMRA Pub of the Year award. Tony Wells, Branch Pubs Officer said that: "The Berry just goes from strength to strength and shows what can be achieved if you put the right person behind the bar. Chris Barnes, landlord of The Berry, understands what a good real ale pub should be all about. I firmly believe that Chris rightly deserves this award as it reflects the hard work he has been doing in serving good quality real ale and cider as well as supporting CAMRA's aims." A presentation of the award is arranged for Saturday 5th June at 3.00pm. (See Tony's Tappings). Around the corner in the Strand we hear that the **Stag** has changed hands, but at time of writing have no further details.

Ship Inn, Middle St: Seriously devoted to Gadds', recent months have produced good reports of No 7, No 5, Dark Conspiracy, 80/- and Seaside. However more distant ales are also to be found – Deuchar's IPA is a regular and there is usually something from Dark Star. Often just Hophead, in February and March we additionally had the benefit of Dark Star Six Hop Ale and Star American Pale Ale. The former being described by one of our members as "probably one of the best beers I have ever drunk – a hop-driven taste sensation with every sip. However, at 6.5% definitely not a session beer!" In Alfred Square at the **Prince Albert** visits in early February found Nelson Baggywinkle in excellent condition along with, Brains Bitter and Cottage Big Boy, and a month later Daleside Spring Frenzy, Northumberland Fog on the Tyne and Cottage Between the Posts. On the opposite corner of Alfred

Sq. the **Saracen's Head** was selling Master Brew, Spitfire and Canterbury Jack.

In the High St. in late March a visit to the **New Inn** found Abbot and Spitfire on the bar inside, and outside, at one of the tables, three or four gentlemen of a certain age consuming that seemingly now rare combination, light and bitter (see Last Knockings). A few doors up, half the ground floor of the former **Strand** (once Black Horse) has been converted to coffee shop and amusements, the remainder boarded up and unoccupied. In Beach St. the **King's Head** was selling Master Brew, Spitfire, London Pride and Harveys Sussex, and **Dunkerley's** St. Austell Tribute. The **Port Arms** was still closed and being redecorated, though it reopened shortly afterwards in early April. We understand that not a lot has changed (apart from the management), with still only Speckled Hen and Abbot on tap, but according to our correspondent appears more welcoming. No sign however, of real ale re-emerging at the **Walmer Castle**, South St., whose bar is seemingly crammed with every lager and keg beer font imaginable.

Bohemian, Beach Street: While it may have cut back on the number of hand-pumps the pub still maintains an interesting and varied range of ales. Beers seen earlier in the year include Woodforde's Wherry, Ringwood Fortyniner, Banks' Original, St Austell Tribute, Skinner's Betty Stogs Bitter, Hop Back GFB, Caledonian Deuchar's IPA and Young's Bitter plus also local newcomer Wantsum Turbulent Priest.

Mill Inn, Mill Hill: Following his reintroduction of real ale into the Edward VII, Goschen Rd., John Townsend has now installed it at his other pub, the Mill Inn in Deal. At the time of writing Jennings

Cumberland was available, and he plans to keep one real ale available as standard. Also seeing a return to real ale is the **Admiral Keppel**, Manor Rd., where Courage Best Bitter and Director's has been available. And just around the corner the **Magnet Inn** in London Rd. is one of the few Branch pubs that regularly takes beers from Shep's microbrewery. Since the end of last year alongside the brewery's more regular brews have been seen Christmas Ale, Faversham Dark, Amber Ale and the limited edition Ginger Porter.

SANDWICH AND RURAL

Red Cow, Moat Sole: One of the town's leading real ale outlets the pub played host to our February Branch Meeting. Local beers over recent months have come from Gadds and Wantsum and from further afield St. Austell, Timothy Taylor, Fuller's, Bass and Young's.

Market Inn, Cattle Market: We understand that Spitfire has been removed, leaving the only regular beer as Master Brew. However the pub is a regular recipient of Sheps seasonal beer and various specials from the microbrewery. To the rear on the other side of Delf St. the **Fleur de Lis** usually has two or three real ales available. Regulars King and Barnes Sussex and Greene King IPA alongside a variety of guests including Gadds, Harvey's and Cottage.

Place Brasserie, High St: A visit in January found Wantsum's 1381 and Turbulent Priest on offer, but our correspondent unfortunately had no time to try them out.

Charity Inn, Woodnesborough: Another pub heavily into local brews, the branch's end of February bus trip finding a selection from Gadds and Want-

sum. Dave from the pub is working in collaboration with the Wantsum Brewery to brew a beer specifically for the pub. It will be called "Charity's Secret" and will be between 3.4% and 3.6 in strength.

High & Dry, Waldershare: Closed and sold at the end of last year, the rumours reported in our winter edition for planned use as a cider venue, have subsequently proved correct. Planning applications have been submitted for use for the production of cider, together with a café/restaurant facility, although from what we can understand alcohol will not be available without food. Nearby at Eythorne, activity was observed in February at the long closed **White Horse**. Lights were on and vehicles parked outside. Local rumour talks of the pub being acquired by someone interested in using it as a home but retaining the bar for private use. Any further news welcome.

Yew Tree, Barfreestone: At the time of writing the pub is once again closed, its most recent incumbents having left during the winter following the withdrawal of support by the business's main investor. Ben Bevan and his wife, both opera singers, took on the pub in 2008 and in the short time they were there won awards for their food, and were included in the Good Food Guide. This year they were among additions to Michelin's Eating Out in Pubs Guide. However it was not all food and the pub carried a good range of real ale, predominantly local, and last year added real cider to the selection. We understand that new tenants are being sought.

Greyhound, Aylesham: Known locally as the Dog, it's curtains at last for the village's only pub, which will now be demolished. After several years of dis-

pute over its future, a last ditch attempt to grant the building listed status as an example of a 1920s public house was reluctantly rejected by English Heritage: too many original features having been lost. Leading the listing campaign was Aylesham District Councillor and Deal, Dover, Sandwich and District CAMRA branch member Linda Keen, who was surprised that plans to demolish it had not been notified to the local community. She subsequently put a successful motion before Dover District Council requiring that in future the planning department would notify ward councillors of plans to demolish buildings in their neighbourhood.

Bell, Shepherdsweil: New landlords are Tony and Jen who took over in Oct 2009. The pub now has cask marque accreditation, and normally has three real ales available, with currently Black Sheep Bitter as regular session bitter. At the time of writing (late Feb) this was accompanied by Hobgoblin and Broadside, one, or possibly both of which, might change in due course depending on their popularity with the locals, although at the moment all three are selling well. At Lydden the **Hope** is another pub now selling real cider: 8% Bid-denden being available on handpump in late February, alongside Harveys Sussex bitter.

CANTERBURY

Phoenix, Old Dover Rd: Following the departure of Linda in the winter the pub was still closed at the end of February, the Old Dover Rd. frontage adorned by a large 'To Let' sign. More recently we understand that a new tenant has been found, but no information on beer policy.

Haywain, Bramling: Four real ales are the normal line-up – regulars Bombardier and London Pride plus two guests.



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Usually at least one Kentish beer features, with Eddie Gadd's brews from the Ramsgate brewery proving particularly popular. However, one of the great successes is not at all local: Brambling Cross from Broughton Ales of Peebleshire chosen because of its name, which according to landlord Kevin always disappears in no time. A visit in February found guests Young's Bitter and Master Brew, and at the end of month the pub was declared winner of the Taste of Kent at an event at Leeds Castle. In May, a Spring Bank Holiday beer festival is planned over the bank holiday weekend. Starting at 7pm on Friday 28th May, it runs through until 5pm Monday 31st. A large marquee in the garden is set to accommodate 26 real ales and five ciders, and there will be music each day, including Ian Shawcross Big Band on Friday evening, 60s and 70s with Signature on Saturday, and Jazz Sunday afternoon. Monday afternoon features a variety of local performers.

FOLKESTONE

Ship, Sandgate: Good to see Harvey's excellent Old Ale on the handpumps alongside the pub's regular selection over the winter months. Also in Sandgate, one Sunday afternoon in late February found the renamed **Earl of Clarendon**, now free of the Shepherd Neame tie, buzzing with happy drinkers. Similarly, another pub that Sheps did not want, and now owned and run by an ex-tenant of the Clarendon, the **Three Mariners** in Hythe, was equally busy. This normally offers six real ales and the Clarendon four, although in mid February the latter was down to two temporarily. A visit around that time found brews from Brewster's and Wyre Piddle.

East Cliffe Tavern, East Cliff: Mid

February found two dark beers on the handpumps in tip top condition – Burton Bridge Mild and Gadd's 80/-.

In the Bayle National Cask Week at the end of March saw the **British Lion and Guildhall** once again offering a combined beer festival with over 20 real ales and ciders available between the two pubs. Among the less commonly seen brews could be found Harviestoun Old Engine Oil, Brain's Bread of Heaven, Ansells Mild and Marston's Sweet Chariot. From Adnam's, the very palatable 4% ABV Gunhill was available. Meanwhile in nearby Church St. a quick look found no sign of real ale on the handpumps at the **Pullman**, and the pub packing up at 9 pm.

Chambers, Cheriton Place: Easter saw the pub's seventh annual Easter Beer Festival with about a score of beers and ciders added to its normal range of real ale and ciders. Among the local selection was once again Wantsum's prize winning Hengist, and from Westerham a Single Hop Varietal using just Brambling Cross. From further afield Sharp's of Cornwall came up with a Six Hop IPA and Saitaire of West Yorks with Cascade, an American style ale with a combination of cascade and Continental hops.

Down by the Harbour the **Princess Royal** remains closed and boarded up, while in the Stade the winter saw the still closed **Three Mackerel** joined by the **Mariner** with a 'To Let' sign outside. By late March the Mariner was still seeking a tenant, but things were at last happening at the Three Mackerel, where new signage had appeared bearing the words the **Captain's Table**, Café and Coffee Shop – it was due to open shortly. In Tontine Street work is progressing on the **Brewery Tap**, or perhaps more accurately the former

Brewery Tap, for except for the tiled frontage and sign, little of the original structure appears to remain. In late February a new roof was under construction.

In Dover Rd. there appears no sign of anything happening at the **Martello**, and Sheps have seemingly disposed at last of the **Railway Bell**. At the time of writing we understand that the **More-hall** in Cheriton is closed.

Elsewhere

At Faversham, Shepherd Neame, Kent's single remaining family brewer, is steaming on with all manner of new brews, both from its main plant and the recently created micro facility. (See Roger Marples visit on page 50). Particularly of interest to older readers, of course, was a recreation of Fremilins Bitter, brewed especially for Wether-

spoon's Beer Festival in April. Not brewed at Faversham since 1990, Stewart, Sheps Senior Brewer, acquired the recipe from InBev, Fremlin's successors via Whitbread, who gave permission to use the original name and the pump clip of 20 years ago. Reports, from those who tried it, described it as quite a decent beer.....but not Fremilins; but which Fremilins? – there already having been versions from Maidstone, Faversham, Cheltenham and Castle Eden, and probably a few more we don't know about!



Channel Draught

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of our Pubs Officer, Tony Wells

OLD CZECH PROVERB

"A fine beer may be judged with only one sip, but it's better to be thoroughly sure."

BERRY GOES FROM STRENGTH TO STRENGTH

As we report in Local News, once again The Berry, on Canada Road in Walmer, has been voted our branch Pub of the Year award (colloquially referred to as "POTY"). This CAMRA award is presented to the real ale pub which demonstrates not just a commitment to quality real ale but is judged to be the best all-round pub in terms of atmosphere, welcome/ service, clientèle mix, support for CAMRA aims and overall value for money.

Landlord Chris Barnes took over the pub in 2005, since when he has had remarkable success. Within a year he gained entry into CAMRA's Good Beer Guide and became eligible for the local POTY award, which in 2008 he won for the first time. The current award crowns what has been and continues to be a very successful and busy year for Chris and the pub. Sales of real ale have increased such that Chris has installed additional handpulls, and has recently served his 800th different real ale, had his 3rd Winter Beer Festival in February, and is planning other real ale and cider events throughout the year. He is due to get married in early June and in late March his partner, Haz, gave birth to their first baby, a boy.

Having won the local award, The Berry now goes forward into CAMRA's East Kent Pub of the Year competition. From over 110 real ale pubs in the branch, just six pubs were selected for entry into the POTY competition. As well as the Berry, the other pubs in alphabetical order, were Blakes, the Eight Bells, and the Louis Armstrong in Dover, the Plough & Harrow, Tilmanstone, and the Ship Inn, Deal. To determine which was the best all-round real ale pub, ten volunteers from CAMRA visited each of the six pubs over a two month period; and just being selected for entry into the competition is no mean feat. The pub has to demonstrate an ongoing commitment to quality real ale throughout the year. The award isn't based on a simple one-off group vote, nor from a single visit by one individual.

The POTY presentation will take place on Saturday, 5th June at 3.00 pm, and the Berry's website can be found at <http://theberrywatmer.co.uk/>, with further information about the Campaign for Real ale at <http://www.camra.co.uk/>.

FANCY A NEW HOBBY: TRY SCOOPING

What is Scooping? Scooping, or Beer Ticking, is maintaining a list of all the "new" beers that you drink. According to the Whitehaven News: "Beer Ticking is the practice of keeping a record of every beer that passes your lips. It is a simple pursuit, rather like train spotting, but infinitely more pleasurable". Given the number of micro-breweries that have started up, this list can get to well over 10,000 different

beers, given some dedication. So, carrying with you a list of the beers that you *have* drunk is important, and a bit more planning may be required. For example at beer festivals, you need to get hold of a beer list in advance, so you can identify some “required” beers.

What are the rules? The rules are really up to you but they can make beer scooping more or less challenging. At its simplest, your rules could say that a “scooped” beer is one that I haven’t drunk before. However, you could add additional complexities: Does it have to be a real ale? Does a sip of someone else’s beer count as a scoop? What if the ABV of a scooped beer changes? What if a scooped beer is brewed at a different brewery? What if the recipe of a scooped beer changes?

What do you need to record? At a minimum you probably need to record the brewery, beer name and the date. However, you could add strength, the location where it was drunk, a beer quality score and/or tasting notes

Terminology. Any hobby has to have its own terminology, or lingo, and Scooping is not without its own: “In the Book”: To add a new beer to the list; “Required” A beer that hasn’t been drunk before; “Spinning”: Rushing around scooping beers; “Withered”: Going to a pub to find the beer you wanted to “scoop” has gone. The rest is up to you. To find out more about Scooping, go to: www.scoopergen.co.uk or www.natashamoorfield.co.uk (then go to the webpage “Natasha on Tour”)

THANET BEER FESTIVAL

The Thanet Beer festival, held over the Easter Bank Holiday, is the largest beer festival in this part of the country. Typically, the beer festival features over 200 real ales and ciders along with a continental bottled beer and fruit wine stall.

This year there were some noticeable differences from previous festivals. First off was the CAMRA Fast Track queue. This meant that CAMRA members were directed into the venue through a different route, avoiding previous years’ queues. In fact we’d arrived in the beer hall before we were even aware of it. The second major change was the opening up of the Queen’s Hall, off the main beer hall. This had no music, so was popular with those festival goers who were there for a few beers and a good chat. Food had been moved into the Queen’s Hall, but getting it wasn’t as easy as it could have been with some long queues, probably caused by the change in food arrangements. This should be fixed by the 2011 festival.



For those who wanted some music, Hobo Jones and the Junkyard Dogs (skiffle punk/skunk rock) were in very good form, their songs including The Drunken Sailor and Jilted John, in which the line “Gordon is a moron” was met by enthusiasm from the audience. As to the beers, those that I tried were all in good condition and offered a wide variety of tastes and strengths. My beer of the festival: Gadd’s Über-

hop, a lager-ale brewed specially for the festival by the Ramsgate Brewery.

SELECTING THE PUB OF THE YEAR – PART 1

As you will have seen above, the Berry in Walmer has won Branch Pub of the Year for the third time in succession. If you are wondering how the selection is made the following two-part article will take you through the process.

Step 1: The pub has to be in the Good Beer Guide. For any pub to be eligible for POTY it must be in the current edition of the Good Beer Guide (GBG), CAMRA's guide to the pubs serving the best cask ale throughout the country, and also among those chosen for inclusion in the next edition. Each year selection for entry starts in January and continues throughout the year, and involves collecting beer quality scores for the pubs in our branch (a topic that has been discussed on a number of occasions). The scores are submitted by CAMRA members and are based on CAMRA's National Beer Scoring System (NBSS), which rates ale quality from 0 (undrinkable) to 5 (superb condition). At the end of the year, it is the top 17 highest scoring pubs, that have served consistently good quality cask ale throughout the year, which will be selected to appear in the next edition of the GBG, to be published the following September.

Step 2: Selecting the POTY Candidates. From this list of 17 pubs, the top 4 to 6 entries, that also appear in the current GBG, are selected – whether 4, 5 or 6 depends on what each pub has scored and how far apart those scores are. As it happens, in 2010 six pubs were selected. If it seems odd to base selection on beer



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scores alone, when there are so many other attributes of a pub to consider, CAMRA believes that if a publican looks after the cask beer then everything else is likely to receive the same care. So it is as good a place to start as any. We now have our short list of candidates, and the second part of this article will cover the process of judging, and awarding the POTY.

A SATURDAY BUS TRIP

The first social outing of the year saw us meeting up at Dunkerley's in Deal for breakfast over a pint of St Austell Tribute. It looked like it was going to be popular as 11 people arrived in the iffy weather, and more people would join us later on.

We took the bus to Worth to call in at the Blue Pigeons and the St. Crispin Inn. The Blue Pigeons, one of three pubs we were planning on visiting which has recently had a change of landlord, has also just undergone renovation, leaving the lounge

bar a relaxed and comfortable place, or as landlady Marilyn describes it: "Shabby chic". So we settled down to a pint of Ruddles County and discussed the plans for the day. Before the next bus some of the group popped over to the St. Crispin for quick halves of Gales HSB and Harvey's Sussex Best Bitter.



Our next stage was a quick stop in Sandwich to change buses to head out to Woodnesborough and Wingham. While waiting for the bus we had sufficient time for a quick half. The majority of the group headed towards the Red Cow, where Mark the landlord, has done wonders for the real ale quality. A couple of us stuck our head around the door of the Market Inn, Shep's only pub in Sandwich. Our next stop was the Charity Inn, Woodnesborough, the second pub with a change of land-



lord, although some of the group stayed on the bus to go to the Anchor Inn, Wingham, to watch football on TV. On the bar of the Charity was a great range of local beers from the Ramsgate and Wantsum breweries. It was also time for something to eat so we sat down to some excellent food washed down with Gadd's #7, and Wantsum's Turbulent Priest and 1381. On again to the Anchor Inn, the third pub with a change of landlord, where we drank London Pride and some great Harvey's Sussex Best Bitter.

At this point we started to retrace our steps – sort of. We stopped off at the Chequer Inn, Ash, where we were treated to a very good pint of Purity's Mad Goose, which was my Beer of the Day. From the Chequer Inn it was time to head back to Deal. Our ultimate destination was the Berry, Walmer, but we had time to stop off

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at the Magnet in Upper Deal. This Shep's pub has recently been getting in the one-off brews from Shep's micro-brewery. Pints of Master Brew and the recently introduced and popular, Amber Ale. A couple of us also took a quick look at the Admiral Keppel, which has reintroduced real ale. Good pints of Courage Directors and Best Bitter were on offer. Eventually we arrived at the Berry, but at this point the author of this article lost the plot and stopped taking notes. A great day out with good company and

good beer. You can find out more about the social events the branch has organised at www.camra-dds.org.uk.

Stagecoach's Day Explorer. For our day out we purchased Day Explorer tickets, which cost £5.50, and give unlimited travel on Stagecoach's buses. It's a fantastic way of getting around to the real ale pubs in our branch without having to worry about drinking and driving. So with a bus ticket in one hand and a few timetables in the other you're all set for a great day out!



Kent CAMRA Beer Festival 2010 22nd - 24th July



**MERTON FARM, OFF NACKINGTON LANE,
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Entrance to the Friday night session will be by advance ticket only. These will go on sale from June 1st – By Post from: 42 Orchard Street, Canterbury CT2 8AP (cheques payable to CAMRA Kent Beer Festival and enclose SAE)

In Person from: **Gate Inn**, Marshside, **Unicorn Inn**, St Dunstan's Street, Canterbury, **Wincheap Wines**, 161, Wincheap, Canterbury, **Railway Hotel**, Preston Street, Faversham, **The Chambers**, Cheriton Place, Folkestone.
All sessions except Friday evening free entry to card-carrying CAMRA members.





RAMBLINGS & RUMBLINGS

Sat 2 Jan – 8 Bells: Gadds 7 & Dark Conspiracy (excellent). **Sun 3 Jan – Edward VII:** Black sheep; **Boar's Head:** Young's Bitter. **Fri 15 Jan – Crown Finglesham:** Golden Braid, Whit Native, Harveys Best. Fri afternoon 'early bird' session, £2 a pint, good ambience! **Tues 19 Jan – Park Inn:** Purity Mad Goose, SF, Broadside; **Blakes:** Skinners Best, Wantsum Fortitude, Harveys Best. **Mon 25 Jan – Phoenix:** (Inadvertent) Burns night in Faversham! Harveys Best, (have tasted better!) Landlord. **Anchor:** Sheps beers in good nick – Late Red, Amber Ale, SF. **Leading Light:** nice pint of Caledonian Old Acquaintance + others

Tues 9 Feb – Jackdaw: Wherry, Harveys Best, Broadside, SF. Very quiet lunchtime but good welcoming atmosphere. Luckily got back before next lot of snow.

Sun 14 Jan – Plough Ripple: Sheps Jack, LP, ESB, OSH. Pub almost crowded Sun pm. Lunchers just leaving and another group watching rugby. Good sunny day. Had hoped to walk from Walmer through snowy fields, but thaw now set in – normal mud resumed. Yuk!

Mon 15 Feb – Red Cow: Young's Special, St Austell Tribute, HSD, Bass, LL. Nothing like a branch meeting to liven things up, though a few regulars in too. **Tues 16 Feb – Ship, Deal:** Gadds 80/- (particularly good), Gadds, Seaside, Dark Star Hophead, Deuchars IPA. Very quiet mid afternoon, guest £3 I think but other beers around £2-50. Finding note pinned on Prince Albert door 'Sorry, on holiday til March', adjourned to **Saracens:** Jack (excellent), MB, SF.

Wed 17 Feb – Fox: Roosters Huntsman, Deuchars IPA, Abbot. Surprisingly lively for Wed eve football, new faces welcome. **Sat 20 Feb – Berry Festival:** Old Mill Blonde Bombshell, Toons Indulgence, 1648 Signature, Hammerpot Madgwick Gold, Ossett Warhorse, etc. Excellent festival, just about right numbers turning up, but at this time of year when outside area is precluded, will struggle to fit in many more people! So is the future tickets or queuing? How annoying that real ale's becoming so popular!

Sun 21 Feb – Louis A: Skrimshander, Cottage Interceptor. Good crowd in for Sunday evening music, superior performance from Djangles, less oomph and more subtlety than usual.

Tues 23 Feb – Samuel Peto: Nelson Friggin, Ruddles Best, Abbot + others. **Wed 24 Feb – Railway Bell:** Sharps Doom Bar, Harveys Best.

Harveys on special offer at £2-50. Pleasant restaurant and good food. **Fox:** Deuchars IPA, Snaith Old Mill Blond Bombshell, Abbot, Cottage interceptor. Quiet, mine hosts on holiday maybe. **Thurs 25 Feb – Blakes:** Purity Mad goose, Harveys Best. Good score for 'Mad Goose', going for £2 a pint! Nice to see a few diners in at lunchtime, bringing a bit of life in!

Fri 26 Feb – Berry: Newby Wyke Kingston Topaz, Potbelly Inner Faze, Harveys best, Grainstore 1050, Wantsum Hengist. Now open all day Friday I hear. Temptation to stay for hours, but saved by bus to Dover at 13.45 again!

Sat 27 Feb – Stagecoach Bus Trip. Blue Pigeons: Ruddles County. First visit since revamp, quite impressive, interesting new old fashioned style, back bar unchanged. Surprised to see only one real ale but on reflec-

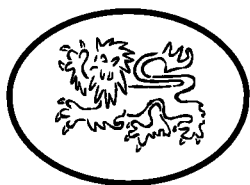
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tion, there were probably too many before. **St. Crispin:** Harveys Best, SF, Gales HSB. As always cosy and welcoming, just beginning to fill up with lunchers. **Market:** Sheps Amber ale, MB. Sacrilege to have only 20 mins to pass through Sandwich – spoilt for choice as usual! **Charity:** Wantsum 1381, Gadds 7, Gadds Seaside. Another revamp, good welcoming pub, and prices too! **Chequer Inn:** Purity Goose, GKIPA, Old Rosie. A few in before us, so worth staying open on a winter's afternoon. And for people like me who get hungry at tea-time, good to know that pizzas always available!

Mon 01 Mar – Blakes: Purity Goose, Adnams bitter. Crept in expecting to be only one there, but what a busy crowd for Monday! All sorts of people seemed to have discovered that this was the place to be. **Sun 07 Mar – Archer:** Brakspear bitter. Soaked up by tasty pizza! (prepared by genuine Italian, I later found out!). **Sat 13 Mar – Archer:** GKIPA. Brakspear just run out – pity as I needed something more substantial than IPA to wash down another Chelsea thrashing of West Ham! **Mon 15 Mar – 3 Cups:** Theakston Hogshead, Exmoor Fox, Courage Best. Nice beer. First ever branch meeting here. **Tues 16 Mar – Chance:** Harveys Best. And an old juke box which even I can work! **Wed 17 Mar – Fleur:** Cottage MM Norman Conquest, GKIPA. **Fox:** Warwickshire Ffiagra, Adnams Stout, Broadside, Deuchars IPA, Abbot. **Fri 19 Mar – Duke of York:** No real ale. Well, someone had to check it out! Quite busy Fri lunchtime, pleasant ambience and décor. One handpump turned round but didn't find out what or why. No-one serving at bar resplendent with keg and lager founts, and long queue at food servery, so did not detain myself further.

Sat 20 Mar – Coach & Horses: GKIPA. Now one solitary handpump, contents served in a Greene King glass, 'brewing perfection' under the logo! But it didn't taste like the nondescript IPA we know and love. Was it something completely different? Or maybe a special one-off brew for CAMRA Nat Exec? Nice enough place, good selection of food. Proceeded via marshland path, often impassable in winter because too wet, and in summer due to blockage by brambles etc., to **Crown Finglesham:** Wantsum Black Pig, Daleside Spring Frenzy, Bushels Cider. Bar customers few and far between after 2pm but plenty of diners in evidence, or more likely 'deserters' by this stage. **Mon 22 Mar – Cat & Custard Pot:** Amber Ale, MB. A few people in Mon lunchtime. Landlady pleased to have come through Jan and Feb. But 'been here 33 years so not too worried' **Tues 23 Mar – Hope Lydden:** Wychwood Paddy's Stout, Biddenden Cider. Quite a young crowd in for quiz night. **White Horse:** Gadds 7, Loddon Ferryman, Beartown Ruin. Fairly lively mid-evening. Group of about 30 in back bar, retirement party? – just walked in off the street and drank all the TT Landlord! **Wed 24 Mar – Chequer Inn:** Black Sheep bitter, GKIPA, Biddenden's. Good few in at lunchtime, both eaters and drinkers. Notices on walls publicising range of pub events. Always seems to be something going on! **Fri 26 Mar – Berry:** Dark Star American Pale (extremely good), Wantsum Black Pig, Frome March Madness, Scottish Spring Mist, Harveys Best, Gadds Conspiracy, East Stour Medium, Thatchers Heritage, Westons Country Perry. A few in at 'teatime' to justify all-day Fri opening. Two-day old Master Henry Steven, son of Chris and Harriet took it all in his stride! **Sat 27 Mar – Crown Eythorne:** SF, Directors, GKIPA. Beer List on Blackboard proclaimed 'Adnams Broadside, Woodforde Wherry and Spitfire' Ah well, they got one right!

Real Ale & Cider Festival

at the
Kent & East Sussex Railway
Tenterden Town Station
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Tenterden
Kent
TN30 6HE



Friday 11th June from 6pm - 10.30pm (admission limited to 150 people only, so come early to gain entry) there will be an admission charge for non CAMRA and KESR members and
Saturday 12th June from 11.00 am - 10.30pm (or until the beer runs out)

Admission Charges

If you wish to attend the festival only, you will need to purchase a platform ticket.

Free entry is available to card carrying CAMRA members, in addition card carrying CAMRA members can purchase a rover ticket on the day at a discount.

Festival Information

Real ales and cider available on some train departures from 10.40 am.

A range of real ales, ciders and perry.

Food available on Friday evening and on Saturday all day into the evening.

Entertainment at the Festival

Friday evening is a quiet session (no music)

On Saturday afternoon and evening there will be live music along with Morris Dancers.

A television on site will be screening the World Cup football match on Saturday evening.

Families Welcome

Camping at the Festival



Kent Small Brewery News

By Roger Marples

P&DJ Goacher-Tovil, Maidstone 01622 682112

Goacher's Old has been selected for the next CAMRA national Winter Ales Festival. It is expected that the Stout will be replaced by Silver Star again, this Summer.

Hopdaemon Brewery, Newnham 01795 892078

hopdaemon@supranet.com

Tonie is working flat out, as usual. There will be a report on my recent visit to Hopdaemon in our Summer Edition

Nelson Brewery, Chatham 01843 832828

sales@nelsonbrewingcompany.co.uk

No information at the present time.

Ramsgate Brewery, Broadstairs 01843 580037

info@ramsgatebrewery.co.uk

Ramsgate has increased in size by 300%, on the same site. The old brewery was decommissioned and completely closed down, and the new brewery was installed and commissioned without the supply of beer to local public houses being affected. Obviously no mean feat. To quote Eddie Gadd, "The new brewery has exceeded my expectations regarding efficiency, fun and flavour". Dragon's Blood was out in time for St. Georges Day and Thoroughly Modern Mild will be out in May. This will be followed by Doctor Sunshine's Special Friendly Ale. Eddie's Uberhop featured at the Planet Thanet Beer Festival over Easter (see Tony's Tappings), and won the beer of the festival award. Having tasted this excellent brew, I can understand why.

Wantsum Brewery, Hersden 0845 0405980

wantsumbrewery@googlemail.com

As mentioned elsewhere, Wantsum Hengist won Beer of the Festival at this years White Cliffs Festival of Winter Ales, and in April Branch members visited the brewery to present James Sandy with his very first award. This new brewery is already expanding, as sales have increased, and James has just installed a new refrigeration unit and a third fermenting vessel. The brewery became a limited company on 1st April. A recent beer festival at The George and Dragon at Fordwich was a great success and featured no less than five Wantsum beers. A new beer, yet to be named, will be produced for May.



Westerham Brewery, Crockham Hill, Edenbridge 01732 864427

sales@westerhambrewery.co.uk

The last piece of equipment in the current upgrading of the brewery, has just been installed. This was a new malt mill, and a grant was obtained from SEEDA towards this installation. The bottled beer that is specially brewed for the National Trust, but also available through the brewery, Viceroy India Pale Ale was selected by Roger Protz in the Independent newspaper, as one of the Top 10 bottled beers. Each month, from March to October, Westerham Brewery is producing a single hop varietal beer using only Kent hops. March was WGV, and April was Bramling Cross. In May they will produce Cascade, a hop normally associated with the USA, but grown by Tony Redsell at China Farm, Harbledown. "Will it hit the high notes of Yakima grown Cascade?", asks Robert Wicks. I can confirm that floral taste is very much in the character of these hops.

Whitstable Brewery, Grafty Green 01622 851007

whitstablebrewery@btconnect.com

The new 3.8% beer Faversham Creek is proving very popular, if the first two brews are anything to go by. Originally brewed as a seasonal beer, if sales warrant it, the beer will go into regular production. However, the main news is that there is a good possibility that Whitstable Brewery will, at last, brew a mild. This should be on sale for CAMRA's "Make May a Mild Month" campaign. It is planned that the beer will be 3.7% - 3.8%.

Roger Marples

The Fox

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The National News

By Martin Atkins

Community Pubs Initiative

In March Pubs Minister, John Healey announced a new package of measures designed to help community pubs. There will be £3.3 million of business support to make pubs more successful and help communities buy into struggling pubs to keep them running. Beer ties will be relaxed with landlords able to add local ales to their normal stock, and a consultation is underway on proposals to cut the requirement for music licences in certain venues. Restrictive covenants will be banned, and the planning system will have additional powers to intervene before a pub is demolished, and to allow pubs to branch out their business into new commercial ventures without planning permission. And landlords will have direct access to specialist, tailored business advice through 'Pub is the Hub', which will receive Government funding of over £1m to ensure that the group act as a specialist first-stop shop for advice on business support and diversification.

This might of course all change depending on the result of the general election, and in any case Alistair Darling's budget has left some doubt as to the extent of the Labour Government's commitment to the cause of community pubs. (see Page 4 and Channel View).

OFT Takes Second Look at Tie

Following CAMRA's appeal the Office of Fair Trading has decided to take a second look at the impact of the beer

tie which CAMRA maintains has an adverse affect on customers. Initially in response to CAMRA's super complaint the OFT had decided that there was no adverse effect. Meanwhile CAMRA has agreed to stay its appeal until August 1st. CAMRA argues that anti-competitive practices are inflating beer prices by around 50 pence a pint, restricting consumer choice and leading to serious under-investment in the nation's pubs.

Magnet Loses Its Attraction

John Smith's famous Magnet Bitter is no more. Its new owners Dutch international brewing giant Heineken, who acquired the beer with their takeover of Scottish Courage in 2008, de-listed the beer at the end of last year. Renowned for its nutty flavour, and to many, a more substantial beer than John Smith's standard bitter, sales had been declining for some time, with of late production contracted out, its final home being at Camerons of Hartlepool. A spokesman for Heineken stated that its sales were falling, it was available in less than 100 outlets, and it was no longer possible to guarantee its quality. Former national director John Holland commented, "If 100 outlets are really needed for a beer to survive even when it is being contract brewed, it would be very worrying if other smaller breweries followed the same policy." (See Last Knockings)

Tetley Back in the Saddle

By contrast, despite doubt hanging over the future of the Leeds Brewery, Tetley's owners Carlsberg UK, are

throwing their weight behind the brand. Whether influenced by the additional support for hunting since the ban a few years ago, a total disregard for PC considerations, or just a belief in tradition, the Huntsman emblem will be making a return as the brand image on all marketing of the cask brew.

MP's Back CAMRA

Parliament's influential Health Committee has backed CAMRA by calling for a minimum price for alcohol and an end to supermarket cut-price offers. It says there should be a minimum price of 50 pence a unit. This would help traditional pubs and reduce binge drinking. It also wants reduced duty on drinks with ABV below 2.8%, increased duty on spirits and industrial white cider, and a tightening of controls on promotions. However, while Home Secretary Alan Johnson says he will ban 'irresponsible' promotions and drinking games in on-licensed premises from April, both the Government and the Conservative opposition are fighting shy of minimum pricing – the latter's planned restrictions if elected running to a ban on cut price promotions, increased tax on super strength lagers and a levy on shops and bars with late night opening. Describing it as a missed opportunity, CAMRA's Head of Policy and Public Affairs, Jonathan Mail, speaking before the announcement of John Healey's initiative (outlined above), commented: "What the Government should be focussing on is drawing up a framework of support for well run community pubs, and addressing the disparity between supermarket and pub alcohol prices." A minimum price per unit would benefit community pubs by curbing the below-cost selling of alcohol by supermarkets, he said.

Champion Porter

Supreme champion at this year's National Winter Ales Festival as overall gold medal winner was 1872 porter from the Elland Brewery. At 6.5% ABV, its description runs, "a creamy, full flavoured porter, with rich liquorice flavours and a hint of chocolate from roast malt, and a soft but satisfying after-taste of bittersweet roast and malt". Silver went to Breconshire's Ramblers Ruin and bronze to Acorn's Gorlovka Imperial Stout. Both the 1872 porter and Gorlovka Imperial Stout featured at our own White Cliffs Festival of Winter Ales as did Black Bear from Beartown of Cheshire which won bronze in the old ales and strong milds division.

Kelham Island Success

For the second year running Sheffield's Kelham Island Tavern has been chosen as CAMRA National Pub of the Year, the first time that any pub has won the prestigious title in successive years. Only two other pubs have won the title twice – the Fat Cat, Norwich and the Swan, Little Totham, Essex. Runners up this year were the Royal Oak, Wantage; the Crown Hotel, Worthington, Manchester; and the Royal Oak, West Sussex. Current owners Trevor Wraith and Lewis Gonda took over the Kelham Island Tavern in 2002 and, despite being flooded in 2007, within a couple of years had made the pub national champion. Formerly called the White Hart it once sold local Stones beers to workers from the many small foundries and factories in the area. Today it is a very different place. Most of the industry has gone and many of the old buildings converted to residential use, with custom now drawn from a much wider area. Up to a dozen real ales are

available, mainly from micros, plus a couple of ciders.

Alcohol Consumption Down

Recent data from the Office of National Statistics suggests that rather than exploding out of control, alcohol consumption in Britain is actually declining, or is at least more or less static. Compared to 1992, those drinking over the recommended safely limits (21 units a week for men and 14 a week for women), the Government's particular area of concern, appears actually to have fallen, for both men and women: peak consumption was in 2000, after which there has been a steady decline. For total alcohol consumption, calculated from retail sales, the average sale per adult was 11.09 litres in 2001/2002 and 11.53 litres in 2007/2008, an increase of less than 4%. Again while alcohol related deaths have shown a marked increase,

almost doubling since 1992, most of the increase occurred during the 1990s, after which there has been a distinct flattening off. Alcohol related disease has also risen fast but from a low base, and is probably no reflection of drinking habits since 2000. In fact the levels of both disease and death might have more to do with life styles adopted thirty or forty years ago rather than current behaviour. What, however, does seem to be indisputable is the attitude of the public, or at least a section of it, towards getting ostentatiously drunk. Whether there is actually more drunkenness is a different matter.



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CHANNEL VIEW

Are They Really Listening ?

"Today is a very good day!" said CAMRA Chief Executive Mike Benner, following the announcement of Pubs Minister John Healey's pub package on March 19th (see Page 4). Unfortunately the news does not appear to have been communicated to our beloved Chancellor. Our glorious new dawn lasted just five days; until that is, Alistair Darling's pre-election budget, when his size twelve booted consideration of pubs and real ale back into the long grass. What his Government giveth with one hand, it likely taketh away with the other.

What was the point of John Healey's detailed and far ranging initiative, if one of the greatest threats to the pub, the high cost of beer, is allowed to go its own sweet way? We understand that his proposals came about as a direct instruction from Gordon Brown. So was this just a reaffirmation of the cynic's point of view that, with an election looming, governments will promise almost anything, or did the Chancellor have his own agenda? We have speculated before that he appears no friend of the public house: "Nasty, unruly places, full of subversive chat and irreverence. Much better have people snoozing in front of their televisions, receptive for the sound bite."

Whether accurate or not, one might be forgiven the impression that since becoming Chancellor he has displayed a certain vindictiveness towards the pub. During his ten years as Chancellor Gordon Brown would regularly add 'a

penny a pint' to beer duty, interpreted as anything up to 5p at the bar. Alistair Darling, from his debut budget in 2008, has had the pint in the pub firmly strapped to the rack, his first turn of the screw seeing not a 1p increase, but 4p, backed up by a projected annual 2% above inflation rise, for the next four years.

His argument in favour of swingeing increases on alcohol duty always derived largely from the fact that historically it is very cheap, and in the off-trade it is. What, as we all know, is not historically cheap is the price of beer in the pub, but this never seemed of concern, although lobbying by CAMRA and the industry can not have left him unaware of the fact. For whatever reason he has always appeared unable, or unwilling, to differentiate the two, although they differ significantly – a supermarket, if it so wishes, can offset a duty increase against its many other product lines, a public house, with probably only food as an alternative source of income, is forced to bear its full weight.

Of course, by the time you read this Alistair Darling's reign as Chancellor might well be a thing of the past. However we should not necessarily envisage any greater benevolence from a Conservative administration. With the exception of the above somewhat doubtful initiative, and a few rather vague manifesto references, the leadership of neither major party appears to show more than scant regard for the public house, preferring instead to rely

on the increasingly discredited philosophy of market knows best. And yet it is a cultural icon. Ted Tuppen, head of pubco Enterprise has described the British pub as one of the world's great brands, and what tale of modern life does not at some point in the narrative end up inside one? - soaps would be impossible.

Whichever party, or combination of parties, ends up running this country, in future we need specific policies in support of the public house. As Hilaire Belloc famously said: "When you have lost your inns then drown your sorry selves, for you will have lost the last of England."

Nothing Like the Sun

In recent issues we have reported on the Sun at Leintwardine in Herefordshire, and the attempts (so far successful) to keep the pub going following the death last year of its long time landlady and owner Flossie Lane. Devoted to good beer and good conversation one might imagine that its location on the Welsh borders, was part of a rural backwater, sufficiently distant from urban Britain to allow for the existence of any number of such down to earth and traditional institutions. Not so at all, the area is in fact renowned for its fashionable watering holes and gastronomic experiences. Brian Viner, writing in the Independent in February, described one such: the Bell at Yarpole not ten miles in distance from Leintwardine, but 1,000 or more in style. For a while its cuisine matched anything on offer from the western world's most prestigious caterers. At New Year, a party of "metropolitan sophisticates" declared that "the lunch could scarcely have been bettered," and "one of the starters, a cassoulet rather racily served in

a Kilner jar, actually draw oohs and aahs."

Unfortunately for local foodies the proprietors shortly after relocated to London, although sadly for those who appreciate the likes of the Sun, we are reliably informed that the locality has plenty of other opportunities for "top-notch pub grub." A century or so ago the weary ploughman, warming himself by the pub fire after a day in the wet and cold, would probably have thought a cassoulet to be some new-fangled breed of game bird, and top-notch pub grub, bread and cheese and pickled onions: and in truth, accompanied by a pint of bitter the latter can scarcely be bettered. Very possibly too, there might also have been oohs and aahs, but in his case not from the titillation of taste buds but, as he eased himself into a chair, from the consequences of back-breaking work.

Today we are well acquainted with such lives. They are set out in detail in books such as Cider with Rosie; on TV in series like the BBC production, Lark Rise to Candleford; and in numerous other recollections of times past, for which modern society would seem to have an insatiable appetite.....so long, that is, that they are confined to the other side of a TV screen, between the covers of a book, or sepia toned photos on the pub wall. In actuality too often the preference is for fancy names, pretentious venues and the judgement of the compilers of food guides. One wonders if, a hundred years hence, the doings of early 21st century newspaper columnists and their cronies, will generate as much interest as those of their forebears a hundred years earlier.



UNSPOILT PUBS

Roger Marples searches for un-modernised pubs

There are very few public houses that have not been modernised, or changed in some way, over the last thirty to forty years. The rate of change has gained momentum over recent years, with the increasing interference in our lives by local, national and EU governments. However, there are a few relatively unspoilt examples scattered around the country, and for the last twenty odd years I have made an annual autumnal visit to a selection of these.

In late October four of us set out on our 2009 trip. Our first scheduled port of call was The Black Horse in Checkendon, Oxfordshire. When I first visited this rural haven it was part of a working farm and the elderly matriarch looked after the retailing of Brakspear's beers to farm workers and visitors alike. The beer was dispensed direct from the cask, in the adjacent ground floor "cellar", and as the landlady was very frail and could only serve

one pint at a time, we were asked to go and serve ourselves. Unfortunately, this lovely old lady is no longer with us and handpumps have been installed selling excellent beers from the local West Berkshire brewery. The same family are still in control, and maintain an air of tranquillity about this isolated old building in a sylvan setting.



Some thirty minutes away lies The Bell at Aldworth, a very old pub with period furniture, open fires, and a smallholding at the back of the car park. A thriving business, it has been in the same family for 200 years, and the landlord, a keen pipe smoker and no fan of the anti-smoking law, and his wife, mingle and chat with the customers. When we visited, the place was overflowing with sports and four wheel drive cars, and wearers of wax jackets who were eating the very tasty filled rolls. The beers were again from West Berkshire Brewery and reasonably priced.

After booking into accommodation in Cirencester, we set out, by taxi (in order that the day's driver might drink) to The Red Lion at Ampney St. Peter in Gloucestershire. Hours of opening are restricted (6-8pm Mon-Thur, 6-10pm Fri & Sat and 12-2.30 Sun). The main drinking room has no bar, just one long table surrounded by benches and seats. There is an open fire and not a lot of room, but the atmosphere is friendly and cosy, and conversation flows. Incongruously, the beer comes all the way from Yorkshire, and is well kept Timothy Taylor's Landlord and Golden Best, and is delivered from two pumps in the corner of the room. Unfortunately, as the Landlord advances in years, there is a likelihood that he might retire, thus making the future of The Red Lion uncertain. Visit it whilst you can.

After a hearty breakfast, and change of driver, we set out for Caudon in North Staffordshire, and The Yew Tree. To say that it is different would be understating a

point. It is located on the fringes of the Peak District National Park, just above a cement works and next to a large yew tree, on the edge of a small village. 300 odd years old, it is crammed with interesting artefacts, including a large collection of working polyphones, a pianola, clocks, a thunder box, a serpent (of the musical variety) and the Acme Patent Dog Carrier. This remarkable piece of equipment comprising a muzzle to go over the dog's head, joined to a vicious looking spike to be inserted into the dog's rectum, complete with a carrying handle, should perhaps not be taken too seriously. On arrival at 11.00, there was a person hiding behind a paper in the bar, which to our surprise proved to be Christopher Excell, a fellow CAMRA member from Ashford who had travelled up to Derby the previous day. The beers on sale were the hoppy Burton Bridge Bitter, Mild from Coachouse Brewery and, the once great, Draught Bass. Pork pies, which come in normal and huge sizes, were in demand. After a short stop for some Leather-breaches bitter at The Green Man & Black's Head in Ashbourne, we dropped off the car in Matlock, Derbyshire, booked into our accommodation, and took a short bus journey to Bakewell for comestibles and some Thornbridge beer at the Rutland Hotel which has even more clocks than The Yew Tree, and is run by a splendid character who wears a pince-nez.



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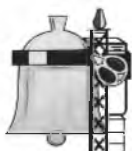
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Our next stop was The Three Stags' Heads, a remote pub at Wardlow Mires on the Sheffield to Chapel-en-le Frith Road. I first visited this anachronistic house about forty years ago, and it has changed little since. It was formerly kept by a lame farmer, Fred Furniss, who besides running the hill farm and public house also had a petrol filling station and small café opposite, and would be seen hobbling on crutches between these different premises to cater for customers. He also employed an elderly lady from Tideswell, to serve at the bar. A smell of boiling cabbage would indicate that the dinner was ready and Fred, his wife, and the barmaid would repair to a side room for this repast, leaving customers to hammer on the door should they desire further libations.



Although these days are long gone, The Three Stags' Heads should not be missed. It is now run by a somewhat taciturn dog loving potter, who might not have appreciated the patent dog carrier, and who at first meeting seems rather fierce, but is nice enough once one gets to know him. His Whippets seem to fill the stone flagged front bar. On the cold and wet October evening of our visit the roaring old black range was a welcome sight in the low ceilinged bar. There are just three tables. At one, two young females on a late walking holiday were taking most of the fire, a couple occupied the second table, on which reposed a dead hare shot by one of the locals, and the four of us occupied the third table. Beers are all from Abbeydale Brewery, Sheffield, and the four available were in top condition. Black Lurcher at about 7% is "the house beer". We had just made ourselves comfortable in this cosy little bar when a coach load of men, dressed as nuns, entered. They seemed a friendly enough crowd, but could only manage half pints. A very strange habit. Opening hours are restricted so please check before visiting. Currently they are Friday 7-11, Saturday 12-11 and Sunday 12-10.30.

Our last stop that day was The Duke's Head at Elton, on the other side of Bakewell which we reached by taxi. Again hours are restricted to evenings from 8.30 and Sundays 12-3. There is, however a late bus back to Bakewell at 11.38 (not Sundays) and they will not throw you out before then. It is directly opposite the church and the bus stop is right outside. The pub is unchanged by time and is another friendly place, which was once part of a farm. The remains of a pig sty are still to be seen. There are two bars, the main one, with an open fire, always in use. Well kept Adnam's Bitter is the beer, hardly local, but this is supplemented by Farmer's Bitter from Bradfield Brewery, Sheffield at times.

The next day saw us back in Kent, and before returning home a stop at one of the most unspoilt public houses of them all, The Queen's Head at Cowden Pound, near Edenbridge. This is run by Miss Elsie Maynard, the diminutive landlady who was born here, but is now into her eighties, and owing to infirmity unable to serve. However it attracts a loyal bunch of customers who are always willing to help out, and Elsie is often in the bar, and likes to chat and exchange the news. Again, the hours are restricted to evenings only from 5pm, and Sunday lunchtimes, and normally just one bar, although there is an open fire – visit it whilst you can.

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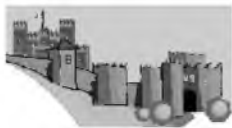
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DOVER IN THE FIFTIES

Doreen Norris remembers her younger days

(Doreen Norris was born in 1930. Here she recalls some of Dover's pubs from her younger days)

When I was first courting my husband and used to go out at weekends, our Saturday evenings would often end up at the Fire Station Dance, in the club room above the Fire Station. However they would usually begin several hours earlier in one of the pubs at the Buckland end of the town, from where we would make our way down London Rd., stopping at various other pubs on the way.

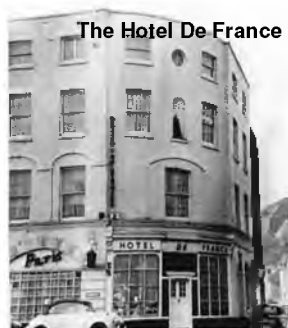


I lived in Edgar Rd., off Coombe Valley Rd. (Union Rd. in those days) and Frank, my future husband, in Heathfield Rd., and one of our favourite starting points was the Three Cups, then run, I believe, by Bill Cooper. We would meet there shortly after opening time at 6 o'clock, and then go to the Bull, followed by the New Endeavour, Old Endeavour and Duke of Wellington – two of which are no more. Other times we would start at the Cherry Tree or Fountain (now the Sportsman), or the Garden Hall – later the Gas Club and now the site of Aldi. After that we might stop at the Plough, or the Rose and Crown run by Doris Kettle (two more pubs both gone), and from there to the Eagle and the

pubs in Bridge St. or Peter St. – Admiral Harvey and Town Arms, and Friend in Need and Globe. Of the four only the Harvey is still there.

In case this all sounds rather excessive, I did not drink much at the time, mainly soft drinks plus the occasional sherry, and though Frank made up for me, he normally kept to halves of mild, and then probably only one in each pub. I imagine it wasn't very strong, because at most he never got more than a bit merry. Neither did I take a lot of interest in the breweries who owned the pubs. Mostly it was Fremlins, although I do remember seeing Gardners signs at the Old Endeavour and Fountain and Mackeson at the Duke of Wellington, and the Eagle of course was Courage.

After we were married we would often go for a meal and a drink at the Hotel de France at the corner of Snargate St., followed by a drink or two at a couple of the pubs at that end of the town: the Walmer Castle or Duchess of Kent in the Market Square where the Ellie now stands, the Wellington Hotel, Met Bars, Queen's Head or Salutation – all six no longer with us. My parents knew the landlady of the Walmer Castle. She always gave me the impression of being foreign, and I understood from my parents that she had something to do with the stage, but I could never find out exactly what.





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Then it was on to the Fire Station Dance or back to our own local, the Diamond. The Fire Station Dance might seem very old fashioned now, no band and of course no disco, just local pianist Roy Ashdown occasionally accompanied by a guitar. My mum and dad, brother and aunt would all be there, and when Roy wanted a break Frank would take over on the piano for an hour. The club had a good bar with hand pumped mild and bitter (Fremlins I seem to remember), but I would stick to sherry or a snowball, and then just a couple.

The Walmer Castle



Doreen Norris



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

I was particularly interested in your article concerning The Antwerp in the winter edition of Channel Draught. I did not know about the association with the Belgian town. Very interesting stuff. I was born in Deal, and my parents Stan and Mim Dale were licensee's of The Antwerp from the mid seventies to about 1980. It was a Bass Charrington house then. They then took over The Rose in the High Street. I left Deal in 1976 to work in London, not before I had visited almost every pub in the town and the surrounding villages, and there were a lot more pubs in those days! If Shepherd Neame ever goes bankrupt they can't blame me!

Some news relating to the Grove Ferry Inn which may of be interest to your readers. From 1st April 2010, a new electric river trip boat will be operating from the Grove Ferry on the river Stour. You will be aware that this has been an attraction for many years going back to the seventies, however due to ever increasing complex legislation it has been difficult to operate such trips again until now. For the last 8 months myself and my business partner, Glynn Rees have been researching, planning and financing this new venture. All the information is on our website at <http://www.grofeferryrivertrips.co.uk>. We are both in our fifties and have been associated with sailing all of our lives. We also enjoy a pint or two. The Grove Ferry Inn is big on food as you probably know, but they sell Shepherd Neame ales, including Bishops Finger. Try and come on one of our trips. She is a lovely boat, really quiet.

Keep up the good work. I remember when CAMRA started, what a great success it has been (thank god).

Best wishes, *Peter Dale*

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AN URBAN MYTH

Working on continued research for my web site regarding all the public houses in the Dover-Deal area, I was wading through the microfilm in Deal library one Saturday afternoon when a lady seeing me busily taking snapshots of the images created from their large reader enquired about the nature of my research. I, of course produced one of my business cards and we got talking about the public houses of Deal. During the conversation the lady mentioned the saying "Paint the town red" and gave me her version of its connection to Deal.

Now, not being one to instantly take any such stories as correct, or indeed instantly dismiss them, I endeavoured to try and source her statement, as I had heard another theory. Similar is the age old urban myth that there used to be 365 pubs in Dover; I have also heard the same mentioned in Deal, which is one of the reasons I have been doing this research into the many public houses. I decided to do a little of my own delving and hope to get to the origins of her statement.

According to various other sources the saying "Painting the town red" originated in Melton Mowbray, the town famous for its pork pies, when in 1837 a rather boisterous visiting huntsman, the Marquis of Waterford, probably after a little too much from the stirrup cup, decided to run amok with a tin of red paint and literally painted as many doors as he had time for. Further reference found that on some of the older buildings evidence of this red paint can still be seen, which suggests that it may well be the true origin of the saying.



The "Spree at Melton Mowbray"

But what has this to do with Deal and the lady in the library? Well, her story stated that during the Napoleonic wars in the early 19th century, with the fleet anchoring nearby there were obviously many sailors in Deal, so many in fact that the public houses were quite packed and over-run, and evidently there weren't enough houses to cater for all their needs. I'm not sure exactly how many public houses there were in Deal in the 1800s as my research is still continuing on that score, but I'd guess in the region of 60. What the lady went on to say was that with these public houses over-run with sailors, other residents, in their eagerness to help, and make a bit of money to boot, decided to open their unlicensed houses to sailors for partaking of certain beverages that the customs would frown upon. To advertise that they were indeed open for business, and to try and hide the fact from the authorities of the day, they painted their front doors red. Hence the saying.

My efforts however, have so far turned up no further information, and I have no idea whether or not there is any truth in the above connection with Deal: and so perhaps it is just another urban myth. Hopefully, someone has the answer.



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THE WHITE CLIFFS FESTIVAL OF WINTER ALES 2010

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From the start we were aware of a significantly different pattern from previous years. Whereas we would normally expect a small group of twenty or thirty waiting for doors to open, this year there must have been nearer a hundred....and they kept coming. By two o'clock we were a little concerned and by half past two distinctly worried – allowing for holders of advance tickets who had yet to arrive, if it carried on like this, we would be closing the doors again mid afternoon. However it all turned out OK. The initial surge somewhat slowed, and by the time of the early evening influx, those who had come at the start were beginning to drift away. It all balanced very well and no one had to wait any length of time to get in.



The Setting Up Gang



Friday Evening in the Maison Dieu

Within a little over two and a half hours the first barrel was finished, and following tradition named beer of the festival. Coincidentally (and perhaps appropriately) it turned out to be our glass sponsor Wantsum's new brew, Hengist, a 5.1% hoppy medium light beer, which had actually been launched at the festival. And Wantsum also scooped third place with its other festival beer Portly Pig, a blend of the brewery's Black Pig porter and port. Other barrels rapidly followed and by the end of Friday evening fourteen had gone com-

pletely and most of the rest had well under half their contents remaining. Meanwhile in the adjoining Connaught Hall, Friday night entertainment was again provided by folk outfit *Fair Isle*, with a selection of Irish style music that saw the more uninhibited, or perhaps most inebriated, up and dancing in front of the stage.

Saturday, following tradition, was quieter, and by the time we closed at six o'clock most had drunk their fill and drifted off leaving just a



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dozen or so barrels remaining. With so many beers it is impossible to sample anything but a small selection, and the Hengist had gone before I had a chance try it. Of the ones I did manage, the Thornbridge brews, St. Petersburg Stout and Halcyon IPA were particularly impressive, but I think, that as last year, my favourite was a strong beer from Burton Bridge, this time Thomas Sykes Old Ale – at 10% ABV the festival's strongest, and one to be consumed with considerable discretion.



Altogether a very successful festival. From its profits we were able to give a donation of £500 to the Dover War Memorial Project, and we were able to welcome the Branch's three hundredth member Roger Everett, who had been signed up for Christmas by his daughter. Perhaps the best summary is that which one festival-goer e-mailed us the following week: "I and two colleagues attended the fest for the first time (ever) last Friday 5th Feb. We thoroughly enjoyed ourselves; the beer was excellent, the venue first rate with exceptional bar and seating,

good company and very good information in the hymn sheet. Thanks and we'll be back again next year."

We also would like to express our thanks, and in our case to to all those without whom the festival would not be possible; our sponsors and supporters, including Dover District Council, Dover Town Council, Thanet Leisure, Adams Printers and James Sandy's Wantsum Brewery; those who gave their time to help; and of course all those who turned up and drank the beer. Thank you all very much and hope we can do it all again next year.



Martin Atkins



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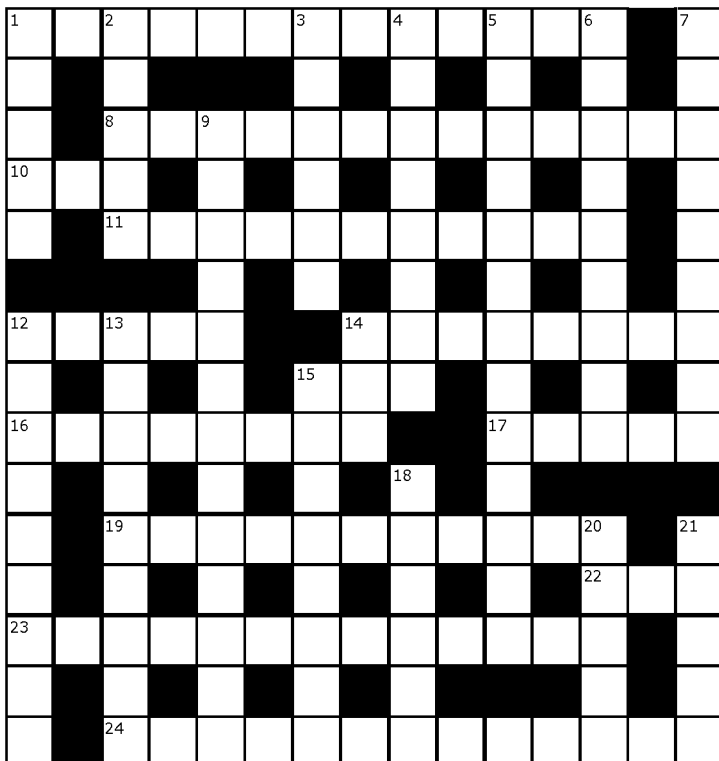
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BY TRISHA WELLS



Across

1. Beer for rabbit from Southern county (7,6)
8. University rep rumbled big ace corruption (9,4)
10. Tree found soaking (3)
11. Computer fry up? (7,4)
12. Airline after spirit dance (5)
14. Scary, but not afraid of everything (8)
15. What's up Doc? A fish (3)
- 16 + 21d What the cobbler did (5,3,5)
17. Turnips born as an afterthought (5)
19. Rating a lute played to divide into triangles (11)
22. Musical note in Columbus, Ohio (3)
23. Bertha's slayer created drivers' tests (13)
24. Pub requires rodent and canines (4,3,6)

Down

1. Harry takes oxygen and nitrogen to produce another gas (5)
2. Corks mixed with stones (5)
3. Tidy the Christmas tree (6)
4. Tun ended brewing unscathed (8)
5. Brewery guide mixed enema (8,5)
6. Poxy ol' hen plays instrument (9)
7. Denier in Sheppey (9)
9. Drink is gentle and sullen (4,3,6)
12. Able to follow adding up again so it can be started over (9)
13. Him? Kettle sorted out the baby chewers (4,5)
14. Came up East of enemy (3)
15. I abandoned song after feature of many gazelles (8)
18. Marker editor lifted (6)
20. German food for German city (5)
21. See 16 across.

Answers on Page 61



THE PILOT BREWERY

Roger Marples visits Shepherd Neame's microbrewery

Some years ago, the mighty Bass set up a small test or micro-brewery in their Burton on Trent premises. This recreated many long lost beers and experimented with new ones, and their beers were much sought after. This brewery has become The Museum Brewery and its beers are always popular when sold at our White Cliffs Festival of Winter Ales. Now, following Bass's initiative, local Kent brewer Shepherd Neame have shown a lot of foresight in creating their own micro-brewery, or pilot brewery as they often prefer it to be called. This is a small four barrel plant which started production in 2007 and only brews about once a week. Its output is roughly 1400 barrels a year compared to the 225,000 barrels produced by big brother next door.

I visited the pilot brewery in early March and was shown the plant by Stuart Tricker, Senior Brewer and one of his assistants James Purcell. James is from a brewing family, as his father Andrew started The Flagship Brewery in Chatham Dockyard, and both Stuart and James are enthusiastic supporters of Shepherd Neame's new venture. However, as very much a 'one man brewery', the day-to-day operation falls to the one man, Stuart Main, who unfortunately was not at work on the day of my visit. Other brewers, though, are permitted to try their hand in the plant, and indeed, it is a useful training ground for new brewers. To some extent, the brewery competes with the independent micro-breweries, but with the obvious advantage of having nearly 400 tied houses of their own. Their publicans are allowed to visit the brewery and 'brew' their own special beers, with, of course, a bit of assistance from the brewing staff, and it has proved popular for special occasions, such as weddings. Top quality Maris Otter malt is normally used, and brewing sugars are rarely added. Most of the hops are whole hops and all of them are from Kentish Hop Gardens. There is a regular supply of brews to houses within the Shepherd Neame estate and Channel Draught will endeavour to supply details of outlets within the magazine's circulation area. At the time of my visit a 3.5% ABV beer was planned for Mothering Sunday, which will be brewed from Maris Otter malt, Kent Cascade and whole Brambling Cross hops, and, in the fermenting vessel and nearly ready to go, was a very special brew; a 9.2% Imperial Porter, the creation of James Purcell. This was due for release in mid April, and some of it will be kept to mature in cask for up to a year. It was brewed using Maris Otter, smoked and chocolate malts and Target hops, with less than 1% sugar. We sampled the brew which tasted amazingly light for the strength, but it still had some time to go and will obviously gain some body. The smokiness was not too overwhelming, and the taste of chocolate malt, predominated.

We moved to the sample room where samples from both the main brewery and the pilot brewery are kept. A new strain of dwarf high alpha hop has been developed at Wye, and the pilot brewery had brewed a 4.5% bitter using this new strain and Maris Otter malt. The beer was named Buccaneer. To my palate it was a light beer for a 4.5% brew. The next beer that we tasted was a 4.8% Ginger Porter which

contained dry ginger and a little ginger ale besides chocolate malt and Maris Otter. Again the beer was a bit on the light side but the ginger was very pleasantly in the background and complemented the beer rather than overpowered the taste.

Stuart asked if I would like to taste any of the beers from the main brewery. I did confess that I am not a great fan of the products of these massive modern breweries, but I agreed that the comparison might be of interest. The first beer that I tasted was to me typical of most large breweries, with that customary thinness and distinctive "big brewery taste". We tried to define the taste, and the reasons for this taste, without success. I asked for a recommendation for another tasting, and James told me that the Late Red was an excellent choice, so this we tasted. I was very surprised at the distinctive and pleasant Kent Cascade hop flavour. The choice of hops certainly was a plus point, but again, to my palate, this was not balanced by the malt which was not Maris Otter in this instance, which is relatively expensive. Again the big brewery taste was there. Whether this is the use of a conical fermenting vessel, which changes the beer into a bottom fermenting beer, the use of a centrifuge filter, which spins solids from the beer, or the type and quantity of malt used I do not know.

However, the aim of the visit was to see the pilot brewery and try the beers brewed there. I congratulate Shepherd Neame on their bold move, and I am sure that given the dedication of the brewing staff, they will be turning out some interesting beers. Within our branch area beers from the pilot brewery have recently been available at the The Magnet, Deal; the Market Inn, Sandwich; the Griffin's Head, Chillenden; and the Royal Oak, River.



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THE 'ORRIBLE TRIP

Part One of The Beery

Boaters Spring 1987 trip

As the Middlewich Narrowboat's fitter afterwards remarked to us, "You've been getting away with things for so long, something was bound to happen before long!" Trouble was, it all happened during one trip; even before the trip, when Dave Green ended his career as a professional boatman by falling a long way down from a quayside ladder onto a barge-load of steel. Fortunately he had only injured a leg and was out of hospital and with us, but with the offending limb encased in plaster, and his language even more abusive than ever (if that could be possible!).

This year we planned to go from Middlewich to Llangollen via the Middlewich Arm of the Shropshire Union and the Llangollen Canals, and if we had time, which if things had gone well we should have had, go up the Shropshire Union in the direction of Chester on our way back. For the first time we had two 70ft boats, 'Sycamore', which we had used in 1984 and 1985 and 'Oak', which Ray and I had encountered the previous year on a trip with the Kent & East Sussex Canal Restoration Group (KESCRG). As I have mentioned before, Sycamore had an engine room immediately forward of the steerer (unlike the normal hire cruiser with the engine under the aft deck), while Oak had an engine room with a boatman's cabin behind it, as per a traditional working narrow boat, and the main accommodation forward of that. The crews were as follows: Dave Green as Skipper of Sycamore with Mike Green, Dave Underdown, John Underdown, Chris Excell, Dave Taylor, John Wilcox (making a welcome come-back after our first trip in 1981), Jeff Waller and Roger Lane. On Oak, Ray Crane (Captain) and myself shared the boatman's cabin with the rest of the crew comprising Phil Simpson, Mike Lock, Dave McNeir (Jonah), Andrew Bushby (Speed), Roger Milbourne (Dodger) and Peter Broberg (Cherub).

From 1pm Saturday, all except Phil (who was to join us on Sunday afternoon at Platt Lane due to house moving) assembled in the Newton Brewery pub at Middlewich to sample some Marston's before setting off: the Dover crowd having again arrived in a KESCRG mini-bus. In due course we checked in at the boatyard, loaded the boats and started away, turning immediately right onto the Middlewich Arm and ascended Wardle Lock in bright sunshine. Ray had decided to fly a P&O flag from the front of Oak which, so soon after the Herald of Free Enterprise disaster, seemed a bit of an ill omen! A mile past



Wardle Lock comes another, Stanthorne Lock, and then it was another four miles through open country with the River Weaver to the right and below the embankment until we reached our intended destination, Church Minshull, where we had decided to spend the evening at the Badger Inn. It proved to be a very pleasant free house with a reputation for good food, in an attractive little village a few hundred yards down a steep hill from the canal. It subsequently became tied to the Burtonwood Brewery but closed some years afterwards. We had an enjoyable time and consumed our fair quota of beer, but the Skipper of Sycamore with his plastered leg complained vociferously about the steepness of the hill on the way back.

Sunday morning started foggy but we still cast off at 6am with Oak in the lead, having achieved this relatively rare pole position by just that; propelling ourselves past Sycamore with the boat pole until Dave Underdown's face was seen peering at us through a front window. Then we fired up the engine and were away, but we knew that the others would not be far behind us. As the bows of our 70ft boat were just about the limit of vision to the steerer (me at the time), Dodger was

stationed up for'ard as bow lookout to signal directions. It wasn't long before I misinterpreted a sign and ran Oak up the bank. Before I could dislodge the boat, Sycamore



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more came past with Jeff on the tiller and their crew hooting with glee. A little while later the positions were reversed again with Sycamore's bows firmly embedded in the bank. Honour was now satisfied and by the time that we had ascended Minshull and Cholmondeston Locks to the Shropshire Union Main Line at Barbridge Junction the sun had become hot enough to burn off the fog.

We now turned south and then a mile further on west again, at Hurleston Junction, and on to the Llangollen Canal and the four Hurleston Locks at its start. While completed as a 45 mile branch to Llangollen with a junction with the Montgomery Canal it was originally intended as a main line to Chester and the Mersey, and is unusual that it is fed directly from the River Dee at Llantysilio, with an east to west water flow at a reasonable speed. From the

top of the locks it was another 8 miles and 5 locks through pleasant countryside with the occasional lift bridge until we stopped for our lunchtime break at Church Bridge, Marbury just below Marbury Lock. According to my 1987 'Suggested Itinerary', the Swan (then Greenall Whitley) lay 250 yards to the south. It certainly seemed a lot more in the midday sunshine of our mini heat wave, particularly to our invalid who complained loudly, and I note that in the next edition of 'Nicholson's' had been updated to half a mile. I can't recall much about the pub but we afterwards visited the church, not specifically because it was Sunday but because, to quote Nicholson's, it as a gem in an unrivalled setting. It stands on top of a little hill, and the grounds contain not just a graveyard but also a garden. It was indeed worth a visit just for the view.



Setting off once more, a further 4 locks and 4 miles later we encountered the six Grindley Brook Locks, the top three of which are a staircase. Whilst waiting for some boats to descend, Oak received a deputation from Sycamore asking if they could borrow our boat shaft (bargepole to the ignorant). It appeared that, full of sympathy for their disabled skipper after the long walk to the pub at Marbury, they had decided to make a Sedan chair for him with two

boat shafts and a kitchen chair lashed together with rope. When the contraption was duly assembled the victim was persuaded to sit in the chair while 4 stalwart members of his crew hoisted the poles to shoulder height and set off along the canal bank. All went well until they turned to come back when the thing became unbalanced, and porters and passenger all tumbled into a heap on the ground. The comments of Skipper Dave were not exactly fit for delicate ears. And the language became even more abusive when I approached and humbly asked if we might

have a re-run so that I could record it on my camera. Needless to say, I didn't get my photographs!

After ascending the Grindley Brook locks we continued the five miles to to our evenings destination, the Waggoners at Platt Lane Bridge at Whixhall, by the side of Whixhall Moss, a "raised bog rich in flora and insect fauna – including mosquitoes" where peat cutting still continued. On the way we passed the entrance to the much-truncated Whitchurch Arm, frequently the subject of calls for restoration which, I suppose, may be realised when the Waterways Restoration Group have run out of other things to restore! So far the itinerary was being followed precisely! The Waggoners was then a fairly basic Greenall Whitley pub. By 1993 the ownership had passed to the Burtonwood brewery, and on our most recent visit to the Llangollen Canal in 2008 it was closed on account of a serious fire. Here we found Phil Simpson waiting for us, thus making our tally complete. It stayed that way for less than one day!!



Monday 28th April! Black Monday! We awoke again to early morning fog and, once again, the crew of 'Oak' emerged just before 6am and quietly poled past 'Sycamore'. Once again we were spotted, fired up the engine and vanished into the mist, knowing full well that our rivals would soon be on our heels. About two miles from Platt Lane is Morris Lift Bridge. A party was landed, the bridge raised, and 'Oak' passed through. No sight or sound of 'Sycamore', so the bridge was lowered again so that any road traffic might cross. As we set off again, however, engine noise heralded the approach of the other boat, motoring hard through the fog. Suddenly came a roar of exhaust note, and full reverse engaged, as the bridge was spotted, almost too late!

Again the early morning mist soon burned off and we emerged into another beautiful day. Just after Morris Lift Bridge, comes the junction with the Prees Branch which after a few hundred yards ends in a boatyard and a dead end, and then, a further five miles or so on, we were in the 'Shropshire Lake District', with the canal first skirting Cole Mere on the left and then Blake Mere on the right, before plunging into the 87 yard Ellesmere Tunnel and arriving at Ellesmere itself. Here there are good moorings, but as it was still early morning and the town was on the agenda for the return trip, we kept going. Frankton Junction, a few miles further on, is the next feature of interest. Here the Montgomery Canal departs to the left down a flight of 4 locks, the first two being a staircase. It was under restoration in 1987 and is still under restoration in 2010, but it *is* gradually getting there – 'there' being Newtown, 35 miles away. At the junction the bridge numbering from 70 onwards continues off down the Montgomery, while the Llangollen starts again from 1! (This should be noted for future reference).

Our next locks were three miles further on, the two New Marton Locks spaced a quarter of a mile apart. These are the last two locks before Llangollen; indeed, the only locks in the 32 miles between Grindley Brook and the end of the canal. They

caused us no trouble in going up, but coming down on Wednesday was going to prove a different matter. Eventually after an excellent morning run of 18 miles and 2 locks we moored outside the New Inn (now the Poacher's Pocket), Gledrid. It was here that things started to go wrong!

The pub had a new landlord who made us feel very welcome. The food was very good and the Banks's beer excellent. Moreover, at closing time (don't forget, in 1987 afternoon closing existed) the pub showed no signs of closing! A somewhat heated argument arose between those who wanted to remain at the pub for the rest of the afternoon and those who wanted to press on and get to Llangollen that evening. In the midst of the debate someone wandered out of the pub to look at the boats and came rushing back to announce that 'Sycamore' was no longer there! About half of each crew (i.e., those who had finished their beer) set off up the towpath in pursuit of the errant craft. The rest of us (the other halves of each crew) saw off their beer, went outside to 'Oak' and followed by water. A couple of the crew of 'Oak' seemed to exude a somewhat suspiciously innocent air.

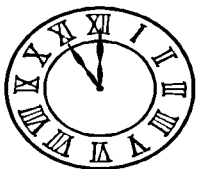


'Sycamore' was soon discovered. Our innocent pair had, unnoticed by anyone else, slipped out onto the towpath, untied 'Sycamore', towed it round the next bend and moored it up again before returning to the pub. At least, we thought, the argument about whether to stay at the pub or not, had been resolved. As we are a hospitable lot and as guests were aboard, on both boats the visitors were made to feel at home, and the Commodore's bottle of Jaegermeister took a right hammering! Very soon after Gledrid comes Chirk Aqueduct and the border between England and Wales. The canal aqueduct is imposing enough but the railway viaduct running alongside it even more so. 'Oak' stopped for a photographic session which I took advantage of, as did our guests, Dave and John Underdown. 'Sycamore' had, as usual, gone steaming off ahead and vanished into Chirk Tunnel, immediately after the aqueduct. Ray took over the steering as 'Oak' started through the 459yd tunnel and Hon. Commodore went down to his bunk in the boatman's cabin for a well-deserved kip.



However, it wasn't long before I was roused by a shout from above. "Jim!" Ray yelled, "Dave's gone overboard!". *(To be continued)*

Jim Green



LAST KNOCKINGS

"Two Nations" was Benjamin Disraeli's description of Victorian Britain, and while much of the economic and social division he was speaking of has disappeared, his words are still applicable elsewhere – a fine example being the philosophy behind Heineken's summary dispatching of John Smith's Magnet (see National News). The company stated that the decision was taken because sales were falling, less than 100 outlets being supplied, and that quality could no longer be guaranteed. *Déjà vu*? Of course, throughout the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s, when hundreds of breweries were bought up and closed by their larger competitors, their beers either discontinued or transferred to their new owners' industrial establishments, where any resemblance to the original could be expected to rapidly disappear. "Too small, out of date technology, no demand, etc." ran the line: explanations and excuses dutifully relayed by the bulk of the media, in those days respectfully supportive of those involved in the creation of national giants. Today many a micro would love to have 100 outlets for its total range, let alone a single beer, but with far fewer, still produce beers of excellent quality. But it's a different world and a different culture. How long had Heineken been mulling over the future of Magnet? Probably ever since it bought Scottish Courage, and probably without much intention of it surviving: it would be interesting to know Magnet's level of promotion and availability over the last couple of years. In the world of international brewing there is little room for such 'anachronistic anomalies.'

I note that earlier in the year Fuller's put on sale the most recent brew of Gales' Prize Old Ale. Excellent news, except where on earth can you buy the legendary beer? Even before Fuller's takeover of Gale's it was hard to come by. And Prize Old Ale is not alone. Whatever happened to White Shield Worthington? I forget the last time I saw a bottle in a pub, but in many, not so long ago, it was standard fare; and most brewers would produce a strong bottled beer alongside an often indifferent selection of lights, pales and browns. One of the last to go was the sugar reduced English Ale. Originally a Fremkins beer it was taken up by Whitbread who distributed it across the country, and while not bottle conditioned it was particularly handy for perking up an insipid draught bitter....until that is, it was suddenly discontinued a year or two back. Pub shelves (and fridges) now bulge with alcopops, low alcohol beers, bottled lagers, and, with the exception of Newcastle Brown, almost anything but bottled ales. So, Fullers, how about brewing a decent sized batch of Prize Old Ale, and put a bit of muscle behind pushing it out into the trade? There are enough pubs selling Belgian bottled beers to prove there's a market.

Of course talk of bottled ale recalls a whole lost culture. Brown and mild, light and bitter and various other combinations were common thirty or forty years ago; today many younger drinkers will never have heard of them. Speculation has always surrounded the exact origin of the practice, with a widespread belief that its real purpose was to cover up the deficiencies of the draught product – certain brews being

so dreadful that consumption was only possible after the addition of a bottle. One acquaintance always maintained that Cobbs of Margate had an allegedly notorious reputation. How true this might be we'll probably never know, although when most beer was under 3.5% ABV, delivered in full barrels (36 galls) and kept in cellars without temperature control, flavours might become none too palatable before it was finished. Nevertheless, whether due to improvements in beer and cellarman-ship, or just fashion, the half and a bottle appears to be largely a thing of the past; sadly obviating the kind of faux pas recounted by one Dover licensee, who was confronted in the bar one day by a youngster of doubtful age cockily requesting half a brown and mild.

Although nothing to do with beer and pubs a recent edition of Radio 4's Food Programme about marmalade is a depressing reflection of modern times. Taking part was a woman representing the marketing industry, where marmalade comes with 'provenance' and a placement in the appropriate 'marketing sector'. According to your preference you might be defined as a 'Heathcliffe (dark and bitter),' or a pussycat (sweet and pale). Apparently, wouldn't you know it, marmalade has an image problem; and also, wouldn't you know it, this defined itself as association with 'crusty old men' – one of society's more advertisement-sceptical groups. The target market of course should be the young, those with the least idea of what they want, and even less money with which to buy it, but who can be educated into demanding that marmalade is what their parents really should be buying. At the moment the services of Paddington Bear have been retained, but it is feared that he is somewhat out of date and lacks the impact of some of the other imagery selling rival products. What is really needed is an easy eating 'entry level' marmalade which will offer little palates a 'taste adventure.' George Orwell, you should be alive at this moment.

Talking of Radio 4 and George Orwell an edition of the Archive Hour looked at the English Pub, both in imagination and reality. The period covered was probably that considered to be its heyday; late 19th century to mid 20th century and featured all the usual suspects: the romanticists – Orwell himself, G K Chesterton and Hilaire Belloc; the impecunious and alcoholic – Dylan Thomas, Louis MacNeice, etc.; and various other proponents and observers of the traditional public house together with their haunts and workplaces, including the early BBC, and the London literary/Bohemian establishment's favourite, Fitzrovia. And a joyful and entertaining hour it should have been, except that its chosen presenter, a dour and humourless gentleman, whose name significantly I forget, exhibited not the least empathy or enthusiasm for the subject. Along with a general disparaging of many of the above, and speculation as to whether alcohol was actually supposed to be enjoyed, one of his more memorable observations spoke of an initial exuberation around the first pint only for dismal reality to reassert itself after three or four. And it was no surprise that he concluded by quoting the latest figures for pub closures and declaring that he probably won't be missing those that had gone, or in fact any of them when they had all gone. One feels he might get on well with G Brown and A Darling.

Old Wort

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National Contacts

Nationally CAMRA can be contacted at:
CAMRA, 230 Hatfield Rd, St Albans,
Herts., AL1 4LW.

For enquiries, phone 01727 867201

Web www.camra.org.uk



Adjacent Branches

Ashford Folkestone & Romney Marsh

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paul@camra-afm.org.uk

Canterbury

Mike Galliers 01732 771775 (w)

01227 272494 (h)

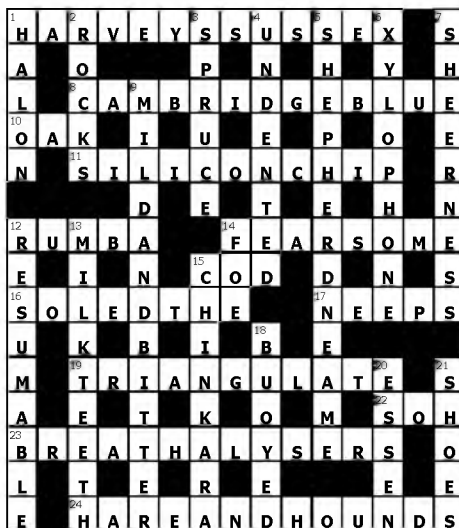
mike@calebriparc.co.uk

Thanet

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CROSSWORD ANSWERS



Local Information & Useful Numbers

Dover Tourist Info 01304 205108

Folk Tourist Info 01303 258594

Dover Police Stn 01303 240055

Folk Police Stn 01303 850055

Dover Taxis

A1 01304 211111

A2B 01304 225588

Central 01304 204040

Dover Heritage 01304 204420

Star 01304 228822

Victory 01304 228888

Deal Taxis

Al Cars 01304 363636

Castle Taxis 01304 374000

Direct Cars 01304 382222

Jacks Cars 01304 362299

Sandwich Taxis

AM Cars 01304 614209

Sandwich Cars 01304 617424

Folkestone Taxis

Channel Cars 01303 252252

Chris's Taxis 01303 226490

Folk. Taxi 01303 252000

Premier Cars 01303 279900

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Stagecoach 0870 2433711

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01303 850294

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correct at time of going to press.

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And Finally.....beware of beer launch announcements.

One news story that caught the eye of those reading The Morning Advertiser, the trade publication of the pub industry, was an announcement by Heineken UK that it is to counter the launch of Guinness Black Lager with a new dark beer called Foster's Amber Stout. Heineken UK brand director Mark Given denied that the new product is a direct response to Diageo's decision move the Guinness brand into the lager category. Given said: "Foster's Amber Stout has been in development since 2009 when we set up the Project Blarney team. The product is founded on detailed research carried out with more than 2,000 consumers, showed that, while Foster's drinkers are receptive to the idea of drinking stout, many find the colour dark and depressing. Foster's Amber Stout will give drinkers the body and taste of a stout combined with the bright colour and refreshment of a super-chilled lager." In a further announcement it was said that bar staff would be encouraged to etch a boomerang shape onto the head of Amber Stout, mirroring the shamrock on Guinness.

One beer expert said: "Only a fool would deny that this is a brave step by Heineken UK." However, despite some obvious clues, at least one major pub chain was fooled – and failing to check the 1st April publication date for the article, enquired about the availability of the new beer.

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