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**CAMPAIGN  
FOR  
REAL ALE**

**Issue 45  
Autumn  
2010**

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

# CHANNEL DRAUGHT



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Know  
OLD DAIRY  
BREWERY**

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# **CHANNEL DRAUGHT**

**ISSUE 45**  
**Autumn 2010**

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**A**nother year pushes on towards its end, and we all wonder where the months have gone, the Coalition's hair shirt economics offering the prospect of a particular chilly winter, and further difficulties for many a struggling pub. After all its fine words about community pubs and local initiative, the Government has yet to put its money where its mouth is. Adjustments to business rates and taxes could be a saviour for many a licensee, but so far all we have had is a cancellation of the previous government's financial assistance, and a review of the licensing laws, which has every possibility of doing very little to deal with the real problem areas, while penalising the responsible majority (see Page 4). Meanwhile more pubs continue to close for good, or appear on the verge of doing so.

However, all is not gloom and doom. As we report in Local News five new micro breweries have started up in Kent within the last year, and there is the prospect of four more joining them in the near future; an example, if ever there was, of an intelligent use of tax/duty levels (see Channel View). Cider too, appears to be in good health, the number of real cider outlets and real cider producers continuing to expand; and, in our branch area, the Berry in Walmer making it a doubly successful year by adding Kent Cider Pub of the Year to its earlier success as winner of Branch Pub of the Year for the third year running.

As usual our Autumn edition includes an annual survey of local real cider; who's making it in Kent and the branch pubs that sell it. Also, Roger Marples visits one of those new Kent breweries – the Old Dairy at Rolvenden, we continue the history of IPA, and take a look at the wide selection of brews now coming from Shepherd Neame. Plus of course all the usual items, from Local News to the continuing history of the Beery Boaters.

*Martin Atkins*

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## EVENTS DIARY

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| Mon 18 Oct | Branch Meeting – <b>Blakes</b> , Castle Street, Dover.                    |
| Sat 30 Oct | Cider Social – <b>Berry</b> , Walmer 3pm (Branch Web Site for<br>details) |
| Sat 13 Nov | St Margaret's Walk (see Branch website for details)                       |
| Mon 15 Nov | Branch Meeting – <b>George &amp; Dragon</b> , Sandwich.                   |
| Mon 13 Dec | Branch Meeting - <b>Cullins Yard</b> , Dover (7pm)                        |
| Mon 17 Jan | Branch Meeting – <b>Alma</b> , West Street, Deal.                         |

### Fri 4th & Sat 5th Feb 2011 White Cliffs Festival of Winter Ale Maison Dieu (Dover Town Hall)

CAMRA Members needed to help staff the Festival - if you can spare some time please  
e-mail

[channel.draught@camra-dds.org.uk](mailto:channel.draught@camra-dds.org.uk)

**Branch Website**    [www.camra-dds.org.uk](http://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@ramblingrumbler.plus.com](mailto:john@ramblingrumbler.plus.com)  
or call 01304 214153.

Events marked \* are not organised by CAMRA



# LICENSING REVIEW CALL FOR GOVERNMENT RETHINK

In early September CAMRA issued a response to the Home Office's review on "Rebalancing the Licensing Act", and called for a targeted, nuanced approach to tackling alcohol-related harm, which supports well-run community pubs and not-for-profit members' clubs. However the Campaign was sharply critical of the short time being allowed for consultation – just six weeks, instead of the usual three months – to consider proposals which are every bit as radical as the 2003 Licensing Act, which came into force in 2005. CAMRA's head of policy and public affairs Jonathan Mail said the Home Office had rushed out an "ill-thought out" consultation, especially as some of the suggested changes to the law could result in extra charges for well-run community pubs, and see many who open for slightly longer at weekends, close early. He added that CAMRA intends to debunk "the myth that has grown up surrounding 24-hour drinking, and to oppose any changes that may unfairly penalise responsible drinkers and community pubs".

While the Consultation contains a number of measures which would be beneficial to community pubs, such as allowing greater community involvement in licensing decisions, banning the sale of alcohol at below cost price and repealing the failed Alcohol Disorder Zones, the review also considers measures which could cause significant harm to pubs, not-for-profit members' clubs and pub customers. Among the potentially damaging measures are:

- Allowing local authorities to determine a uniform closing time for licensed premises throughout the local authority area, which could potentially see a return to 11pm or even 10pm closing times.
- Introducing a late night levy on licensed premises
- Further increasing license fees so they are based on full cost recovery, putting more pressure on pubs
- Restricting the ability of magistrates' courts to hear appeals on licensing decisions, leaving appeals on bad licensing decisions in the hands of licensing authorities which will have an incentive to justify their original decisions.

CAMRA has highlighted the dangers and risks of unintended consequences in this approach. It has called for the Government to ensure their measures reflect the role of cheap alcohol in the off-trade, while focusing not just on punishing premises where irresponsible drinking takes place, but on encouraging and rewarding well-run pubs.

CAMRA expects the outcomes of this review to be in the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Bill due to be debated in Parliament later this year.

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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](mailto:channel.draught@camra-dds.org.uk)

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

## DOVER

**Castle Inn**, Russell St: New owner is Paul McMullan from Deal who bought the pub in the summer after it had been closed for two and a half years. Paul was hoping to re-open before Autumn,



however as he was planning to offer accommodation the Dover District Council were asking him to apply for change of use, with all the paperwork that that entails. However, there appears some doubt over whether change of use is required. Apparently the Castle has a history as a coaching inn dating back as far as 1790, and has advertised its overnight rooms in Dover District Council's own accommodation guide for tourists. Meanwhile, at the Heritage Centre, Paul found a Dover Corporation pamphlet from the 1950s or 1960s listing the Castle as a place to

stay for the princely sum of 12/6 a night.

His research also turned up the fact that the pub used to be Cliff Richard's watering hole, whenever he and the Shadows used to play in the now boarded-up former ABC in Castle St. – the Castle Inn being just round the corner from the stage door. There is however, no record that he ever spent the night there. By October red tape problems appeared to have been sorted out, and the pub duly re-opened on Saturday 16th, complete with baby grand piano. No information as yet on beer but if real ale is on the agenda an obvious first choice would of course be Paul's near namesake from Hertford, if that is, they ever get round to sending their beers much beyond their own heartland.

**White Horse**, St James St: Timothy Taylor Landlord and Loddon Ferryman's Gold remain regulars, with guests varying a lot. Woodforde's Wherry and Nelson's Friggin' in the Riggins' were available in late July, and Loddon Hullabaloo and Black Sheep Bitter a couple of weeks later. We understand that Dover's new MP Charlie Elphicke was present in the beer garden on the latter occasion, but only drinking a non-alcoholic beverage! However, as he was smoking as well

we can perhaps rest assured that this was not to conciliate the PC brigade.

Meanwhile, the Channel Swimming season being well under way the walls of the main bar are busy recording the latest participants' details. Although, although only begun six or seven years ago under the stewardship of Jill and Jack, space is rapidly running out, leaving Jeanette with the problem of how to provide additional room while retaining all the existing information. And it's not only the present generation that is represented. This summer saw the inclusion of the oldest yet, Mike Jennings, who first did the swim (France to England) in 1960. A remarkably fit looking gentlemen, who looked every bit as if he could have gone down to the beach and done it again this year.

**Blakes**, Castle St. Standard real ale is Adnam's Bitter along with the brewery's seasonal ales. However the pub also deals extensively with local Kent Brewers – Gadds, Hopdaemon and Westersham featuring regularly, and the recently established Old Dairy Brewery from Rolvenden still proving particularly popular. And Peter is looking forward to trying beers from the new Abigail Brewery in Ashford which is due to start production at the time of writing. From further afield the Northumberland Brewery routinely delivers a selection of its ales, together with various guests from around the country.

Many of you will have heard of the sad and unexpected death in September of long standing CAMRA member Jan Vanaerts. Jan lived in Shepherds Well and worked at the L'Arche community in Barfreton. He was well known to Peter and Katheryn from their time at the Yew Tree, and maintained connections as a regular customer at Blakes. His particular expertise was health and

safety, and he was an advisor on such matters, to the Branch's White Cliffs Festival of Winter Ales. It was appropriate and fitting therefore that Blakes hosted Jan's wake following his funeral and burial in Barfreton churchyard on

Jan Vanaerts



Thursday October 7th. Despite being Dutch Jan was a staunch supporter of British real ale, about which he displayed a detailed and extensive knowledge that would put many of our compatriots to

shame. He always seemed good humoured and was pleasing company, and his appearance in the pub was always very welcome. CAMRA, Blakes and real ale have lost a good friend.

**Louis Armstrong**, Maison Dieu Rd: The first weekend in September saw the pub's annual late summer beer festival, with a special order of sixteen real ales in addition to the house bitter Hopdaemon Skrimshander. A total of seven real ales plus cider was available at any one time with the pub's temporary stillage (Neil's ladder set over the chill cabinets) brought into use again. At the start this featured Gadds Dogbolter, Hopdaemon Green Daemon and Thornbridge Jaipur, the last two disappearing very rapidly within a day or so, the Jaipur receiving particular help from one of our branch members and a local brewer. Also proving highly successful were two brews from the newly established Old Dairy Brewery (see page 44) – Gold Top and Blue Top, and Hophead and Old Chestnut from Dark Star. A somewhat smaller festival is planned for December.

**Cinque Ports Arms**, Western Docks: Another pub recently to have undergone renovation, it reopened in July under the proprietorship of Andy Snelgrove and Kat Beaty. Real ale has been reinstalled, and the couple are taking a no tolerance approach to drugs for which the pub had lately become associated. They intend to return it to having a good reputation for food and drink, along with bed-and-breakfast accommodation and rooms to let, and have already established a steady customer base of builders, truckers, customs officers and cruise terminal users. Two real ales are normally available – Courage Best plus guest (Doom Bar in late August). Towards the other end of the Harbour a visit to **Marine Court** found London Pride available. Good to see this pub/bar is still doing real ale, although the siting of the handpumps around the corner at the far end of the bar where they are barely visible can not be doing much to assist sales. Also good to find a bit of variety, a quick look in July finding all three pumps carrying Spitfire clips.

**Eight Bells**, Cannon St: Good selection of local brews over recent months. In particular the new Wantsum Brewery has featured strongly – Hengist, Dynamo and Turbulent Priest having all made an appearance. However Hopdaemon, Gadds and Nelson have also been available, the latter with the brewery's very own World Cup brew – (Bobby) Moore of the Same – during this summer's competition. "A congenial enough place to watch the World Cup final," as one of our members put it, "though whether that was worth watching is another question."

**Lord Nelson**, Flying Horse Lane: Now having dropped its gay association, early July found a mixed clientèle, the

new landlord/landlady having been there about three months. No real ale, though apparently the Czech bottled Budvar was quite drinkable: the licensee due shortly for a course at Faversham on handling real ale: 'People are asking for it.' A return visit a week or so later found Master Brew and Spitfire on the handpumps. However, the demand cannot have been that extensive as by late August it was back to no real ale again.

**Royal Oak**, Whitfield: Following permission being granted for its replacement by houses, much of the pub has been demolished, leaving little more than a shell of ground floor walls.

**The sad remains of the Royal Oak, Whitfield**



## **DEAL**

**Deal Hoy**, Duke St: Good reports about a barrel of York Brewery Yorkshire Terrier back in the summer: "on good form, served at perfect temperature, and bought with a fantastic pork pie to complement it! So good, stayed for an unplanned second pint." Nice to see Sheps expanding their range again with the occasional guest. Also on were Spitfire and Master Brew.

**King's Head**, Kingsdown: Alex and Amanda still maintaining an interesting range of real ale. Reports earlier in the



summer found one of our members spent a pleasant summer evening enjoying Kingsdown Ale, Cotleigh Peckham Golden Balls, and Dark Star Hophead, while a few weeks later another member spoke very favourably of Gadd's Dr Sunshine's and BrewDog Physic: "Not seen this on tap before, and very well kept." Later in August as venue for that month's branch meeting, we were offered excellent Black Dog Mild from Elgoods, along with Greene King IPA and Crouch Vale Summer Breeze.

**Zetland Arms**, Kingsdown: It's long been widely known that landlord Tim Cobbett, is one of the longest serving landlords in our Branch, however an article in July in the East Kent Mercury filled out the details. Apparently Tim took up the reins in July 1977 (as temporary manager) just a couple of months before the pub played host to two of the 20<sup>th</sup> century's most notable personalities, Harold Wilson and David Frost, who were in Deal making a TV programme about British prime ministers. The visit is commemorated to this day by a photograph on the pub wall. Tim is a direct descendant of the outspoken early 19<sup>th</sup> century writer and traveller William Cobbett. However, we trust that Tim does not share his ancestor's opinion of Deal and it's inhabitants: "...a most villainous place. It is full off filthy-looking people." The pub's standard real ale line up is Master Brew and Spitfire from Sheps, and IPA and Old Speckled Hen from Greene King.

**Leather Bottle**, Mongeham : Maintaining a varying choice of two real ales, mid October found the pub to be another outlet to which Rovenden's Old Dairy Brewery has beaten a path – Blue Top and Red Top both being available on the handpumps.

## SANDWICH AND RURAL

**Place Brasserie**, High St: Another bar looking at local brews and this time from Sandwich's own resident brewer James Sandy and his Wantsum Brewery. In mid August his latest brew Miller's Mirth was on offer, and "what a classic," says our Pubs Officer. "A bitter with a floral, spicy aftertaste – had been to a few pubs during the afternoon and this was by far the best." A far cry from its days as Magnums when the choice always seemed to be Courage Directors or Courage Directors.

**Red Cow**, Sandwich: Consistently good reports over recent months, and a very successful festival during the World Cup, one of our reporters turning up on the Sunday evening thought he'd got the weekend wrong, as there appeared no sign of any festival. "Barmaid looked blank – thought I'd been had. But later found landlord Mark, who showed me the room next to the bar with nine nearly empty barrels, saying that everything sold out quickly, the football on Saturday evening obviously helped! (*No doubt drowning their sorrows, this being the night of the England/USA match – Ed.*) Remaining beers included Skinner's Pint of Two Halves, Moorhouse 2010, St Austell Tribute and BrewDog Physic.

**Carpenters**, Coldred: Following last year's successful dadlums evening, the first Tuesday in August saw once again, the Branch's table set up in the main bar, and six Branch stalwarts challenging all comers to a few hours at the traditional Kentish game. A team of locals was soon assembled and an entertaining evening ensued. We drank Harveys Sussex Best Bitter and Gadd's Seaside straight from the barrel, the pub provided a fine buffet, and a good time was had by all.

**St. Crispin**, Worth: Hospitable venue for our September branch meeting. good selection of snacks and a choice of Harveys Sussex, London Pride, and Gadds Seaside and Rye Pale Ale.

**Duke of Cumberland**, Barham: Following its successful summer festival the pub hosted an Oktoberfest from 1<sup>st</sup> to 3<sup>rd</sup> October. Taking its theme from the famous German festival it was an Anglicised version of the event, with the focus mainly on ciders as a celebration of the apple harvest. There were also locally produced wines on sale, as well as some traditional German cuisine, although lederhosen were definitely verboten. Music was traditional and largely acoustic – folk, jazz, ceilidh etc.

**Hope, Lydden**: Permission has recently been granted to build four houses at the rear of the car park. This will necessitate the demolition of the single storey end of the pub, by the car park entrance, which currently houses the bar servery and toilets (see picture Front Cover). However, Landlady Elaine says that if the development goes ahead it is planned that a new bar will be constructed further down the pub with a rear extension to serve as a restaurant. In mid October the pub was selling Wadworths Henry IPA, Kings Red River and Biddenden Cider

**High & Dry**, Waldershare: At the time of writing the building is encased in

**The High & Dry, Waldershare**



scaffolding, presumably work in progress to establish the cider production unit, etc. for which permission was granted earlier in the year.

**Greyhound**, Sandwich: Having been converted into a restaurant and two flats over the last year or so, the former pub now bears signs offering refurbished restaurant and flat for sale, rent, etc.

**Five Bells**, Ringwould: Alterations now appear complete, but as yet no sign of the pub, closed for the best part of two years, reopening.

## FOLKESTONE & HYTHE

**Chambers**, Cheriton Place: Admirable support of the local community with three of the pub's regular beers and both its ciders coming from Kent brewers and Kent cider producers. With the former comprising Skrimshander, Kentish Reserve and Dogbolter, drinkers must be hard pressed to know where to start. The other regular real ale is Adnams Bitter, and the brewery were also supplying the guest, Lighthouse, in late August. Ciders are Biddenden Bushels and East Stour Medium.

**Harveys**, Sandgate Rd: Bombardier and Courage Best remain the favoured real ale ales in the basement bar, although the handpumps now have the benefit of a protective chrome arch through which the pump handle is just about visible if glimpsed at the right angle – an arrangement which at first glance gives the impression of there being no real ale at all. Whether this is to fool the more youthful punters into thinking that they are drinking real keg, or to make the real ale feel at home amongst all the gleaming fonts is anyone's guess. Over the road the **Happy Frenchman** is still just offering one real

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ale on its four handpumps – Brakspear Bitter in late August.

At the bottom of Bayle Steps the **Princess Royal** remains boarded up, a former landlord now running the **Mariners** on the Stade. In Tontine St. the rebuilding of the **Brewery Tap** appears complete and activity seems now concentrated on internal work – any information on what is planned here gratefully received. In Dover Rd. wooden shuttering now surrounds the site of the former **Railway Bell**, but apparently no work is yet being undertaken. Further down the hill the street's one remaining pub, the **Raglan** was selling Greene King IPA at last visit. Opposite, the **Martello**, having failed to find any takers following its refurbishment as a 21<sup>st</sup> century establishment several years ago, the property has followed the usual route and now appears to be flats. Beers from Cornish brewer Sharp's remain prominent at the **Lifeboat** with Doom Bar and Cornish Coaster on handpump around the Bank Holiday weekend, along with Bate-man's Salem Porter.

**Three Mariners**, Hythe: Another fine example of support for local brewers and cider makers in early September. Except for Young's Bitter the remaining four real ales were all Kentish – Gadds No 5, Incubus, Whitstable Faversham Creek and Old Dairy Sun Top – as were both the ciders, from Biddenden and Double Vision. More Whitstable was to be found at the **Earl of Clarendon**, Sandgate alongside Old Hooky, Greene King IPA and Lancaster Blonde.

## CANTERBURY

**Phoenix**, Old Dover Rd: Closed for a while in the winter following Linda's departure, and put up for sale, this long term real ale outlet appears now to

have acquired new owners. Mid August found half a dozen beers available, although Kent was represented by just a single brew from Whitstable. Other beers included, London Pride, Bombardier, Young's, St. Austell Tribute and Landlord. In Stour St. the **Old Brewery Tap** was selling beers from Hopdaemon and Whitstable, along with Biddenden Cider and Brakspear Oxfordshire Gold, and in Wincheap the **King's Head** was offering Harvey's Sussex Best Bitter, Greene King IPA, Moorhouse's Black Cat Mild and, rarely seen at this end of the county, Larkins Best. In Palace St. at the **Bell and Crown** we found Incubus and Skrimshander plus Whitstable IPA.

**Unicorn**, Bekesbourne: The following came to us by e-mail during the summer:-

"My name is Peter and I am a long-time CAMRA member from Germany. Recently I came by chance to the Unicorn in Bekesbourne and was really very happy with the quality of the beers available there. Food and atmosphere were very good, too. In fact, I was on my way back home via Dover after taking part at the annual Real Ale Holiday organized by the Bradford branch and we certainly only went to the best beer pubs during those five days, but the two beers I had in the Unicorn were the highlight of the whole trip. Both were from the Westerham brewery, Grasshopper and British Bull or something like this. The landlord was very friendly generally and especially by explaining me the way back onto the A2 eastbound which is quite a bit tricky from there. Happy greetings from one of a rather rare species – you won't find that many Germans who

like Real Ale, I'm afraid – too warm, too flat, no head....." (*We know the feeling, and its not confined to Germany* - Ed.)

## BREWING

**Brew Your Own Beer** As Roger Marples reported, after his visit earlier in the year, the Pilot Brewery in Faversham, Shepherd Neame's micro set up, is offering a bespoke service to publicans and others who want to create their own beers. Particularly aimed at festivals and pubs' special events it will brew a beer to a customer's own requirements, and has attracted considerable interest over recent months (see Sheps Late Summer Newsletter). For the more knowledgeable and experienced there is also the opportunity to brew oneself – with of course help from the brewery's own staff. Standard brew is 16 firkins and the customer will normally be expected to take at least four, although Sheps are quite confident that the rest can be easily disposed of among their own licensees. Feedback on the beers is encouraged, as the information enables the brewery to plan ahead and is useful if a brew is asked for again.

**Micro Explosion** Including planned and proposed breweries the number of micro producers in Kent has just about doubled over the last year. The newcomers already operating are **Wantsum** at Hersden, **Royal Tunbridge Wells**, **Tonbridge** at Tudely, **Moodleys** at Penshurst (bottles only) and **Old Dairy** at Rolvenden (see Roger Marples' visit page 44); and those in various states of preparation, **Abigail** in Ashford, the **Farriers Arms**, Mersham, an outfit calling itself the **Kent Brewery** which is looking for a site between Maidstone and Sevenoaks, and a rumoured new brewery in the Canterbury

area. Progress is well under way at Abigail which hopes to be in production by the end of October. The Farriers Arms was hoping to open its brewery late summer but matters have been delayed and it is now also looking to get started during the autumn. The pub has received considerable national publicity over recent months, appearing in an article in *The Publican* and twice on the BBC. There are normally three real ales Timothy Taylor Landlord, Wadworth's Henrys IPA plus guest.

## KENT PUB OF THE YEAR

This year's winner is West Kent's Pub of the Year, the **Flower Pot, 98 Sandling Road, Maidstone**. The GBG



description tells us that this is a genuine street-corner free house that has much to offer real ale enthusiasts. The landlord, an evangelist for real ale, offers a diverse range of four guest ales to complement the two regular beers. The pub's top bar has panelling reputed to be from HMS Victory. Home-cooked pub food is available 12-6pm daily. Frequent live music and jam nights feature, as well as occasional beer festivals. A short walk from the railway station. A Winter Beer Festival is planned for 25<sup>th</sup> to 27<sup>th</sup> November with fourteen ales. Runner-up and East Kent Pub of the year, is the renowned Elephant in Faversham.



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# TONY'S TAPPINGS

The perambulations and musings  
of our Pubs Officer, Tony Wells

"In Vino Veritas. In Cervesio Felicitas" (In wine there is wisdom. In beer there is joy)

## A SCANDALOUS SITUATION

Those of you who live in the Dover area may be aware that the Royal Oak in Whitfield has been demolished. What is amazing and frankly outrageous is that the owner of the pub did not require any form of planning approval for this action to be taken. When I approached Dover District Council Building Control Department I was informed by the Senior Planner that "...only some buildings require demolition consent from the Local Planning Authority, for example demolition consent would be required for some buildings over a certain size in a Conservation Area or a residential building in any location. It is therefore likely that the demolition of the Royal Oak would not require permission from the Council and as such we have no details relating to the demolition."

As a real ale drinker I hope that you are shocked at this news and would ask you to write to the Dover District Council Building Control Department, Council Offices, White Cliffs Business Park, Whitfield, Dover CT16 3PJ and Charlie Elphicke MP, House of Commons, Westminster, London SW1A 0AA protesting at this situation and ask for the law to be changed in respect of getting local authority powers to approve/reject demolition proposals of local facilities, such as pubs.

## IS THERE MORE TO VISITING A PUB THAN DRINKING?

One way of visiting a local hostelry is by taking a walk out in the country whilst getting a breath of fresh air and some exercise. But is there more to it than this? The answer is "yes". In this article I'd like to introduce you to "geocaching" – a high-tech treasure hunting game played with Global Positioning System (GPS) and other navigation devices.

Geocaching started on the 3<sup>rd</sup> May, 2000, one day after Selective Availability was discontinued, resulting in a ten-fold improvement of the accuracy of GPS technology. One GPS enthusiast, wanting to test out the accuracy of the upgraded GPS, hid a bucket, containing prize items and posted its location on the web. Within days other readers read about the hidden bucket and used their GPS receivers to locate it. So geocaching was born.

Caches, waterproof containers containing anything from a small logbook to items for trading, are hidden by geocaching enthusiasts. Clues to the location of these caches, such as latitude and longitude, crossword-style hints, encrypted messages and other puzzles, are then posted on the geocache website. Geocache hunters then use the clues to locate the cache, update the log and trade items – under the simple rule of "Take some stuff, leave some stuff". They keep a track of their experiences on the Geocache website. Today, there are over one million caches worldwide.

However, you don't necessarily need a GPS system. I found out that you can find a cache by plugging the latitude and longitude into Google Maps and printing off a copy of the resulting satellite map. Using the map, the clues and a bit of hunting around I was able to find the caches I was looking for. For example, if I go to the Geocaching website and enter the postcode of my local, the Crown Inn, Finglesham, I find that there are four caches within one mile of the pub. So having had a quiet pint or two I can then get some mental and physical exercise walking to, and locating one or more of these caches.

So the next time you are visiting a pub why not see if there is a cache nearby and add a bit of interest to your visit. More information can be found at [www.geocaching.com](http://www.geocaching.com)

Happy hunting!

## THE BIGGEST STREET PARTY IN KENT?

September is the month when Faversham holds its Hop Festival – a celebration of the hop harvest and the heyday of hop picking, when thousands of Londoners came down to the Kent Hop-Gardens every September for a country holiday with pay.

The town centre is converted into a gigantic street fair with music, entertainment, stalls, folk bands, morris dancers food stalls, visited by over 20,000 people. Of particular note to anyone who likes real ale is that the centre also becomes a very large pub. You can spend the whole day wandering around the streets of Faversham taking in the sites and sounds of the event, with a pint in one hand and a bite to eat in the other. When you need another drink you can wander to the nearest bar which usually is not too far away.



Tony (left) and the gang at the Hop Festival



Gathering the Hop Vines

Being Faversham the majority of the pubs are owned by Shepherd Neame, including the brewery tap. My particular favourite is The Bear Inn, situated right in the Market Square. This pub is split into a number of small rooms which all front onto one long bar running from the front to the back of the pub.

But there are a number of places where you can get real ale from other breweries:

**CAMRA Stall:** Local CAMRA Branches have a stall serving regional real ales and ciders. This year saw a greater choice on offer and was much appreciated by those who took time out to visit it



**The Leading Light:** a Wetherspoon pub in Faversham's bustling Preston Street, serving a wide range of ales at cheap prices

**The Old Wine Vaults:** a large rambling pub opposite the Leading Light. This year, the pub not only had an extra bar in the garden but it also had a real ale bar facing out into the street

**The Elephant:** this old-style drinking establishment is a little way from the town centre, past the railway station, but definitely worth a visit. It seems to be a favourite haunt of morris dancers and it might be possible to watch an impromptu performance or two on the street outside the pub

**Breweries:** There were brewery stalls as well, including Nelson and Whitstable

This was my third year of visiting and it is still as exciting and interesting today as it was when I first went.

## **OF OLD TRACTORS, HOP PICKING AND DARTBOARDS**

The last CAMRA walk of the summer started out at the Frog & Orange in Shatterling. On offer was Theakston's Old Peculier and Black Bull bitter and a particularly good pint of Ramsgate's She Sells Sea Shells. Inside was a display of different types of dartboards, including a London Fives board (12 segments numbered repeatedly 20, 5, 15 and 10), and a Yorkshire board with just a double and bullseye. Outside there was a fascinating display of vintage tractors and engines, hosted by

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Our next destination was south to the Black Pig, through hop fields and across farmland. In the hop gardens, hop pickers were hard at work chopping down the bines and stripping the hop flowers. In a few months time I would hope that these hops would find their way into the real ale I drink. At the Black Pig, a good lunch was had by all, washed down with pints of Sharp's Doombur & Cornish Coaster and Fuller's London Pride. This pub has improved tremendously since the new publicans, Mark Fright and Vick Pegram took over and a

friendly welcome awaits all customers.

We had to change our plans at this point as we found out from Mark that the Charity Inn, Woodnesborough, which was to be our next destination, was temporarily closed. We headed instead towards the Chequer Inn, Ash. Here we sat around in comfortable armchairs drinking Triple FFF's Alton Pride and Greene King IPA.

From Ash we took a short bus trip into Sandwich and stuck our heads around the George and Dragon. This Cask Marque pub had Shepherd Neame Master Brew, Charles Wells' Bombardier and O'Hanlon's Yellow Hammer. Of particular interest was the home-made snacks on offer which include pork pies and scotch eggs. Just enough to help absorb some of the beer we had been drinking. A convivial day out was had by all.

There are no immediate plans for the next CAMRA walk, but there has been a suggestion of holding one towards the end of the year around St. Margaret's. Go to [www.camra-dds.org.uk](http://www.camra-dds.org.uk) to find out more.

## **A LAST WORD OR TWO**

Labeorphilist: someone who collects beer bottles

Tegestologist: someone who collects beer mats

## **MY LAST TAPPINGS**

Well, this is my last Tony's Tappings. I've been writing this column for over four years and enjoyed every minute. However, I feel it is time to move on and concentrate my time and effort on other things.

However, you haven't heard the last from me. I'll still be cajoling you into sending me beer reports, asking you to help out at our beer festival, writing up articles that interest me (and I hope you), asking you for beer reports, letting you know about what's happening in the area, writing up CAMRA walks and other social events, and, did I mention, getting you to send in some beer reports.

Cheers and happy drinking

*Tony*

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# RAMBLINGS & RUMBLINGS

**Mon 9 Aug – Flowerpot, Maidstone:** Trip to judge for pub of the year. My first visit to this congenial street-corner pub, which seems to effortlessly and unobtrusively tick all CAMRA boxes. But the new-entrant is suddenly confronted by six unfamiliar handpumps so 'beer menu' blackboard would have been helpful. Quite a lengthy train journey from east Kent coast, but glad I made the effort!

**Tues 10 Aug - Carpenters Arms, Coldred:** Harveys Best, Gadds Seaside – Lively dadlums evening, frustrating game, just like terrestrial skittles, looks dead easy until you try to aim accurately. Not sure whether consumption of copious amounts of alcohol helps or hinders!

**Thurs 12 Aug – Elephant, Faversham:** Second judging trip, and a pub I'd visited several times before, but this time I was alone and had more time to contemplate and absorb it. It's always struck me as a bit gloomy, due to the black ceiling no doubt, but it looked quite cosy in the evening sunlight now. I viewed the rear patio through an evening shower on this occasion, but this is obviously a great asset to the pub during better weather. Quite a good 'clientèle mix,' even if many seemed like CAMRA types, but nothing wrong with that, is there! The policy of 20p off a pint if you show your CAMRA card is excellent, as reflected in my marking. Conversely I didn't think £3 a pint for non-members was particularly 'good value', though in Faversham it might well be average. Again a 'beer menu' blackboard would be helpful.

**Sat 14 Aug – Town crawl of Hythe and Sandgate:** Replaced rained off Fair-weather Walk to Alkham and Lydden. **Red Lion:** Wantsum Turbulent Priest replaced by Whitstable Native – slightly chaotic service, though true we were there before midday. **Three Mariners:** Old Dairy Red Top, Gadds Summer Ale, Incubus, Young's Bitter, Bushells cider, Blushing Old Wife Raspberry. Fairly quiet lunchtime. **Carousel Lounge:** Elgoods Cambridge, Doom Bar, Adnams Bitter, Ruddles Bitter. A bit busier, not a bad place, better than 'a port in a storm'. **Clarendon:** Hydes Loose Cannon, Jekyll's Gold, Summertime Blue. Interesting to see three Hydes beers on offer, though I think by accident rather than design. By now sun was shining and sat outside pub overlooking blue sea! **Ship:** Summer Lightning, Abbot, GKIPA, St Edmund Fresh Gold, Whit EIPA & Oyster Stout.

**Festival Weekend. Sat 28 Aug – EK Railway Beer Fest:** Great atmosphere, plus all beer £2-50!

**Sun 29 Aug – Black Pig, Festival:** Young's Special, Incubus, PC Steam, Pedigree, Well Blathered, Westons 1<sup>st</sup> Quality, Old Rosie, Pawsley Farm – Changeable weather, got soaked to the gunwales walking back to Ash for bus. (No buses at Staple on Sundays). **Chequer:** Mars Magic, GKIPA – Young barmaid affirmed pleasantly, that "Yes", drowned rats were served. **Mon 30 Aug – Crown, Finglesham:** Dark Star Best, Nethergate Sweeney Todd, Milestone Lion's Pride, Whit. Faversham Creek, Dark Star Sunburst, Over the Moon, Milestone Loxley Ale,

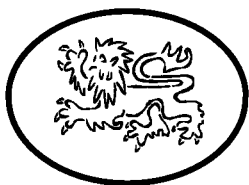
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Nethergate Old Growler, Whit. Native, EIPA – Tail end of festival, Mon pm. Self service policy. Commendably trusting, I guess the goodwill earned would more than make up for the one or two pints drank 'undeclared'.

**Sat 4 Sept – Black Pig:** Pedigree, Doombar, Sharps Cornish Coaster. Crafty visit during ramblers' dance at Village Hall; tested Emergency exit.

**Mon 6 Sept – White horse:** Wherry, Landlord, Loddon Ferryman's Gold. Quiet Monday afternoon, but plenty of worse places to shelter from the rain. **Blakes:** Old Dairy Blue Top, Gold Top, Summer Perle. Apart from glancing out the back door, no idea if it's raining or not

**Tues 7 Sept – Crown & Sceptre:** No real ale. Intended going to the Archer to watch England/Switzerland match but such a palaver getting back, so on impulse made first visit instead to my geographic local for some time. Small local boozer, friendly enough. Strange pricing: bottle of Marston's Old Empire £3 – 5.7% (I think); MB 'Smooth' £2-95

**Wed 8 Sept – Three Cups:** Black sheep, and Suncoaster or something on improvised pump clip. Arrived in not best frame of mind due to bus problems, but welcome underwhelming, so was not tempted to linger to try second real ale. **Fox:** Adnams Gunhill, Directors, Deuchars IPA, Abbot

**Thurs 9 Sept – Shepherd & Crook, Burmarsh:** Adnams bitter, Gadds 5, Bidenden. Small group of five ramblers at lunchtime, but livened place up nonetheless! Didn't like to drink too much as I was leading and needed to keep my wits to cross featureless marsh to Dymchurch

**Mon 13 Sept – Eight Bells:** Gadds 5 and Dogbolter, Hobgoblin, Thornbridge Kipling, Abbot and Abbot Reserve, Wantsum Mores Head, Nelson's Blood. Impressive beer selection – Whatever else is wrong with Dover, we really are spoilt for pubs and beers. Must come back here for an evening's session some time!

**Tues 14 Sept – Bohemian:** Harveys Best, Sharps Special, Doom Bar, Young's Bitter. **Hoy:** Late Red, Whit. Bay, Master Brew, Spitfire. First visit in a long while, not cheap, but pleasant ambience. **Prince Albert, Deal:** Adnams Gunhill, Whitstable Pale Ale, Cottage Southern.

**Fri 17 Sept – Lantern:** Master Brew Spitfire. Surprisingly quiet Fri lunchtime, 'punters been and gone,' declared landlord. Pleasant cosy pub. **Blakes:** Old Dairy Blue Top, Adnams Lighthouse, Anglo-Dutch Spike's on t'Way

**Sun 19 Sept – Jackdaw:** Harveys Best, Broadside, Spitfire. Ramblers arrived about 1220 before the rush, if there was one. Impressed to see barmaid offering samples to someone unsure which ale to try

**Sat 25 Sept – Archer:** Henry's IPA, Doom Bar. About six screens to watch the football, decent beer, pizza made on the premises, what more can anyone want?

**Wed 29 Sept – Royal:** Late Red, Master Brew, Spitfire. Good lunch in bar overlooking sea, friendly service and nice to see it reasonably busy Wed lunchtime.

**Thurs 30 Sept – Kings Arms, Elham:** Golden Braid, Harveys Best, Skrimshander. Yet again ramblers forming 90% of clientèle early lunchtime

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# Kent Small Brewery News

By Roger Marples

## **ABIGAIL BREWERY, Ashford 07734 342278**

[james@abigale.plus.com](mailto:james@abigale.plus.com)

The installation of equipment at this new brewery is now complete and by the time you read this report brewing could have commenced. The owner and brewer is James Wraith, who will be joining SIBA in order to take advantage of their direct delivery scheme.

Initial plans are for two beers, a 4% - 4.2% bitter, and a 3.8% Pale (Golden Ale), these should be ready about mid-October, and will use English hops. There is the possibility of some new brews using American hops next year. The trading area is planned to be East Kent, roughly the area covered by a line drawn East of Maidstone. The brewery has a premises licence, and it will be possible to pick up a cask for home consumption at the brewery. The aim is to start with a small production of good quality cask ales, James wanting to tweak his recipes and ensure his beer up to standard before supplying widely.

Just a quick reminder that all comments, queries, etc., should be sent via the Brewery Liaison Officer Christopher Excell who can be contacted via the local Branch.. Brewery trips and orders for beer festivals should be arranged directly with the brewery.

## **P&DJ GOACHER, Tovil, Maidstone 01622 682112**

The Old has been submitted for the 2011 National Festival of Winter Ales, in Manchester, after winning an award in the strong ale category in the South East Regional event. It is expected that the Stout will be replaced by Silver Star again, next Summer.

## **HOPDAEMON BREWERY, Newnham 01795 892078**

[info@hopdaemon.com](mailto:info@hopdaemon.com)

Greendaemon was brewed for draught sales at the beginning of August and was followed by Dominator for the autumn.

## **NELSON BREWERY, Chatham 01634 832828**

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

No reply was received to my request for information.

## **OLD DAIRY BREWERY, Rolvenden 01580 243185**

[fineale@olddairybrewery.com](mailto:fineale@olddairybrewery.com)

Please see the article on Page 44. Beers from this brewery have proved to be popular in local outlets including Blake's, the Louis Armstrong and the Berry, and top seller is Blue Label. Sales are buoyant and the brewery is working hard at

present. As their slogan states, "You won't want any udder bitter".

**Ramsgate Brewery- Broadstairs 01843 580037**

[info@ramsgatebrewery.co.uk](mailto:info@ramsgatebrewery.co.uk)

Eddie states, "Harvest is mixed: good aromas on the hops, yields not too shabby but the poor things got a bit of bruising – luckily that hasn't affected brewing quality so no need to panic". Green Hop Ale (4.8%) was widely available as this article was being written. It's proving popular, and I tried it in Blake's and was very impressed.. Eddie is hoping to build on this next year. October will see Oatmeal Stout being available. Bottled No. 3 and faithful Dogbolter hit the shelves of ASDA in the autumn, a step up for Ramsgate Brewery's bottling operation, but they remain firmly brewers of cask ale. Eddie brewed with Shepherd Neame at Faversham recently – 'Delta', available in select SN outlets! He is hoping they'll come and brew at Ramsgate some time. Now that would be a brew I'd like to sample.

**Wantsum Brewery –Hersden 0845 0405980**

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

No information from this brewery.

**Westerham Brewery-Crockham Hill, Edenbridge 01732 864427**

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

Mid September saw the Westerham Brewery pass a major milestone -1000 brews or gyles of beer. To celebrate a 1000<sup>th</sup> brew India Pale Ale (4.8%) was produced, using all five hop varieties grown at Scotney Castle and Finchcocks hop gardens in West Kent. Also brewed was a double batch of the Little Scotney Green Hop Harvest Ale (4.3%) made with undried green hops. Both are monthly specials in October.

November sees the return of the General Wolfe Maple Ale (4.3%), made with Bramling Cross hops from Finchcocks and Canadian Maple Syrup, and in December there will be two specials: Double Stout (5.5%) and Gods Wallop Christmas Ale (4.3%). Sales continue to grow strongly with new customers taking cask ales when they did not stock them before.

**Whitstable Brewery – Grafty Green 01622 851007**

[whitstablebrewery@btconnect.com](mailto:whitstablebrewery@btconnect.com)

Rafik states that he has nothing to report for this edition.

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# The National News

By Martin Atkins

## Community Pub Scheme Axed

The Government has abandoned Labour's £4m programme to provide grants, match-funded by loans from the social lender Co-operative and Community Finance, to help communities turn pubs into co-operatives. Instead of the co-operative movement's expertise, which helps to save village shops, there will just be guidance leaflets. Peter Couchman chief executive of the Plunkett Foundation, which was to administer the fund, said: "The Government has turned its back on communities looking to take more responsibility over their everyday lives. Communities owning and running their local pub has been used by the Prime Minister constantly as an example of the Big Society," but "they need help and advice. Legislation for a community right to buy is very welcome but without proper support it will be a community right to fail."

In response, local government minister Bob Neill said pubs don't want "state handouts" – but they do want to be able to "compete on a level playing field, without reams of red tape. The new government has axed the unfair cider tax, is stopping loss-leading sales of alcohol by supermarkets, will be making it easier to play live music and is to give local communities new powers to save pubs." However, the gap has been partly filled by the co-operative movement, which will be developing a package to aid the 82 communities that have asked for help to save their local. It will not be at the same level, but will provide highly

experienced support in business, legal and financial areas.

## More Real Ale, More Real Ale Breweries

At last it seems, real ale might be emerging from the ghetto of old men and enthusiasts in which for so long it had appeared trapped. Recent CAMRA research has found that across the country 54% of people have drunk real ale, compared with just 36% in 2008. Leading the way is the north east of England, where the figures have doubled in the last two years to 74%. And alongside the growing interest in drinking real ale the number of real ale breweries is expanding as well. The encouraging picture in Kent, reported in Local News is replicated across the country, 78 having opened between the publication of the 2010 Good Beer Guide and the 2011 edition. Britain now has 767 operating breweries, four times the number that existed when CAMRA was founded in 1971, and the vast majority small independent craft breweries. Good Beer Guide editor Roger Protz said: "Against all the odds, craft breweries continue to sprout like mushrooms at dawn. Beer in pubs may be expensive compared to cheap supermarkets but drinkers are prepared to pay a bit extra for beer with taste and quality."

## Wetherspoons Rejected

The seemingly irresistible expansion of JD Wetherspoon throughout the length and breadth of the country has just received a sudden check in the Hampshire town of Lympington. In early

September, strong local opposition saw the New Forest council reject a proposal that would have turned a large furniture shop next to the church into one of the chain's outlets. Fears of bad behaviour by inebriated youngsters, additional competition to the town's already struggling pubs, and the proposed location next to the church, appear to be the major factors concerning the town's inhabitants.

### **Fair Deal on Beer Tax**

CAMRA is calling for a fair deal for Britain's 15 million pubgoers and beer, as part of the Government's current review of alcohol taxation and pricing, which is considering the rates and structure of duty on different products, and the differential between duty rates on low and high strength products. The New Year VAT increase will see taxation on a pint of beer rise to over a pound, and CAMRA chief executive Mike Benner predicts that yet more community pubs will shut unless the Government acts. "Relentless tax increases on the nation's pubs are contributing to closures, job losses and a decline in community spirit," he said. "CAMRA will be pressing for targeted measures to support well-run community pubs," which "could include a new class of business rate relief for community pubs, and a compensatory reduction in beer duty." The Government says it is committed to reviewing alcohol taxation and pricing to tackle problem drinking without unfairly penalising pubs, responsible drinkers or local industry. However, producers of real cider will be concerned that it plans to increase tax on cheap, strong ciders.

### **Majors 'Rationalise'**

With the usual disregard for tradition and locality, the inheritors of the UK's

large scale brewing operations, are busy consolidating them within their global organisations. Carlsberg which owns the Tetley brand, and who only recently announced the return of the Huntsman logo with considerable fanfare, will next year be closing the Leeds brewery where it is currently brewed. Cask production will be contracted to Banks in Wolverhampton, and keg production to Heineken's John Smith's brewery in Tadcaster, the latter having already acquired Newcastle Brown following Heineken's own closure of the former Scottish and Newcastle's Gateshead plant (the old Clubs Federation Brewery). We have therefore the prospect of Yorkshire Bitter brewed in the Black Country and Geordie Brown Ale brewed in Yorkshire.

Meanwhile, A-B InBev (the brewery with the name that spells it out – i.e. could be making anything from brake fluid to wedding cakes) has put up for sale its remaining cask brands: Bass, Boddingtons and Flowers. At £15m, and as brewing of all three is contracted out, this no doubt mainly represents brand value, but whether there will be any takers at that price is another matter. However, the Bass trademark still retains considerable kudos, and for that reason, at some price, they will presumably sell.

Molson Coors, however, has seemingly no plans for major divestments or closures, and in fact is enjoying major success in the form of bottle conditioned White Shield Worthington, since the beer's brewing was returned to its home town, Burton. The company itself produces 100,000 barrels a year, and the beer, having proved a winner with Sainsbury's, is now also available at Morrisons, Asda and Waitrose. Other major brewers please note!.

### Wenlock in Jeopardy

The future of the renowned Wenlock Arms in north London is in doubt following an offer for the pub that one of its joint owners described as "so good it would be hard to refuse." However, whether the proposed purchaser has plans for redevelopment or retention as a pub has not been disclosed. Either way a decision on its sale is imminent.

### Highgate Survives

The future of the Walsall brewery which closed in June has been secured following a deal between landlord Empire Star and a local consortium. While the members of the consortium have yet to be revealed, a license to brew has been applied for and the aim is to establish a museum and working craft brewery. It is hoped that brewing will recommence by the end of October.

### No Action on Beer Tie

Following CAMRA's appeal against its initial decision to take no action on the beer tie the OFT reviewed the matter again, and finally reported in mid October. Again, however, it failed to agree with CAMRA's arguments and decided that no action was necessary. Mike Benner, CAMRA Chief Executive described the OFT's decision as based on a blinkered and selective consideration of the evidence. He said that while recognising the concerns of tied pub landlords and the additional cost of tied beer it has failed to recognise the impact of these on consumers, and the inevitability of higher prices, under investment and pub closures. CAMRA will be continuing its campaign against the tie.

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# CHANNEL VIEW

## Brewing in a Ferment

As we report in Local News, Kent now has fifteen breweries with the prospect of another four opening in the near future – the most that the county has enjoyed since the decades immediately following World War II. It is a picture repeated across the country. 78 new breweries have opened between the publication of the 2010 Good Beer Guide and the 2011 edition, making a nationwide total of 767, four times the number that existed when CAMRA was founded in 1971. Most are small craft breweries run by enthusiasts, interested in producing good ale, and who have found a way of combining their interest with their livelihood. It is one of the great success stories of recent years, but as so often success is not without its detractors.

In the case of craft or micro brewers these come in the shape of their larger cousins; not the giants of the industry, A-B InBev, Heineken, etc., for whom, as we point out in National News, cask ale is very much a sideline, but the long established family and regional brewers who are their direct competitors. And the cause of their grievance lies in Progressive Beer Duty, the lower rate of duty for small brewers introduced in 2002 by Gordon Brown during his years at the Treasury following years of campaigning by the Society of Independent Brewers. The economies of scale employed by large brewers, including computer controlled brew-houses, enabled production of beer at very low cost, well below that which the craft brewers could achieve. Just before PBD was introduced many were actively thinking of giving up brew-

ing because they could not match the discounts demanded by pub owners.

The introduction of PBD radically altered the game. Amendments to the initial allowance saw the ceiling set at 60,000 hectolitres which is tapered so that brewers nearer to that level pay more. It proved decisive and 400 more micros have opened since. However, while craft brewing has benefited, the larger producers are starting to feel excluded. Most of course have their own tied estates through which they sell the bulk of their production, however they still wish to sell to the pubcos and the free trade and are now finding that they are the ones unable to compete. A recent article in SIBA's newsletter, by Stephen Pugh of Adnams, forcefully expressed their views.

Whether their complaints bear close scrutiny is another matter. Certainly the likes of Fullers, Young's and Shepherd Neame are hardly under-represented on the country's bar tops, and Adnams themselves appear ever more prominent. Neither has the sector's loyalty to brewing generally been allowed to stand in the way of the lucrative real estate deals and offers from rivals which have seen so many disappear. No doubt at the very moment, they are busy lobbying for alterations to duty, and for the playing field to be tilted more in their direction. But even a doubling of the PBD ceiling, which CAMRA supports, would still leave operations the size of Adnams out in the cold. Maybe, if adjustment is required, an extensive sliding scale, which would benefit the smaller producers most, might be a solution.



What is important, however, is that nothing must be done to discourage the craft brewers from maintaining the revolution that they have brought to British brewing. The range of beers now available bears no comparison with that which existed at CAMRA's inception, for whatever the qualities of the traditional beerage at the time, it hardly included innovation. In fact, ironically, CAMRA's initial objective was very much on the same lines – simply, the preservation and promotion of traditionally brewed milds, bitters and best bitters instead of the keg product that was being foisted on us by the national giants. It was the enterprise and pioneering spirit of the micros that gave us the mouth-watering selection of stouts, porters, IPAs, strong bitters, etc. that we now enjoy. Golden Ales, in particular, which have provided more GBBF champions in recent years than any other style are purely a micro creation.

Microbrewing has proved a revelation, not just for beer, but as an example of successful small scale enterprise. It's a model which has resonances across much of British industry. In particular its use of duty allowances in support of smaller operators surely has applications for many a struggling community pub.

### **“Rebalancing” the Act**

More haste, less speed; look before you leap; marry in haste, repent at leisure: the list of appropriate metaphors and is extensive, and the new government seems intent on standing accused of every one of them. Whether in order to demonstrate its decisiveness and willingness to 'roll up its sleeves,' the excitement of finding its hands on the levers of power, or a genuine concern that there is no time to lose, it is pursuing change at a pace rarely seen

by a British administration. Its review of the licensing laws, "Rebalancing the Licensing Act" is typical. Instead of the normal three months consultation, all responses have to be made within six weeks, followed by a debate in Parliament later in the year. For what is likely to be a major piece of legislation, and one in a complex area which the Government obviously feels was got wrong last time, this appears a ridiculously short time scale. In particular there are some very worrying proposals, which deserve extensive consideration: local authorities having the right to dictate hours, increased licensing fees and a suggested late opening levy to pay for the alleged additional policing arising from pubs being open beyond 11pm (or in future, maybe whatever time the local council might decide).

Unless the Government steps very carefully it is likely to do as much damage, as the problems it is trying to resolve. In particular there is every chance that the community pub, probably 80% or so of the total, and an integral part of the Prime Minister's Big Society, will suffer as a consequence of regulation designed to control the handful of troublemakers. The majority of pubs only want to be able to stay open a little later if they need to, perhaps just at weekends or for special occasions, without having to pay for the privilege. As we all know, the licensing hours that most of us grew up with originated as emergency measures during World War I, and were never dropped. In a modern society, which governments are so keen to refer to as 24/7, and where TV, radio and the internet run all through the night, is it not somewhat incongruous to expect us all to be tucked up in bed with a cup of cocoa and a good book by 11pm?



# INDIA PALE ALE

## The Burton Years

Since the middle ages Burton-on-Trent has held a special place in England for its brewing. While partly due to its central geographical position, it was probably more dependent on the quality of its water and the salts that it contained, particularly calcium sulphate (gypsum) and magnesium (Epsom salts). These both encouraged fermentation and drew the best out of the hops, as well as providing the finished beer with a sparkle and refreshing taste. A 19<sup>th</sup> century verse plays tribute to its widely accepted qualities, as well perhaps, of English belligerence:-

Ne're tell me of liquors from Spain or from France  
They may get in your heels and inspire you to dance  
But Ale of old Burton if mellow and right  
Will get in your head and inspire you to fight.

Burton ale contrasted markedly with London beers, whose soft water, rich in calcium carbonate, was more suited to sweeter brown beers. By the start of the 17<sup>th</sup> century it was gaining cult status in some of the capital's inns and taverns, and a century later there was a regular and established trade, often referred to by then as Hull beer, by virtue of the sea-borne route that brought it south. It also sold widely over the midlands and the north, but its main trade lay with Baltic, which at its peak accounted for 70% of production. However, from the late 18<sup>th</sup> century worsening trading conditions with Russia, and subsequently the disruption of the Napoleonic Wars, saw the business deteriorate and then disappear altogether. Between 1780 and the mid 1820's the number of breweries in Burton fell from thirteen to five. New markets were desperately needed, and a ready made one was there and waiting in the rapidly expanding British Empire.

For thirty or forty years Hodgson's Brewery in Bow had been the main supplier of India Ale, the pale malt based beer developed by George Hodgson during the 1780s, that provided British colonists with a lighter and more thirst quenching drink than traditional London beer. But London water could not compete with Burton water in terms of clarity and bitter-



ness, the sulphates in particular allowing for much increased hopping levels, and a sharper and cleaner taste. During the 1820s the Burton brewers, particularly Bass and Allsopp, began developing their own version of pale ale and by the end of the following decade had eclipsed Hodgson to become the dominant suppliers to India.

We cannot be exactly certain of the nature of mid 19<sup>th</sup> century India Pale Ale, but a lot of evidence suggests that for Bass at least, the export ales produced until the 1970s had never altered appreciably. That being the case, the original gravity would have been around 1060 (6% ABV if fully brewed out), and while less than the 7% to 8% common for stouts and porters of the time the casks would have been primed with sugar, and secondary fermentation would have seen final strength somewhat higher. Hopping rates were high, probably twice the level of modern bitters, although over the long sea voyage the bitterness would soften a little. Normal transshipment was in hogsheads, which on arrival at the dockside would have their bungs removed to vent off carbon dioxide, in order that they might not explode during the voyage.

The success of the Burton brewers saw others attracted into the trade. In 1833 Barclay Perkins and Charrington both began exporting ales and were joined the following year by Simmonds of Reading, exploiting its connections with the army at Aldershot. Scottish brewers such as Tennent of Glasgow and Younger of Edinburgh, with their own versions of pale ale, were also prominent. India Ale, Hodgson's original name for the style came to be superseded by India Pale Ale, and business expanded to include almost anywhere with British colonial rule. Burton ale however, remained the standard against which all others were judged, but for most non-Burton brewers, while it remained a periphery activity compared to their local trade at home, this was of no great concern. Things however, were about to change.

There is a widespread and much related belief that the success of IPA on its home

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soil dates from barrels of the beer salvaged from an 1827 wreck in the Irish Sea. When sold and drunk in England its outstanding quality was so evident that the style took the country by storm. In truth though, however impressive was its sharpness, cleanness and sparkle it was no more widely available across most of the country than it ever had been, until the rapid expansion of the railways from the late 1830s allowed easy and rapid distribution. Allied to the replacement of pewter tankards by glass, demand soared. During the 1840s output from Burton Breweries rose from 70,000 to 300,000 barrels a year, and between 1850 and 1880 Burton brewing trebled in size every ten years. By 1874 Bass was the world's largest brewer.

All of which left the rest of the country's brewers with a problem. IPA was not cheap: 7p-8p a quart compared with 4p-5p for porter or mild, but it was the drink of the rapidly expanding lower middle class – clerks, shopkeepers and skilled workers – a highly successful status drink, and every brewer had to have it in its portfolio. As it was not yet possible to identify the chemical constituents that gave Burton water its particular qualities, the obvious solution was to set up shop in Burton, and from the 1840s a number of the London brewers, followed later by some of the provincial brewers, opened their own breweries in the town. However, with the exception of Ind Coope, who in 1934 merged with Allsopp, they achieved no great success. Generally speaking the incomers' IPA was considered inferior to that of Allsopp and Bass, and by the end of the century, most had closed their Burton operations. But by this time British brewing was once again undergoing a major change. Scientific developments had allowed water to be Burtonised, thereby enabling Burton type beers to be brewed anywhere, while changing tastes saw IPA losing its pre-eminence, and giving way to a less strong and less heavily hopped style of beer, which was increasingly acquiring the popular name of 'bitter'.

And what of the original export trade, the *raison d'être* for the creation of IPA in the first place? From the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century, it came under severe competition from the creation of a young Bavarian brewer, Joseph Groll – the golden lager Pilsner beer. Launched in 1842, its success was immediate and brewers across the continent, in North America and in the colonies of Africa and Asia rushed to emulate it; and a trade which they once dominated, slipped away from Britain's breweries. One critic of British beer complained it had "too much alcohol, too much sediment, too much hops and too little gas." However, with massive investments in traditional plant they were not much inclined to switch to even more capital intensive lager plant. Perhaps to their commercial loss, but almost certainly to our gain, most British brewers remained true to the processes and methods developed in their home country over the preceding centuries, and maintained a style of brewing and beer unique to these islands.



*Martin Atkins*



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# THE PORK PIE

**A fond look at the once great pub snack**

As we report elsewhere food is now a major consideration of pub operators, and that largely means meals, not the simpler and cheaper options, once considered standard pub fare. With sandwiches sometimes starting at not far short of a fiver there is little space for the roll or pie for a pound or two. Perhaps one of the major absences is the pork pie, now usually restricted to being cut up as part of a buffet. Often an unknown quantity, quality was variable (although we were spared the delights of mechanically recovered meat), but the best were excellent, and there was always suspicion that the stack of pies under the perspex food cover at the back of the bar, might not have been brought out from the fridge that morning, but had sat there day after day, and was to sit there, until all consumed.

The latter belief was lent encouragement by an incident in a Dover pub some forty odd years ago. The pub which still exists, and which, in case any taint should reflect on its present incumbents, shall remain nameless, was possessed of such a stack of pies. Stopping for a pint with a friend one lunchtime, my companion bought a pork pie to have with his beer. On cutting it in half he found a layer of mould on top of the filling. Full of apologies the licensees gave him a second pie, which also proved to be mouldy, but not to be deterred he went for a third. This appeared to be OK, and he ate it with apparently no ill effects: however I think I might have given up after the first.

Today, modern health regulations make such occurrences unlikely, but quality can be as variable as ever. Not so, however, at the local Spar shop in Great Haywood, Staffordshire where a couple of recent Beery Boater's trips began. It sells a selection of pies from a local producer of most excellent quality and value: the standard individual, at only 99p, being perhaps half as large again as the average big brand example, and containing the most succulent and coarse chopped filling.

As a point of interest, and as we are approaching the festive season, the following is a 19<sup>th</sup> century recipe from a time when pork pies were of a more substantial construction; and people less concerned about their waistlines.

Pastry:- 3½ lbs. flour, heated quite hot; 1lb. Lard; 1 pint water; ½ tsp salt

Filling:- 3lbs. pork (2 parts fat, 1 part lean) cut very small and well mixed;  
1oz salt; 1 tsp anchovy essence or sauce

Boil lard, water and salt together, pour over flour, mix, knead and shape around 2lb jar. When cool remove jar and fill pastry casing with pork filling. Cover with pastry lid with hole in centre and bake for 2½ hrs (hot first then medium to finish). When baked pour jelly made from stewed gristle and pig's foot through hole in top to fill any remaining space. Apparently the resulting pie when cold had a most subtle flavour, and was most popular around Christmas.

*Martin Atkins*



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## Getting to Know THE OLD DAIRY BREWERY

The Old Dairy Brewery is not the easiest place to find, and should you be visiting, I recommend that you take an Ordnance Survey map with you. For non car owners, like me, the best way is 'bus from Ashford to Rolvenden, then take the marked footpath which is just the Benenden side of The Bull. It is a very pleasant short walk to Rawlinson Farm, on the Hole Park Estate, which is where the Old Dairy Brewery can be found, unsurprisingly located in an old dairy. The cows still live on the farm but now produce milk for a nearby dairy.

Together with Jeffrey Waller of Swale Branch, who was to be official photographer, I had arranged to meet Will Neame at the brewery. However, Will was nowhere to be found, but descrying some fermenting vessels and hearing the sounds of activity from behind a door, we duly entered the brewery to be met by Ed Wray the Head Brewer, Will being his assistant. He seemed pleased to see us and introduced us to Guy Mappelbeck, the ebullient Sales and Distribution Manager, and Lionel Fetz, the Governor.



Lionel had sold his previous business at the beginning of 2009, and started to look for something else to do. As he was a home brewer and CAMRA member, his thoughts turned to starting his own brewery, and after writing a business plan, decided it was feasible and set out to find a qualified brewer. The brewer came in the form of Mick Hoban, an Australian who was thinking of starting a microbrewery of his own. They approached a Yorkshire engineering firm to produce brewing equipment to a high specification, and brewing started in December 2009. Red Top, a beer devised by Lionel and Mick was the first brew. Mick had to return to the Antipodes, for personal reasons, although still keeps in touch with the brewery, and was replaced by Ed Wray who had studied micro biology at Imperial College, London and Brewing at Heriot Watt University in Edinburgh. He was formerly brewing at Hog's Back Brewery in his home county of Surrey.

Production has gradually increased and the five barrel plant brews two or three times a week to supply upwards of sixty outlets all over Kent and East Sussex. The biggest customer of Old Dairy Beers is the well known Man of Kent in Rochester. However the first customer was The Star in Rolvenden, which could be loosely termed the brewery tap, and usually have an Old Dairy beer on the pump. The Ship in Rye is another regular outlet, while a little nearer home, one might try Blake's of Dover where OD beers have proved extremely popular.

After enjoying a libation of Red Top, Lionel told us an interesting story. Apparently the French Champagne house of Heidsieck Monopole produce Gold Top and Blue

Top champagnes, and as Old Dairy brew Gold Top and Blue Top beers they thought it would be polite to drop a friendly note to this French champagne producer to let them know – although the European Union legislation of types of beverage under which Heidsieck are controlled is alcoholic beverage excluding beer, it would be the British thing to do. The immediate response from our Gallic neighbours was to threaten a law suit. The French who invented the word bureaucratic (although it was the British who invented Champagne, under a different name), are still deluging poor Lionel with missives of a hostile nature.

However, life goes on in the brewery, and Ed showed us around the plant of which he is justly proud. Three regular beers are brewed. Red Top at 3.8% uses East Kent Golding and Cascade hops with Maris Otter, crystal and brown malts. The unusual use of brown malt gives a rich brown colour in this best bitter, and the slogan on the pump clip is “You won't want any udder bitter”. Gold Top is 4.5% and is described as a Golden Ale. It is brewed with East Kent Goldings, Styrian Goldings and cascade hops, and Maris Otter pale, Munich and Carapils malts. The last of the regulars is Blue Top, an India Pale Ale at 4.8% using Maris Otter Pale and crystal malts and Styrian Golding Hops. Sun Top a 3.6% summer ale is currently available, brewed with Amarillo hops and extra pale malt. A stout or porter is planned for the winter. Shortly to be produced is an 8-8.5% Double Hop Beer for The Man of Kent in Rochester. This will use Amarillo and Cascade hops and only be available in cask form from the Man of Kent and in bottles from the brewery. There is a tiny bottling and labelling plant in the brewery. There is also talk of producing cider from local apples.

With the upsurge of popularity in good quality real ales, Ed was optimistic about the future. His theory, with which one cannot help but agree is, “The real ale drinker/s in a group will normally choose the location, as the spirits, alcopop and lager/keg drinkers don't care where they drink as most public houses cater for the mass market”. Therefore the seller of microbrewery products has the advantage.

Now, after all that talk and seeing all that beer being brewed we decided that it was time to visit an Old Brewery outlet. Lionel offered to take us to that well known beer house, The Bull at Benenden. On the way to his motor vehicle/ brewers dray he pointed out the large mound of cattle feed (spent grain) and manure pile (spent hops). A happy farmer, who gets free supplies, and happy cows, whose smiles are depicted on all Old Dairy advertising. When we arrived at the Bull we discovered that the Old Dairy Sun Top was not yet on and that we would have to drink the Westerham Brewery Finchcock's Ale first. Lionel looked rather worried at this prospect, as he had more work to do back at the brewery. I suggested to the Landlady that we could perhaps be served some straight from the cask. Good hosts that they are, she spoke to the Landlord and this was done. As I had not heard of the Sun Top before today, let alone tried it, I was keen to taste it. It was in the style of Hop-head, but not as hoppy. We then went to the Star in Rolvenden where we were able to drink Red Top; a totally different, but very enjoyable beer. This was my first visit to a Greene King House for many a year. All in all an informative and interesting visit to this new small brewery.

*Roger Marples*



# FOOD IS THE FUTURE

## The changing nature of pub sales

Not our words of course, but those of Mark Brumby, an industry analyst for the pubs and drinks trade speaking to Martin Hickman from *The Independent* in August, about a recently published poll for *The Publican*.



According to the poll's results, for the first time ever, the country's 52,000 pubs now rely more on food than drink for sales. Information from the 1,000 publicans surveyed, showed that 52% of sales came from food. "Pubs are now officially a food led business", the magazine said. Long term factors including falling beer consumption, competition from supermarkets, changing lifestyles and the high prices that licensed premises can often fetch for alternative uses, combined more recently, with the smoking ban, rising alcohol duty and the recession, have seen thousands of pubs call it a day. Although clo-

surements have slowed from the record rate of 52 a week in the first half of 2009, one in ten pubs have shut in the last five years, and the country's total has dropped 6,100 from 58,600 in 2005.

Meanwhile over the past two decades UK spending on eating out has doubled to £43bn, while over the past five years drinking outside the home has remained static at £29bn. Publicans, brewers and the owners of pub chains have all identified food as their salvation and ploughed money into kitchens, and more elaborate and extensive menus. They have also developed specialist food chains. Greene King in 2007 bought the Loch Fyne chain of seafood restaurants, and has created the family orientated Hungry Horse chain; and Mitchells and Butlers has split its estate into 1,065 pubs and bars, and 814 restaurant pubs including the Harvester brand. According to M&B's 2009 report to investors: "Growing wealth, increasing distribution, and changing social factors, particularly the increasing proportion of working women.....have contributed to this growth." And separately gastro-pubs have appeared, offering more 'sophisticated' dining at cheaper prices and less formally than in a restaurant.

However, before we all rush out to our local to drown our sorrows while we still can, Mark Brumby's own analysis of *The Publican*'s poll is somewhat different, and perhaps a little less gloomy for the traditional pub user. He calculates that the figures must include drink sold with food, "otherwise the numbers would not add up." As heavy food outlets such as Marston's and M&B's managed houses only achieve levels of 35% to 40% food, 52% would be impossible for the thousands of pubs

whose "idea of a food offering is a pickled egg with your crisps." The true figure for food is probably nearer 26%. None the less, the share increases annually, if only by one per cent, and while wet sales are marginally more profitable, wet led sales are drying up – overall the trend is away from wet sales and towards food. Many in the industry see pubs and restaurants converging, moving away respectively from fine-dining and male dominated boozers, towards middle priced and often family orientated eating venues – the pubstaurant, as Martin Hickman put it.

A depressing prospect admittedly, for those of us brought up to believe that a pub was for drinking and talking. But trends are only trends and rarely last for ever. If we believed in the inevitability of trends there would be no CAMRA and we would all be drinking keg; and with beer consumption down and severe competition from supermarkets, the food trade has been the salvation of thousands, possibly tens of thousands, of pubs.

Of course there was a time when the provision of food was all part of the service, the days of coaching inns and taverns, but its hard to equate their character and style with the average modern eatery – often, displaying all the benefits of the corporate mindset, a kind of motorway services cafeteria with alcohol. Contrast the varied and often extravagant hospitality to be found at many a hostelry throughout Dickens' Pickwick Papers. Perhaps, we should just be grateful if pubs retain a corner where we can sit and talk and drink good beer, and not complain too loudly about how they achieve it.



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# SHEPHERD NEAME'S LATE SUMMER NEWSLETTER

## PILOT BREWERY

The Pilot Brewery has been busy undertaking commissions (see Local News). Recent beers and those expected shortly, have included:-

**Bearded Lady:** A 4.8% ABV American style fruity pale ale brewed for the Royal Albion Folk Festival in Broadstairs in early August. All 16 casks sold out over the first weekend, and a double brewing is planned for next year.



**Hops for Heroes:** Brewed for Ashford Rugby Club's Beer Festival over the first weekend in September, which was raising funds for the Help for Heroes charity. A mid-chestnut coloured beer at 4% ABV with a pronounced bitter ending.

**Six of the Best:** 6.0% ABV and using six malts and six hop varieties, the beer was commissioned by the Akkurat Bar in Stockholm, for the city's autumn Beer & Whisky Festival.

**Delta:** Requested by a hops wholesaler, and partly as a test, using the newly-developed hop Delta. 4.5% ABV. It was brewed mid September and in the pubs about two weeks later, but only Shepherd Neame licensees who had pre-ordered. Comment cards were provided to find out what drinkers thought of it.

**Cob Tree Old Ale:** Brewed In late August for the Kent Museum of Rural Life's Beer Festival in September. A malty 4% ABV using Fuggles and Goldings from the museum's own bines.

**Fireworks Ale:** A 3.8% ABV beer for the Bonfire celebrations at Newick, a few miles north of Lewes, using Pale, Crystal, Amber malts and Malted Wheat, and major hop Styrian Golding. All sixteen casks destined for the village's The Bull Inn.

**Rochford Strong Mild:** At 4.5% ABV a higher alcohol version of Old Faversham Dark. Half production will go to South Essex CAMRA's annual Rochford beer festival, with local pubs getting the remainder.

**Porter** is to return this winter following interest from licensees. The beer had been dropped because sales fell off dramatically after New Year, but is now being transferred to the pilot brewery and uses a different recipe – the local CAMRA branch are pressing for a return of the original 5.2% ABV recipe from the 1990's....without any vanilla. Sheps are prepared to brew it almost continuously depending on or-





ders, so get your landlord to order some. Stewart is also thinking about brewing an Ashes beer for the winter test series, using both English and Australian hops.

## MAIN BREWERY



**Hop Festival Ale:** (4.5% ABV) was produced for the Faversham Hop Festival in September, using green hops and, with its usual very distinctive taste.

**Cinque Ale** (4.1% ABV) **Samuel Adams Blonde Ambition** (5.5% ABV) were brewed for Wetherspoon's Autumn Beer Festival. The former, a deep chestnut, hoppy bitter, with a distinct hoppy nose and a fruity palate, was hopped five times – hence the name. The latter was specially brewed by brewers from the Boston Beer Company, producers of the Samuel Adams range of beers, using 100%

Cascade hops picked by the brewers themselves at Redsall's Farm, Faversham.

**Late Red** (4.5% ABV), sales of which were down a bit during the summer, is to become the regular winter beer from October to February, with **Canterbury Jack** (3.5% ABV) the regular summer ale. **Golden Harvest**, and **Top Hat** will not be brewed currently and **Tapping the Admiral** will only be available in bottles, exclusively for Lidl supermarkets. **Christmas Ale** (5.0% ABV) will be available in December, brewed to last year's recipe and **Amber Ale** (4.5% ABV) will be back for January and February. **Rudolph's Reward** (3.7% ABV) will be produced for the M&B pub company and there will be many brewery runs as it is a big contract.



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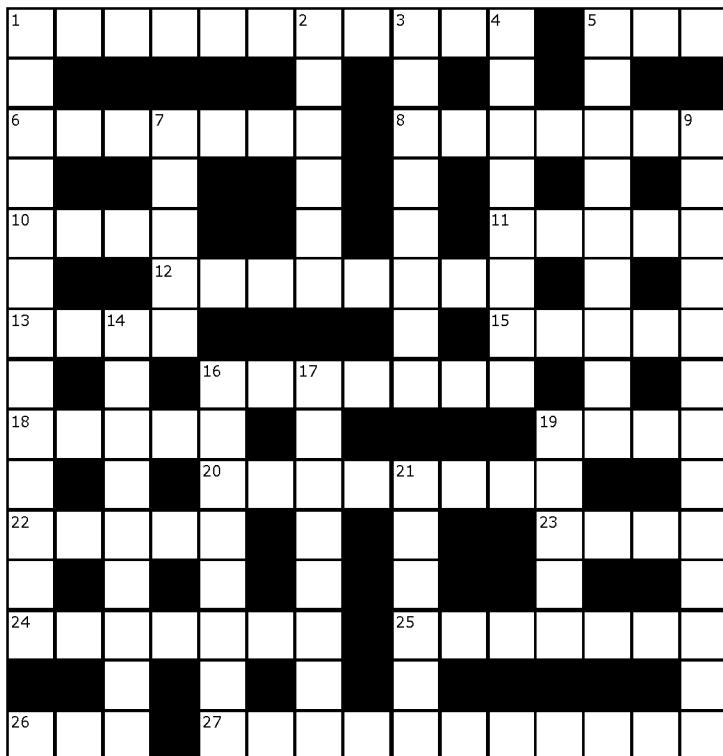
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# CROSSWORD

BY TRISHA WELLS



## Across

1. Topsy husband of Marilyn has pub (5,6)
5. Face an idiot (3)
6. Bird in small Kent brewery (7)
8. Dim Lara confused officer (7)
10. Maria loses her head over song (4)
11. Hang a puzzle in Africa (5)
12. Station in Australia (8)
13. Terrible disturbed ride (4)
15. Ton of hives in rubbish (5)
16. 'Hi Jean!' as they say in Environmental Health (7)
18. From the Middle East terrorist organisation – quite interesting! (5)
19. Almost on the doorstep (4)
20. Horrible gnome without name wandered round French streets (8)
22. Small person – a bird from Switzerland, perhaps (5)
23. Champion in the rowing race (4)
24. Genuine beer to campaign for (4,3)

25. Windy drink? (7)

26. Discover biro in opening (3)

27. Fuller's beer that has been handed down to us! (6,5)

## Down

1. Drink that's warm and icy (4,3,6)
2. Nicest upside down creature (6)
3. Around Deal for nothing with green fuel (4,4)
4. Sheep entrance Thanet brewery (7)
5. Real madam stirs jam (9)
7. Jack is a scoundrel (5)
9. Hide Courage in Mongeham pub (7,6)
14. Rita randomly truncated and mangled by big lorry (4,5)
16. Long drink for big party (8)
17. Hot drink when Ugli is diced (8)
19. Run! He messed about with Indian leader (5)
21. Stu had five hundred and ten in his small flat (6)

**Answers on Page 61**



# THE 'ORRIBLE TRIP

## Part Two of The Beery Boaters Spring 1987 trip

*In our spring edition we left our intrepid boaters on the borders of Wales, and Hon. Commodore roused from his bunk by a shout that Dave had gone overboard. Now read on.*

As can be imagined, Hon. Commodore came up through the hatch like a jack-in-the-box! There was no-one on the tiller. Ray had jumped in the canal to assist Dave, who was floating face-down. Effectively it was his tin leg which had saved him, as it had come off and floated to the surface like a marker buoy allowing Ray to locate him, and drag him up. Later, in jest, we joked that we should get it painted day-glow orange in case of future emergencies. However, it was no laughing matter at the time. When we turned Dave over we saw that he had gone under the boat and the propeller had sliced him across his face and the top of his head. Also, although we didn't know it at the time, he had broken his only good arm. He was, perhaps fortunately, unconscious.

It would appear that 'Oak' had gone aground by Bridge 27 (Irish Bridge). Dave must have lost his grip, unnoticed by Ray, who had put the throttle lever astern to get off the mud, and drawn Dave under the boat. However, our lucky star hadn't quite deserted us. Not only was Dave on the side nearest the towpath, but the only person on the towpath was a nurse on holiday, who immediately took charge once we had Dave on the bank. Also, we were next to a bridge with road access and nearby cottages, so while Ray and I got Dave ashore, Mike Lock rushed off to the nearest house to telephone for an ambulance.

The ambulance, from somewhere called Gobowen, arrived very quickly and its crew, full of enthusiasm, rushed down to the towpath with their stretcher and lifted Dave onto it. It was probably their first interesting incident for years, because as they lifted the stretcher the bottom split and Dave was left lying on the ground! So we grabbed hold of him as best we could and dumped him in the ambulance. They asked us not to telephone any of Dave's relatives; that would be done when it was decided which hospital he would be going to. They obviously realised it was serious: Dave reckoned afterwards that he theoretically died and had to be revived a couple of times on the way.

Meanwhile, 'Sycamore' had steamed on ahead, quite unaware of these events. They did, however, have a similar incident, but with a happier ending when Peter Broberg fell off the stern, onto the towpath and rolled down an embankment. Eventually Oak started off again, our adventures having had a certain sobering effect. By the time that we had reached the great aqueduct at Pontcysyllte (I can spell it but not pronounce it) we were up to taking photographs. For the record, the aque-



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duct, opened in 1805 is reckoned to be one of the Seven Wonders of the Waterways. It crosses the Dee 126 ft below, and is 1007ft long with a trough only wide enough for one boat; and the steerer has a towpath on one side and an unprotected drop on the other. Credit for its design and building usually goes to Thomas Telford.

There was no sign of Sycamore in the basin at the end of the aqueduct, (the truncated remains of the Ruabon Arm originally intended as the route towards Chester and the Mersey), so Oak made the sharp left-hand turn into the narrow, twisty and shallow arm towards Llangollen. We found out how shallow a mile and a half further on when we came across 'Sycamore' proceeding slowly astern – a concrete trough, installed as a temporary repair for a breach, being shallow to allow boats of our draught to proceed. The present inconvenience combined with the strain of the last few hours suddenly took their toll and tempers flared; ending up with John Wilcox and I scrapping, and entertaining the others by rolling down a steep embankment, to the detriment of clothing, spectacles, etc.

We were stopped by the Sun Trevor Bridge, with the Sun Trevor pub opposite, and rather than reverse back to the Ruabon Basin and the Telford pub we decided to spend the evening there. I was changed, in the bar and halfway through my first pint, the incident with John almost forgotten, when Mike Green came in and said that John was sufficiently aggravated to be outside with suitcases packed waiting for a taxi. However, Marston's proved a great calmer of troubled waters. When the taxi arrived the driver was told that his services were not required, and John and I spent a very pleasant evening getting drunk together. We learnt that Dave had been taken to Stoke-on-Trent Hospital, and that his wife would be phoned. John and I were not the only ones getting drunk. Phil left the beer kitty in the pub when he left!

Next morning, Tuesday, we reversed back to Ruabon Basin from where most departed to Llangollen by public transport for lunchtime. Dave McNeir and I stayed at the basin with the boats while a deputation (Phil and Dodger I think) made their way to Stoke-on-Trent to see how Dave was getting on. I was about to go to the Telford for a pint, when someone from the boatyard said there was a telephone call. It was a female who purported to be em-



ployed by British Waterways. Could she have details of the accident please, "Just for our records?" Not suspecting anything, I supplied them. The Telford proved a pleasant enough pub, with superb views overlooking the aqueduct, but the beer was Tetley's and I still hadn't recovered from a surfeit of the stuff on our 1983 Yorkshire trip. After one pint I went to see if there were any other pubs around, and there were. At the end of the basin was a path, and at the end of the path the Wellington, a Marston's pub with several Good Beer Guide entries to its credit. So I had a couple more there before returning to the boats.

The Llangollen party soon arrived back, together with the forgotten kitty, retrieved

from the Sun Trevor, and we set off back over the Pontycysyllte Aqueduct, the Stoke-on-Trent contingent to meet us later. We moored for the night just past Chirk Aqueduct, above the Bridge Inn, "The Last Pub in England", where another pleasant session was spent on Banks's beer, although as we got there before opening time the bottles reappeared and some people were quite merry even before we entered the pub.



Those who had been to see Dave returned to say that he was already showing signs of improvement, and an elderly local produced a box of snuff which was empty by the time that he got it back again. We seemed to leave well after closing time. At the top of the track John Willcocks lost his befeathered leather hat in the canal and retrieved it by simply striding in, picking it up and putting it on his head.

Wednesday morning and things went suspiciously well until just after New Marton Locks when the tiller being stiff, it was found that the rudder had been knocked out of its pivot. Presumably the culprit was a lock cill, and as this had happened with Oak before, suggested that it might have been longer than its theoretical 70ft. I thought I could relocate the rudder easily, but had no luck, only producing great mirth from a passing all female boat, seeing me over the side, stripped down to my underpants. Fortunately the Narrow Boat, then a regular GBG pub, at Maestermyn

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Bridge, Welsh Frankton, was not too far off so we made our way there to telephone the boatyard and, sample some of their excellent beers while waiting.

Sycamore, as usual, had disappeared, heading for Ellesmere. Nowadays, with mobile telephones, things would have been easier, but then we had no means of contacting them, so allowing sufficient time to elapse for them to arrive, Phil and I duly set off by taxi to find Sycamore moored in the basin with the crew wondering where we were. They had stationed Chris on the bridge at the entrance to the arm so that when Oak arrived he could tell us where they were. However, he kept mistaking other boats for Oak to the bewilderment of their crews, who saw this presumably demented type leaping up and down waving and gesticulating at them. Phone calls to the Narrow Boat and Middlewich Narrowboats, established that the fitter had not arrived, but was scouring the canalside near Bridge 5 and could not find any boat, and I suggested that he drive to Ellesmere and I would direct him. On his arrival, it rapidly transpired that he was confusing Bridge 5 above Frankton Junction, where Oak was moored, with Bridge 5 above Hurleston Junction! But at least I got a lift back to my boat.

It was now about 4pm, but the Narrow Boat showed no signs of closing and the crew were making the best of it. The fitter replaced the damaged rudder with a new one, but it appeared we had bent the skeg, which houses the bottom rudder pivot, and it would still not operate correctly. He suggested we struggle on 23 miles to the English County Cruises boatyard at Wrenbury, with its dry dock and hydraulic lift. Middlewich Narrowboats



would inform them of our impending arrival on the morrow. We agreed, but I cannot now understand why he did not put back the old, already damaged, rudder. As it was, the new rudder, suspended by only its top bearing, was also damaged by the time that we got to Wrenbury, causing our damage deposits to suffer even more! Anyway, underway again, and with steering taking a little more effort than usual, we reached Ellesmere within a couple of hours for a most enjoyable evening.

In spite of Oak's rudder problems we made good progress on Thursday and reached Wrenbury by mid-afternoon, contenting ourselves for lunch with a couple of pints of Banks's at the Horse & Jockey at Grindley Brook. Grating noises on lock cills indicated that no good at all was being done to the new rudder. Once in dry dock, work with a blow-lamp and hydraulic jack soon had Oak properly fitted with a new rudder. Meanwhile we had an unusual view of the boat with its big, vicious-looking propeller – Dave Underdown would have been interested to see it!

We went no further that day but took our evening's sustenance at the two nearby pubs, the Dusty Miller and the Cotton Arms. The former, canalside and a converted mill, sold Robinson's beers and very good food: the landlord very proud of his inclusion in a recent CAMRA publication, 'Classic Country Pubs'. The latter sold Greenall Whitley beers and was more 'basic'. More the 'village pub', perhaps. Whilst at Wrenbury, we saw a copy of Wednesday's 'Shropshire Star' which had a

report of Dave's accident in it. It was virtually word for word what I had said to the so-called 'British Waterways Official' on the telephone at Ruabon! I subsequently learned that BW had no knowledge of the accident. The only humorous aspect was that I was described as "being in charge of a group of disabled people", but perhaps someone saw the crew coming out of a pub after a session!

Friday 2<sup>nd</sup> May and last full day. Having abandoned any thoughts of going up the Shropshire Union Main Line towards Chester, we decided on lunch at the Barbridge Inn followed by a return to Middlewich that evening. With only 7 miles to Barbridge we made a late start at 8am, Oak seeming a delight to handle with its new rudder. However going down Hurleston Locks I contrived to clip the rudder out again, but as just a slight touch I was confident that I could refit it easily. But could I? Eventually, I had to recourse to telling the rudder, the boat, the crew and anyone within fifty yards what I thought about it, in no uncertain terms. The air was blue. That did the trick as on the next attempt the rudder went in with no effort!

Now bypassed, the Barbridge Inn used to be not only canalside but on the busy A50 as well, and was a regular night-time stop of mine when I was lorry driving. In those days it had a reputation for good food and good beer, and knowing that Middlewich wasn't particularly good for pub food in the evenings, we took the opportunity to eat there as well as lubricating ourselves: luckily the pub closed on time! By the time we set off, quite a strong wind had got up, and at the start of the Middlewich branch Speed ("I always steer better after a few pints") managed to nudge a few moored boats with Oak. He blamed the wind, but other factors may have played their part. The rest of the afternoon's run of 10 miles and 3 locks was uneventful and about 6pm we moored above Wardle Lock in Middlewich.

That evening, at a pub in the town, I was expressing my feelings about the trip and casting doubt on whether I would organise another 'Beery Boaters', when Jeff presented me with a pewter tankard which the lads had bought for me, so I could not really say 'no' to trying just one more the following year. A little while and several pubs later I found that the tankard was missing and proceeded on a tour of all the pubs which we had visited to try to find it. The others let me go, knowing full well that Jeff had retrieved the tankard in order to have it engraved. Eventually I got it back again at the Kent Beer Festival in July. It spent several honourable years at the Swingate, then at the Royal Cinque Ports Yacht Club and is now lodged in Blakes The inscription on it is 'Jim the Beery Boater'. Also awarded was a new institution, 'The Order of the Golden Bog Chain', for the most amusing incident of the trip. John Willcocks won it for (among other things) his attempts to walk on water, but as he has not been seen since the end of 1987 the award has not been made since. The evening ended with fish & chips on the way back to the boats.



Normal last-day routine on Saturday – i.e., clean the boats, finish off the remains of the breakfast food and back to the boatyard for 9am. Eventually we were ready to take the boats down Wardle Lock and turn left to the boatyard. The crew of Oak



prepared the lock for Ray, who was on the tiller. But when the top gates were opened it was only for Sycamore, with Hon. Commodore's brother at the helm, to come put-putting past into the lock, earning him the comment of the week, "Bloody Greens! Rat-bags to the end!" (or something rather similar!). And that, as they say, was that. After the normal group photographs we were away in various directions, the Dover contingent, plus Dodger, in the mini-bus, on their way to spending the evening in Rugby with our old friends of the Rugby CAMRA Branch.

Postscripts: We ended up by not getting a particularly fair deal from Middlewich Narrowboats. Our accident deposit was charged for two rudders, when we felt the damage to the second one was their own fault, and for a boat pole which was on board when we arrived back; and as the accident deposit exceeded that for one boat the Sycamore's accident deposit was debited as well. We decided to go elsewhere the following year.

Neither were we best pleased with the press or the health authorities. The Shropshire Star told the Dover Express about Dave's accident and the first thing that his wife knew about it was a reporter knocking at the door, even though we had been told that the hospital would see to that. Dave made a complete recovery and has not missed a Beery Boater's April canal trip since and only a couple of end-of-year trips. He maintains that he was told at Stoke-on-Trent Hospital that boating was good for him (apart from the falling-in bit) and that he shouldn't give it up. Hence he says that he goes boating on Doctors' Orders!

*Jim Green*

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# LAST KNOCKINGS

**Not Quite Binge Drinking** What good fortune that Tony Blair's recourse to alcohol when things got especially tough was just short of the level that would have categorised him as a binge drinker. His recent account of the years in Downing St., reveals that consumption during the evening could be a stiff whisky or gin, say a treble (3 units), followed by half a bottle of wine (5 units) at dinner, leaving him right on the cusp: binge drinking, according to government diktat, ensuing at consumption of more than eight units in a session. How po-faced and puritanical we've all suddenly become. In the 1980s Denis Thatcher's fondness for gin and tonic was more a matter of amusement rather than censure. Admittedly he was not the prime minister, only her spouse, but then Margaret apparently liked a drop or two herself. Perhaps in the ideal world there would be no excess drinking, smoking or over eating, along of course with no crime, war, disease or anything else unpleasant, and we would all spend our time in harmonious brotherly love, but then one suspects, it might be just a little boring.

**Four of the Best** This photograph was taken somewhere in our Branch area earlier in the year. Those who know the establishment will undoubtedly recognise it, and it did get a mention in an earlier issue of Channel Draught. As we said then, the only other public house that we are aware of where one might find four Goachers beers on the hand-pumps is the redoubtable Black Lion at Lynsted, the other side of Faversham – home to excellent real ale and sentiments that would dismay our friends in Brussels. As we suspect the details on the pumpclips will be too small to read the four ales are, from left too right, Mild, Gold Star, Fine Light and Imperial Stout. (The location is revealed on Page 61)



**A Most Uneven Playing Field** The recent conviction of Sir Ranulph Fiennes for a car accident in which another driver was seriously injured amply demonstrates the double standard that exists in our transport legislation – one law for drink drivers, one law for everyone else. Sir Ranulph who had just completed the 42 miles High Peak Marathon pleaded guilty to falling asleep at the wheel and was fined £1,000 pounds and given four penalty points. Had he however, been just marginally over the drink drive limit, and whether or not he had fallen asleep or caused an accident, he would automatically have received a ban, followed by all the difficulties and

complications of retrieving one's licence, including proving to authority that he could live for several months without a drink.

**A New Campaign?** Perhaps at last, after banging our heads against the wall for years, the current plight of the British pub has entered the general consciousness. At this year's general election all three major parties espoused policies designed to help pubs, and the media too is now providing regular coverage rather than intermittent shock horror stories that someone or other's local was being torn down. Even the future of that bastion of tradition, and all that is good in old England, 'The Bull' in Radio Four's *The Archers*, appears to be in jeopardy. No doubt Ambridge's Bull will be saved for the nation, but it is not just the decline in numbers threatening the British pub as we knew it. The depleted national total, now around 52,000, includes gastropubs, family eateries, and youngster-orientated town centre neo-clubs complete with DJs. A recent survey for *The Publican* reported that 52% of pub sales came from food (see page 46), and although some have argued that the true figure is much lower, there is no disagreement that it is substantial, and is growing. In many respects the position of the traditional pub is similar to that of real ale when CAMRA was formed: if it was a wild creature it would be on the red list of endangered species. Perhaps, while there are still a few remaining, we should establish a Campaign for Real Pubs – possibly, as CAMRPUB is an impossible mouthful, CAMRINN or maybe CAMRHO, the Campaign for Real Hostelries.

**Beer is Good For You** So says a new report by the Beer Academy. Rather than being unhealthy it is a natural product made from natural ingredients - water, malt, hops and yeast. It contains important vitamins, fibre, antioxidants which may protect against heart disease and some cancers, and minerals such as silicon which may lower the risk of osteoporosis. And normal strength beer also works well as a thirst-quencher, being sufficiently low in alcohol to allow balanced hydration to be maintained. The report also debunks the myth that beer makes you fat. At 95% water, it contains few free sugars to convert into fat.

### **Beer Festival – Beijing style**

Never let it be said that *Channel Draught* does not provide a comprehensive view of beer drinking. Here (left) we see how the Chinese enjoy a beer festival. This is Yanjing Brewery, celebrating 30 years of brewing. Apparently it cost the equivalent of a pound to get in and a pound for a 2 litre jug of beer. We don't know, however, whether it would have qualified as real ale, but we suspect not.



*Old Wort*

It takes all sorts to campaign for real ale

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Channel Draught 45

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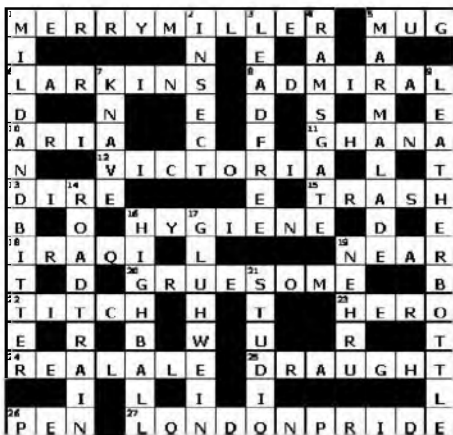
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### Thanet

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## CROSSWORD ANSWERS



**Last Knockings answer:** The location of the 4 Goachers Handpumps was the Royal Cinque Ports Yacht Club, Dover.

## 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

AI 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 Taxi 01303 226490

Folk. Taxi 01303 252000

Premier Cars 01303 279900

National Express 0870 5808080

Stagecoach 0870 2433711

National Rail Enq. 08457 484950

### Trading Standards Office (East Kent)

01843 223380

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01303 850294

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## And Finally..... The Chinese Beer Drinking Deer!

As the Christmas season inexorably approaches, it seems that Rudolph's red nose may not be such a myth after all. A deer in China has developed the taste for beer. The local party animal is from Weihei in Northern China's Shandong province and after trying out beer now disregards water altogether.

According to Zhang Xiangxi, who works as a waitress at the resort's restaurant, she discovered the deer's unusual tastes last November when she was cleaning up after some customers. She says: "I saw a bottle of beer was still half full so I playfully passed it to the deer. Unexpectedly it bit the bottle and raised its head and drank all the beer in one shot." Since then, whenever there is any leftover beer she takes it to feed to the deer.

However, beer isn't the only booze the deer drinks, it will happily drink wine if beer isn't available. 'It likes beer the most. Some times it can finish up to three bottles,' said Zhang.

So if on the night of Christmas Eve you find an intoxicated deer with a glowing nose on your roof slurring 'Jingle Bells', you know the reason why.

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