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Branch of the Campaign for Real Ale



**CAMPAIGN
FOR
REAL ALE**

**Issue 72
Summer
2017**

CHANNEL DRAUGHT

INSIDE

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GOOD BEER
GUIDE
TRAIL**

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tour of our GBG
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AND
POURING**

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CHANNEL DRAUGHT

ISSUE 72
Summer 2017

Welcome to the Summer 2017 edition of Channel Draught – the last we anticipate in the present format, as we plan from this Autumn to change to full colour gloss. That will be eighteen years since our first edition, a folded A3 sheet published in Autumn 1999. As they say, a lot of water has passed under the bridge since, and sadly a lot of pubs and not a few of our members are no longer with us.

However, on a brighter note and headlining this issue, as you will see from our cover, is The Lanes success in being chosen as East Kent Pub of the Year, a great achievement after less than three years since first opening its doors. We also congratulate the Five Bells in Eastry for being awarded Branch Pub of the Season for Summer this year.

In Ash, as we report in Local News, the campaign for a community purchase of the Chequer continues, but the future of other threatened pubs remains uncertain or has been decided unfavourably – we understand that the Red Lion, Wingham now has permission for residential conversion. Nevertheless, across the branch, the number of pubs and bars offering good quality real ale continues to far outstrip our allocated space in the Good Beer Guide, and we have created a new web page in an attempt to bridge this gap (see page 24).

Elsewhere in this edition we report on the start of this year's Good Beer Guide Trail, take a look at how your ale is delivered in the pub, provide an update on the progress of the Deal Hop Project, and publish an abridged version of a famous fictional pub crawl – plus all the usual items.

Martin Atkins



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EVENTS DIARY

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| <i>Thur 24 - Mon 28 Aug</i> | Beer Festival, New Inn , Canterbury* |
| <i>Fri 25 - Sun 27 Aug</i> | Deal & Betteshanger RFC Beer Festival , Walmer* |
| <i>Sat 26 - Sun 27 Aug</i> | Brogdale Cider Festival , Faversham* |
| <i>Sat 26 - Mon 28 Aug</i> | Beer & Railway Festival, East Kent Railway* |
| <i>Wed 30 Aug</i> | Stagecoach Service 82 Bus Tour |
| <i>Fri, 1 - Sun 3 Sep</i> | Lydden Bell Cider & Pork Festival , Lydden, Dover* |
| <i>Sat 2 Sep</i> | Beer & Cider Festival, East Malling Research |
| <i>Sat 2 - Sun 3 Sep</i> | Faversham Hop Festival* |
| <i>Mon 11 Sep</i> | 2017 GBG Trail – Berry , Walmer 1200 noon |
| <i>Fri 15 Sep</i> | Angel & Demons Brewery Party , Capel-le-Ferne* |
| <i>Fri 15 - Sun 17 Sep</i> | Cider & Beer Festival, Crabble Corn Mill , River, Dover* |
| <i>Mon 18 Sep</i> | Branch Meeting, Carpenter's Arms , Coldred. |
| <i>Fri 22 Sep - Sun 8 Oct</i> | Kent Green Hop Beer Fortnight* |
| <i>Sat 30 Sep</i> | Kent Regional Meeting, London Tavern , Margate |
| <i>Tue 10 Oct</i> | 2017 GBG Trail – King's Arms , Sandwich 1200 noon |
| <i>Fri 13 - Sat 14 Oct</i> | Green Hop Festival, Berry , Walmer* |
| <i>Mon 16 Oct</i> | Branch Meeting, Deal Hoy , Duke Street, Deal |
| <i>Fri 20 - Sun 22 Oct</i> | Beer & Cider Festival Spa Valley Railway , Tun'dge Wells |
| <i>Fri 10 Nov</i> | 2017 GBG Trail – Mash Tun , Dover 1pm |
| <i>Mon 20 Nov</i> | Branch Meeting, Breakwater Brewery Tap , Dover |

Branch Website www.camra-dds.org.uk

Branch meetings are held every third Monday of each month and start at 7.30pm.

For full details about rural rambles, pub strolls and 2015 GBG Trail, please email

john@ramblingrumbler.plus.com or call 01304 214153.

Events marked * are not organised by CAMRA



MARSTONS DEAL WITH CHARLES WELLS

In a further concentration of power at the national end of British brewing, Marston's has acquired the brewing interests of Charles Wells of Bedford. The midlands based brewery, which brews in Wolverhampton (Banks's) and Burton (Marston's), and owns as well Jennings in Cockermouth, Wychwood in Witney and Ringwood, has promised to keep the Bedford brewery open.

Along with the acquisition comes a plethora of well-known brands including Courage, Young's and McEwan's, as well as Wells' own flagship brew Bombardier, now one of the top ten selling cask ales in the country – gathering together in a single ownership many of the famous names from the last couple of centuries of British brewing. Other parts of the deal gives Marston's the UK rights to a range of top foreign beers, and grants the company a long term exclusive arrangement to supply all beer, wine, spirits and minerals to Charles Wells' 200 plus pub estate, which the Bedford company will be retaining.

The development echoes Marston's purchase of Thwaites brewing division in 2015, along with which came ownership of Wainwright and Lancaster Bomber, Thwaites free trade business, its distribution depot and dray fleet, and the brewing of Thwaites Original Bitter and the Occasional Range of beers. Similarly, while Thwaites still brews a limited range at its micro-brewery, Charles Wells has plans for a new small 30,000 barrel per annum plant to brew exclusively for its estate. It expects to increase its tied estate, and both companies view the future primarily in terms of pub retailing.

Meanwhile, Marston's sees itself as a major force in the industry, embracing large scale brewing, ownership of a substantial tied estate, and drinks distribution over a wide area. As well as acquiring a large chunk of Charles Wells, it has recently reached agreement to become exclusive drinks distributor to the 1300 or so Punch Taverns pubs that are not being sold to Heineken, and will be taking on distribution to 255 pubs run by Birmingham pubco Hawthorne Leisure.

Unsurprisingly, Marston's chief executive officer Ralph Findlay is delighted with the deal, which he says, offers the company the opportunity to extend its trading area in the south of England and Scotland. He said: "we have demonstrated our ability to acquire, integrate and develop beer brands such as Hobgoblin and Wainwright." However, CAMRA has reservations, suggesting that the consolidation could reduce choice, value for money and quality for beer drinkers.

CAMRA chief executive Tim Page said: "We're also wary of one company increasingly controlling a larger and larger share of the market, which is seldom beneficial for consumers." He accepted that Marston's had a positive track record of keeping breweries open and in situ, and often of investing to increase capacity, and he urged the brewery to continue that policy. And he added: "We'd also encourage it to protect the brands that it has acquired and increase the range available to beer drinkers, by continuing to supply them alongside the existing beers produced by Marston's-owned breweries. It's reassuring to hear Charles Wells intends to continue brewing in Bedford." (See Last Knockings)

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The Local News

Contributors - Martin Atkins, The Mcilroys,
John Pitcher, Tony Wells, Jim Green etc.

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

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

channel.draught@camra-dds.org.uk

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

DOVER

East Kent Pub of the Year Four awards in less than three years is no mean feat, but that is what **The Lanes** has achieved in a little over two and half years since it opened in December 2014. Having already won seasonal awards for Spring 2015 and Autumn 2016 it was chosen as Branch Pub of the Year 2017, and subsequently Debbie and Keith have now added East Kent Pub of Year 2017 – a resounding endorsement of the quality of their ale and the success of the pub. The award took place on the afternoon of Friday 11th August in a crowded pub, Branch Chairman Martin Atkins complimenting the couple on their achievement, the wide and varied choice of ale, and Kentish cider and wine, and entrusting

that they would keep up the good work.

As we reported in our spring edition the **First and Last** at East Cliff is now open again, but in exactly what format we are uncertain. We understand it is operating as a hotel, with the bar apparently extant, and we assume it is therefore open to customers as a pub. However still no information whether or not real ale is being sold. In August there were problems when a bottle landed on the roof, seemingly thrown from the cliffs above, and shattering into the garden where children were playing.

In St. James Street, at the foot of Castle Hill, the selection at the **White Horse** remains normally three ales and a cider – Harveys Sussex Bitter remaining standard. Guests over recent months have included Adnams Fat Sprat and from Timothy Taylor Boltmaker and Landlord. In the warm weather, the first floor level rear garden makes a pleasing setting for a pint or two.

At the **Castle**, Russell Street, as far as we are aware the pub remains bereft of real ale, but plenty at **Blakes**, around the corner in Castle Street. Blakes Bitter brewed by Millis, remains as house beer but is complimented by ales from far and wide – Adnams always featuring strongly, and the brewery's Oyster Stout available on a visit a few months back.



Keith and Debbie Lane receive their East Kent Pub of the Year Certificate from Branch Chairman, Martin Atkins.

In the Market Square the **Port of Call** reopened in the spring and now carries the name **Burger Brothers**, and indication no doubt of its dominant raison d'être. Real ale, however, still appears to be sold, although judging by the price is Keg Keg only – £5 a pint being quoted recently. Meanwhile, in Bench Street at present, real ale continues to be absent from the **Duchess** and the **Funky Monkey**.

However, elsewhere in Bench Street, no lack of real of course, at the **Mash Tun**, where also, an extensive range of ciders can be found. If spoilt for choice may we recommend the most local from **Green Oak Farm** at Waldershare: usually available as medium or dry, it always satisfies. House beer comes from Hopdaemon and over recent months has been joined by among others Oakham Asylum and Citra, Seaside, Totnes Stout and Hopdaemon Red. The fine views of the Castle and East Cliff revealed by the demolition of Burlington House and Centurion House are now severely curtailed by the St James' development, but we trust its opening will bring more than adequate compensation.

Cullins Yard, Cambridge Road: The home to Dover's first indigenous brewery for the best part of a century, usually one or two from in house Tír Dhá Ghlas will be found on the handpumps. Visits earlier in the summer found Pig's Ear and Jimmy's Riddle alongside the regularly appearing Adnams Broadside.

In Cannon St. Wetherspoon's **Eight Bells** offers a broad choice from its twelve handpumps, while in Biggin Street, opposite the Town Council offices, Bombardier and London Pride are regulars at the **Prince Albert**. At the **Golden Lion**, Priory Place recent choice has normally been John Smith's or the eponymously named Golden Lion Ale from a source yet to be identified. At the **Priory Hotel**, May saw the

appearance of Wembley 67, a celebratory ale, no doubt, for some sporting success, but falling between England winning the World Cup in 1966 and Manchester United the European Cup in 1968, the particular event escapes us.

Boar's Head, Eaton Road: As we reported in our Spring edition after seven years Dean was due to leave the pub in mid July, but, at the time of writing, we have no further news and assume therefore that the change took place, and that a new licensee has taken over. In Elms Vale, the **Crown & Sceptre** was selling Whitstable Bay and Hog Island over recent months. Not having heard otherwise we assume the pub is still under the management of Dave Hicklin.

In Ladywell the seemingly "inevitable" which we spoke of in our Spring edition, needs, it appears, some qualification. As reported the **Park Inn** is undisputedly offering Indian food, but in exactly what capacity appears uncertain. The bar remains, and on a visit in August was offering Gadds No 5 on hand-pump, but whether or not just for diners, or available for casual drinkers remains uncertain. Further information on this real ale/oriental crossover required

A few doors along the **Rack of Ale** maintains an ever changing selection of real ales alongside a variety of ciders. Over recent months beer choice has included brews from Adnams, Thornbridge, Nethergate, Cotleigh, Manning and Dover's very own Tír Dhá Ghlas – a barrel of Pig's Ear being available in mid July. Special commendation, however, must go to Cotswold Hung Drawn and Portered, a most flavoursome and satisfying dark ale.

Louis Armstrong, Maison Dieu Road: Real ale choice almost exclusively from Kent micros, complemented by occa-

sional brew from further afield, usually as swops with the normal suppliers. Hopdaemon, Gadds, Old Dairy, Westerham and Goachers feature strongly with more recently some of the newer Kentish brewers making an appearance. Romney in particular is proving popular, one of the brewery's Murmuration one-offs, a 5% pale ale, disappearing with amazing rapidity over one weekend. At the nearby **Red Lion** in Charlton Green the choice is two real ales, normally Plough from the G2 Brewery in Ashford, and either Timothy Taylor Landlord or Good Old Boy from West Berkshire.

At the **Thirsty Scarecrow** the extensive cider range is supplemented by real ale. Recently Kieran and Kate have moved away from cask, to CAM-RA compliant KeyKeg – in mid August a choice of two including an excellent tasting Old Dairy Kiwi. Cask will reappear at Green Hop time, with subsequent availability yet to be determined. Still no sign though of real ale at the **Eagle**.

In Lorne Road business appears to be booming at Dover's newest pub, the **Breakwater Tap**, where we hear that a substantial expansion of capacity is planned for the brewery. Up to six or seven cask ales are available covering a wide range of styles. One evening in mid July the selection included Dover Pale Ale, Dockers Porter, Minnow Mild and the malty dark amber Castle on the Hill, together with a trio of pale ales using American hops – Hellfire Corner, Daybreaker and The Mogul. Opening hours remain from 6pm Thursday and Friday and from 12 noon Saturday and Sunday, but we hear that these may well be extended in the near future.

At the **Railway Bell**, Kearsney real ale comes mainly from national suppliers. In late May a visit found a choice of Abbot and Sharps Atlantic, and a

month later Old Golden Hen, Abbot and Doom Bar. In Temple Ewell the annual Rotary Charity Beer Festival at the **Fox**, this year transferred from the May Day Bank Holiday weekend to late June, offered twenty real ales plus entertainment. Pride of Sheffield remains the pub's regular ale alongside a selection from across the country, with recently, seemingly special attention to its namesake – both Cotleigh Fox and Exmoor Fox having appeared over the summer.

In River, speculation surrounds the future of the parish's two pubs. The **Dublin Man O' War** remains closed and boarded up with much local opinion expecting the site to end up as housing. Meanwhile we understand Shepherd Neame is seeking to dispose of the **Royal Oak**, a development which recent history would not endow with great optimism.

DEAL

In Beach Street the former Sheps **Clarendon Hotel**, now divided into a number of different uses, has reduced its bar area still further. Latest visit found the step down central bar due to be converted to some kind of residential use according to an on-site workman. That now, would appear to leave just the **Burger Brothers** operation with its selection of KeyKeg beers.

A few doors along the **Bohemian** offers four or five local and national brews – in early June Wadworth Horizon, Doom Bar, Truman Swift, Ripple and Gadds No 5. Later the choice included Salopian Oracle, a 4% ABV golden ale described as having a clean refreshing taste with slight citrus and elderflower. At **Dunkerley's** St. Austell Tribute remains the regular handpump offering although the pub also sells various KeyKeg ales. And in South Street in June the **Taphouse Beer Café** was selling Kirkstall Framboise (3.6% ABV) – good reports, although as the beer

was on tap (as opposed to handpump) we do not know whether or not this was compliant with CAMRA criteria.

Just Reproach, King Street: the usual wide and varied selection of micro brews, including in early July the strangely named The Frog is Fried. Earlier, in mid June, Goacher's Mild and Best Dark were available, the latter attracting the comment: "Top form with excellent rounded taste....superb balance of bitterness with slight choc overtones." And in late June a visit found Brew York Jarsa – "perfect summer drink", Downsland Dark Life, and Intrepid American Pale – "a real cheek sucker, very hoppy."

In the High Street the **Rose Hotel**, at the time of writing, is currently closed and undergoing refurbishment to create a "bijou hotel" (a variation on boutique hotel?) – no information on availability of real ale when reopened. The **Spires Bar** in the Landmark centre was selling Canterbury Ales Summer Ale in early July, while in mid June **Der Bär** was offering angels and Demons Bombay Social – "clean, crisp, dry, spicy bitter taste....ideal for hot summer weather."

At the **Saracen** in Albert Square, one of Sheps' more recent brews, Hog Island East Coast Pale Ale (4.8% ABV) was available at the start of June. Apparently it has achieved considerable popularity, particularly with large pub-cos. Opposite, the **Prince Albert's** selection included Nelson Defiance in mid July, while visits to the **Ship** in Middle Street earlier in the summer found a heavy preponderance of Gadds beers – No 5 and No 7, Summer Days and She Sells Sea Shells – plus the old faithful, Dark Star Hophead.

The **Deal Hoy** was selling Whitstable Bay Red, Spitfire Gold and Master Brew in early June and the **Alma** Thwaites Landlord, Ripple Best Bitter and Landlord. In Golf Road a board outside the **Smugglers**, (former Jolly

Gardner) is advertising real ale – no further information at time of writing – while in Queen Street, by the time you read this the **Hole in the Roof** should have reconfigured itself as the **Queen Street Tap** operated, we understand, by a company called StoneGate. Opening night was set for 24th August. Four cask ales are planned with both local and national brews represented.

Also in Queen Street we hear that ex Dover Wetherspoons manager, Kenny, now running the **Sir Norman Wisdom** is looking to expand the pub's beer range. In mid-June Whitstable beers were much in evidence in the shape of Kent Coast and the all too rarely seen Kentish Reserve. Later the pub's range included the iconic Kelham Island Pale Rider.

In Bowling Green Lane, it is good to see the **Bowling Green Tavern** open again, after we found it unexpectedly closed on our early March walk, while at the **Farrier** in Manor Road more recent months have seen Ripple Steam Farmhouse, St Austell Proper Job and Caledonian Edinburgh Castle 80/- on the handpumps. In mid July a visit to the **Three Horseshoes** in Mongeham found Fuller's London Pride available, while at the Leather Bottle Dan has now replaced gravity dispense with handpumps on the bar, which in mid-August were offering beers from Goody and Romney.

Lose one, gain one is an apt description for current state of play In Upper Walmer. The former **Railway** is now just a cleared site awaiting development, having already seen one application for housing turned down. Meanwhile the **Freed Man** on Dover Road offers a range of ale that customers at the former might only dream about, as exemplified by a barrel of Triple FFF Citra Sonic (4.4% ABV) in mid-June – "good head with full citrusy taste....nice fruity balance overall."

Berry, Canada Road: As usual a vast selection of ever changing beers, many never heard of before (with some from breweries never heard of either), and retaining Harveys Sussex, and Hop-head and American Pale from Dark Star, as regulars. Good to see brews appearing from Dover's new Breakwater Brewery – The Mogul: “superbly kept with fresh head and amazing aroma for this 6% West Coast style IPA.”

In Kingsdown the **King's Head** provided a pleasant venue for our May Branch Meeting. Beer choice was Oakham Inferno, Gadds 5 and Brains Rev. James. Other ales appearing over recent months have included Oakham Hare & Hedgehog, Raw JR Best Bitter, Greene King IPA and Skinners Lushingtons.

SANDWICH & RURAL

Branch Pub of the Season: Summer 2017 Sunday August 13th saw Branch Chairman Martin Atkins present the award for Branch Pub of the Season to Mary Franks, landlady of the **Five Bells**, Eastry, to resounding applause from pub regulars. Chosen from a short list of some half dozen pubs, the selection was a tribute to the pub's welcoming and friendly atmosphere, enhanced by its pleasing garden for those long

daylight evenings. Real ales are Wantsum Black Prince and Greene King IPA as standard coupled with ever changing guests sourced from both local Kent and across the country. In June the pub had hosted our monthly regular Branch Meeting, as well as, for the first time, our Branch's AGM.

Any visitor in search of real ale in Sandwich would do well to start down by the old Toll Bridge where the **Admiral Owen** and the **Crispin** can always be relied upon. Local ales can be found at both, including at the Crispin, its own house beer brewed for it by Mad Cat. Visits in late June found additionally Dark Star Hophead and Adams Broadside while Tonbridge Coppernob was available at the Owen. Meanwhile a short walk away the **George & Dragon** in Fisher Street normally offers three real ales, including regularly from the West Country Otter and Butcombe and more locally Wantsum.

Elsewhere in the town the **Red Cow** was selling Gadds Seashells, Old Dairy Blue Top and Dogbolter on a visit in June while in the **Fleur de Lis**, selection included Harveys Sussex. At Sandwich's was recently established real ale outlet, the **Mermaid's Locker**, recent beers have included Saltire Pride, Gadds 3, and from Canterbury Ales, Bavarian Red and Millers.

Outside Sandwich the Branch still faces the prospect of a diminishing number of rural pubs. It seems now that the **Red Lion** in Wingham has been lost, the appeals in respect of the Council's non determination of change of use and listed building applications having now been allowed. Also seemingly gone is the nearby **Tuns at Staple House** (former Three Tuns) where permission has been granted for change of use to residential dwelling plus erection of nine dwellings and shop.

Also, with future uncertain is the **Aylesham Working Men's Club**. An



Martin Atkins presents the Summer Pub of the Season Certificate to Mary Franks, Landlady of the Five Bells, Eastry

THE LANES

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application for conversion to flats has already been refused, and we believe an appeal decision is now awaited. In St. Margarets, work is well under way to convert the **Hope** to residential use and construct dwellings at the rear, while at the closed **Red Lion** a decision on change of use to residential is awaited.

Meanwhile, in Ash the campaign to save the **Chequer** continues. At the time of writing, with the extended share scheme, about 70% of required finance has been accounted for. As we report in National News, with so many pubs now being purchased by local communities, the prospects appear increasingly optimistic. However, future prospects for the closed **Charity** at Woodnesborough remain a mystery – as far as we know, no plans to reopen or convert to some other use. No further news either about the **Bricklayers** in Shepherdswell, where the property remains empty and boarded up. Recent reports say that fencing has now also been erected across the car park at the rear, and we understand there is concern in the village about the pub's condition.

At Shepherdswell's other pub, the **Bell Inn**, up by the Green, we hear that a change of licensee is imminent. Visits earlier in the summer found Directors and Doom Bar available. And in Coldred the **Carpenters Arms** annual beer bash in mid-summer found the usual varied selection – one dedicated drinker recording Skinner's Porthleven, Dark Star Hophead, Long Man Long Blonde, Arbor Blue Sky, Butcombe Original and Ramsgate Summer's Day.

Plough & Harrow, Tilmanstone: Apparently surplus to requirements for the Faversham brewer, Shepherd Neame has disposed of the pub. The new owners, we understand, are in the process of refurbishment with the intention of reopening as a pub.

Wrong Turn, Barfrestone: Wantsum

Black Prince Mild remains a regular amongst a selection with a strong Kent contingent – recently including Goody Genesis, Gadds Dr Sunshine and Musket Flintlock. At the start of July the pub was selling the ever popular Oakham Citra. Earlier in the year one weekend visitor's comments reflected the pub's popularity: "Sunny Sunday weather bringing out the crowds!"

At the **Two Sawyers**, Woolage Green, a visit in late May found Doom Bar and Hop Head on the handpumps, plus the hunger inducing aroma of steak and kidney pie wafting out of the kitchen. Meanwhile the **Royal Oak**, Nonington was selling Greene king IPA, Doom Bar and Master Brew, the **Griffin's Head**, Chillenden also Master Brew plus Spitfire Gold and Hog Island, and the **Fitzwalter Arms**, Goodstone Master Brew and Whitstable Bay.

Black Pig, Staple: As we reported in our spring edition, owing to ill health Ali and June have sadly had to leave the pub – the change-over brought forward from August to mid July. We hope the new licensees will maintain the wide selection of ales which over recent months has included Theakston Highland, Moorhouse's Springwatch, Harveys Sussex, Timothy Taylor Boltmaker, Adnams Ghostship, Jennings Cumberland, and Gadds Dr Sunshine.

July saw the **St Crispin** in Worth host our monthly Branch meeting, another pub with a fine garden, and one where the quality of its food has drawn particular comment – "excellent lunches!" said one real ale drinker. Regular ales are London Pride, Gadds No 5 and Doom Bar.

In Finglesham the **Crown** normally offers a choice of three real ales, recent visits have seen Dark Star Hophead, Moorhouse's White Witch, Canterbury Miller's and Knight's Ale, and Bombardier Burning Gold. At Northbourne, the **Hare & Hounds** is currently being

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refurbished with reopening due early September and new tenants Danny & Jade from the Crown at Eythorne. Earlier in the summer a visit to the **Plough** in Ripple found Ripple Steam Best and Gold 3.5, Fullers ESB and John Smiths.

Jackdaw, Denton: Regular ales over recent months have been Spiffire Gold, Ringwood Razorback and St Austell Tribute, together with either Landlord or Boltmaker from Timothy Taylor. In other parts of the "Gaskell Estate", early June saw Harveys Sussex, Hophead and Broadside at the **Duke of Cumberland** in Barham, and Boltmaker, Hobgoblin Gold, and the Angels and Demons brews Harry Hop and Panama Jazz at the **Gatekeeper**, Etchinghill.

In Elham a visit earlier in the year found Old Dairy Blue Top, Whitstable Hüll and Wantsum 1381 at the **Abbot's Fireside** and the usual selection of Golden Braid, Harvey's Best and Skrimshander at the **King's Arms**. In Lyminge the **Coach & Horses** was selling Purity UBU, Black Sheep Baba and London Pride.

In Capel in early June the **Royal Oak** was selling Master Brew and Brew XI, and the **Lighthouse** Greene King IPA and Doom Bar with Romney beers shortly to be added – the brewery's beers have been selling well in bottle, so the pub plans to try out draught.

CANTERBURY

New Inn, Havelock St: "Nine years ago, almost to the hour," recalled Katrina in mid July, "We waved Kurt and Margaret off to the sunny mountains of Austria, and I held the key to The New Inn." No doubt locals will recall how long Kurt had been there, must have been best part of twenty years or more, to a time when, within a few minutes' walk, there was also the **Royal Dragon**, **Leopard's Head** and **Brewers Delight** – some of us can even remem-

ber when the pub was owned by Allied Breweries and sold Ind Coope beer.

Today many and varied are the ales at the New Inn, and the anniversary was accompanied by extensive celebrations and consumption of ales: "I slightly lost track of the beers, which were hurtling out as fast as I could put them on," Katrina said. A visit one Saturday evening during the hot weather found a choice of Betty Stoggs, Wherry, G2 Plough, Gadds Mild, Musket Ball Puller, Ticky Brew and Velocity.

Two Sawyers, Ivy lane: Another survivor from decades ago, the pub provides a useful watering hole no distance from the City centre – "a nice relaxing haven from the Saturday afternoon hustle and bustle." Recent ales have included Bombardier Burning Gold and Adnams Mosaic.

On Old Dover Road, the **Phoenix** continues to offer four plus real ales, with an emphasis on Kentish brewers. Over the last few months have been seen Whitstable EIPA, Welton English Pride, Adnams Bitter, Cotleigh Old Buzzard, Musket Flintlock, and from Old Dairy Red Top and Uber Brew. And in Wincheap in mid June the **King's Head** was selling Greene King IPA and Mild, Olde Trip to Jerusalem and Harveys Sussex.

Outside the city in early June, at the **Black Robin**, Kingston there was Doom Bar, Gadds No 5 and Purity Hop Goose, and in Bossingham at the **Hop Pocket** Cotleigh Tawney Owl, Greene King IPA and Tribute. In Stelling Minnis, at the **Rose & Crown**, Bombardier, Youngs Bitter and Goacher's Dark were available, and at the **Chequers** on Stone Street Tonbridge Copper Nob, Hophead and Old Dairy Red Top. And more Red Top could be found at the **Duck**, Pett Bottom.

Earlier in the summer Adnams Ghostship and Doom Bar, were seen at the



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Red Lion, Bridge; Landlord and Ripple Steam at the **Duke William**, Ickham; and Wadworth 6X, Fullers Seafarer and Greene King IPA at the **Rose**, Wickhambreaux. At the **Haywain**, Bramling the now annual beer festival took place over the Spring Bank Holiday weekend with 35 ales and ciders, while a visit in late July found London Pride, Bombardier, Old Dairy Uber Hop and Goacher's Fine Light on the hand-pumps.

FOLKESTONE

Recent months have seen real ale choice in Folkestone boosted by two new micropubs – the **Troubadour** in Tontine Street and the **Bouverie** in Bouverie Road West. The Troubadour opened in May, and a visit a few days later found a selection of beers from Kent Brewery, Oakham, Gadds and Angels/Demons, plus the legendary Thornbridge Jaipur. At the Bouverie in mid June the pub had two Kentish handpumped real ales from the Range Brewery and Goody's.

Just around the corner, however, the **Happy Frenchman** was closed, while at **Harveys** real ale choice remained Bombardier and Courage. At **Chambers**, there was Adnams Lighthouse plus three locals, Pig & Porter Human Noise, Hop Fuzz Adhoption and Harry Hop from Angels and Demons. Meanwhile, the country wide ever changing selection at the **Firkin** comprised Oakham MK Ultra, Tiny Rebel Fubar, Gadds Cloud Surfer (small batch series) and, from the home of fanciful names, Arbor I Speak for the Trees. Other beers recently have included *Kent Pale*, Bristol Milk Stout, and Gloucester Gold, and from Dover's Breakwater Cowjuice and Castle Hill.

At midsummer Hophead, Doom Bar, Timothy Taylor Golden Best and Long Man Long Blonde could be found at the **Pullman** and Hobgoblin, Fortyniner

and Banks's at the **British Lion**. In the Guildhall the regulars Harveys Sussex and Greene King IPA were joined by St. Austell Proper Job, Brains Rev James and Adnams Broadside, and in **Kipps** the choice was Skylarking and Human Noise from Pig and Porter, and Fallout and Belg'ish from Hop Fuzz.

In the Stade four or five ales appears normal fare at the **Mariner** with a selection of regulars, including Broadside, Harveys Sussex Best and Doom Bar, and less commonly seen brews like London Pride and some of the Kent locals such as Mad Cat. In mid June the selection at the **Ship** was Youngs Bitter, Doom Bar and Bombardier and Bombardier Gold, and at the Lifeboat, Romney and Hop Fuzz Belg'ish. At the end of June, the **East Cliff Tavern**, described by one drinker as a rarity these days, being a mid terrace local boozier, was selling Ripple Farmhouse and Kent Prohibition.

At Sandgate, a visit in late June, found home brewed Cotter VC at the **Ship**, alongside Greene king IPA and Abbot, Summer Lightning, Dark Star American Pale Ale and Hophead. In Hythe there was Doom Bar at the **Carousel** and Titanic Steerage, Musket Trigger and Gadds No 5 at the **Potting Shed**. At the **White Hart** beers were Greene King IPA and Panama Jazz from Angels and Demons, and Old Dairy Red Top at the **Red Lion**.

The **Three Mariners** has featured Rockin Robin ales heavily on recent visits plus a strong representation of Kentish ales – brews from Old Dairy, Pig and Porter, Hopdaemon, Musket and Goacher's all appearing. Young's Bitter remains a regular.

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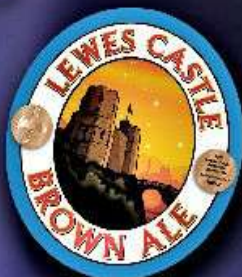


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*World Beer
Awards 2015*

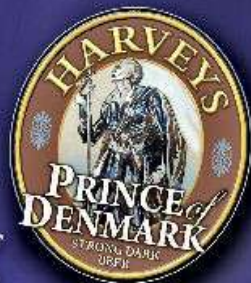
**WORLD'S
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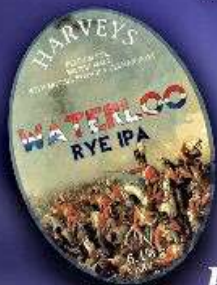


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Latest news informs us that everything is going very well, and they are just awaiting on the weather and the hops! A summary of the position towards the end of July was as follows:-

A full survey completed at the end of June of the project's 130 sites found 94% of 275 Prima Donna Hop Rhizomes were growing well



A competition to name the first bottled beer using their hops, to be brewed by Ripple Steam Brewery in September, came up with **Hopping M.A.D (Made Around Deal)**, and local Artist Peter Webb is designing a bottle label.

Around 50 members have attended at Brewery Tours at Ripple Steam to further the project's understanding of the brewing process, and a number of members are researching hop drying options for 2018 (this year we plan to use the hops for our green hop beer)

There have been well attended monthly meetings at the Bohemian, Just Re-proach and Berry, and monthly advice stalls are run at the Landmark Garden

They will be planning the harvest process during August/September, and a number of members have volunteered as harvest marshals. This harvest is still going to be an interesting process. Hop rhizomes take three years to mature so this year's will be the lowest, but they have to coordinate the harvest on one day in September over all 130 sites!

The celebration of their first harvest & beer will be on 28th October

Membership for 2018 will be opening in January, and there is already a waiting list. Anyone wishing to join, please drop a line to info@dealhopfarm.org.uk.





KENT SMALL BREWERY NEWS

(The following includes only breweries for which we have a report)

Amazing, Ship Inn, Sandgate: New beer is Bad Boy (5.5%). Originally “a brew that went wrong” it proved immensely popular and is now brewed on a regular basis.

Breakwater, Dover: Beers currently brewed are:- HMS Minnow Mild (2.8%), Dover Pale Ale (3.5%), Hellfire Corner Golden Ale (4.1%), Docker's Porter (4.1%), Cow-juice Milk Stout (4.2%), Castle on the Hill Amber Ale (4.4%) and Mogul West Country IPA (5.6%). Available to local pubs, most can usually be found at the Brewery Tap, open 6pm Thur/Fri and from 12 noon Sat/Sun.

Brew Buddies, Swanley: Since the last report a rebrand has taken place, with new pump clips and new web site (brew-buddies.co.uk). Seasonal specials have been introduced and are selling well. At the Hoppers Hut micropub in Sidcup, the new design has gone down well and sales of bottles and cans from Brew Buddies and other breweries continue to sell well.

Brumaison, Marden: Still being operated part time producing BB (Traditional Bitter 3.6%) and GB (Golden Blonde Ale 4.4%). Monthly sales are increasing with high levels of repeat business. The next few months will see winter recipes developed, and planning for full time running of the brewery.

By The Mile, Broadstairs: Not had much time to brew recently. Keeling's Old Stout (5.0%) sold well at The Tap Room in Cliftonville and was due to be supplied to the 39 Steps earlier in the summer. All bottles from the same batch have now gone, and a further bottle brew was planned. A cask of Aris Wheat (5.3%) went to The Conqueror, Ramsgate in early July.

Caveman, Swanscombe: Due to other commitments, and the need to promote and develop new beers, the main Caveman beers are currently being brewed under contract at Leatherbritches Brewery, Derbyshire. It is hoped that brewing will return to the Cave in the near future. Green Caveman (4%) a light hoppy seasonal beer using Kent Goldings was launched at the Dartford Spring Fayre in May.

Farriers Arms, Mersham: Presently producing regular bitter, Farriers 1606 (3.7%), plus seasonal ale Summer Gold (4.1%). Normal range is guest beers plus two of their own. Easter saw Hoppity Hop (3.8%), with vanilla notes.

Goody Ales, Herne: Seasonal summer beer Good Innings (ABV 4.6%) being brewed at time of writing – full bodied golden ale with citrus hoppy flavour. Monthly events 'Firkins at Full Moon' in the brewery's on-site bar remain popular.

Hop Fuzz, West Hythe: Unit Number One (the brewery tap) is now open on Thursdays from 5 - 9 p.m. as well as afternoon and evening Friday to Sunday. Best selling beers are Martello and Bullion Bomb. Fall Out (3.6%) is the baby brother of Bullion Bomb. A new beer, Galleon (4.6%) is a coffee flavoured best bitter, while AdHoption (4.2%) is sometimes produced to support a local dog rescue home.

Isla Vale Alesmiths, Margate: Brewing of popular beers continues. No news of any new beers. Bosun's Best is brewed for the Wheel Alehouse, Birchington, and Two Halves for the Two Halves in Margate. New premises still sought.



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www.theanchoratwingham.com

Maidstone, Maidstone: The brewery continues to brew the Eight, First Light and Alpha 38 beers and they are regularly on sale at the Flower Pot, and being distributed around the South East by Firkin Ales and AVS agencies. Sales in spring saw an upturn and plans earlier in the year to sell the brewery are currently abandoned

Margate, Margate (former Cottage Pub, High St): Three 2.5 HL copper tanks have been installed over the new bar and five self-pour beer taps provided. It is envisaged that this will provide the shortest ever distance between fermentation vessel and customer, with no prior contact with air until it hits the bottom of the glass.

Musket, Maidstone: Having outgrown its 5 barrel plant plans are in hand to relocate on the same site and acquire a 15 barrel plant. Heat problems in the hot weather required fans going 24/7 during brewing. Powder Burn porter sold well during the winter and will be brewed again in November. It was replaced by Matchlock Mild for spring and summer. Real ale tents were provided for the World Custard Pie Championships at Coxheath, and for Classic Cars on Bearsted Green, and MMK Branch supported by donating a cask of beer for the MENCAP Fayre.

NauticAles, St Peters: Maiden Voyage (4.2%) Maiden Voyage is now available all the time. Sophie's Choice, a bottled beer in memory of Micky Rush's daughter who recently passed away, is planned to be available from her birthday October 10th. A Green hop ale is planned plus repeats of the best of the top 10 already brewed.

Nelson, Chatham: Very busy over the past few months which has left stocks of ale low. Regular swaps now with other breweries across the country, and the copper coloured Mutineer's Revenge (5%) is being listed nationally with Wetherspoons.

Old Dairy, Tenterden: Uber Brew (3.8%), a light hoppy ale, is a new regular brew and is selling well – available in cask and bottle conditioned. Summer Top (3.6%) appeared in late spring. Dark Side of the Moo 'limited edition' – conditioned in whisky barrels, and sold in bottles in the shop only.

Ramsgate, Broadstairs: Seasonal Brews have included Old School Mild (4%) in spring, followed by Festive Ale (3.8%) – pale ale malts with tropical fruit hop aroma, and Summer's Day (4.3%) – amber ale brewed with 'Munich' malt for a full body, a little aromatic malt and a combination of spicy Kent and fruity west coast hops. Speciality, high ABV brew, High Tide Tripel – blended gueuze bottled with a little brett – should be ready for late summer. Some of the High Tide base beer will appear in cask over the coming months – 'dangerously delicious'.

Range Ales, Lympne: Regular beers continue and joined by some seasonals as regulars on customer request. New summer beer Beach Head (3.7%) contains a chocolate malt to give a light, amber colour – darker than normal summer ales.

Rockin' Robin, Boughton Monchelsea: New dry-hopped pale ale Crafty Robin (5%) has sold well, and will be brewed again. Most of the light/amber beers have been brewed regularly throughout Spring and into Summer. Mildly Rockin was brewed for May and Rock A Hula has made a welcome return. Session ale Reliant Robin remains the best selling beer. Robin's 'Beer Barn', open Friday to Sunday now has a full food/drink licence. Blizzard of Oz and Stoutly Robin back in October.

Romney Marsh, New Romney: For the second year running Romney Amber Ale won the Taste of Kent Award for Kent Beer of the Year. Recent small batch one-offs were Murmuration 01 (4.0% copper-coloured session bitter), and Murmuration 02 (no details) available in July. Also new for the summer is Romney Rye Mild

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(3.2%). The brewery has also sponsored the refurbished RHD Railway's Bar Car and collaborated on the 'Ales by the Rails' beer hut at Dungeness Station.

Swan On The Green, West Peckham: The normal beers, Trumpeter (4%), Bewick (5.3%) and Fuggles (3.6%) have been on over recent months, with plans were to alternate Cygnet (4.3%) and Chinook (4.3%). Golden Summer, a very hoppy 5.3%, and the popular Ginger Swan (3.6%) are additionally being considered for the Summer. Last year's problems with the cellar air conditioning are now sorted.

Tír Dhá Ghlas, Cullins Yard, Dover: Current range Jimmy's Riddle Bitter (4.7%), Pig's Ear Bitter (3.7%), Jolly Roger Mild (3.7%). One or two normally to be found at Cullin's Yard and occasionally elsewhere locally.

Wantsum, St. Nicholas at Wade: Fully relocated from Hersden by the beginning of April. After a few teething problems back to full brewing – "frantic" in early summer to catch up on back orders, and was supplementing with guests. Taproom and shop, up and running, and crowd funding is in process to attract investment.

Whitstable, Grafty Green: Native Bitter and Oyster Stout sent to Shrewsbury and West Shropshire CAMRA beer festival. At the South East SIBA judging Whitstable took gold for Kentish Lager and Whitstable Pilsner, and silver for Raspberry Wheat Beer. Renaissance Ruby Mild took silver in cask mild/brown, which lost out only to Langham's Triple X which went on to be named Overall Champion!



Best Of... Web Page

How many times have you been travelling and wondered, "which pubs in the area serve the best real ale?" You could buy CAMRA's Good Beer Guide, but due to the limited space in this fine publication not every pub can be featured.

So, we decided to launch the **Best Of...** web page.

What is the Best Of... web page? Imagine a web page that features pubs across the branch that serve good quality real ale, that provides succinct information about each pub as well as a link to the pub's WhatPub entry, and is updated regularly to reflect any changes.

That's what the "**Best Of...** web page is all about.

How are pubs selected? Every day CAMRA members use CAMRA's National Beer Scoring System (NBSS) to rate the quality of the real ale they have been drinking in our local pubs. These scores are then used to identify all the pubs from which we receive regular reports of good quality ale being served. These are the pubs that feature on the **Best Of...** webpage.

Where can I find it? Go to our website at www.camra-dds.org.uk then click on the **Best Of...** link in the left hand menu.

Of course, without consistent reports a pub cannot be included, so if you are a CAMRA member and feel that your local, or a pub you know of, should be on the **Best Of...** web page, score the ale and send it to us.

For more information about CAMRA's NBSS go to www.camra.org.uk/nbss

Situations Vacant

Tony Wells, our Branch Pubs Officer, has expressed his intention of standing down at June's AGM. As a result a number of positions and roles will become vacant:

- Pubs Campaigns Officer (see below)
- Pubs Preservation Officer (see below)
- Pubs Database Coordinator
- Good Beer Guide Coordinator
- Pub of the Year Coordinator
- LocAle Coordinator
- Cider Representative

You can find more information about these roles on CAMRA's Member's Dashboard

Pubs Campaigns Officer/Pubs Preservation Officer

Monitor and report on pub activity across the branch; Coordinate campaigns relating to pubs under threat of closure or unwanted changes; Keep abreast of council policies and plans; Assist in maintaining an accurate pub database

Important

The Branch Committee has a number of other vacant positions, including Treasurer and Social Secretary. If these are not filled the branch will struggle to operate. This may cause the branch, including the beer festival, to become defunct and close.

If you'd be interested in volunteering for one or more of these roles or have any questions then please feel free to contact Tony at pubs.officer@camra-dds.org.uk.

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Tucker's Grave Inn Devotees of traditional pubs will be concerned to hear that the National Inventory gem at Faulkland in Somerset (see Pulling & Pouring - page 45) is up for sale. We understand that there is a prospective buyer but it is feared that the intention is for it not to remain as a pub. At the time of writing Bath & Borders CAMRA are submitting an ACV application to try and secure a safety net, and an online petition of support for the AVC was due to be available shortly. Meanwhile, those wanting to stay up to date with any news can do so via Tom Chapman: bathandborderspubs@gmail.com

RCH Brewery Also from Somerset comes news that the award winning RCH Brewery at West Hewish near Weston-Super-Mare, founded in 1983, has gone into liquidation. Managing director Dave Turner described the situation as complex and crazy. "In short," he said, "It's down to HMRC refusing the company's alcohol wholesaler registration number due to historical disagreement" – while RCH could brew beer it could not sell it. However, he understood that a buyer existed for the brewery's assets and brands, who in due course intended to revive the beers. Bristol and District branch brewery liaison officer Vince Murray said the news was saddening, "It seems clear nobody at the brewery had any idea what was about to happen."

Four Years to the Top In our summer 2013 edition we reported on the resurrection of a famous name in East Anglian brewing with the opening of the new Lacons Brewery in Great Yarmouth. The original brewery, which operated an estate of some 300 pubs, was acquired by Whitbread and closed in 1968. However, the widespread dis-

tribution of the brewery's falcon emblem, carved into many a pub, or ex pub, across East Anglia, sufficiently intrigued local business men Mike Carver and Trevor Hourican, that they restarted brewing under the same name.

Initially 100 casks a week were brewed, with planned expansion to 400. They also hoped to recreate some original Lacon beers from the Lacon's yeast strains acquired from the National Collection of Yeast Cultures. Now, just four years later the brewery has been included amongst the best in the world, achieving the top accolade for its cask beer Encore (3.8% ABV) at the International Brewing Awards. It also took a bronze for a new ale Old Nogg (6% ABV), based on a beer originally brewed in 1926.

Everards Closes Brewery Following last year's announcement that it is closing its Castle Acres Brewery at Narborough near Leicester, Everards intend to have vacated the site by the middle of August and to have decommissioned all plant by the end of October. In an echo of developments seen among others of the established beerage, it plans to reduce its brewing operations to concentrate on its 176 strong pub estate, selling the current site to raise money for a £30 million development of new head office, brewery, pub, café and cycle centre on nearby land – job losses of 27 from the staff of 102 are anticipated. The brewing of the current range of beers is being transferred to Robinsons and Joules. According to managing director Stephan Gould, the two breweries have been using Everards recipes, materials and yeast, to supply beer to Everards pubs, alongside Narborough brewed beer, since

the beginning of the year, without apparently any complaints from customers.

Bree Louise to Close The famed GBG listed real ale pub, and current North London CAMRA's branch pub of the year, the Bree Louise, is due to close in November to make way for HS2. North London branch chairman John Cryne said: "I don't see why good businesses and livelihoods have to be ruined for the sake of shaving a few minutes off a journey to Birmingham. Especially when sensible alternative plans were put forward which would have saved such businesses and homes and still allowed the new development." Formally the Jolly Gardener, the pub was taken over by Craig and Karen Douglas in 2004 who turned it into a leading real ale outlet with usually 17 changing beers plus cider and perry. Also their home, before it is bulldozed they plan to drink the pub dry –

"the only liquid I want left on site is our tears", said Douglas. The current edition of London Drinker reports that Craig and Karen are actively seeking another pub.

Community Ownership Grows Estimates suggest that across the country over a hundred pubs will soon be owned by their customers. And three of the latest to embrace the new freedom, all with help from the Plunkett Foundation, are the Craufurd Arms in Maidenhead, the King's Head in Pebmarsh, Essex and Kent's very own Harrow at Stockbury. Following Shepherd Neame's decision to sell the Harrow last September a determined group of local residents raised more than £350,000, with a share issue inviting investment of between £200 and £20,000 attracting 141 to become joint owners. Purchase was agreed with the brewery in March.

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RAMBLINGS & RUMBLINGS

By Stroller

Mon 1 May – Lanes (*Mad Cat Crispin Amber + others*). **Priory** (Wembley 67). **Lantern** "Very busy yesterday and sold out of ale", though bank of expensive keg fonts on bar. First visit since refurb – pub/eaterie in middle of nowhere. **Chance** (Bass). **White Horse** (Timothy Taylor Boltmaker @£4!! Adnams Fat Sprat, Harveys Best)

Sat 6 May - Mon 8 May – Admiral Collingwood, Ilfracombe Wetherspoons (*Otter Amber, Hunter Half Bore, Premium, Torbay Topsail, Cotleigh Long Eared Owl*). **Mon 8 May – Woolacombe Red Barn** (*St Austell Proper Job 4 @ £4-20!*) **Tues 9 May – George, Braunton** (*Butcombe Bitter*). **Wed 10 May & Thur 11 May – Admiral Collingwood** (*Exmoor Gold, Abbot, Torbay Topsail, Devon Dumpling*). **Fri 12 May – Ilfracombe** (*George & Dragon Exmoor Gold, Sandpiper, Doom Bar*). **Admiral Collingwood** (*Devon Dumpling, Abbot*). Enjoyable week spent in North Devon. The Wetherspoons seemed easily the best bet in town (*seems almost like the only bet in town! – Ed*), and guess who forgot their vouchers!

Tues 16 May – Black Pig Notice on door, "Sorry, closed mon/tues lunchtimes due to illness". **Five Bells, Eastry** (*Proper Job, GKIPA*)

Sat 20 May – Louis Armstrong (*Old Dairy Jazz Top, Westerham Family Ale + others*) Kent Regional Meeting – about twenty members. **Breakwater** (*Dover Pale Ale, Castle-on-the-Hill + others*) Apres KRM. Pleasant outside looking out over river and old mill – inside birthday party in progress.

Mon 22 May – White Horse (*Harvey's Best, Landlord*) very nice on patio. **Cullins Yard** (*Jimmy's Riddle, Pig's Ear, Broadside*)

Fri 26 May – Rack of Ale (*Nethergate Stour Valley Gold*). **Conqueror, Ramsgate** (*Romney Amber*) Saltaire Chocoholic just gone! **Sir Stanley Grey** (*Gadds 5, London Glory, Bombardier Gold*). **Bellevue** (*Spitfire Gold, Master Brew, Whitstable Bay*).

Sat 27 May – St Crispin, Worth (*Gadds 5, London Pride, Doom Bar*). **Red Cow** (*Gadds Seashells, Old Dairy Blue Top, Dogbolter*). **Four Candles, Broadstairs** (*Oakham Citra*)

Sun 28 May – 39 Steps, Broadstairs (*Saltaire Onyx, ESB + others mainly keg*) Recently moved two doors along road to larger premises. Just possibly a large 'micro' before, but certainly not one now! **Chapel** (*Hophead + others*) Decided to opt for snacks – various pies on offer. 'Fast food' it definitely wasn't. **Stanley Grey** (*Gadds 5*)

Tues 30 May – Star, St Mary-in-Marsh (*Young's Bitter, Tribute, Master Brew, Ringwood 49er*) Good ambience for drinkers late afternoon.

Wed 31 May – Troubadour, Folkestone (*Kent Brewery Session, Oakham Scarlet McCaw, Gadds 5, Angels/Demons ADS Me, Thornbridge Jaipur*) First visit here, only open a few days. Mine hosts very keen, waiting for it all to happen! **Valiant Sailor** (*Doom Bar*) After long climb from town, the Doom Bar slipped down nicely.

Louis Armstrong ('Decca', Skrimshander, Canterbury Knights). **Fox** (Sheffield Pride, Butcombe bitter, Otter, Exmoor Fox)

Fri 16 June – Trip to Margate. Ales of Unexpected Closed at midday, no indication when it might open. It only opens in the evenings in the week apparently, but would have been handy to have opening times on the door. **Two Halves** (Little Valley Brewery Stage Winner + other stronger offerings). **Lifeboat** (Angels & Demons Bombay + others, mostly keg) Obviously the trendy destination for the Turner Gallery types. **Harbour Arm** (Cotleigh Tawny Owl, Gadds 5)

Sat 17 June – Mash Tun (Oakham Asylum & Citra, Seaside, Totnes Stout, HD Red)

Sun 18 June Tried to walk to **Shepherd & Crook** but field paths blocked by crop so gave up. **Three Mariners, Hythe** (Old Dairy Summer Top, Pig & Porter Session IPA, Rockin Robin Rock-a-hula, Hopdaemon Red) Short staffed but barmaid kept her cool in very hot conditions.

Mon 19 June – Branch AGM, Five Bells, Eastry (GK Barmy Army, Wantsum Black Prince, Greene King IPA) Pleasantly surprised to see a reasonable turnout and the pub fairly busy on a Monday.

Tues 20 June – Star, St Mary-in-Marsh (Youngs bitter, Master Brew, Tribute, Abbot) Nice bar staff, must call again! **Chambers** (Angels & Demons Harry Hop, Adnams Lighthouse, Hop Fuzz Adhoption, Pig & Porter Human Noise)

Wed 21 June – Louis Armstrong (Westerham Summer Perle, Skrimshander, Old Dairy Silver Top). **Fox** (Sheff Pride, Cotleigh Fox, Arundel Summer Daze) A few extra enjoying the garden in the nice weather, if not exactly heaving

Thurs 22 June – Smugglers, New Romney (Hop Fuzz Martello, Titanic Plum Porter, Tonbridge American Pale) Seemed a good idea to call in early evening returning from Hastings.

Sat 24 June – Hop Pocket, Bossingham (Otter, Pig & Porter Eye Contact, Harvey's Best) First ever visit, helpful barmaid. Quite unusual to inform complete strangers that the Harveys is nearly finished but the other two should be fine! Information normally reserved for locals only in my experience.

Sun 25 June Too late apparently for the **Rotary Club Festival** at the **Fox**, all shut up at 6pm, so adjourned to **Railway Bell** (Old Golden Hen, Abbot, Doom Bar). **Lanes** (Titanic Lifeboat, KGB + others)

Mon 26 June – Rack of Ale (Cotleigh Uncle Sam + others) Simon clearly enjoys standing in as mine host.

Fri 30 June – Three Mariners (Tonbridge Rustic, Youngs Bitter, Musket something or other) **Shepherd & Crook** (Gadds Dr Sunshine, Cotleigh Barn Owl) Managed to get a very late lunch fortunately, perfectly OK though welcome a bit underwhelming. **Eastcliff Tavern, Folkestone** (Ripple Farmhouse, Kent Prohibition) A mid-terrace local boozier, quite a rarity these days, and always a good welcome from Richard

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CHANNEL VIEW

1960s Déjà Vu In the world of global brewing AB InBev is in the process of incorporating SABMiller into its already extensive international operations. On page 4 we report that in Britain Marston's is substantially increasing its share of the beer market by acquiring the brewing interests of Charles Wells. Two separate and distinct business deals that are nonetheless intimately related, and for those of us of a certain age, resurrect worrying memories.

Never has the brewing industry been so diverse. At one extreme are international corporations producing millions of barrels a year, at the other are tiny micro-brewers brewing for just a single pub and perhaps the occasional other local outlet. And never has the choice of beer been so great. The 1960s pub standard of mild, bitter and keg, the usual selection just before CAMRA was formed, has now been expanded to include global lager brands, national keg and cask ales, and bottled beers from all over the world, as well as ales of every shade of colour and taste from the heaviest stout to the palest golden ale.

A beer drinker's Utopia one might think, and up to a point that would be right. Certainly for real ale drinkers the current situation is phenomenal, especially here in East Kent, the home of the micropub where small independent outlets abound. Latest estimates puts the number of independent breweries in the UK at around 1,700. Overwhelmingly devoted to real ale, there are few towns and cities where a decent range of locally brewed ale is not available.

However, not everything in the garden is rosy. As demonstrated by the above deals, the giants of the industry are rest-

less. Mainstream lager brands are showing signs of decline, while the current success of craft ale is attracting great interest from both within the brewing industry and from commercial businesses outside – perhaps welcome for those on the end of a good deal, but also putting a squeeze on those wishing to retain their independence.

In America, where the independent sector has, like the UK, seen great expansion over recent decades, there have been failures and closures, and there have also been acquisitions. Over recent years A-B InBev as bought Goose Island, Blue Point, Bend Brewing, Elysian, Breckenridge and Wicked Weed – the latter the winner of six US and international beer awards since it was founded in 2012.

Meanwhile the other half of the new global monolith had not been asleep, acquiring the Czech Pilsner Urquell in 1999 and London's Meantime in 2015, although following the merger they were disposed of, but not of course back to independence. Having sold their souls they are now the property of others, to be passed around from corporation to corporation, like real estate. The current ownership of Pilsner Urquell and Meantime currently resides with Ashai of Japan.

Others joining the jolly fray include "best lager in the world" Carlsberg, who already has the UK rights to Brooklyn Lager and at the time of writing is likely to shortly announce the acquisition of a British craft brewer, and a variety of investment organisations, such as American private equity company TSG Consumer Partners. Already owning stakes in a number of US craft brewers

it has recently taken a 22% stake in BrewDog, valuing the company at around £1 billion.

Amidst all this takeover frenzy one thing stands out, it's all about brands, which is perhaps a degree of comfort for us real ale drinkers. The independent, or micro brewing sector in Britain is generally free of branding. Not that there are not prominent newly established brewers whose names are widely known and respected, but real drinkers generally drink by taste – we are among the least likely to be influenced by the blandishments of marketing, we make our own judgements.

This does not mean though that we need not be concerned. Large commercial operators have a variety of ways of exerting pressure on their smaller competitors. In America two of the best known independents, Samuel Adams and Sierra Nevada, both saw sales fall in 2016. Admittedly these are very different operations from the average British micro but like the Chaos Theory butterfly in the Amazon rain forests there is a ripple effect.

Here in East Kent, at the heart of microbrew Britain, with plenty of small local breweries, we might think this will all wash over us, and at the moment, for real drinkers, the activities of the national or international industry can for the most part be ignored. But they are happening. Those who remember the 1960s have seen it all before. We should be concerned.

What Price Beer A year or so ago we reported on a 2015 event to discuss the premiumisation of beer, a term which translated from business jargon to ordinary English, basically means charging more for it. And a distinctly depressing piece of cynicism it proved.

The philosophy was summed up by one representative as follows: "Premiumisation.....involves taking

something normal and adding something to it to take it to the next level. It's happened with coffee and with various foods. In beer, it's come from the craft beer movement that didn't really exist five years ago and it's moved even faster than coffee did. When customers go out they want to go to more relaxed places; they'll spend £50 a head but they'll be relaxed about it."

Dedicated glasses, heavy branding, the creation of beer sommeliers, higher ABV to be consumed in smaller quantities at higher prices – no marketing ploy was neglected. Particularly disappointing was the contribution of former CAMRA chief executive Mike Benner, as managing director of SIBA (the Society of Independent Brewers). "It's about educating people about beer in the same way we do wine", he said, "there's not been any genuine value attributed to beer as a category. The industry managed to position wine in a particular way to the benefit of suppliers and retailers."

All of which is a world away from the founding principles of CAMRA. For the average real ale drinker, dedicated glasses and branding will count for little, and they certainly do not require anyone to "educate" them. However the thinking outlined above is starting to spread. In a recent edition of CAMRA's newspaper *What's Brewing* Buster Grant the new chairman of SIBA joined Mike Benner in suggesting that cask ale is under-priced, and in a subsequent edition there was talk of retaining real ale as "an affordable luxury".

Most real ale drinkers think they pay quite enough for beer already, and certainly do not consider it a luxury. They would be perfectly happy just to see real ale retained as the traditional beer of Britain as the drink of the ordinary man or woman, brewed and served in the way it always had been for centuries, and at an honest price.



THE 2017 GOOD BEER GUIDE TRAIL

Martin Atkins joins the Branch Good Beer Guide Trail

Following our custom of recent years, our Membership Secretary, chief ramblor and organiser of walks, John Pitcher, has arranged a series of trips to visit all seventeen of the pubs in Deal, Dover and Sandwich Branch area, which CAMRA members have selected for this year's Good Beer Guide (GBG).

Commenting before the trail kicked off in June, John said that the plan was to do it the easy way: "These pubs should all be serving top quality ale, and are generally ideal places to chat, and while away the time. So there's no hurry, no point in rushing them all in one go! So we'll take our time and do six 'nodules' comprising three pubs. Since most are in our urban area, with one exception there will be little walking involved and we'll get around mainly by bus or on foot. The walks will start with an easy induction nodule in June, with one nodule a month until November."

At the time of going to print, two walks, those for June and July have been completed, and are described in detail below – followed by the itinerary for the remainder.

Tuesday 6th June – *Easy Induction Evening in Dover*



The Louis Armstrong, Dover

So, the trail kicked off, with the easy introduction nodule, one evening in early June at the **Louis Armstrong**, where, at around 6.30, a group of dedicated beer drinkers assembled to enjoy the selection offered by three of Dover's best real ale pubs. At the Louis the choice was Hopdaemon Skrimshander, Gadds Dr Sunshine and from Goacher's of Maidstone, Best Dark and Decca (the music related name the pub uses for Goacher's Special/House ale) – a contrasting selection of ales and all from Kent. With occasional exceptions, and those usually the result of swops by its normal suppliers with breweries elsewhere in the country, the Louis draws all its real ale from its home county.

John's schedule had us moving on at 7.30, and we spent a very happy hour before progressing to our next destination, just a few streets away,

and one of the town's more recently acquired group of micropubs. This was the **Rack of Ale** in Ladywell, which opening just about four years ago in the Autumn of 2013, is now very much an established part of Dover's pub environment, and where we were made very welcome by Simon Glover. An old friend of the Branch, Simon has also done his time "before the mast" as a Beery Boater (and is very welcome any time he wants to come back), and was looking after the pub that evening for Trish.

Three ales were available, with, at least by name, a distinctly medieval flavour – Wantsum Black Prince, Lincoln Green Sherwood and Springhead Outlawed – alt-

though it is unlikely that they otherwise bore much resemblance to the un-hopped, and probably cloudy, offerings of several centuries ago. Once again dark contrasted with pale, the Black Prince mild complimenting the pale ales from Lincoln Green and Sherwood. There was of course in addition a selection of ciders, and an hour passed all too quickly before John was giving us “a five minute warning” that departure for the evening’s final pub, was imminent.

The **Eight Bells**, Dover’s Wetherspoons, is just about twenty years old, sufficiently long for it now to seem that it has been there for ever. With its twelve handpumps (although in truth that evening it was not exactly a dozen – some being devoted to cider or beers waiting to come on), it offered the broadest selection of ale that night, including regulars such as Ruddles and Abbot, plus a variety of occasionals or guests, Westerham’s Spirit of Kent proving particularly palatable. Meanwhile, those feeling a mite peckish, took the opportunity to assuage their hunger from the pub’s extensive menu offering.

A pleasant evening, and we looked forward to the next element of the trail, at the start of July.

Monday 3rd July – Eastry and Deal

Following the pattern of previous years, this was an afternoon meeting, but unlike those it was a Monday rather than the traditional Saturday. It also made use of the local bus services, some of which will be radically altered in the near future, if Stagecoach’s current proposals come to fruition.

John had arranged a starting point at midday, at the **Five Bells**, Eastry, our Branch’s Summer Pub of the Year for 2017, and, since the closure of the Bull a few



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years ago, now the only pub in the village, and accordingly nine of us met there early that afternoon. For anyone travelling from Dover by bus it was also probably one of their last opportunities to use the service via Whitfield and Tilmanstone – the new planned autumn schedules



seeing it discontinued and replaced by buses running through Deal. For those wanting to eat, food was available, while real ales were two from Wantsum – Black Prince mild and Imperium best bitter – along with Greene King IPA, and a relaxing hour or so passed, and several pints consumed, before we needed to think about moving on.

Our two remaining pubs that day were in Deal, and again the journey involved a threatened bus service, the cross country route through Staple. The bus, seemingly late, we began to wonder if the route had not been abandoned already, before it transpired that someone had misjudged the time, and it duly arrived shortly after its scheduled time of 1.40pm. There followed a half hour journey through villages and countryside and the western environs of Deal before we alighted in Queen Street and made the short walk to the **Just Reproach**.

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Our Branch's first micropub, the Just Reproach opened over five years ago in December 2011. Four micro brewed beers are usually available plus Kentish cider and wine. Ale choice that afternoon was Four Candles Mosaic Pale Ale (replaced later by Hophead), Oakham Ales Citra, Long Man American Pale Ale and a gooseberry flavoured ale from Weird Beard, The Frog Is Fried. Well patronised for a Monday afternoon, it showed no sign of closing when we left sometime after 3pm, and the staff had just opened the long window onto King Street to gain the benefit of Deal's cooling sea breezes.

Our last stop was the **Ship** in Middle Street, by contrast a pub of substantial age in the heart of the conservation area. A free house for many years, it had once been part of Charrington's large East Kent estate. Real ale is provided by five handpumps in the main bar with Gadds as a major supplier, and we were offered a selection of No 5, No 7, She Sells Sea Shells and Summer Days – an amber ale with a colour more reminiscent of a heavy winter bitter. Hophead was on the remaining pump. Particular note was made that No 7 retailed at a very appealing £2.40 a pint.



We sat in the back bar overlooking the garden, and having visited all three of our allocation talk turned to maybe going on somewhere else. However, it was very comfortable and we opted to stay where we were and drink the Ship's good ale. We duly left some time after 5pm to head back to the town centre and buses home.

Saturday 5th August -The Rural Ramble

This 7 mile walk took place as we were going to press. Some 8 members dodged torrential showers and a thunderstorm to visit the **Fox** at Temple Ewell before travelling by train to Shepherdswell and walking to **The Wrong Turn** at Barfrestone. Then a somewhat muddy walk through the (now rain soaked) fields to the **Carpenters Arms** at Coldred..

The Remaining Three Walks

4) Mon 11th September The Berry, Crown, Red Cow

Meet at the Berry at 12, bus to the Crown Finglesham for lunch then bus to Sandwich for the Red Cow in the afternoon. The Crown is not directly served by bus so a walk of about half mile each way will be needed

5) Tues 10th October King's Arms, Crispin, George & Dragon

Relaxing Stroll round Sandwich

Meet King's Arms at 12, Crispin for lunch, and G&D

6) Friday 10th November Mash Tun, Eight Bells, The Lanes

The Grand Climax! Meet at 1 in the Mash Tun, then Eight Bells for luncheon, culminating in the Branch and East Kent Pub of the Year where there will be recognition of any hardy soul who has completed all six stages!



COLIN DEXTER

An appreciation of the life of the author who created the real ale loving detective, Morse

Whether or not John Thaw's interpretation of Inspector Morse matched the vision of his creator, Colin Dexter, as he appeared on TV, he certainly looked like a man who would have shared Morse's passions. The lasting image is of Morse sitting in the corner of some ancient hostelry, a pint of bitter to hand and crossword being duly unravelled, and with the trusty Jaguar awaiting nearby to transport him in pursuit of some new lead or further questioning of an existing suspect. At this point fiction and reality would start to part company.

On screen, parking never seeming as much an issue to Morse as it is for the rest of us, nor consideration of drinking and driving. There seemed always space for his car, and while Morse never appeared to exceed the drink/drive limit, he always gave the impression of a man who would not be going into a pub for just the odd pint.

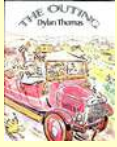
But alcohol was important to Morse, as it was also to Colin Dexter. Lamenting the author's loss in a recent edition of CAMRA's *What's Brewing*, beer writer and real ale campaigner Roger Protz, states that: "His views on the benefits of alcohol would cause palpitations in the offices of the chief medical officer – 'The mind becomes lucid after beer, if the body is enjoying a drink, have a drink. The body will soon tell you when it isn't enjoying it. If I've got to think, I've got to drink!'"

Roger had known Colin Dexter since 1990, when following the initial TV appearance of Morse he met Colin in the King's Arms in Oxford for an interview for *What's Brewing* – "he drank Flower's and I sampled Brakspear," he recalls. There followed, over the following decades, a continuing relationship with CAMRA, involving judging for the Champion Beer of Britain and contributing to the *Good Beer Guide*. In 2003 he provided an entertaining speech at the Campaign's awards lunch in Whitbread's historic City of London brewery.

A crossword compiler as well as an outstanding crossword puzzle solver Colin Dexter derived the name Morse from the former Lloyds bank chairman, Sir Jeremy Morse – for many years one or other of them winning the UK crossword championship. Meanwhile, another crossword compiler, Mrs. B Lewis provided her name for Morse's loyal but perhaps put upon sergeant.

Beer had been an enduring interest to Colin and from the start it was one endowed upon his fictional inspector, the back cover of his first novel, *Last Bus to Woodstock*, informing us that Morse enjoyed crosswords, the *Archers* and real ale. Unfortunately towards the end of his life Colin's diabetes became too bad for him to drink.

"It must have been a great sadness for him to have to forego beer", says Roger. However he added: "Back in 1990 he told me his favourite beer was Morrell's of Oxford. The brewery is now long gone and now Colin has left us. I hope they are reunited in the great saloon bar in the sky."



THE OUTING

A story by Dylan Thomas

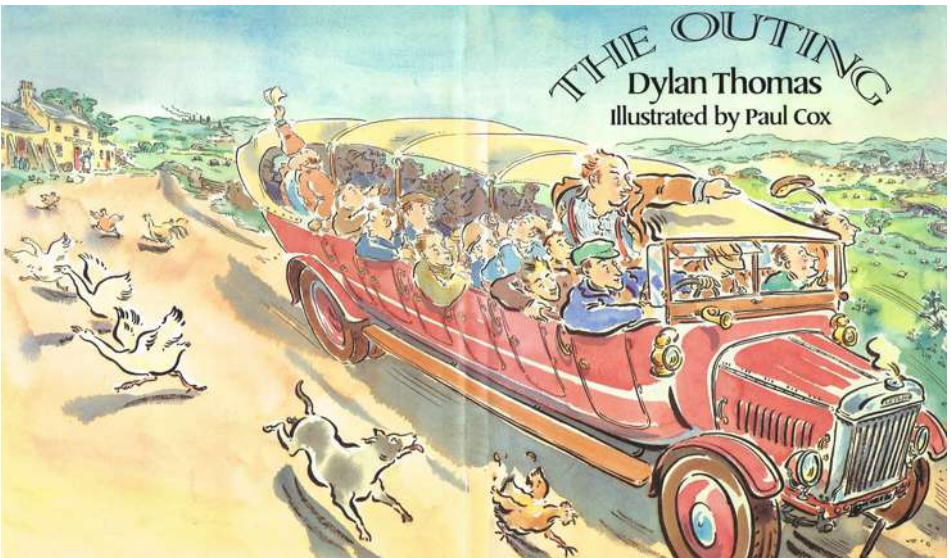
The following is a much abridged version of a very famous summer pub crawl, and my apologies in advance to those who know the piece, but we are constrained by space. I hope I've done it reasonable justice.

On Sunday evening, after Bethesda, Mr Franklyn walked into the kitchen where my uncle and I were eating sardines with spoons from the tin. "I brought the list," said Mr Franklyn. "Every member fully paid." My uncle wiped his whiskery mouth with a handkerchief big as a Union Jack, and ticked the names off one by one.

"Enoch Davies. Aye. He's good with his fists. You never know. Little Gerwain. Very melodious bass. Mr Cadwalladwr. That's right. He can tell opening times better than my watch. Mr Weazley. Of course. He's been to Paris. Pity he suffers so much in the charabanc. Noah Bowen, ah very peaceable. He's got a tongue like a turtle dove. Never an argument with Noah Bowen. Jenkins Loughor. Keep him off economics. It cost us a plate glass window. And ten pints for the Sergeant. Mr Jarvis. Very tidy. Sinbad the Sailor's Arms. Got to keep in with him. Old O. Jones. Old O. Jones always goes."

My uncle at last approved the whole list, and soon after that Mr Franklyn went, and then, suddenly, there was my uncle's wife standing in front of the dresser. "If you go on that outing on Saturday, Mr Thomas," she said to my uncle in her small, silk voice, "I'm going home to my mother's. It's me or the outing, Mr Thomas." It was almost half a minute before my uncle said: "Well, then, Sarah, it's the outing, my love."

For the rest of the week my uncle's wife whisked quiet and quick round the house



with her darting duster, and my uncle blew and bugled and swole, and then at breakfast time on Saturday morning, the morning of the outing, I found a note on the kitchen table. It said: "There's some eggs in the pantry. Take your boots off before you go to bed." My uncle's wife had gone, as quick as a flash.

"It's the same every year," said my Uncle. "But this year it's different. You'll have to come on the outing, too, and what the members will say I dare not think."

The charabanc drew up outside, and when the members of the outing saw my uncle and me squeeze out of the shop together, both of us cat-licked and in our Sunday best, they snarled like a zoo.

"Are you bringing a *boy*?" asked Mr Benjamin Franklyn as we climbed into the charabanc. He looked at me with horror. "Boys is nasty," said Mr Weazley. "He hasn't paid his contributions," Will Sentry said. "No room for boys, boys get sick in charabancs, might as well bring *women*. Better than bringing grandfathers. Grandfathers is nasty too," said Mr Weazley. "What can we do with him when we stop for refreshments?"

"Twenty-six minutes to opening time," shouted an old man in a panama hat, not looking at a watch. They forgot me at once. "Good old Mr Cadwalladwr," they cried, and the charabanc started off down the village street. A few cold women stood in their doorways, grimly watching us go. A very small boy waved good-bye, and his mother boxed his ears. It was a beautiful August morning.

We were out of the village, when Mr Franklyn, called out loud: "where's old O. Jones? Can't go without old O." We turned and drove back, to where outside the Prince of Wales, old O. Jones was waiting patiently and alone with a canvas bag.

"I didn't want to come at all," old O. Jones said as they hoisted him into the charabanc and stuck a bottle in his hand, "but I always go." And over the bridge and up the hill and under the deep green wood and along the dusty road we wove, slow cows and ducks flying by.

The charabanc pulled up outside the Mountain Sheep, a small unhappy public house with a thatched roof like a wig with ringworm. From a flagpole by the gents fluttered the flag of Siam. The landlord stood in the doorway simpering like a wolf. He was a long, lean, black-fanged man with a greased love-curl and pouncing eyes. "What a beautiful August day!" he said, and touched his love-curl with a claw.

"You keep an eye on the charra," my uncle said; "see nobody steals it now."

"There's nobody to steal it," I said, "except some cows," but my uncle was gustily blowing his bugle in the bar. I looked at the cows opposite, and they looked at me. There was nothing else for us to do. Forty-five minutes passed, like a very slow cloud. The sun shone down on the lonely road, the lost, unwanted boy, and the lake-eyed cows. In the dark bar they were so happy they were breaking glasses.



A real Welsh Charabanc trip

A Shoni-Onion Breton man, with a beret and a necklace of onions, bicycled down

the road and stopped at the door. "Quelle un grand matin, monsieur," I said. "There's French, boy bach!" he said.

I followed him down the passage, and peered into the bar. I could hardly recognise the members of the outing. They had all changed colour. Beetroot, rhubarb, and puce, they hollered and rollicked in that dark, damp hole like enormous ancient bad boys, and my uncle surged in the middle, all red whiskers and bellies. On the floor was broken glass and Mr Weazley.

Out of the fug and babel I heard: "Come out and fight. Look at Will Sentry, he's proper snobbed. Look at his wilful feet. Look at Mr Weazley lording it on the floor." Mr Weazley got up, hissing like a gander. "That boy pushed me down deliberate," he said, pointing to me at the door, and I slunk down the passage and out to the mild, good cows. Time clouded over, the cows wondered, I threw a stone at them and they wandered, wondering, away. Then out blew my uncle, ballooning, and one by one the members lumbered after him in a grizzle. They had drunk the Mountain Sheep dry. Mr Weazley had won a string of onions that the Shoni-Onion man raffled in the bar. And when I looked through the back window of the thundering charabanc, I saw the pub grow smaller in the distance. And the flag of Siam fluttering now at half mast.

The Blue Bull, the Dragon, the Star of Wales, the Twll in the Wall, the Sour Grapes, the Shepherd's Arms, the Bells of Aberdovey: I had nothing to do in the whole, wild August world but remember the names where the outing stopped and keep an eye on the charabanc. And whenever it passed a public house, Mr Weazley would cough like a billygoat and cry: "Stop the bus I'm dying of breath!" And back we would all have to go.

Closing time meant nothing to the members of the outing. Behind locked doors, they hymned and rumpused all the beautiful afternoon. And when a policeman entered the Druid's Tap by the back door, and found them all choral with beer, "Sssh!" said Noah Bowen, "the pub is shut." "Where do you come from?" he said in his buttoned, blue voice. They told him. "I got an auntie there," the policeman said. And very soon he was singing "Asleep in the Deep."

Off we drove again at last, the charabanc bouncing with tenors and flagons, and dusk came down warm and gentle on thirty wild, pickled, men without a care in the world at the end of the world in the west of Wales. "Who goes there?" called Will Sentry to a wild duck flying.

They stopped at the Hermit's Nest for a rum to keep out the cold. "I played for Aberavon in 1898," said a stranger to Enoch Davies. "Liar," said Enoch Davies. "I can show you photos," said the stranger. "Forged," said Enoch Davies. "And I'll show you my cap at home." "Stolen." "I got friends to prove it," said the stranger in a fury. "Bribed," said Enoch Davies.

On the way home, old O. Jones began to cook his supper on a primus stove in the middle of the charabanc. Mr Weazley coughed himself blue in the smoke. "Stop the bus," he cried, "I'm dying of breath!" So they carried out the remaining cases, and the primus stove, and old O. Jones himself, and took them into a field, and drank and sang while old O. Jones cooked sausage and mash and the moon flew above us. "Who goes there?" called out Will Sentry to the flying moon.



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Fri 13th October - **Psychic Supper**

Sun 15th October - **One Love** 2pm - 4pm

Fri 10th November - **Quizco** (disco & music quiz) 8.30pm



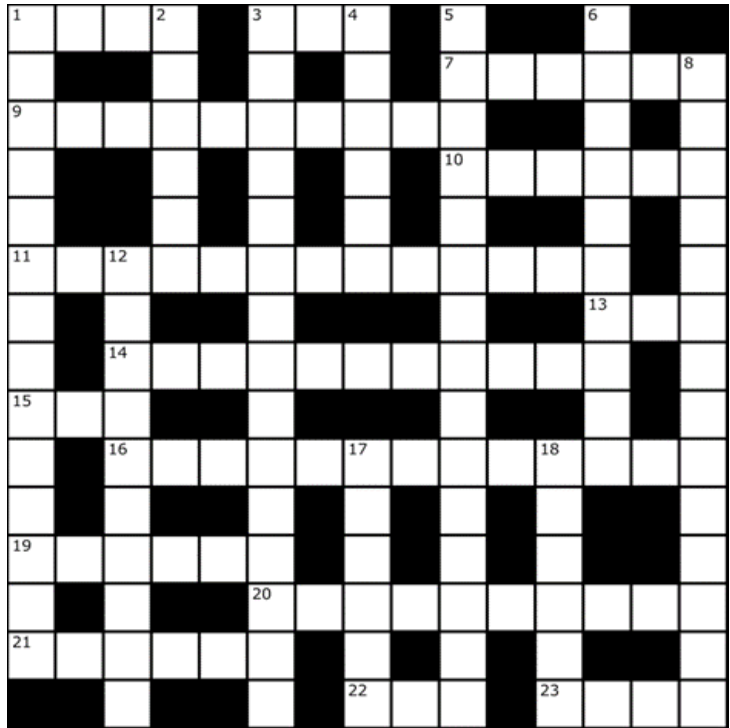
CASK ALE WEEK

22nd September to 1st October



UNCRYPTIC CROSSWORD

BY TRISHA WELLS



Across

1. Cross between a grapefruit and a tangerine (4)
3. A quick punch (3)
7. German accent (6)
9. Event that took place on 2nd June 1953 (10)
10. Hinder progress (6)
11. Cape Town landmark (5,8)
13. Anger (3)
14. Portent of bad weather (5,6)
15. Winter runner (3)
16. 1973 Bond movie (4,3,3,3)
19. Speak unintelligibly (6)
20. English region comprising Norfolk, Suffolk and parts of Cambridge shire and Essex (4,6)
21. Leader of Egypt during the Suez crisis (6)
22. Sign of affirmation (3)
23. London gallery (4)

Down

1. Anti-slavery novel by Harriet Beecher Stowe (5,4,5)
2. First name of Mrs Crawley in Downton Abbey (6)
3. One who trades illegally, especially during wartime (5,10)
4. Ancient region of West-central France, capital Poitiers (6)
5. 1990s Lloyd-Weber musical, based on a 1950 Billy Wilder film (6,9)
6. Arranged notes to go with the tune (10)
8. War film starring Steve McQueen and James Garner (3,5,6)
12. TV fox glove-puppet (5,5)
17. British Admiral who died at Cape Trafalgar in 1805 (6)
18. Educated (6)

Answers on Page 61



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PULLING AND POURING

How the pub bar and how we order beer has changed over the years

*The following is adapted (with a few additions by ourselves) from an article by **Geoff Brandwood** in Beer magazine, the quarterly sister publication to CAMRA's What's Brewing.*

Go into a pub for a pint of real ale and you'd expect to find a bar counter and (hopefully) several handpumps, each with a pump clip advertising what's on offer. Sorted. But like so many things in life, it isn't always that simple, and here we look at how the picture has changed, quite radically over time.

If you see old British films with scenes set in pubs, down to say, the early 1960s, you'll see things were very different. Quite apart from the pubs having been traditional multiple rooms, the counters were pretty bare affairs and not festooned with today's rampart-like array of dispensers for kegged ales, cider and perhaps your favourite California Chardonnay. Just a few handpulls and unlabelled ones at that. They tended to dispense only mild or bitter – in the public bar (commonly the domain of the working man), ordering 'a pint' would produce mild throughout large swathes of the country without any further clarification necessary. And in the days when brewery ownership was the norm, you simply knew whose beer you'd be drinking.

Some of us don't need to look at old films – our memories stretch back that far anyway. Probably the big change came in the late sixties when mild, bitter and keg (Red Barrel, Double Diamond, Tankard, etc. which had been around for a few years), were joined on the bar counter by draught Guinness and an expanding range of lagers and additional keg bitters, and the breweries decided that in the egalitarian mid-20th century there was no place for pubs being separated into public and saloon bars, and all the other various divisions beloved by the Victorians.

The pump clip is now the norm, but when did they start to appear? It's been suggested the origin may lie in the 1930s as drinkers travelled more, but they do not seem to have been in general use until the 1950s or perhaps 1960s. Nowadays, with so much glorious choice available, they are pretty near essential.

Centuries ago, beer would have been drawn direct from the cask and it was only the end of the 17th century that appears to have seen the patenting of an engine to draw beer (by one John Lofting, a Dutch inventor, merchant and manufacturer living in London). Further developments were undertaken in 1797 by the prolific and brilliant inventor Joseph Bramah, who also turned his attention to hydraulic presses, water



closets, locks and much more besides. During the 19th century, manual beer engines became the norm.

Although the tall handpull came to be standard, other forms also existed. One that was very widely used was the lever-action handpull (sometimes called the cash register handpump).

The only pub where this arrangement has survived in use from Victorian days is the **Old Crown**, Kelston, Somerset. Another (disused) set is to be found at the **George**, Borough High Street, London, which proudly proclaims the name of the maker, a Mr. South of Blackfriars. A recent good-news story is the installation of a restored set at a Kent micropub, the **Freed Man** in Walmer.

*There was of course another set locally, though we believe not used, at the **Rising Sun** Kingsdown, which as far as we are aware has not been seen at the pub since it was run by Pam and Ralph Charles and their son John.*

A much more frequent arrangement would have been to stillage casks behind the bar counter. Taking the pubs on CAMRA's lists of pubs with historic interiors, there are thought to be between two and three dozen instances surviving throughout England and Wales, so this isn't



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exactly common these days.

It is generally something that survives in rural areas, although a couple of exceptions are the **Fishguard Arms**, Fishguard, Pembrookshire, and the **Royal Oak**, Adamsdown, Cardiff. A few of the country examples of stillaging behind the counter still surviving are the **Queen's Head**, Newton, Cambridgeshire; **Horseshore**, Ebbesbourne Wake, Wiltshire; **Sorrel House**, Shottisham, Suffolk, plus **Tuckers Grave Inn**, Faulkland, Somerset, where casks are kept in a bay window in the public bar, which remarkably, has no counter at all.

*Of course pubs without bar counters where beer is served straight from the cask on stillage are becoming increasingly less rare – the original micropub format – while there have always been pubs with stillage behind the bar and the beer dispensed on gravity. Locally, the **Red Lion**, Stodmarsh, the **Shipwright's Arms**, Hollow Shore on the Swale, and the **Duck** at Pett Bottom near Bridge still serve beer in this fashion, while many remember the **Mogul** in Nell's time with its casks on wheels. Later of course, before it closed Charlie and Frank had installed a gravity dispense system. We believe that the now disappeared **Crypt** at one time had the barrels behind the bar, while the **Park Gate Inn** near Leeds Castle was selling Fremlins straight from the cask well into the 1970s.*

Meanwhile, there was a time when many pubs traditionally would have put a pin of winter ale on the bar around Christmastime. It seems not unusual for no method of cooling to be employed, but being that this was at a time when old pubs often had no central heating and given the probable strength of the beer, it might well not have mattered.



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AROUND FOUR COUNTIES

THE BEERY BOATERS' SPRING 2017 TRIP

Although called the Four Counties Ring, most of this circular canal route is in Staffordshire and Cheshire, and while it includes much of the Shropshire Union Canal only a small bit is actually in Shropshire. But that still only makes three counties. Which is the other one and where did we encounter it? Will someone tell me, please?

Anyway, we started in Staffordshire, from Anglo Welsh at Great Heywood, on Friday 21st April. The Beery Boaters were a bit down on numbers. Five of us, Dave & John Underdown, Martin Atkins, Steve Grayland and Hon. Commodore (Unelected) Jim Green had the 69ft narrowboat 'Empire', which we had previously taken to the Caldon Canal in 2012, and Martin Prime, Peter Broberg, Paul Rhoods and Robert Miller were on the similar size 'Grey Goose'. We were accompanied by John 'Shep' Shepherd and Lesley, along with Fran, Arthur, Dave and Jeanette on the 62ft 'Mayfly'.

Martin and the Commodore arrived just before 3 o'clock, having been delayed by an unforeseen M25 motorway closure, by which time the checks and instructions on the boats had all been carried out. The rest of the crews were all there, so it wasn't long before we proceeded up the Trent & Mersey to our first night's stop, the Saracen's Head at Weston, a mere three miles and two locks away.

Not much had changed since our previous visit in 2012, maybe a slightly better range of beers and the Saracen's head on the inn sign being replaced by a more austere 'S-H' logo. The food was still good, perhaps somewhat more reasonably-priced than last time. Some also visited the Woolpack, away from the canal in the village, but most of us, in particular the more ambulatory deficient, stayed put.

Saturday and a 7am start with Empire in the lead. Weather fine but a bit cold, conditions we experienced much of the week. Six miles and a couple of locks to Stone, and then the four locks through the town (where we noted that the usually crowded moorings had plenty of empty places), followed by the quartet of Meaford locks, and then on for another few lock-free miles to the Plume of Feathers at Barlaston. Empire moored just before midday with Grey Goose and Mayfly turning up shortly afterwards, briefly preceded by Jeanette who had walked along the towpath. Again not much had changed since 2012, except that the gent's toilets had been truncated, and the once-gigormous urinal was no more.

The afternoon saw us through Trentham Lock by the Wedgwood Pottery, and up the five Stoke Locks, passing Shirley's Flint & Bone Mill, and at the top Etruria Junction, where the Caldon Canal departs to the right, and we parted company from the 2012 Canal Trip route. Now on Trent & Mersey summit level we continued the few miles to Longport, where I had last moored 20 years ago. There had then been a trio of convenient pubs, the Packhorse and Duke of Bridgewater almost canalside by Bridge 126, and the Railway just around the corner towards the sta-

tion. Now the Duke of Bridgewater looked long closed, the Packhorse appeared to have had refurbishment started and then abandoned, and of the Railway there was no sign at all. We had moored in a modern-day beer desert!



Dave and John Underdown in Johnny's Inn, Burslem

However, salvation was at hand! The timetable on the bus stop outside the Packhorse informed us that we were in time to catch the last bus to Burslem, about a mile uphill. We alighted in the town centre, almost opposite the 2017 GBG Post Office Vaults, so it was decided to make a start there. After that, we looked for, and found, a new micro-pub, Johnny's, in St. John's Square, opposite the Bull's Head, the Titanic Brewery tap, which we had visited on election night in 1997. Meanwhile along the road was the Duke

William with an interior that could have been unchanged since before World War II. It was also doing meals until 9pm and selling Sarah Hughes Ruby Mild and after an hour or so in Johnny's, most of us finished a very enjoyable evening there. All the pubs that we visited were crowded, and all the beer we drank was good. Afterwards some walked back to the boats, while the more infirm or just plain lazy indulged in taxis.

Sunday, and no need for a very early start. We were about a mile from the southern portal of Harecastle Tunnel, 2926 yards long – a one-way tunnel controlled by a tunnel keeper at either end and wasn't liable to open until at least 8am. We moored by the tunnel entrance, and while waiting replenished our fresh water tanks.

There are, in fact, three Harecastle Tunnels. The original Brindley tunnel, opened in 1777, which required boats to be legged through; Telford's tunnel from 1825 with a towpath on an iron platform alongside the canal, and which allowed one-way operation in each direction until the earlier tunnel was closed by mining subsidence in the early 20th century; and a railway tunnel, running 40ft above the canal tunnels. This was abandoned in the 1960s and replaced by a line running round Harecastle Hill and one wonders why this route wasn't chosen for both canals and railway in the first place.

Our tunnel keeper duly arrived, checked our tunnel lights, horns, etc., and told us that we could enter once the single boat that was on its way from the other end had emerged: which we did, first Mayfly, next Grey Goose and, at the tail end Empire. There are no ventilation shafts in the tunnel, and a door at the southern (Stoke) end with extractor fans that draw air and engine fumes through the tunnel from north to south. The doors were closed behind us and the extractor fans



Waiting to enter Harecastle Tunnel

turned on, benefitting Empire at the rear with the exhaust fumes from the two in front, although they were lucky to be spared Empire's rather smoky engine!

At the northern end of the tunnel, the canal is stained dark orange from iron ore deposits, and very soon is joined to the left by the Macclesfield Canal at Hardings Wood Junction – the two running parallel for a while until, after the Trent and Mersey has gone down two locks, the Macclesfield is able to cross it at Red Bull Aqueduct and go off to the right.

We were now on the infamous 'Heartbreak Hill', a flight of locks descending through thirteen miles to Middlewich, with many just a bit too far apart for convenient walking. Originally all paired, i.e., two locks side by side, many had subsequently been reduced to single use, although since my last visit quite a few appeared to have been reinstated as doubles. By lunchtime we had travelled three miles past Harecastle Tunnel and down twelve locks to Rode Heath and the Broughton Arms, a canalside Marston's pub.

Here we made a change to the afternoon's itinerary. The original plan was to get to Middlewich, but that would be very late and moorings close to pubs are hard to find in Middlewich. So we decided to go as far as Wheelock, six miles and five locks short of Middlewich, and try to get back on schedule with the once-traditional 6am start next morning.

Off again after a few pints, Grey Goose ahead and the other two boats close together. The first lock, a single lock, was the partner of the once infamous Thurlwood Steel Lock, an ingenious contraption designed to eliminate any hint of the subsidence hereabouts caused by salt extraction, but so complicated to use that just about everyone ignored it in favour of its neighbour alongside. In 1984 it was still there, but padlocked and unusable, and shortly after removed completely.

Empire completed Heartbreak Hill towards the end of a warm afternoon, and no indicator of what we were to confront over the next few days. At Wheelock, we found Grey Goose moored up by the sanitary station, awaiting someone from Anglo Welsh to fix their water pump which had ceased to function. We tied up beyond the road bridge and just past some towpath works, where shortly after Mayfly joined us.

All except Martin Prime, awaiting Anglo Welsh, went to the Cheshire Cheese, now the only pub left in Wheelock: the Commercial Hotel (CAMRA National Inventory), and the Nag's Head, both having gone. However, the Cheshire Cheese, a Hyde's of Manchester house, was nice enough. Martin soon joined us, their problem having been just a loose electrical connection, and sorted out over the phone, and another enjoyable evening ensued.

Monday, and Empire was untied and away at 0600, the weather overcast and damp, and the other two boats not far behind, but we didn't see much of them until mid-day. From Wheelock to Middlewich the canalside scenery is somewhat dreary, for much of the way consisting of a busy main road one side and the huge Saxa salt complex on the other. Rush-hour was in full spate as we entered the town and turned left just below King's Lock, with the King's Lock pub alongside, into the Wardle Canal, probably the shortest canal in the country. For some obscure legal reason, when the Shropshire Union Canal's Middlewich Arm was constructed, a direct link to the Trent & Mersey was forbidden, and required a separate jointly-owned canal to cover the few yards.

The Middlewich Branch is ten miles long with four locks, spaced well apart. It is very rural, passing through no towns, and the nearest village Church Minshull, down in the valley of the River Weaver. There are a couple of boatyards, and few moored boats, apart from the half mile before Barbridge Junction, where, after a few hours, we turned left onto the Shropshire Union main line. There had been a couple of brief showers, but not a great deal.

Empire headed the few hundred yards for the excellent moorings outside the Olde Barbridge Inn (originally just the plain Barbridge Inn and before that the King's Arms), where we had stopped twice last year, the other boats carrying on to spend the Monday lunchtime at Nantwich, three miles further on. Thus we were, albeit very briefly, travelling on part of the previous year's April route. The Barbridge still had a good choice of Real Ales, including Weetwood. I enquired about Weetwood Eastgate, which we had much enjoyed in 2016, to be told that as it was so popular it had been re-badged as 'Barbridge Ale'. So we enjoyed Weetwood Eastgate again.

Shortly after setting off, we passed the start of the Llangollen Canal at Hurlston Junction, where we had gone last year, the weather now not quite as bad as then, but only just, the cold wind blowing half a gale across the open fields. We passed Nantwich Basin, a short arm going off to our right, which had once been Telford's intended route through Dorfold Park until re-routed by the lord of the manor's nimbysism. At Nantwich itself Grey Goose was moored by the aqueduct, the easiest access to the town, but for some reason Mayfly was tied up about half a mile further on.

A couple of miles past Nantwich are the two Hack Green Locks and a sign indicating the way to some sort of Cold War Secret Bunker, now open to the public. Another couple of miles and we were at the foot of the Audlem flight of fifteen locks, the steerer of Empire, Hon. Commodore, Unelected, feeling like a dose of hypothermia was approaching.

The recommended moorings for Audlem, between the Shroppie Fly and the Bridge Inn above the third lock up, were fully occupied, so we moored above the fourth lock with an easy walk back to the Bridge Inn. More Marston's, and we were soon joined by the other two crews who had moored below the lock on the non-towpath side. Most of us stayed here for our food and drink, although some went to look at the Shroppie Fly, but it was closed: more touristy it was probably too out of season and too cold on a Monday night, we thought. Meanwhile some heavy showers of hail discouraged us from going to the more distant, Lord Combermere, the other pub in the village, away from the canal.



Tuesday morning, and the wind had died down with the sky clear, but the tops of the boats were covered in ice when we set off up the remaining eleven locks. A short stretch at the top and then the five lock Adderley Flight where we found a

handy farm shop with a canalside booth. Apparently, there had been black pudding, but Mayfly, which had started off in front of us, had cleaned them out of it. There was also we heard, somewhat inappropriately, ice cream.

There followed a slow three miles to Market Drayton, past lines of moored boats, and for a short distance we were now in Shropshire. We watered up from a very sluggish tap, and would have stopped had not the town centre been quite a way from the canal, and the only canalside pub closed for refurbishment. So Empire opted to go another three miles and up the five picturesque Tyreley Locks to the Wharf Tavern at Cheswardine, and leave Mayfly and Grey Goose to enjoy the delights of the only town on the Shropshire Union actually in Shropshire. Steve, who was being troubled by a bad toothache, had also hoped to find a dentist here, but none were available without appointment, so he stuck with painkillers and hoped it might diminish.

Picturesque Tyreley Locks might be, but the by-washes at the foot of the locks viciously throw the boats all over the place, and as you approach, and in Woodseaves Cutting above, there are places so narrow in places that boats can't pass each other. Canalside signs warn of falling rocks, and Waterways World warned about falling sheep, but the sides of the cutting are so sheer and crumbly with precariously clinging trees, that I reckon falling trees constitute the greatest hazard.

We tied up just past the Wharf Tavern, which Nicholson's describe as 'once a coal wharf and warehouse'. But if it was once a warehouse, then it must have been completely demolished and a modern pub erected in its place. Very foody, but the beer was good enough, Joules, Charles Wells and guests, and more rain came down while we were safely inside under cover.

On the move again in the afternoon, we passed the former Cadbury's chocolate factory at Knighton, where chocolate crumb was loaded onto boats to be conveyed to Bourneville. The boatmen were reputed to be generous in their largess to canalside children, and probably had plenty of help on the Wolverhampton Flight. "Quick, lads, here comes 'Chocolate Charlie' again!" 'Chocolate' Charlie Atkins was a well-known Cadbury's boatman. And with just a couple miles to our evening's venue, the Anchor at High Offley, the impressive Shebdon Embankment offered distant views of the Wrekin fifteen miles to the south-west. However, the strong cross wind was bitterly cold and for a while the sky darkened and threatened serious rain.

The Anchor is in CAMRA's National Inventory of Pub Interiors of National Historic Interest, and is generally considered a 'Divisional Pub'. Many years ago it was the 'Sebastopol', but it is still an unspoilt canalside pub, perched on the bank above a canal landing stage. Empire, arrived at around half past six, with the pub reputed to open at seven. But at seven there was no sign of light or life



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inside. We wandered round disconsolately, perhaps there was something wrong or the opening times had changed. Eventually Steve, whose toothache had now abated somewhat, rang the pub's telephone number: "Just push the door open, Dear?" Olive, the landlady, told him!

The door indeed was open, nobody had thought to try it! Lights went on and Olive served us beer (as usual only Wadworth 6X available), and bustled around to get a roaring open fire on the go. It seemed crowded enough with just the five of us and a couple of locals inside; when the two other crews arrived it was almost standing room only. The Anchor is smaller than a lot of current micro-pubs. Toilets were where they should be – outside and round the back, and the only food available were rolls, proper rolls and not padded with extraneous salad; 'compost' as some call it. We had a marvellous evening and left the pub under a star-spangled sky, with only a distant lightening in it far off to the south to indicate the suburbs of Wolverhampton.

Wednesday, and weather fine and less cold. We passed through Grub Street Cutting, famous for the high narrow bridge with a telephone pole situated on a central brick arch halfway up, and appeared to start entering civilization, i.e., lots of moored boats, particularly at Norbury Junction where the Newport and Shrewsbury Branches went off. Then along the Shelmore Embankment, with its construction problems the last section of the canal be finished, and by which time Thomas Telford had died, passed Gnosall (with its silent 'G'), and through the 81 yard Cowley Tunnel.

Five more miles to Wheaton Aston, with a single lock which I had completely forgotten about when I compiled my itinerary, and then three miles to Brewood (pronounced Brood) for lunch, crossing, about halfway along, the elegant cast iron Stretton Aqueduct over the A5. Empire moored just before Bridge 14, where a steep path leads up the side of the cutting to the Bridge Inn, and which the less agile among us struggled up, only to find later, an easier access on the other side of the bridge.

The Bridge Inn, according to my very ancient Nicholson's guide, is a 'basic, busy and friendly canalside pub offering Ansell's Real Ale'. It was now a little more up-market, and the beer was a selection from Marston's, but we had a warm welcome from the newly installed landlord. Naturally, the rest of the flotilla arrived in due course, and we enjoyed a pleasant couple of hours.

Setting off again, we passed under the ornate Avenue Bridge, carrying a private road to Chillington Hall, and then, three miles further on, the answer to my question was revealed. We had entered the West Midlands, the fourth county on the Four Counties Ring: was it called the Three Counties Ring before the West Midlands was created in the mid-20th century!

At Atherley Junction, we turned left onto the Staffs & Worcs, having negotiated the six inch rise of the



stop lock, (designed to prevent water draining into the Shropshire Union), and a mile further on we were back in Staffordshire again, just after a very restricted cutting one boat width wide, with the occasional passing point. For another half mile the canal forms the West Midlands/Staffordshire border, and then after a further mile we tied up outside the Fox and Anchor at Coven, originally just the Anchor, but the Fox somehow crept in recently. A bit up-market, but at least it now sold Real Ales (Bass, Marston's and guest), whereas for some time it had been 'fizz'.

Thursday and having come off a relatively straight Telford canal, we were now back on a twisty Brindley canal for our last day. Between Coven and Gailey Wharf it is indeed particularly twisty, passing an extensive and odorous chemical works at Calf Heath, just after Hatherton Junction where a branch used to go up to connect with the Wyreley & Essington Canal. After Gailey Wharf, with its distinctive round-house, a series of individual locks start to take the canal down to the Trent & Mersey Canal. We went down six as far as Penkridge, passing close to the M6, and pulled up at Penkridge Lock sanitary station to take on water, before tying up below the lock. Lunch was taken at the adjacent Boat Inn – rather Spartan, but serving a tasty drop of Holden's Golden Glow.

The last afternoon took us back to Great Haywood, where we moored in the boatyard and spent the evening in the Clifford Arms, offloaded the boats in the morning, loaded cars, or set off to Rugeley Railway Station, and went home.

Jim Green

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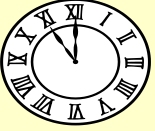


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LAST KNOCKINGS

Taking Back Control One of the main arguments put forward by the advocates of Brexit was the taking back of control, and irrespective of whether you are a leaver or remainer, real ale drinkers and lovers of traditional pubs were there many years before. Brexit is of course about the perceived influence of Brussels, but the initial impetus behind CAMRA's forty odd year old campaign was about getting our beer back, as we wanted it and not as big business wanted it. With the supply of real ale now seemingly secured, more recently concern has turned to pubs. Again big business and the interests of the market was decimating what had once been an enduring symbol of British culture. In fact if decimate is taken literally, in its original Latin meaning of to reduce by a tenth, the destruction has been far worse – in Dover barely a third of the pubs that existed fifty years ago are still there today.

It's heartening then, to see the fight back, first in the shape of micro-breweries and secondly as micropubs and community owned pubs. As we report in Local News, the fight to save the Chequer in Ash continues, and should the campaigners at any time doubt what they could achieve, they need look no further than this year's CAMRA National Pub of the Year. The George and Dragon in Hudswell, North Yorkshire closed in 2008 and left the village with no facilities other than a hall. It was bought back by the villagers and reopened in June 2010, and as well as being a pub, it also supports a library, a shop staffed by volunteers and allotments. There could be no better example of community action.

Music in East Kent What's this got to do with beer I hear you say, must be talking about bands in pubs. Well that's what I thought when I heard this advertised as a programme on Radio 4. I should have known better. Not that I distrust the BBC, and I listen to Radio 4, Archers and all, a lot of the time. However, even with its northern outpost in Salford, it is, along with much else in the media, London centric, and what the broadcast transpired to be about was musicians and others involved with music who had moved from London to live in Thanet, attracted it seems by the comparatively cheap house prices.

So what's the real ale connection? Simply this: micro brewing has been around for decades, almost since the foundation of CAMRA in 1971, but would you have known it from the BBC or other major elements of the media? Unlikely, occasional references about small breweries, often on the periphery of other stories, hardly



The George & Dragon, Hudswell

amounted to informative coverage. And similar lack of interest appears generally to accompany East Kent's own invention, the micropub. Enter "craft brewing" and all of sudden the airwaves and news-stands are awash with stories about independent brewing. The difference? – it's in London and its hip, "sharp young men with beards" as someone commented. Add in the new KeyKeg technology, exotic ingredients and origins on the other side of the Atlantic, and the reports seem almost to write themselves. Apparently a subject of much greater interest than provincial enthusiasts establishing a brewery in an old farm building or industrial unit, or converting a redundant shop unit into a pub.

Where have all the drinkers gone? "Look at it", said one local landlord, "Saturday night, and where are they all?" 7pm on a July evening and the last remnants of the late afternoon/tea time session were just drifting away. At one time, before all day opening, when Saturday lunchtime had seen pints knocked back in quick succession before 2.30 chuck out time, the pub would have enjoyed a few hours respite, and by 7 o'clock the evening would have been welcoming the start of the evening contingent. Now that pubs, once open, tend to stay open until end of evening closing, the dimensions have changed. Without the impetus of closing time pints are drunk slower and drinkers stay on, slipping into middle or late afternoon with another pint or two. By the time they go home coming out again for the evening is rapidly disappearing as an option. There are of course other factors keeping people at home, the internet and multiplicity of TV channels amongst them, but the change in licensing hours is not without its effect.

Warm Beer and Fags Ever noticed that pubs seem to smell different these days, and this is not just the absence of smoking? To open the door of a pub fifty years ago was to encounter a warm fug of beer and cigarette smoke – you could have been blindfolded, but you knew exactly where you were. Close your eyes in a pub today and you might still be aware that you were in a pub, but not because of anything that your olfactory senses might tell you. It could be just my age, but beer now somehow doesn't quite smell the same. While there may be no difference direct to the nose as you knock back a pint, the smell that at one time seemed part of the very fabric of the building seems no longer there. Perhaps no bad thing I hear some of you say, and maybe it's all down to a switch away from the heavy flavours of traditional ale, to the less strongly smelling lagers, ciders and lighter spirits. However, our new real ale dominated micropubs, also don't have that old beery smell.

Where We Came In As a post script to our report of Marston's takeover of Charles Wells Brewing Interests, one comment from Marston's chief executive rang a very resonant bell – the deal, he said, offers the company the opportunity to extend its trading area in the south of England and Scotland. Not identical, but depressingly similar to the rhetoric accompanying the merger of Bass and Charrington in the late 1960s. The first brewery to have complete national coverage blazed the press business pages. Oh, how we all cheered!

Old Wort

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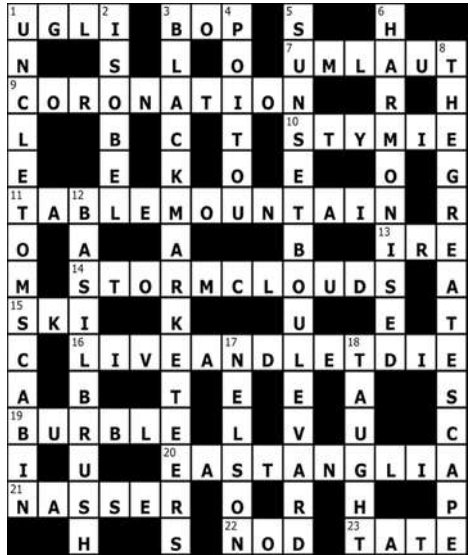
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CROSSWORD ANSWERS



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And Finally.....Old jokes are the best.

People like to try new things during the summertime and there are those who get bored of their usual beer and want to try the latest new trend – helium beer. Social media has recently been awash with videos and stories of people downing a glass of what looks to be ordinary beer until they suddenly start speaking in the high-pitched squeaky voice associated with inhaling helium. Then the questions start, 'Where can I get this?' 'Can this get shipped over here?'

A description accompanying a video by Samuel Adams Brewery of Boston says, 'Lightened from heavier gases like CO₂, 'HeliYum Beer' takes advantages of the properties of helium for a truly remarkable brew. Since helium is an odourless gas, it doesn't compete with the natural aromas of the ingredients. From a freshness perspective, helium doesn't oxidize which allows for a much longer shelf life.' What people are missing in their haste to try this new brewing marvel is the date that these videos and stories are published on, April 1st. Yes, helium beer is an April Fool's joke that has been doing the rounds now for about five years and has once again surfaced this year. Unfortunately, it's not possible to create beer infused with helium. Firstly, helium isn't soluble in water (or, in this case, beer). Secondly, it can't be carbonated like carbon dioxide and nitrogen can. Finally, adding liquid helium to beer would result in a block of beer-coloured ice – it turns from liquid to gas at -140C.

Sorry, but if you want a squeaky voice, you'll just have to try another way.

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The Mash Tun

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