

Draught Copy



CAMPAIGN
FOR
REAL ALE

Free Magazine

**By Maidstone & Mid-Kent
CAMRA**

incorporating Ashford,
Folkestone and Romney Marsh,
Gravesend & Darent Valley,
Bexley, Medway & West Kent
Branches

Summer/Autumn 2024 No. 209

Website: www.mmk.camra.org.uk

Twitter: www.twitter.com/mmkcampa

CAMRA's East Malling Beer and Cider Festival

7th September 2024

See you there!



DRAUGHT COPY

Draught Copy is the magazine of the Maidstone and Mid-Kent branch of CAMRA, the Campaign for Real Ale, also incorporating news from Ashford, Folkestone and Romney Marsh, Bexley, Gravesend & Darent Valley, Medway and West Kent branches of CAMRA. It is published quarterly, in March, June, September and December and has a circulation of 3,500 copies. Opinions expressed are those of the author of the article, and need not represent those of CAMRA or its officials.

If you find a pub selling short measure, allowing smoking in the premises, or other illegal things in pubs, please have a quiet word with the landlord. However, if you need to complain about a licensed premises in your area, report the problem to Trading Standards by contacting Citizens Advice, who will pass the details to your local Trading Standards service: Call the Citizens Advice consumer service helpline on 03454 04 05 06 (Monday to Friday, 9am - 5pm). We should demand the highest standards of service in our pubs.

Advertising rates: £100 / £60 / £35 for a full / half / quarter page respectively

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The copy date for the next issue is 21st October 2024.

For further information about all pubs mentioned in this publication (or indeed anywhere in the UK), please refer to CAMRA's national pub database: www.whatpub.com

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Our social diary changes faster than we can print it, so to keep up-to-date we suggest you use the below QR codes to access the branch meetings on our websites.



Ashford,
Folkestone
& Romney
Marsh



Bexley



Gravesend
and Darent
Valley



Maidstone
and Mid-
Kent



Medway



West
Kent



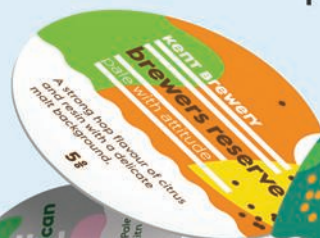
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CAMRA MEMBERS WEEKEND, DUNDEE — APRIL 2024

Each year a group of us attend the CAMRA AGM and Conference, partly to attend the conference and help to form new policies and vote on the motions, for the other part we like to visit the various pubs and breweries across the UK.

Day 1

Five of us left West Malling fairly early in the morning, changing at Victoria for Euston. Tonight, we are staying at a hotel near the Central railway station called the Artto. In hindsight, its close proximity to the station was probably its most redeeming feature, but it was also conveniently situated for our evening's pub crawl. Two further members joined for the evening's walk.

The **Pot Still** is a busy city centre pub and was the first hostelry to visit. It had a good variety of ales and is also known for its impressive selection of whiskies. I wished that maybe it had been the last pub and in which case I would have had a tough selection choosing a whisky chaser as a night cap.

Next up was the **Drum and Monkey**, a corner pub housed in an American-style bank, with opulent marble and wood-paneled interiors. It is convenient for both railway stations and various bus routes. It had a large P shaped bar and featured hand-pumps with varied ales from well-known local and national favorites to new, emerging breweries.

Moving to the **Horse Shoe**, which is a Victorian pub near the Central station, it is recognised by CAMRA for having a nationally important interior and claims to have Scotland's longest bar.

A hostelry close to Queen Street Station was the **Counting House**, a Wetherspoons in a very impressive building with an outside drinking area on George Square. The building featured statues, paintings and drawings, while on the bar there were up to 8 cask beers, mainly featuring Scottish breweries.

The **Crystal Palace** is inspired by London's Crystal Palace. The second Wetherspoon pub of the evening is in a Victorian iron-framed former furniture house, close to Central Station. The large high windows give the pub a fresh light feel during the daytime. There are 2 large bars on different levels, although we only made it to the lower level. The last call of the night was the **Sir John Moore**, yet another Wetherspoons close to our hotel, for a last drink of the day.

Day 2

We had a journey of around 80 minutes to our next destination, meeting at the **Counting House** again for lunch before boarding the train at Queen Street Station.

Arriving at Broughty Ferry we found our way to our Wetherspoons hotel; my first stay in one but was impressed at the stark contrast from the last hotel in

Glasgow - a nice hot shower and a full tea/coffee tray with biscuits in each room and bottles of water. One of our number was staying elsewhere but a further member had joined us at Dundee.

Broughty Ferry is a residential suburb on the River Tay estuary, known for 15th-century Broughty Castle, with waterfront views and local history exhibits in its on-site museum. Global and Scottish eateries, cosy cafes, and fish 'n' chip takeaways cluster nearby.

A very short stroll from the hotel was the first of 4 pubs, the **Royal Arch Bar**, which is a popular, locally owned, pub in the center of 'the Ferry'. There were three televisions in the public bar, for the many sports fans, with meals served in the Art Deco lounge. Three changing ales from all over Britain were available. The main bar was very busy so we moved to the Art Deco Lounge and we found room to sit and savour a couple of their fine ales.

We had another short stroll to the **Ship Inn**, which is a traditional free house situated on the waterfront at Broughty Ferry, with views over the Tay towards Fife. Dating back to 1847, this cosy retreat is atmospheric and interesting, with several nautical features. Three well-kept real ales were available. We took our beers to the pavement seating outside. It was chilly but a pleasant, sunny evening nonetheless.

Licensed since 1857, the **Fisherman's Tavern**, consists of three fishermen's cottages converted into a small hotel. With the bar to the right of the entrance and with a snug on the left, we walked through to the back of the pub and found room to stand and put our beer on a handily placed shelf at the end of the dining room/lounge.

We were interested to see an event advertised, that was going to be a charity Dook involving the staff. After establishing that's what it said, and not a typo, I asked one of the staff what a Dook was. She laughed and explained that they were all going to get plunged into cold water, but sadly not on the day of our visit... a "Dook" is effectively a duck pronounced with a Scottish accent.

The last stop of the night was the Wetherspoons pub we were staying in. The **Jolly's Hotel** is a twenty-five room hotel which was bought by Wetherspoon and re-opened in early 2014 after a major re-fit. There are two large areas: one area being more relaxed with comfy chairs and the other more functional. It had a large number of hand-pulls serving a wide selection of ales. There is also an outdoor patio area with many tables and a smoking area. We ate in the functional area and then adjourned to the much quieter area where we stayed for one or two more.

Continued in Draught Copy 210

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CAMRA presents:



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East Malling Research ME19 6BJ

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Maidstone and Mid Kent CAMRA
East Malling Beer Festival

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Pub Of The Year 2024.

Local CAMRA members from Ashford, Folkestone & Romney Marsh branch, gathered on a Sunny Saturday afternoon in April at the Dog House, Smeeth for the presentation of Pub of the year.

The Dog House was one of 6 pubs up for Pub of the year within the branch area competing for the award. Nestled away inside the Evegat business park, you can find the wonderful micro-pub and vinyl bar which is the Dog House. Run by Duncan and Clare, this little home away from home has everything you need for a great afternoon or evening out. With local fresh food available from the kitchen and a choice of Ciders and Ales.



On the awards day there was a choice of 3 ales including the very



exclusive Fuzzy Dog ale and 4 ciders. Fuzzy Dog was enjoyed by many of those in attendance, and with it only being exclusively available at the Dog House, it was well received.

It was smiles all around from Duncan, Claire & Sarah the Branch chair as the certificate was presented outside the micro pub.

(Members from AFRM CAMRA Branch, with Duncan & Claire)

Pub Saving Award: The George, Bethersden

There were 40 entries in CAMRA's Pub Saving Awards 2023, including The George at Bethersden. Sadly they didn't win, but were given one of 3 Highly Commended awards, which is great news! The presentation to the George took place on 2nd February, with the local radio, TV and MP, Damien Green in attendance (who, incidentally pulled the first pint when the pub reopened).

The George closed its doors in 2020 during the pandemic but instead of it

reopening when the restrictions for pub visiting were lifted, the locals learned that the pub had been put up for sale as a potential private home. Dismayed, the locals were determined to save their beloved pub, and a group of them stepped forward to set up The George Community to save it.



The George Community raised money through pop-up social events and a share offering. They managed to raise enough money to not only buy the pub, but also carry out a major refurbishment of the building and improve the beer garden.

The pub reopened in May 2023, initially as a wet pub and now have several local ales being regularly on tap, including those from Harvey's, Long Man, Canterbury Ales and Romney Marsh Brewery, plus the George supports other local suppliers such as Kent Crisps. Along with the many events regularly held at the pub, it has now returned to its rightful place at the heart of the village. Congratulations to all involved!

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National CAMRA Club of the Year 2022 and 2023



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Pub Of The Year 2024

Bexley's Pub of the Year for 2024 is the **Robin Hood and Little John** (DA6 8PF), with the certificate presented on Wednesday 19th June to Tony , Ray and Katerina Johnson. Coming in second, the **Broken Drum** (DA15 9PT) and the presentation took place during the 9th birthday (17th April) of this amazing micro. In third place, back in the honours after a change of owners, the **Penny Farthing** (DA1 4JJ), with the presentation on the 23rd July. Cider Pub of the Year is the **Kentish Belle** (DA7 4QW) which still continues to stock an interesting selection of cider and received their certificate on the 22nd May. Club of the Year award went to



Dartfordians Community Sports Club (DA5 1LW) home of the Bexley Beer Festival, where the presentation was at the Festival.

Bexley Festival 2024

Our 17th Beer Festival logo depicted the 100th anniversary of our hosts, Dartfordians Rugby Club (where we have been stationed for an amazing 10 years), along with the 60th anniversary of Radio Caroline, which is still ruling the airwaves.



This year the sun shone on us and we had our second highest attendance with 1752 through the door, 730 CAMRA members, 961 non-members and 61 under 26's who we let in for free.

Having a total of 111 beers to start along with 23 Ciders/Perries, plus 2 bright beers from *Bexley* on Saturday, less than 4 firkins of beer were thrown away and all the cider/perry consumed. Beer of the festival, by customer vote, was a resounding win for *Bexley Mocha Stout* with *Alnwick Brown* taking second place, a three way tie for third comprising *Kent Citra Revolution*, *Stay Wild's Juma* and *Tankley's Rye IPA*. Cider/perry was a win for *Black Rat Perry* with both *Turners Apple Pie Cider* and *Turners Russet* joint second. Thank you to all voted.

First cask to run out was *Bexley's Spiced Rum Porter*, followed by *Broken Drum's Broadman* and *Bexley's Raspberry Pale*. The first cider/perry to run out was the first *Turners Apple Pie* followed some while later by *Dudda's Tun Apricot* and *Cockeyed Strawberry Blonde*.



Our grateful thanks go to everyone who supported and sponsored us: *Bexley, Kent, Stay Wild* and *Tankley's* breweries for the glasses. *J D Wetherspoon* for sponsoring the staff t-shirts via *Smart T's & The Kit Room*. *Macaulay Scott of Welling* for the card flyers, programme, strike cards and all our printing needs and

our Pub of the Year, the **Robin Hood & Little John** who sponsored our "Strike Cards". Thanks to the club Steward Megan Lewis for all her help and assistance, also giving us a chance to present the Club of the Year award, and of course the festival volunteers from Bexley and beyond, who organize and staff the Festival giving up their free time to make it such an enjoyable event, indeed without whom the festival would not exist. Good to see some more newcomers helping out, thank you Chris and Paul. Thanks to everyone who helped during set-up, worked during opening hours or take down, whatever your role in making Bexley festival a success, we appreciate and applaud you.

Special mention to Alan Bartlett who did the pre-festival staffing and managed the door/glasses/strike cards, Joe Mist for the cooling, aided by Peter Muldoon, and Pat Ward, our site manager, health & safety guru and to Paul Turner and



Peter Muldoon who used their

vast knowledge and experience to assist the more unknowledgeable in their quest to learn more about other ways to enjoy the apple and the pear. A big thank you to Penny Duggan who sorted the programme prior to printing and finally to Andy Wheeler, proprietor of the **Broken Drum** micro pub, who being the Organiser of the event, spends hours slaving away in front of a computer to complete the essential paperwork necessary to bring the festival to life.

To those who returned your strike cards for charity, £1,069.20 was raised for the J.D.Wetherspoon's sponsored charity, Young lives Vs Cancer.

Next year, subject to confirmation, 8th - 10th May, celebrating the 50th anniversary of Bexley CAMRA.



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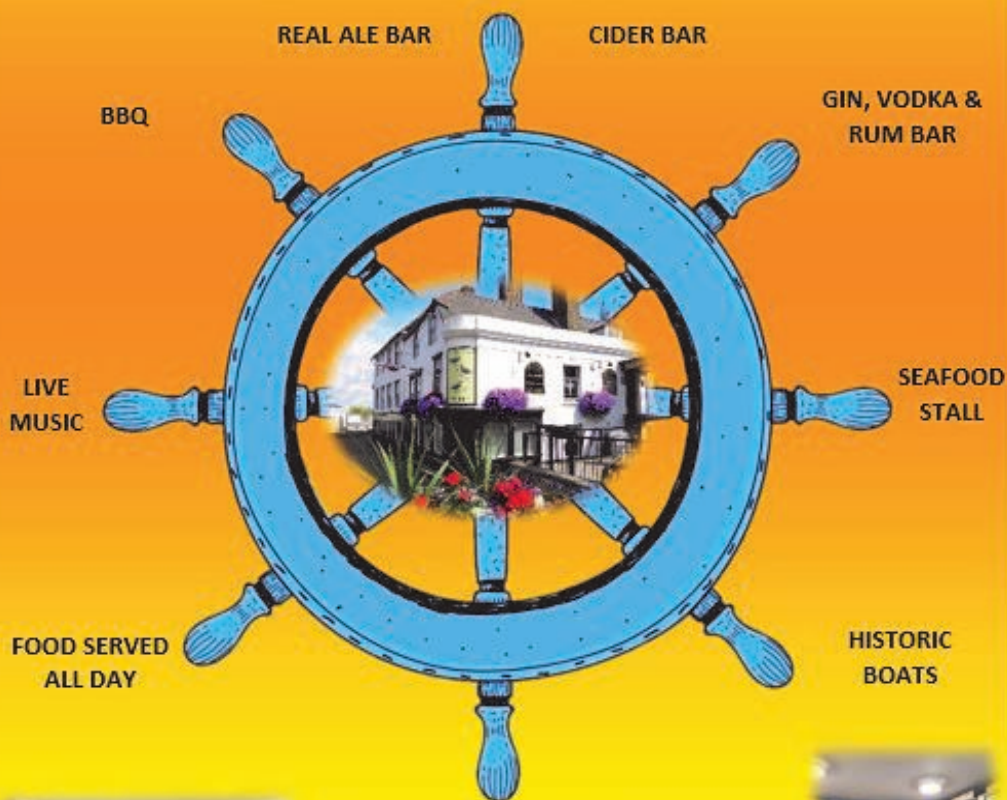
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Weekend

Beer, Cider & Music Festival

2nd, 3rd & 4th August 2024



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Our branch Pub of the Year for 2024 is the **Compass Alehouse** in Gravesend. This micropub also won the award in 2022. The competition produced two new runners-up in the **Chequers** at Crockenhill and the **Cotton Mill** at Swanley. All three received award certificates as did the **Old House** at Ightham Common as the branch and Kent Cider Pub of the Year and **Dartford Working Men's Club** as our Club of the Year.



A second vintage bus running day is being held on Sunday October 13, centred on Ebbsfleet Station but replicating local services in the Gravesend and Dartford areas. Buses will be running between 10 am and 5 pm. The intention is to schedule trips as far as possible to allow visits of reasonable duration to local pubs along the routes. As these notes were being written, details of the event were still being worked out but more information should be available on The Classic British Buses website - events diary (classicbuses.co.uk). Apart from Dartford and Gravesend, which will have regular buses, it should be possible to get to pubs in the following villages with another bus back at a sensible time: Longfield, Longfield Hill, Meopham, Cliffe, Swanley, New Ash Green. Bus trips are free but passengers are encouraged to buy a programme.

The **Stage Door** in Dartford displays a hand-drawn list and map of pubs in the town, dated 1905. There are no fewer than sixty shown. Some have changed names since, including the **Stage Door** which was the **Smiths Arms** at the time, but more than half have vanished altogether, particularly in and around the High Street where whole rows have gone.



News from the Dartford area in July is that the **Wat Tyler** is for sale and the **Orange Tree** at Wilmington is closed again, possibly temporarily. At Northfleet the **Rose** near the station is also closed. Shepherd Neame have restored the kitchen at the **Earl Grey** though at the time of writing it had yet to be commissioned.

In Gravesend the **Woodlands** closed in July. The intention seems to be to incorporate it in the hotel alongside and an application has been made to reclassify it as a restaurant despite the fact that it was always possible to get a drink there without a meal.

Ken Baines reports that the pubs in Wrotham continue to provide for the villagers in their different ways. The **George & Dragon** has a weekly bingo session on Wednesday evenings. The **Rose & Crown** continues its Fish Friday evenings and its popular weekly quiz on Thursdays where there is a weekly theme, such as Pride Week in late June.



The **Rising Sun** at Cotmans Ash has a new sign painted by the daughter of a regular customer. The ice cream reference on the sign is to a product made by owner Michelle's daughter's business using milk from their own cows and sold at the pub.

The CAMRA discount at the **Chequers** at Crockenhill has been changed to apply on Tuesdays, not Thursdays. The **Bridges** at South Darenth duly reopened in the spring, with an initial offering of two real ales.

One of the clubs in the area with regular real ale is the **Hartley and District Social Club**. This has two changing beers, one of which will be from *Iron Pier*. The picture shows their *Bitter* alongside *Taylor's Landlord*. CAMRA members should have no problem being admitted.



There were a couple of pub refurbishments in Gravesend in March and April. First, the **Goose** reopened just before Easter. There is a brighter, slightly different layout and a new bar. Some booths now have their own TV screen. There are now up to four real ales, all regular at the moment. These are *Adnams Ghost Ship*, *Fuller's London Pride*, *Sharp's Doom Bar* and *Wychwood Hobgoblin Gold*. A loyalty card is available making the seventh pint of real ale free.



The **Echo** closed for a while in mid-April for a refit. The toilets were renovated, the bar top was replaced, new curtains were fitted and new furniture installed in the left-hand bar, which now seems much brighter and roomier as a result. A series of framed local photos now adorn the walls of this bar, including two of the pub itself.

There was a further planning application for a change of use at the **Amazon & Tiger** at Harvel, this time for residential use. Coming so soon after the approval of the previous change, which allowed the closure of the pub while retaining the visitor accommodation, a suspicious person might think this was the intention all along. Fortunately the application was rejected. At Green Street Green the planning application to replace the **Ship** with housing while retaining a ground floor micropub has been approved. The existing pub closed in 2019 and has stood empty since.



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For more information on these pubs, see CAMRA's online pub database *whatpub.com*

Hengist, Aylesford – Due to re-open May with new management. The nearby **Chequers** remains closed.

Duke of Edinburgh, Barming – New licensee Greg Russell opened here on 1 March receiving a welcome from the previous regulars in this Shepherd Neame house.

Red Lion, Biddenden – Re-opened on 11 April with new licensee Zoe Reeves who was welcomed by patrons. Early days but trying out *Proper Job*, *London Pride*, *Black Sheep*, *Greene King IPA*, *Harvey's Best* and *Landlord* to find customer preferences.



Larkins Alehouse, Cranbrook – This was packed with regulars indicating the appreciation they have for all those responsible for the running of this excellent and welcoming business. Our CAMRA branch chairman presented the Pub of the Year certificate to Emma, who runs the bar impeccably.

That evening we found *Three Acre India Pale Ale*, *Long Man Best Bitter*, *Iron Pier Black IPA* and *Canterbury Ales NZ Pale Ale* available.

Bull, East Farleigh – Now sells *Goacher's Fine Light Ale* and *Harvey's Best Bitter*.

Walnut Tree, East Farleigh – A member happily reported that *Shepherd Neame Cobnut* had been found there substituting one of the usual range.



George Inn, Leeds – Whilst choosing a *Whitstable Bay Pale Ale* here, our reporter spotted *Harvey's Best Bitter* as well. Unusual in a Shepherd Neame owned pub.



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Fisherman's Arms, Maidstone – Have apparently had Larkins ales in April.

Stag, Maidstone – This re-opened in June following a chimney fire.



Muggleton Inn, Maidstone – Have now increased the number of guest ales available which seems to be appreciated by customers. Last two seen were *Batemens Five Generations 5G* and *Nethergate Hop Weaver*, the latter being a new one for me and particularly good.

Wateringbury, Wateringbury –

Due to re-open in mid August after a refit. Have added an electric vehicle charging facility in the front car park. Keeps both *Greene King Abbot* and *IPA* as regular ales.



Walnut Tree, Yalding – This has

now closed and the George is operating as a shop and takeaway. Hence the **Yalding Club** is the only hostelry remaining in the village. The Shepherd Neame operated **Boathouse** being a fair distance from both the village and the station.

Images from CAMRA's online pub database whatpub.com



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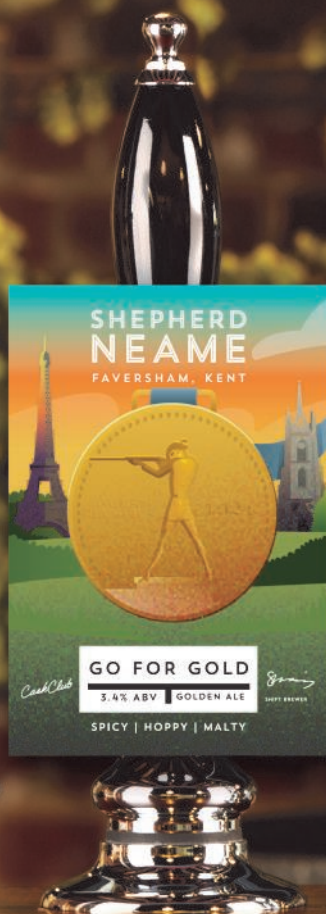




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Its congratulations for the second year running to the **Coopers Arms** in Rochester for being nominated by Medway CAMRA as their pub of the year 2024.

The saga of the **Angel**, Rainham has finally come to a happy ending as the pub re-opened on the 1st of March after a £185,000 refurbishment on behalf of the owners, Admiral Taverns. In late March, on a visit to the pub, two ales were on offer *Timothy Taylors Landlord* and *Theakstons Old Peculiar*, the former selling at £4.90 a pint. The *Landlord* was tried and found to be in excellent condition.



The **Monarch** in Gillingham, owned by Shepard Neame, is currently up for sale.

The lease on the **Flying Saucer** pub in Hempstead, owned by Greene King, was terminated on the 8th June. Since its closure there has been social media attempts to get the pub re-opened being deemed by the local community as part of their local heritage since 1951.

Dave and Lorraine Halliwell, owners and hosts of the **Past and Present Ale House**, Gillingham stepped down from their role at the end of March. In their place, in the daily running of the micro pub, will be Dave and Lorraine's daughter Kerri and her husband Sam Wilkins. They will not be introducing many changes to the pub but hope to inject a few new fresh ideas to encourage people to come inside. For those thinking that Dave and Lorraine's "retirement" is permanent, then you can be rest assured that they will both be running the micro pub on Tuesdays and Wednesdays. We wish them well in their semi-retirement.



The Medway Messenger newspaper has reported that the owner of both the **Fenn Bell Inn** and the Fenn Bell Conservation Project, Hoo, Andy Cowell, is hoping to raise money from the sale of a plot of land next door to the zoo, to clear debts incurred since Covid. Andy stated, to the newspaper, that the zoo had lost more than £1 million since the pandemic.



You wait for a beer festival to come along in Medway, and like buses they come along in threes! First out of the blocks was the **Prince of Ales** in Rainham, held from the 14th to 16th June, to celebrate owner Karl Martins third anniversary since becoming owner. Seven ales were on offer when visited on the Friday and those I most enjoyed were *Northern Monk beer Sup* and *Sambrooks Brown Dog Riot*.

Next up was the **Past and Present's** festival in Gillingham held from the 20th to the 23rd June. A large crowd attended on Thursday 20th not only to sup some good beer and cider, but also to watch England vs Denmark Euro 2024 championship. Among others, *Skinners Brewery Bettie Stogs*, *Vale Brewery Black Beauty* and also *Rebellion Brewery Smuggler* were available.

The same weekend saw the beer and cider festival at the **Frog and Toad** in Gillingham. An outside bar dispensed six real ales and ciders from *Dudda's Tun* with a further three beers from *Wantsum* on the bar inside the pub. Much enjoyed on my visit was *Isle of Purbecks Fossil Fuel & Full Steam Ahead* and *Liverpool Brewing Co. Tropical Pale Ale*.

It is with sad regret that the death has been reported of Medway member and part of the former Medway Beer Belly editorial team Chris Murphy.

Contact: Keith Ennis / Dave Moore

email: campaign@westkent.camra.org.uk

CHARCOTT. The **Greyhound** continues to offer a good selection of well kept ales. *Larkin's Traditional* is the regular brew, but there's always guest ales too. Visits over the past few months have found brews from *Anarchy Brew*, *Downlands*, *Fonthill*, *Hopfuzz*, *Iron Pier*, *Kent*, *Lakedown* and *Three Acre* available. The pub has won a couple of awards in the past few months as well.

CHIDDINGSTONE HOATH. The **Rock** had *Lakedown Spring Ale* on the bar in the past couple of months.

EDENBRIDGE. The **Old Eden** is now being run by Marissa and Simon Reeves, three ales are available, with *Harvey's Sussex Best* being regular. The others change occasionally and *Long Man* and *Tonbridge* brews feature. There is also a cider on hand pump. The pub is closed on Tuesdays, but open all day the rest of the week and is gaining a good reputation for food, with Sunday roasts being recommended, available 12-8. The **Rose & Crown** has been shut for some time, but work started in April, there will be a wine bar on part of the ground floor and conversion to residential use for the rest of the building. The **Swan** is another pub that's been closed for a long time and was boarded up at the end of April, with the car park blocked off. However during July, some work has been undertaken in the building.



GOATHURST COMMON. The **Pheasant Plucker** can be found just east of Ide Hill and has a couple of well kept ales available. An evening visit in June found the regular *Harvey's Sussex Best*, with guest ale, *Sharps Twin Coast Pale*, both available.

Bus Trip to Groombridge and Langton Green

On Friday, 15 September, a group of us departed Tunbridge Wells on the hourly Metrobus 291 service to East Grinstead and Crawley at 11.52. Our destination was Groombridge, a village that is in both Kent and Sussex.



Our visit started at the **Junction Inn** Groombridge, a pub which is across the border in Sussex. It was originally called the **Junction Hotel** and was built with the coming of the railway to Groombridge. It is now a large pub with three distinct drinking/eating areas, with outside tables to the front and rear. There was just the single cask beer available, *Harvey's Sussex Best*.

The next pub on the agenda was the **Crown Inn** which is a short walk across the border into Kent. The **Crown Inn** dates back to about 1585 and its low beams and inglenook fireplace has a wealth of history. During the 18th Century the **Crown Inn** became the headquarters of the Groombridge Gang, ruthless smugglers who terrorised the country between the village and the South coast.



We arrived on a hot afternoon and after getting our drinks sat out the back of the pub with nice shady umbrellas. Some of our party partook of the food on offer and there was much discussion of the East European dishes available. The cask ale on offer here was *Harvey's*

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Sussex Best and the rarely seen *Larkins Pale Ale*. After a couple of drinks and finishing the meal, it was time to move on to our next destination.

Some of us went to the front of the pub where there is a very convenient bus stop for the short hop up Groombridge Hill to the **Hare** at Langton Green. However, a couple of the more fitter members of our group decided to walk

up the footpath to Langton Green. The bus came almost on time and we were quickly whisked up the hill. The **Hare** at Langton Green is a new name for the pub. It was formerly the **Greyhound Hotel** dating back to 1785. The original building was demolished in 1900 when a fire partially destroyed the living accommodation and revealed the old house to be in an advanced state of dilapidation. The current building was completed in 1901. It is not known when the name changed from the **Greyhound Hotel** to the **Hare** but there is an inn sign for the **Hare** dating back to 1992. On arrival we quickly made our way to the light and airy bar area where we found four cask ales



available; *Greene King IPA*, and from the same brewery, *Ruddles Best*. Of more interest to us were the other two ales. *Cellar Head Session Best* and *Five Points XPA*. We had to wait for our colleagues to walk up the hill and they soon arrived in desperate need of a drink. After a pleasant stay and a look around the pub it was soon time to catch a bus back to Tunbridge Wells.



A few of us ended up at **Fuggles Beer Cafe** as it is in an excellent location for catching buses back towards Tonbridge. There was the normal extensive list of cask ales and cider and craft beers and ciders to choose from.

Note: Metrobus timetables are available at <https://www.metrobus.co.uk/services> and at <https://bustimes.org/>

Bus Trip to Crowborough and Eridge

We started the trip in Tunbridge Wells. Six of us caught the Brighton & Hove bus service 29 from Royal Victoria Place. No sooner than we were on the journey we came across heavy traffic. There were three-way traffic lights at the Sainsbury's roundabout in Eridge Road and the bus had to negotiate the lights twice as it goes into Sainsbury's and then back out. We had a reasonable leeway for our connecting bus at Crowborough Cross, but the delay was jeopardising this. After a fretful journey we arrived at Crowborough Cross with four minutes to spare. The 228 Compass bus was waiting at the stop and so we quickly jumped on for the journey to our first destination. This journey took us through the housing estates of Crowborough and Jarvis Brook, past Crowborough Station and back into Crowborough where we alighted at a stop called Plough and Horses, the location of a closed pub.

We had arrived at the Plough and Horses some 20 minutes before our first pub, the **Wheatsheaf**, opened, so it was a slow walk up the road, discussing the locality and we were soon at the pub. The **Wheatsheaf** was first licenced as a beer house in 1853 and remained a beer house until 1972 when it was granted a full licence. It has been owned by various local breweries including *Smith & Co* of Lamberhurst, *Kemptown Brewery* of Brighton and *Charringtons*. It was then a freehouse until joining the *Harvey's* estate in 1998.





A staff member arrived, parked and said we were welcome to wait in the garden until they opened. Once open, we found three *Harvey's* beers available, *Sussex Best*, *Armada Ale* and *Old Ale*. We all got a drink and settled ourselves down. It was nice to see a real fire making the pub more welcoming. Having looked at the lunch menu, we decided that we should stay for lunch and catch the bus in an hour and a half's time.

Lunch arrived and was enjoyed by those eating and having sampled the beers on offer, it was time to depart for the bus back to Crowborough Cross.

After a short wait a Brighton & Hove 29 arrived, on its way to Tunbridge Wells. We only had a short hop down the road to our next destination, the **Boar's Head**. It had now started to



rain and it was lucky the bus stop was right opposite the pub. Once inside the cosy 17thC low beamed pub, we found *Harvey's Sussex Best* and *Fullers London Pride*. After a quick discussion we decided that we would finish our drinks and catch the next 29, a couple of stops down the road. We duly arrived at the bus stop in good time for the scheduled departure but the bus was running a few minutes late. Luckily

the rain was light and we did not have to wait long.

A short journey took us to Eridge Station which was the stop for our next pub. This was the **Huntsman** situated down a slip road just past Eridge Station. The **Huntsman** was built in 1866 with the coming of the railway and was appropriately called the **Railway Inn**. It then became **Hamsell Public House** and the **Railway Hotel** before settling on the **Huntsman**. For many



years it was a *King & Barnes* pub and it is now a free house. Once inside we found the rarely seen *Larkins Pale*, *Long Man Best Bitter* and a local cider, *Charringtons Earls Reserve*. As the lunchtime diners were departing, there was plenty of room for us to spread out around a large table and discuss our next move. Did we call in at another pub en route or return to directly to Tunbridge Wells?

The wait at the bus stop was not ideal. There was no shelter and the traffic on the busy A26 was throwing up a lot of spray (and the bus was delayed). In the end Tunbridge Wells won as a couple of us could visit **Fuggles Beer Café** knowing our bus stop to return to Tonbridge was directly opposite.

The Brighton and Hove 29 bus runs half hourly during the day and serves many more pubs along the route to Lewes and Brighton.



On our first ever visit to Cambodia, it was inevitable that I would be searching out not only the sites, but also what was on offer in terms of craft beer. In this article, I've covered visits to Siem Reap, Phnom Penh, and Kampot. Google maps provided the navigation! Note that moneywise you can use \$US or Cambodian Riel (which gives a better exchange rate). Your change will always be in Riel, though.

After a long flight and a shorter one, with a change of airports in Bangkok, we arrived in Siem Reap. Siem Reap's biggest draw is Angkor Wat, a UNESCO World Heritage Site and the world's largest religious monument. This magnificent temple, spread over many sites, was built in the 12th century, and is an architectural marvel showcasing the Khmer Empire's artistry and power. After a day exploring this, it was time to settle down to see what the city had in the way of craft beer bars. At the first of these, **Pomme** (Sala Kamreuk Road), we were greeted by the sight of seven taps on the bar, dispensing beers from the on-site brewery, and four



of them were selected as a taster tray. The owner, Ollie, was kind enough to show us around the small brewery in the rear of the premises (due to the climate temperature, all the brewing vessels are double skinned with a water jacket). Next on the

tour was **Embargo** (24 Chhuon Street), offering a dozen or so taps to choose from, so to have a variety, I ordered the 5 x 100ml paddle, with beers from *Brew Khnear* and *Riel*. **Embargo** will also allow you to bring in local street food to snack on. The **Welsh Consulate** (Old Market Lane) was close



by, which had beers on from Kingdom Breweries. I plumped for the *Lemongrass 4.7%*, a rather bland Kolsch style beer. Kingdom Breweries, from Phnom Penh, is a large craft brewery, that contract brews many of the different brands of craft beer found in Thailand, Hong Kong, Singapore and the Philippines. Both these bars are located close to Pub Street (no decent beer along here, but would suggest a visit just for

the vibe!).

Next it was on to Phnom Penh, via a six hour road journey. Phnom Penh is, of course the capital of Cambodia, and lies at the meeting point of the mighty Mekong and Tonle Sap rivers. After a long trip, there were just three bars on the



list for the evening. On the way to the first of these, we were wondering why everyone was staring up at a large tree. On looking up, we saw the reason - hanging on the branches were hundreds of large fruit bats! Continuing on we found **Eleven Degrees Brewery** (66 Preah Monivong Boulevard), located underground in a shopping centre. Owned by

Vattanac Brewery, I had one of their beers, *Dragon Dark 6.0%*. The brewed-on-site beers were *All Night Long Coffee Stout 9.0%* and *Golden Sorya Ale 4.0%*. After we had drunk up, and finished off the complimentary peanuts, it was time for another bar. A short walk took us to **Hops Craft** (No. 17 Street 228), another on-site brewery, with a



pleasant outdoor drinking area, and with the brewery

visible through glass panels. A German style pub, it offered five craft beers on

tap. I chose the *Red Fury 6.8%*. The penultimate bar of the night was a ten minute taxi ride away. **The**



Box Office (76 Street 244) is a place that has a small theatre bar to the side, and on this night they were rehearsing a short play. Sixteen taps in here, and the choice of beer was *Brew Khnear's Janet Street Porter 5.5%*, - she should get royalties the way her name is used! The final bar for the night, down a side alley close by, was **Craft Beer - Friends** (82 Street 244). Various beers and some decent food is available in here, along with live music.



Continued in Draught Copy 210



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MEET THE LANDLORD

by Tony Williams



In this issue, Maidstone & Mid Kent CAMRA member and recently “retired” founder of Musket Brewery, Tony Williams, meets up with Charles and Tracey who celebrate THIRTY years behind the bar at the **Chequers, Laddingford**.

This welcoming 15th century village pub, really is the heart of the community and retains a wealth of

original features that have stood the test of time, to truly charm all that visit.

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The **Chequers** is a real family pub, with children and dogs all welcome and there’s a large, lovely beer garden, that’s just perfect for warm, sunny days.

“We have held an annual Beer Festival for twenty seven years and there’s always a decent range of real ales on tap. We continue to invest in our local community, assisting in fundraising for our local school and a host of both large and small charities, as we feel that this is what’s expected of a local pub.” continued Charles.

Quiz nights and popular theme weeks including Sausage week, Pie week and many other events, keep people coming back to the **Chequers** again and again. The pub’s range of tempting, value for money food, is also a big draw, with many people making the **Chequers, Laddingford** a weekly destination to meet up with friends.

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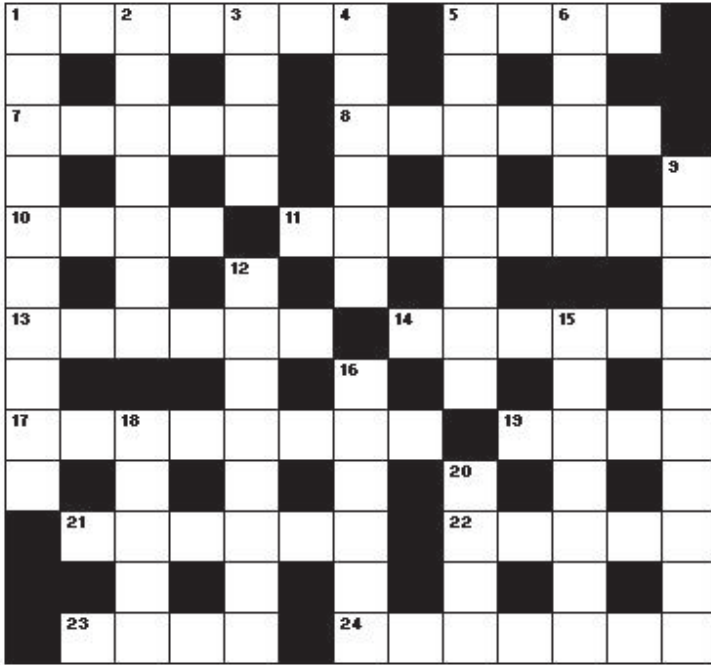
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Across

- 1,9 Philosophical assertion by 5 across expressed initially in Saint Elmo's Fire, flickering (4,2,1,10)
- 5 70s rock group short on power? (4)
- 7 Gets close to some obscene Arsenal chanting (5)
- 8 Substitute finds humour in school (6)
- 10 See 18
- 11 Pleasure is really intense initially. Doubly so, and saucy! (4-4)
- 13 Roman salad (6)
- 14 Painful bleats from animal enclosure (6)
- 17 Red-nosed, dishevelled but recommended (8)
- 19 Insect brings back saucy flavour (4)
- 21 Sack Resident Medical Officer for entanglement with First Lady (6)
- 22 State I owned a garden tool (5)
- 23 Correct the waves rolling back (4)
- 24 Get involved with Corrie's Mrs Sharples. Exhilarating at first, but may be followed by Mutant Ninja! (7)

Down

- 1 Area secured by Switzerland, for example (10)
- 2 Intended to treat caffeine? F-off! (7)
- 3 Damaged tins earlier this month (4)
- 4 Powers classic car (7)
- 5 Introduce an egg I consumed (8)
- 6 Prickly things around start of play (5)
- 9 See 1 across
- 12 Sandy Denny's Convention in Venice, perhaps (8)
- 15 Nadal's headwear awarded good marks in two exams? (7)
- 16 Setter: 'I'm in the money!' (6)
- 18,10 Vacation taken by 5 across runs into impasse (9)
- 20 Swinging both ways, Lawrence may follow 19 (4)

Solution to Crossword No. 43

*Congratulations to
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who won last time.*





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