

Draught Copy



By Maidstone & Mid-Kent
CAMRA

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

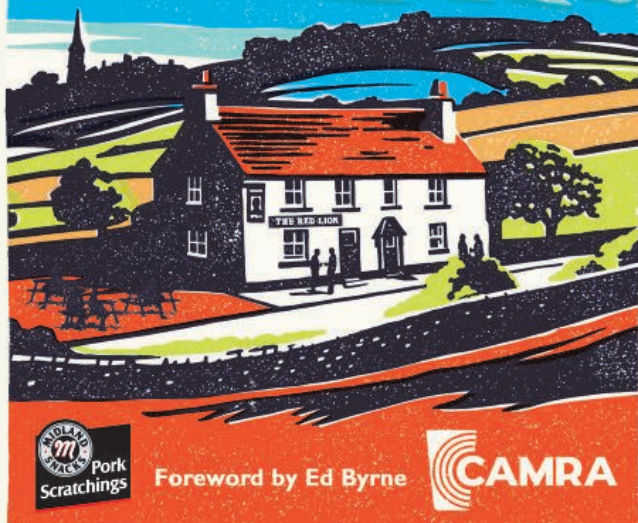
Winter 2025/202 No. 211

Website: www.mmk.camra.org.uk

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THE GOOD BEER GUIDE 2026

The UK's
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- The Good Beer Guide is the definitive guidebook to pubs that serve great cask beer across the UK
- The Guide uses an independent, volunteer-led selection process that makes it the authoritative and trusted voice of cask beer drinkers in the UK
- This is the complete book for beer lovers and for anyone wanting to experience the UK's finest pubs.



Foreword by Ed Byrne



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

Editor and Correspondence: *DraughtCopy.Editor@mmk.camra.org.uk*

Advertising: *DraughtCopy.Advertising@mmk.camra.org.uk*

The copy date for the next issue is 25th January 2026.

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
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KENT BREWERY

Seasonal Greetings from Kent Brewery

**Treat yourself to something
tasty this Christmas!**

REAL ALE AND CIDER ENTHUSIASTS TOAST SUCCESSFUL FESTIVAL

There was barely a drop of beer left as organisers called 'Time' following eight hours of revelry at CAMRA's East



Malling Beer and Cider Festival, held on Saturday September 6th in the grounds of NIAB EMR, the world-famous horticultural research station in East Malling, with cider fans also drinking the bar dry before closing time.



The Festival, planned and staffed by local real ale and cider campaigners, featured 74 different Real Ales, many brewed locally, 34 varied ciders and perries, all from Kent producers, as well as live music from The Joe Cox Band, and Unit 48.



Ian Clennett, Chairman of Maidstone and Mid-Kent CAMRA, the Campaign for Real Ale, said: "With such atrocious weather in the build-up to the event, we were delighted with what became a bumper turnout on a glorious day. Visitors told us the Festival is one of the highlights of their year, with a great selection of beers and ciders on offer, as well as a wonderful location."

Many festivalgoers took advantage of the regular free shuttle bus services from Aylesford, Maidstone East and West Malling Stations. Jeff Tucker, Festival transport coordinator, said: "Using double decker buses has proved a winner and they really caught the eye with their destination signage."

'Beer of the Festival', as selected by a panel of Real Ale enthusiasts, was Dark Angel Stout, from Durham Brewery, with Citra Idaho 7 Azaca, from Two by Two Brewing in Byker adjudged runner-up. A separate panel chose Earl's Reserve, from Charrington, in Matfield, as winner in the 'Best Cider or Perry' category, with Dudda's Perry from Dudda's in Doddington, as runner-up.

A pledge by Festival organisers to donate a sum equivalent to unused drinks tokens returned by visitors raised £400 for Porchlight,

which provides support for homeless and vulnerable people in Kent.



MEET THE LANDLOORD

by Tony Williams



In this issue, MMK CAMRA member, Tony Williams, meets up with **Larkins' Alehouse at Cranbrook!**

You would be hard pressed to find a more community minded pub, than the multi-award winning Larkins' Alehouse. Run by sisters Wendy and Julie with their respective husbands Mark and Kevin, the high street pub is truly the hub of the community.

Maidstone & Mid Kent Branch "Pub of the Year 2024", Larkins' Alehouse walls are adorned with numerous former CAMRA award certificates, that stand as testament to beer quality and welcoming ambience at this former florist shop. But with running the pub, whilst half of the team holding down full time jobs, it's the family's commitment to the community that's just so impressive, as Wendy explained.

"It's what we love doing. We have made so many wonderful friends throughout Cranbrook and beyond, that it seems whenever things need organising, people come to us. Running a pub also means that we have many willing customers possessing a multitude of skills, that are prepared to pitch in." she said.

From being heavily involved in the hugely popular annual Cranbrook on the Green and Cranfest (Cranbrook's Music Festival) and the Cranbrook Town Christmas Market, to filling St. Dunstan's Church with Christmas Trees or spending Pancake Day cooking and serving pancakes in the church to local children – the Larkins' team turn out for almost anything, with all profits going to local community projects or charities. "For personal reasons we do support **21 Together**, the Down's Syndrome charity and **BBS** the Bardet Biedl Syndrome charity, along with others such as the annual RBLI Poppy Appeal." Wendy added,

None of the family team had any experience in the pub trade, but have made Larkins' Alehouse a "must visit" when in Cranbrook, together with a warm welcome for children and dogs and **THREE FREE CAR PARKS** on hand!

Check out larkins-alehouse.co.uk or call (07786) 707476 for Opening Times and other information.



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Accounts Preparation



Larkins' Alehouse
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We'd like to wish all our customers and friends a very
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Christmas Opening Hours:

Christmas Eve	2pm – 9pm
Christmas Day	12 midday – 2ish
Boxing Day	12 midday – 5pm
New Years Day	12 midday – 4pm

All other days are as per our normal hours

Marden Village Club



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A warm Wednesday in August was the day planned for a lunchtime visit by WK CAMRA members to the **Hopbine Inn** and the **Halfway House**. Both pubs are hard to get to without a car, but with a little ingenuity, can be reached by bus. Unfortunately, bus services on the chosen day, which were already disrupted by road works, were further affected by a lorry becoming stuck under a narrow bridge near High Brooms station. The use of WhatsApp as a means of alerting members to the problem and suggesting alternative ways of getting to these two rural pubs, managed to save the day, and in the end six people were able to enjoy two of the most delightful country alehouses in the branch area.



The **Hopbine** at Peterridge, was the first stop, but due to the aforementioned traffic disruption, only two people used the advised route, which was the 297 Hams Travel Service from Pembury Hospital, followed by a 10-minute walk from Brenchley. Two other members cycled, whilst two more walked from Matfield, having missed the 297.

The **Hopbine** stands at the top of a hill, on the edge of the hamlet of Peterridge, and after many years as a tied pub – *King & Barnes* originally and then *Badger Ales*, is now a flourishing free house. There were three beers on sale, *Tonbridge Traditional*, *Harvey's Best* plus a house beer brewed (at the time) specially for the pub by *Cellar Head*. All were in good condition, and all were well received.



Given the various time restraints, the **Hopbine** was the best pub to eat at, although unfortunately, the pair who walked from Matfield arrived too late, and found the kitchen closed.

The menu is restricted to pizzas and burgers, with most of us opting for the latter. My gourmet burger was very tasty, and because I ordered it without the fries, I got it at a knockdown price. With the weather warm and fair, we sat outside at one of the three, shaded terraced areas at the rear of the pub. Other customers seemed to prefer the tables in front, or at the side of the building (less distance to walk), with some preferring the cool interior of the pub itself. For a midweek lunchtime, the **Hopbine** was certainly enjoying a good trade.

Once the two walkers had arrived, and whetted their whistle with a well-deserved pint each, we decided to move on to **Halfway House** a mile or so

outside of Brenchley. The two cyclists set off by road, whilst the rest of us followed on foot, along a well-trodden route, through a series of former orchards, and then through a valley with a number of fishing lakes. Half an hour later, we emerged onto a winding lane at the rear of the **Halfway House**.



The **Halfway House** needs little in the way of introduction to pub connoisseurs, particularly as it majors on cask beer. Casks are kept in a temperature-controlled room, immediately behind the bar, with extra-long taps that protrude through the dividing wall, and out via false, wooden barrel ends, set into the wall. The result - beer kept at just the right temperature and served in the most natural way possible -

straight from the cask. This was my first visit to this attractive, destination pub, since before the pandemic, and the improvements that the owners had put in place, to enable trade to continue outside, during those periods when COVID restrictions were partially lifted, have added to both its charm, and versatility. These additions include a large, semi-covered area overlooking the garden that offered some much welcome shade from the fierce, early August sun.



For me there was one beer on the list that really hit the spot, and that was *Goacher's Fine Light*, but there were also a couple of "house beers", one brewed by *Cellar Head* and another by *Kent Brewery*, this was alongside ales from *Tonbridge, Kent*, and *Anarchy*. We had around 90 minutes before the arrival of the 297 bus that would take us back to Pembury, so we sat outside chatting and enjoying the well-kept beers. There was time for a second beer, and *Kent Session Pale* was my choice. It was pleasant, but didn't top the *Goacher's*.



We stood out in front of the pub in plenty of time, as whilst the bus will stop there, it is not an official stop, and it is necessary to flag it down. With a steep descent towards the pub, and the temptation for the driver to put his foot down, that isn't always the easiest, or indeed the safest of tasks. Fortunately, we managed it OK, and we

boarded the bus back to the Pembury. One member who lives in the village left the bus just outside his house, and the rest of us didn't have long to wait for our connections. Presumably the morning's chaos had cleared by then, but never let it be said that West Kent CAMRA bus trips lack drama or are uneventful!

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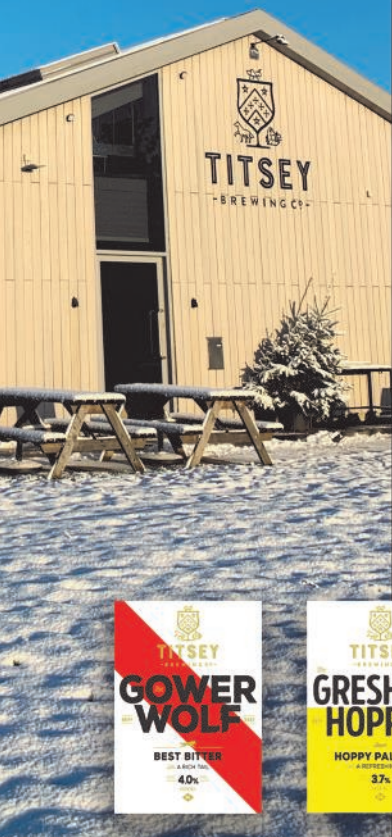


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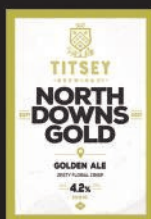
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A GOLDEN YEAR FOR HARVEY'S

We are delighted to report that three of our draught Sussex beers have taken First Prize in **CAMRA's London and South East Area 2025 Champion Beer of Britain Competitions**

Sussex XX Mild Ale Gold Award

Milds Category
'Born to be Mild' Festival,
Wandsworth

Sussex Best Bitter Gold Award

Session Bitters Category
Farnham Beer Festival

Sussex XXXX Old Ale Gold Award

Brown Ales and Red Ales, Old
Ales and Strong Milds Category
Ealing Beer Festival



We also competed in national and international competitions with our packaged products.

Our entries in the **British Bottlers' Institute Competition 2025** saw us take Gold Awards for Christmas Ale, Lewes Castle Brown Ale, Southdown Harvest Ale and Star of Eastbourne East India Ale.

At the **World Beer Awards 2025**, we achieved Gold UK Winner Awards for Christmas Ale, Old Ale and Prince of Denmark Stout.

While, at the **International Beer Challenge 2025**, we were given Gold Awards for Georgian Dragon Ruby Ale, Old Ale and Prince of Denmark Stout. Gold Medallists then go head to head in each category and these heats saw successes for

Old Ale (Trophy for Best Ale up to 5%) Prince of Denmark (Best Stout or Porter Trophy)

The seven trophy finalists then compete in the final.

The judges named Harvey's Old Ale 'Supreme Champion'

We were also awarded the accolade
UK Brewer of the Year 2025

"Winning the 'Supreme Champion' Trophy, in competition with a wealth of beer styles and brewing nations, is an accolade we had not expected. Our Sussex beers are brewed in the County Town using authentic methods of production that have stood the test of time. Combining our spring water and yeast strain with locally sourced hops and barley remains fundamental to our brewing process, as does the skill and dedication of our staff. Every member of the team has contributed to this success and I am immensely proud of them."

Miles Jenner, Head Brewer & Joint Managing Director



HARVEY'S BREWERY



SOCIAL TO HAWKHURST, TICEHURST & WADHURST

It was a mild but grey September day when four of us met at Royal Victoria Place Bus Stops for the Stagecoach 1066 service to Hastings. Today we would be using this service for all of our visits. The journey time to Hawkhurst was 50 minutes and when we got to Tunbridge Wells station two more joined us.



Our first stop was the **Eight Bells** at Hawkhurst Moor and it has its own bus stop. The **Eight Bells**, which is a Grade II listed building, has recently been acquired by the Lakedown Pub Group, the pub owning arm of the Lakedown Brewery at Burwash Weald. The pub had a scattering of customers, some

of whom were having a meal. The pub itself is quirky in design with separate outside doors to the two bars which are divided by the serving area. To move from one bar to the other involves going out the far side of one bar, along a corridor and into the other bar. Of course, some of us went in one door and the others in the other door. The cask ales on offer were two *Lakedown* beers, *Magic Hour* and *Kicking Donkey* along with *Harvey's Sussex Best*. I opted to try the two *Lakedown* beers as I was sure I would encounter *Harvey's Sussex Best* later in the day. By this time the sun had burnt off the grey clouds and we decided to sit in the extensive rear garden with our beers.

Our social secretary had our day well planned and after just over an hour we were outside waiting for a bus to return us in the direction of Tunbridge Wells. It came on time and quickly delivered us to Ticehurst where the very accommodating bus driver took us through the village and allowed us to alight safely at the junction of Cross Lane. We then had a 20 minute stroll down the lane to the



Bull at Three Leg Cross which is situated close to Bewl Water. The **Bull** dates from 1385 and has been a pub since the nineteenth century, this magnificent beamed and quarry tiled building is set in four acres of ground with gardens to front and rear. An earlier phone call had ascertained that they would still be serving food when we

arrived and, on arrival, we were directed to the best table for a party of our size. There were two cask ales available, *Lakedown Magic Hour* and *Harvey's Sussex Best*, both were in very good condition. The service from the staff was excellent throughout our visit, from taking the orders so we could pay separately, to serving the food and even getting drinks for us at table.

We returned to Ticehurst by tracing our steps back up the lane and then walked

into the village and the **Bell** in Ticehurst. The **Bell** was an 16th century coaching inn on the London to Hastings route and dates from 1540. The pub has recently been developed in an idiosyncratic style to which it is difficult to do justice in words; if you are in the area it is well worth visiting for that reason, in addition to enjoying its beer and ambience. There was a choice of four cask ales, *Wainright Gold*, *Harvey's Sussex Best*, *Lakedown Pale* and *Thornbridge/Lakedown Golden Horizon*, the last of which I chose as I had heard of it but not found it before now. The **Bell** was also the location of the bus stop for our onward return journey.



The bus duly came on time and we were soon at The **Greyhound** in Wadhurst. We had heard that there were new tenants after a period of closure and we had never visited the pub. Here we found *Harvey's Sussex Best* the only cask available and it was in good condition. The local CAMRA branch for this pub is NE Sussex and they do find it difficult getting to their far reaching pubs, so we gave them some assistance by getting information so they can update their records. It was then back to the bus stop, and our bus back to Tunbridge Wells.

Some of us then went to **Fuggles Beer Cafe** which is very handily positioned opposite the bus stop to for me catch a bus back to Tonbridge.

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MEMBERS' WEEKEND

ST ALBANS 2026

Friday 17 – Sunday 19 April 2026

The Alban Arena, St Albans



Hosted by South Hertfordshire Branch



Contact: Adrian Moss (01474 363102) email: adrian.moss49@btinternet.com



It's been a year since the last edition, so this item covers a few of the major local developments in that time. The developer who bought the burnt-out **Green Man** at Hodsoll Street obtained planning permission for a replacement pub on the site. Locals were concerned that the proposed building could be easily converted to housing in future and the intention might be to allow the pub to fail in order to make the required change of use easier. However the developer later pulled out and the site was put up for sale with a closing date for offers in March 2026. The local campaigners are intending to put in a bid. The photo shows the pub before the fire.

Things have moved on in Stansted where the owners of the **Black Horse**, shown here, when owned by Leney & Sons, have now vacated the premises. They have also applied for planning permission to convert it into flats and build two houses on the land, while retaining a very small bar serving drinks only. Local suspicion is that this would be unviable and again could be used to justify its closure as a pub. The local campaign to buy and revive it remains active and well-organised so there is a chance here.



Along the Darent Valley we lost two notable pubs this year. The **Queen** in South Darenth closed in June on the retirement of the owner of 27 years. He had obtained planning permission to convert it to four small cottages, which is what it was originally converted from. The fate of the bar clock, which runs backwards, is unknown. The

Chequers at Farningham had also closed by July and again planning permission was approved for conversion to housing. We have no news of the ancient waiter who used to be a feature of the bar.



Better news is that the **Amherst Inn** at Seal Chart, once named the **Sir Jeffrey Amherst Crown Point Inn** and closed since February 2024, was due to reopen on November 24. It will now be known as the **Pig and Pickle**.



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OPENING TIMES

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Contact: John Mills: email pubs.officer@mmk.camra.org.uk

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



Dirty Habit, Hollingbourne - The scaffolding has come down and there is now an end in sight for the completion of the restoration of this historic building.

Monk's Head, Larkfield - Oliver Aubrey is now the licensee here. Thankfully cask ale is available again.

Harvey's Sussex Best Bitter is the single permanent ale with one guest ale that has currently been chosen from Purity, Adnams and St Austell breweries.



Armoury, Linton - The Musket brewery has had to close down due to economic pressures and hence the popular brewery tap there has also closed.

Coach House, Maidstone - New management here and cask ale is available again with *Harvey's Sussex Best Bitter* on the bar.

Bell, Smarden - New management at this Shepherd Neame pub.

Lord Raglan, Staplehurst - Andrew & Annie Hutchison retired at the end of 2024 after 31 years tenure and being good enough to be voted for inclusion in the Good Beer Guide each of those years. Keith Rookledge took over in October 2025 after some updating of the facilities. *Harvey's Sussex Best Bitter* and *Goacher's Fine Light Ale* are back on the bar.



Swan on the Green, West Peckham - The pub is now running under the ownership of The Swan Community Project, a consortium of local investors. Tonbridge beers have been stocked for some time now.

Boathouse, Yalding - Has had a new thatched roof installed.



Walnut Tree, Yalding - For sale again after a previous offer failed.

Images from CAMRA's online pub database

For full information on pubs, including Facebook and other media see the Camra maintained online data at camra.org.uk/pubs that covers the UK.

CELLARS ALEHOUSE WINS BRANCH PUB OF THE YEAR 2025



The Cellars Alehouse has been named the 2025 “Pub of the Year” and 2025 Cider Pub of the Year, for the Maidstone & Mid Kent CAMRA branch — a well-deserved award that celebrates



its commitment to quality, atmosphere and heritage.

Nestled in the old cellar of the former Style & Winch Brewery, the pub exudes history and charm, with vaulted ceilings, flagstone flooring, oil-lamp lighting, and walls adorned with classic brewery and pub signs. Inside, patrons can enjoy a carefully curated selection of cask ales, craft keg beers, ciders and more — all kept in perfect condition in the cooled cellar — offering something for both ale purists



and casual drinkers alike. More than just a pub, Cellars Alehouse offers a warm, intimate atmosphere where conversation thrives and the focus is firmly on good beer and community.



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Spitfire

NEW-LOOK SPITFIRE TAKES TO THE SKIES

Spitfire Kentish Amber Ale is one of the UK's best-loved beers with an international reputation as a Great British Classic.

Since its inception as a one-off brew back in 1990, Spitfire has enjoyed phenomenal success, earning a Royal Warrant and protected status as a Kentish Ale.

Now, it has been given a bold new look - proudly brewed in Kent and honoured with a Royal Warrant from King Charles III, this beer delivers a true taste of British heritage.

TASTING NOTES

Brewed using 100% Kentish hops, the finest malt, and water drawn from the artisan well deep beneath the Faversham Brewery, Spitfire Amber Ale combines the pick of Kentish hops to layer bitter orange marmalade flavour on top of sweet biscuits and caramel malts for a peppery dry finish.



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shepherdneame.co.uk
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Hello, everybody, welcome to the Medway news page. I feel like Dr. Who travelling back in time to recall the beer events of the past year in flashback.



Firstly, in recalling Medway's events I will begin with the **Frog and Toad** beer festival which was held between the 20th and 22nd June. In the outside bar six beers were on offer of which I can recall *Georges Brewery Hopmonster Mad Dog Black*, {abv 4.9%} was much appreciated by me. Alongside the ales were a small number of ciders from *Turners*. The hosts Dave and Glenda also over the three days provided *Wantsum* ales in the pubs bar.

Moving onto the 27th July I attended the annual beer festival at **Rainham Cricket Club**. Held on one of those very hot days of summer, I took shelter from the heat under a tree near the cricket scoreboard to keep cool. With a total of 36 beers to choose from, one could say the beer drinkers were spoiled for choice, while cider drinkers were given a choice of eight ciders. I recall drinking *Burton Bridge Bitter* and *XL Mild*, *Milestone Cromwell Bitter* and *Ossett Brewery*. As in the previous year's festival here the beers were in excellent condition with the *Ossett* offering too good to just drink one!

The **Past and Present Ale House** in Gillingham held a German beer festival from the 3rd to the 5th of October with 16 bottled and two draught beers on offer. Due to unexpected demand by the end of the first day, most of the bottled beers had run out!



On the 1st November the **Prince of Ales** in Rainham, (incidentally earlier in the year voted Medway CAMRAS pub of the year for 2025/26) held a green hop and dark beer festival.

It is reported that the **Angel** in Rainham is now closed Tuesdays as well as Mondays.

Lastly to bring this year's Medway CAMRA events calendar up to date, the branch will be holding their Christmas social at



the **Who'd ha thought It** at 9 Baker Street, Rochester on the 3rd of January starting from 12.30pm. Attendees are asked to give a donation for the food given by the pub.



I close by wishing everybody a very happy Christmas and a peaceful New Year on behalf of the branch.

Contact: Keith Ennis / Dave Moore

email: campaign@westkent.camra.org.uk

Leigh RBL Club has disaffiliated from RBL and is now Leigh Community Club. 2-3 real ales mostly local. CAMRA members welcome with membership card.



Somerhill Arms, Tonbridge. Has been closed for several months but is now being refurbished. We are hopeful there may be some cask ales on reopening.



Hilden Manor, Tonbridge. Has been taken on by the Elite Pub Group and renamed the Never Say Never. They are hoping to open in January 2026.

The Spotted Dog, Smarts Hill. Has been bought by Bowes Hospitality, who run the Rock at Chiddingstone Hoath. There are new food menus along with *Larkins* and *Harvey's* beers.

The Castle Inn, Chiddingstone. Has finally reopened after extensive remedial work after a well was discovered in the pub. Regularly serves *Larkins* and other local beers.



The Bull, Tunbridge Wells. A new management team has seen new food menus and there are normally two beers available from the *Shepherd Neame* stable.

Bricklayers Arms, Chipstead. There is a new landlord who used to run the Royal Oak in Tabard Street. First indications are a good choice of *Harvey's* beers.



Secret Cask, Edenbridge. After closing a couple of years ago has finally reappeared a few doors up the High Street. Currently open restricted hours whilst work continues. *Pig & Porter* and *Titsey* beers were available on opening.

Ragged Trousers, Tonbridge Wells. Have recently been taken over by the Hopbine at Petteridge. *Harvey's Sussex Best* was available on reopening.

Bedford, Tunbridge Wells. Has recently be refurbished and the cask ale offering has been reduced to three. *Harvey's Sussex Best*, *St. Austell Proper Job* and a changing *Pig & Porter* are available.





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Mad Dog Taproom, Tunbridge Wells. Geoff has retired from the Pantiles Tap and it has been taken on by *Mad Dog* Brewery and renamed. Craft only.



The Philanthropist, Tunbridge Wells. A cafe next door to the Ragged Trousers that acts as the Tap for *Fonthill Brewery* serving keg only beers.

Cross Keys, Tunbridge Wells. Closed in November when the tenants left. Pubco are looking for new tenants.

Fleur de Lis, Leigh. Has been sold to local landowner and we understand will be reopening in 2026 as a village pub.

Allkin Tap, Tunbridge Wells. The Tap room of the *Allkin Brewery* (Formerly Good Things) has had a makeover. Their beers are currently contract brewed whilst the new brewery is built. Craft keg only.



Guinea, Tunbridge Wells. Has recently been refurbished. Usually serves two cask ales from local breweries.



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BEER SCORING AND THE GOOD BEER GUIDE

You may be aware of the 'Good Beer Guide'. But you may not know how pubs are selected to appear in the guide. The answer is that it is largely via beer scores submitted by CAMRA members from all over the country.

So how do I score the quality of the beer?

You don't have to be an 'expert' to begin scoring your beer. However, you may try a beer that isn't to your normal taste but what you need to consider is the quality of that beer, how well the pub has kept it and served it and score it according to the general guide below. It is a simple 0 to 5 point system, with half points being used if your opinion of the beer falls between two categories.

0. No cask ale available
1. Poor. Beer is anything from barely drinkable to drinkable with considerable resentment.
2. Average. Competently kept, drinkable pint but doesn't inspire in any way, not worth moving to another pub but you drink the beer without really noticing.
3. Good. Good beer in good form. You may cancel plans to move to the next pub. You want to stay for another pint and may seek out the beer again
4. Very Good. Excellent beer in excellent condition. You stay put!
5. Perfect. Probably the best you are ever likely to find. A seasoned drinker will award this score very rarely.

How do I submit my scores?

In order to submit your scores, you need to login to CAMRA's online pub guide camra.org.uk/pubs. In order to start submitting scores, you need to:

1. Login. To do this you need your membership number and your CAMRA password.
2. Search for your pub by name. Be careful here as there are many pubs in the country which share the same name.
3. Once you have found your pub, a 'Beer Score' button is in the 'Current Beers' section.
4. Simply fill in the date and your score.
You can enter the brewery / Beer, price or make any comments but this is not required to submit the score.
5. Click 'Submit and close' or 'Submit and score again' if you have another beer to score and your score will be entered into the database.

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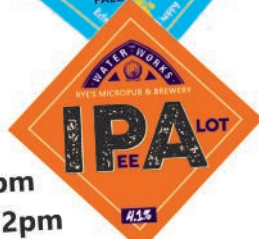
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PUB OPENING TIMES

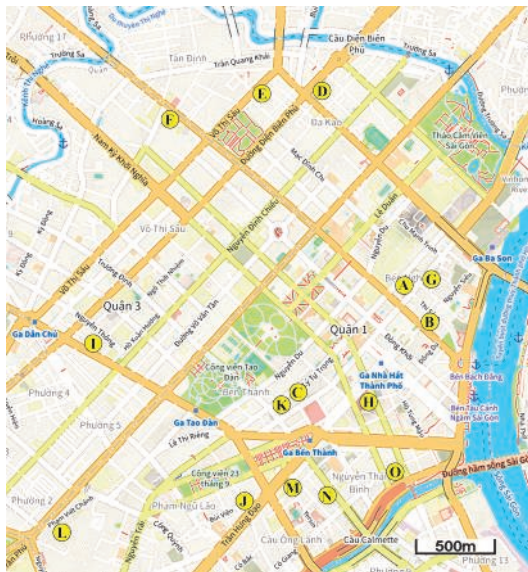
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HO CHI MINH CITY

by Mick J Allen

Carrying on from my article on Cambodia in Draught Copy 209/210, the next visit on the list was to Ho Chi Minh City. That involved a transfer of bus at the Cambodia/Vietnam border, and a walk over the frontier, involving the normal 'why are you here, where are you staying etc, etc questioning. Renamed from Saigon in 1976, HCMC is home to an Ale Trail, a route taking in nine (was ten) craft beer outlets. When you have got a sticker in your beer passport for each, you can claim a free t-shirt. Beers were around the £4.50 to £6.00 price per pint range, depending on abv. Note - Google Maps is your friend, the map I have provided shows just the rough locations.



The next morning, after negotiating the roads filled with dozens of bikes that HCMC is known for, and a little sightseeing, it was time for the first bar. This was **Heart of Darkness (A)** (31D Ly Tu Trong), a brewery founded in 2016 by American John Pemberton, on the outskirts of HCMC, operating two taprooms in Vietnam, and one in Singapore. Out of the sixteen taps available,

the choice was *Quietest Creature Lemongrass Wit* 4.8% and *Directors Chocolate Porter* 6.3%. After getting our passport stamped, it was a twenty minute amble to **7 Bridges Taproom (B)** (15B/12 Le Thanh



Ton) for a *Migrating Coconuts* 6.0%. From the brewery in Da Nang, they supply four taprooms, plus many other outlets throughout Vietnam. Next it was a short walk to on to **Pasteur Street (C)** (26A Le Thanh Ton). This was a different venue to the one mentioned in the Ale

Trail, but, nonetheless stamped our booklets. At a guess, I would say that all of the **Pasteur Street** venues would give you a stamp (and there are five others to choose from in HCMC). A quick taxi journey then took us for our fourth stamp, to **Steersman Taproom (D)** (18 Phan Ke Binh). The beer of choice in here was *Dark Horse Brown Ale* 5.5%, along with a clean-up wipe, if you needed it, for the princely sum





of GBP 0.01p. **Hoprizen Craft Beer (E)** (16/18 Vo Thi Sau) was next on the list for our fifth stamp, although at the time of writing this article (July '24) appeared to have shut up shop and closed and been removed from the Ale Trail list. **Deme Brewing (F)** (393/7 Hai Ba Trung) was our final stamp



of the day. It was certainly a challenge to find this one, but, thanks to our fellow ale-trailer, and Vietnamese speaker, Anna, it was found to be on the fourth floor, with no signposting on the street at all. Only a couple of



Deme ales on in here, so I had the *Hoi Hoi Session IPA 4.2%*. **Deme Brewing** was not to be the last bar of the night, however, as we had heard on the grapevine of a new opening. **7 Bridges Taproom (G)** (38 Dong Du) was a new addition to complement the existing bar. The beer in here was a *Fire Eater Stout 7.3%*, the roasted chilli peppers making it an ideal nightcap.

Our penultimate day in HCMC started with a visit to **Belgo Belgian Craft Beer (H)** (29/31 Ton That Thiep). There are three other venues dotted around HCMC, but none of them are in quite such an historic building, that was once



used as a guest house for the temple opposite. After a sampling of their *Cherry Beer 3.5%*, **Bia Craft (I)** (1 Le Ngo Cat) was next, a short taxi ride away. Out of the forty taps in here, I chose the *No*



Cookie No Nookie Oreo Stout 5.0% to get the third to last stamp. For our penultimate Ale Trail stamp, the **Rooster Beer Taproom (J)** (40 Bui Vien), started in 2015, was reached by taxi. We'd actually tried to get a beer in here on our first night in HCMC, but failed, as it was too late. However, this time, *Roosters Pale 5.0%* and *IPA 6.5%* were the beer choices. The brewery began back in 2016, on a small scale, but moved to its current premises on the Kizuna Industrial zone, a few miles out of HCMC, in 2019.



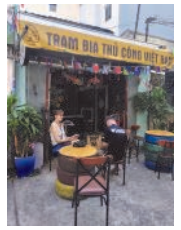
So, it was finally time for our last stamp, and to collect our prizes. A ten minute walk



away was **East West Brewing (K)** (181/185 Ly Tu Trong). The brewery is overseen by Patrick Barnes, from Portland, Oregon, who was the former innovation brewer at Sierra Nevada Brewery. It was a good feeling to get our final Passport stamps, and walk away with a t-shirt. Fittingly enough, this bar is the only one on the Ale Trail with an in-house brewery, and it was finished

off with a *Triple IPA 10.0%*. Fortunately for us, we still had a day left in HCMC, and we'd found another four craft beer venues that were not part of the Ale Trail, and the next afternoon we set about finding these.

After a morning visit to the Vietnam War Ben Dinh Tunnels, and a visit up Landmark 81, the tallest building in Vietnam, it was time to seek out **Tram Beer Craft & Coffee (L)** (59/15B Pham Viet Chanh). This little gem was located up a side alley, and didn't appear open at first, but the lady from next door gave the owner, Nghia, a shout and he duly came out to



open up the premises. A rather strong *Cream Ale 6.0%* was served, all of the beers being brewed in the back room on a tiny plant. A taxi ride back into town then took us to **MixTape Drinks (M)** (40 Dang Thi Nhu, first floor), where we sat on the balcony overlooking life go by. A recent opening, all the beers are brewed in District 7, to the south



of HCMC. I also had an enjoyable beer chat with one of the owners, Khanh, over a *Mixtape Peaches & Cream 6.9%*. Our penultimate bar in HCMC was **Reham Saigon Taproom (N)** (165/41 Nguyen Thai Binh). Six beers were on in here, all from the brewery of the same name, located in Bao Loc,



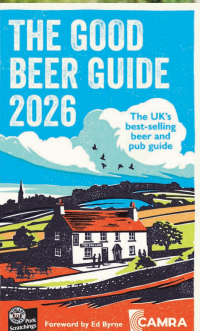
midway between HCMC and Dalat, which was our destination the next morning. *Bia Den (Dark Beer) 5.0%* was the choice in here. There's also a 'spin the wheel' outside the bar giving various freebies if you land on the correct space. Our final pub in HCMC was close by, **Rogue Saigon (O)**

(13 Pasteur). Another rooftop bar, sixteen taps served a variety of different brewers' beers, I finished on a *Pasteur Street Jasmine IPA 6.5%*. To sum up, HCMC has some marvellous bars, beers, and sights. Oh, and warm weather into the mix, as well!

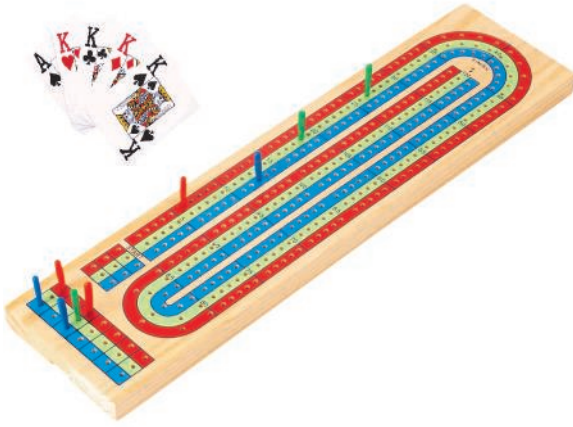
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PUB GAMES : CRIBBAGE



Cribbage is a card game played with two or three people, or four as partners. Two unique features are the crib (extra hand for the dealer, which is made up of cards discarded by all the players) and the score board.

The invention of Cribbage, Crib for short, was attributed to the poet Sir John Suckling (1609 - 1642) by his biographer, John Aubrey. Suckling was something of a scoundrel by all accounts, "the greatest gallant of his time, the

greatest gamester both for bowling and cards, so that no shopkeeper would trust him for sixpence". He was an expert at cards, dice and bowls as well as being a womaniser and notorious wit on top of his poetry day-job! His most notorious feat began when he distributed large numbers of packs of marked cards to the aristocratic populace around England. He then followed up this preparation by going around the country playing the local gentry at Cribbage for money, managing to earn himself around £20,000 (about £4 million in today's money). His lifestyle eventually led to his downfall, however, when in 1642 he allegedly became involved in a plot to free the Earl of Stafford from the Tower of London. In an effort to escape the consequences of this, he fled to Paris and there committed suicide by poisoning himself at the age of 32.

There's no hard evidence to show that Suckling was the inventor of Cribbage and it seems to be suspiciously similar to an earlier game played in Tudor times called Noddy, the rules for which aren't entirely clear. It is probably indicative that Noddy means 'fool' or 'dimwit' and, in 'The Complete Gamester' published by Charles Cotton in 1674, the upturned Jack in 'Cribbidge' is referred to as 'Knave Noddy'. The traditional story says that Suckling invented the game after 1632 (age 23) whereas the Oxford English Dictionary has it's first reference to the word "Cribbage" at 1630, the year that he was knighted, which sheds some considerable doubt upon that version of events. It does seem likely, though, that Sir John did improve and codify the rules to Cribbage and, however game came about, he definitely used his contacts to publicise and spread the new game throughout the land. Cribbage itself is a most elegant and enjoyable pastime with just the right combination of skill and luck. It's not difficult to pick up but

can take some time to play well.

Cribbage requires the use of a scoring board which appears to have been in existence long before the invention of Cribbage itself and may be descended from the same game boards used in ancient civilisations such as Ancient Egypt i.e. those from which Backgammon or Mancala derived. The board is by no means used only for Cribbage, either - many other pub games such as Table Skittles and Indoor Quoits commonly use the same board for scoring. The game spread from England and is now played all over the world.

A standard cribbage board is used to keep score during the game, where each player (or team) moves a pair of pegs along parallel rows of holes, following a track that typically winds around the board. The general movement is indeed "up the outside" from a starting point towards the finish line.

The typical game involves navigating either to 61, 121 or 181 points. Players leapfrog their back peg over the front peg as they score points. The second peg helps track the cumulative score while the front peg shows the points gained in the current hand, preventing mistakes in counting. This functional design is a simple and intuitive system for tracking the progress of the game.

The holes are clearly divided into sets of five, a fact that allows large scores to be tallied immediately without counting and means that a quick glance is all that is needed to determine who is winning and by how much. A complete trip up and down the board is 60 holes but each end has a finishing hole into which the winning peg is placed. Thus, games scored using a Cribbage board are usually first to 61, 121 or 181.

These days Cribbage is one of the most popular card games around and is still played all over Britain in pubs. The British National Domino and Cribbage Championships has been organised by Keith Masters (no relation of the author) annually in Stoke on Trent since 1985.



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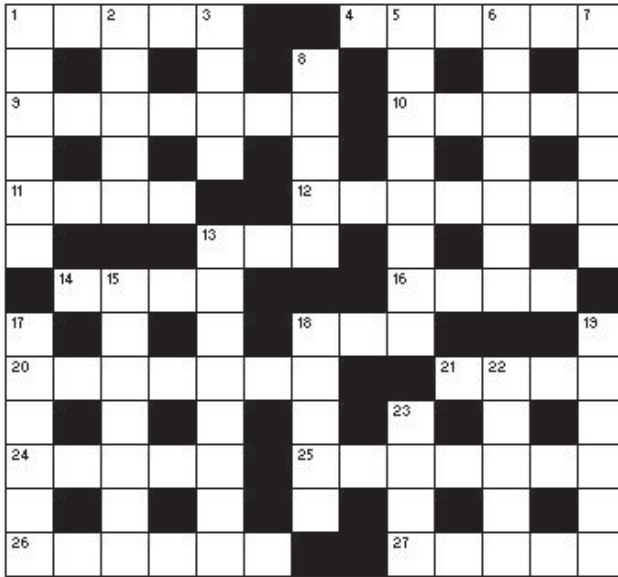
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CROSSWORD No. 46

compiled by MICK NORMAN



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Across

- 1 Father showed the way, but lost colour (5)
- 4 Check model sports car (4,2)
- 9 Black singer interrupted by queen in the morning? Quite the reverse (7)
- 10 Turning most of spigot for unknown traveller (5)
- 11 See 27
- 12 Disagree over hazardous waste (7)
- 13 Disturbance in bar - support required (3)
- 14 Carl leaves northern city for Cuba, perhaps (4)
- 16 Shemale taking drugs in northern river? (4)
- 18 Prosecute the little girl (3)
- 20 Wait - insect next to be hung (7)
- 21 14, but Elvis found therein! (4)
- 24 Aspire to a quarter of a million sheets (5)
- 25 Supplicants supplications (7)
- 26 Manufactured again from 24, note (6)
- 27,11 Cricketer Frank and singer Billy get hitched to heavy hitter - the 10 king? (5,4)

Down

- 1 Yorick's head covered by most of the ocean. Calm down! (6)
- 2 The sea in France is feebler (5)
- 3 Untidy supermarket appears in a pickle (4)
- 5 A French seabird (tailless) ate a sheep - or a giraffe! (8)
- 6 Plead - the culture of the mischievous child (7)
- 7 Car for children? No thanks! (6)
- 8 Orange town in Israel (5)
- 13 Making no progress at sea. Keep a cool head? Balls! (8)
- 15 Light classic car? (7)
- 17 Crab can be poisonous (6)
- 18 Pet is confused about REM's lead singer (5)
- 19 So near deriving motive (6)
- 22 Stoners use restricted substances at first (8)
- 23 Beer ingredient could be vinegar! (4)

Solution to Crossword No. 45

*Congratulations to
R. Amos, Bexleyheath
who won last time.*





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