

Draught Copy



**Free
Magazine**

by Maidstone
and Mid-Kent
CAMRA



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

Website: www.mmk.camra.org.uk

September–November 2026

Edition 214

See you at the Beer Festival!



DRAUGHT COPY

Draught Copy is the magazine of the Maidstone and Mid-Kent branch of CAMRA, the Campaign for Real Ale. It incorporates news from: Ashford; Folkestone and Romney Marsh; Bexley; Gravesend & Darent Valley; Medway; and West Kent CAMRA branches. It is published quarterly, in March, June, September and December and has a circulation of 3,500 copies.

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If you find a pub selling short measures, allowing smoking in the premises, or allowing any other illegal activities, please have a quiet word with the landlord. However, if you need to complain about a licensed premises in your area, contact 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: £110 / £65 / £40 for a full / half / quarter page respectively

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The copy deadline for the next issue is Sunday, 25th October, 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.camra.org.uk/pubs

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Sadly, any social/meeting calendar we could print is likely to be inaccurate and incomplete, so to keep up-to-date we suggest you use the QR codes below to access the branch meetings on our websites.



Ashford,
Folkestone
& Romney
Marsh



Bexley



Gravesend
and
Darent
Valley



Maidstone
and
Mid Kent



Medway



West
Kent

A Joyous Celebration of Beer!

The East Malling beer festival is one of the most eagerly-awaited dates on the Maidstone and Mid-Kent branch calendar. It may last for only a few short hours, but planning for the event began back in February with a meeting in a pub in Maidstone, and the event will not be finally over until late on the following day – a labour of love for the volunteers involved.

At the time of going to press, details were still being finalised, but there will be more than seventy different beers in a massive variety of styles, not to mention some more than thirty real ciders and genuine perries (a rare product nowadays), with an emphasis on local producers. I understand that some CAMRA members will be making dedicated trips to local breweries to ensure that their beers are represented on the day.



and Premium bitters (4.3–6.4%), IPAs, porters, several different breeds of stout and Old Ales. Please feel free to visit CAMRA's website to learn more (and maybe do a bit of homework before the big day): <https://members.camra.org.uk/learn-discover/the-basics/beer-styles/>.

My advice? Pace yourself. Maybe start with halves, or even thirds of a pint and enjoy the music and the atmosphere; at the end of the day, if you have found a beer you really like, celebrate with a pint!

Are you normally a lager drinker? No problem. Every year there are some lager-style drinks. Just look for the *Helles*, *Kölsch* or *Vienna* style beers. If you are looking to broaden your palate, I recommend gravitating towards the pales and lights

Please do not drive to the event if you plan to be sampling the wares. You can catch a train to East Malling station if you want to work up a thirst with a fairly long walk, or buses will run regularly to and from Maidstone, opposite the Maidstone East station, and from West Malling.

Above all, enjoy the day! And if you are not a member but feel the urge to join CAMRA, you will be able to do so at the event.

Don Andrews



CAMRA members, of course, flock to the event from all over Kent and further afield, but it is open to everybody who enjoys real ale. There will be plenty to eat and drink and an afternoon of live entertainment from up-and-coming local bands on the stage at the lower end of the site. I can honestly say that I have been to the last three East Malling festivals, and met nobody who had had a bad time.

Most types of beer recognised by CAMRA will be there, from pale and dark milds and Scottish light (usually 4% or less alcohol by volume or ABV) through session

Cask Beer is marginalised



A recent report published by CAMRA, highlights the unsatisfactory state of beer and brewing in the UK. The report is hard-hitting, and says that *"In our opinion, the hard-won reputation of UK brewing has been trashed by big business and is unsupported by Government. If nothing changes, the decline will continue and may become terminal."*

CAMRA documents how a relatively small number of multinational drinks corporations control the UK beer market, and have reduced consumer choice, while running multi-million-pound marketing campaigns that trick consumers into thinking they're buying independently produced beers and not just brands.

CAMRA praises the independent brewers who are making interesting and exciting beers, using high-quality ingredients, reviving traditional styles or exploring new possibilities – but they are unable to compete with the global brewers' control over market access, or their mass marketing campaigns. .

The four corporations who rule the British beer market have focussed on trying to bolster the flagging market in big-brand international lager, with little visible effort put into producing or developing heritage styles. In the UK.

Their main brands are production line lagers of similar appearance and style, which compete with each other for a share of the declining market in such beers. The com-

panies' few remaining cask and bottled beer brands are often sold as if produced in a particular locality, or else to small-batch or 'craft' specifications, when typically they are neither.

The full report can be found at: <https://camra.org.uk/beer-report>

What CAMRA would like to see from the Government

- 1) Request that the Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) investigate and rectify any distortions within the UK beer market, to include but not be limited to the various practices that limit access to market for independent, small and medium-sized brewers. In the absence of willingness by the industry to change its ways, we believe that a CMA-led market investigation is the only way to address the issues we have raised.
- 2) Investigate the legality and legitimate scope of line maintenance contracts that oblige supposedly independent pubs and other premises to sell a limited range of specified beers or force them to pay significant additional fees to stock those from smaller, local and independent breweries.
- 3) Support growth in the beer sector by encouraging the efforts of UK-based independent breweries in both the domestic and export beer markets.
- 4) Introduce labelling that compels brewers to set out clearly which brewery brewed the beer and which company owns the brand.
- 6) Use the upcoming review of the new alcohol duty system to examine the principles that underlie the UK's counterproductive level of taxation on beer.

Rifle Volunteers



Alex welcomes customers old
and new to the Rifle Volunteers.

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OPENING TIMES

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Tuesday - Saturday: 12pm - 11pm

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SCAN FOR TICKETS & INFO

Keep an Eye on your Branch Diary

An Impromptu visit to the Black Horse at Thurnham



Inside the Black Horse

As it was, I arrived at Bearsted a little later than I had planned, and very quickly realised that in the middle of August, under the still hot sun was not the best of times to ascend the Thurnham Road.

As I trudged up the hill, it also occurred to me that catching an earlier train back would be advisable, given that I didn't want to go back along this road in darkness. The road went along and up and up, and I still seem to have quite a long way to go. However, it was too late to back out now, so I continued on my way up the unforgiving hill toward the Black Horse.

Although Draught Copy has details of many events within our branch and around the area, it is quite easy to forget given the quarterly nature of publication, so it is a good idea to keep an eye on the online branch calendar:

<https://mmk.camra.org.uk/diary>

This month, by chance, I stumbled upon a branch outing to the Black Horse at Thurnham. I have passed the pub many times by car, and a couple of times on foot (with the Ramblers, it's quite a trek), and had regularly wondered what it must be like. This seemed to be the ideal opportunity to find out.

I knew that our branch Social Secretary, Jeff, was unlikely to be there himself, but I do remember that he offered directions for a bus connection which got you within a mile or so. Unfortunately, I had lost the email/WhatsApp/text/message containing the precise details. However, in the end, I decided to take the train to Bearsted instead.

I reckoned that whichever way you went, there was a long hill to go up before you get to the Black Horse, and a return train ticket allows you to leave later, should you wish...

I opened the entrance door, dripping with sweat, and was delighted to see a good number of CAMRA members (who had followed instructions properly). I had a pint of the *Westerham Summer Perle*, which almost compensated for the long walk, and one of the pub's house brew, which tasted rather similar to *Tonbridge's Copperknob*, but was an excellent example of said brew if so. One of our number informed us that he planned to catch the 2051, and gave us all half-an-hour's notice.

This was very fortunate as we seemed to be enjoying bright daylight at that particular moment, but I could see that the sun was already slipping down towards meeting the (stunning) scenery outside the back door of the pub, and it was quite a group of us who set off back to the station.

It was a really enjoyable outing, to a pub I would never have gone to without the suggestion of the CAMRA social event guide – so keep an eye on it as the months go by, you never know when it might come in useful!

Text and photo – Don Andrews

Maidstone & Mid Kent Pub News

Red Bull, Eccles – Has a new licensee and has had some internal refurbishment.



Eight Bells, Hawkhurst – Maidstone branch members joined with West Kent members for a beer festival here. There was a selection from *Lakedown* and a couple from the new *Garage Culture* brewery in Rye. Sadly, a week later, a notice placed on their website stated the venue was closing as it was unable to continue due to the same factors that so many premises are already facing.

Oak & Ivy, Hawkhurst – Plans to update this had halted some time ago and now it is for sale.

Windmill, Hollingbourne – Has had a new operator but we have no information yet.



Chequers, Laddingford – Charles and Tracey are leaving after 32 years of devotion to this excellent pub. They will be sorely missed by the community and will be a hard act to follow for the incoming licensees.

Brenchley, Maidstone – Has been sold and will become a **Bullseye** darts and karaoke venue.

Coach House, Maidstone – Licensees are due to leave 22 August.

Duke of Edinburgh, Maidstone – From July 24 new licensee, Matt Hall, has replaced the former licensee, Greg Russell who has decided to concentrate on his other pubs.

Eagle, Maidstone – Has been stocking *Tonbridge* beers for a while and this has been appreciated.

Duke of Wellington, Ryarsh – The annual beer festival had a good attendance with opportunities to drink beers from breweries in Manchester, Cornwall and around the country.



Black Horse, Thurnham – Currently have *Tonbridge Coppernob* as a house ale named *Copper Ale* that was very good on a recent branch visit. Also had *Tonbridge Easy Street* and *Westerham Summer Perle*.

**Text by John Mills, photos by
CAMRA website and Don
Andrews**

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

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Good News for a Great Beer



Édouard Manet's "Bar at the Folies Bergère":image courtesy of the Courtauld Gallery (Samuel Courtauld Trust)

There was a time when Bass was almost ubiquitous. It could be found (in one form or another) on every continent on the planet, except, perhaps Antarctica. Its red triangle was the first-ever trademark, I have been reliably informed, and it is still present in many pubs which have no connection with the beer. The trademark features prominently in Édouard Manet's painting "*Bar at the Folies Bergère*."

My own fond memories of Bass stem from a small, dark, local pub just off the Tottenham Court Road in London, where the basic nature of décor was more than compensated by the excellence of the beer. The pub is still there; sadly the Bass is not.

In 2000, the Bass company ceased brewing beer and became, effectively, a pub management company. The brand ended up being taken over by the multinational AB InBev company.

Bass continued to be brewed, but production dwindled to about 30,000 barrels

a year, and it became a rare sight outside its home grounds of Burton and Derby.

In 2010, AB InBev announced that it was selling off Draught Bass and three other well-respected brands for £15 million, but there were no takers. The future of these iconic brands looked bleak.

However, draught Bass aficionados were not prepared to give up. A National Bass Day was organised every year, with drinkers encouraged to visit pubs and consume generous quantities. Fans produced a register of all

known pubs that serve Draught Bass and a Facebook page with the slogan "Great Stuff This Bass," a slogan once used by Bass.

In the end, AB InBev had a change of heart, and announced that it will invest in the beer, "which will remain in Burton" Distribution has increased from just 350 to more than 1,000 pubs in recent times. The beer will not be identical to the original, as Carlsberg Britvic, the owner of Marston's, has shut down and disposed of the Victorian vessels that were developed specially, but regular Bass drinkers agree that the "New Bass" is well made, and similar to the original.

Other brewers are also seeing a future, in old brands. JW Lees from Manchester has relaunched the local favourite beer, Boddingtons, with great success, Kirkstall Brewery in Leeds, have revived the famous Allsopp's beer in collaboration with descendants of the original Allsopp family.

Don Andrews/CAMRA

Local Pub News

Victoria, Belvedere - Dawn Sims and Dawn Beasley share the license and landlord role and took over in May with *Theakston's Quencher* as opener.



Inside the Golden Lion

An application for flats on the spacious car park at the **Running Horses, Erith** has been submitted.

Another surprise draught appearance occurred at the **Bear and Ragged Staff**, Crayford where the usual *Greene King IPA* was complemented with some *Belhaven IPA*. Kat Clement at the **Rose, Bexleyheath** has been in 6 months now, with assistance and beers from *Mighty Oak* (*Saxon Shore* doing well). She wants to experiment with real cider – watch this space. Up the way in Long Lane the **Long Haul, Bexleyheath** – being handed over to new owners – has so far shown no discernible divergence from standards or Kentish offerings.

Elsewhere change of tenure also likely at the **Green Man, Welling** and at the **Prince Albert, Bexleyheath** where the tenant has thrown in the lease from Shepherd Neame citing overheads and rent.

Several seasonal refurbishments underway, notably at the **Golden Lion, Bexleyheath** – now Craft Union-branded (Stonegate), at the **Fox, Belvedere**, and at the **Railway Tavern, Bexley** where last year's crash damage is decently

remedied. At all these, standard national beers are still found, the **Fox** having two or three at once. A visit to the **Silver Fox, Bexley** in early July found *North-down* beers on draught. It also found Nicky reserved about continuing that source – a revisit later that day found *Kent Old Skool* fresh on, so two of those went down. Nicky would like cask from more breweries in 36s rather than 72s – if only they would!



The interior of the Silver Fox

A newer bar, the **Taproom, Sidcup**, near the ex-Charcoal Burner in Marechal Niel parade (233 bus) has been going a while – not really a cask bar itself but *Bexley* brews show on the ubiquitous cold fonts. Not to be mixed up with the **Tap, Sidcup** (a self-service tap bar), which would seem to have survived an appeal after serious allegations about supervision of an event in March which were taken by the "Met" to the Licensing authority.

And: Wetherspoons outlets in Bexleyheath things seem to have been markedly quieter in recent months; in fact the **Wrong'Un** was noted early in June turning over quite a lot of beer at 99p a pint...

That's all from your correspondent now – off to Shirk, Rust and Pray on the Green Goddess Pub "Bus Tour."

Text and Photos by Roland Amos

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Pub News

The expansion work at **Fuggles Beer Café, Tunbridge Wells** has started. Owner Alex says *"Refurb works are going as expected, few snags and issues but most of the horrible work is done and we are progressing nicely. Hoping to have Phase 1 (new toilets) and Phase 2 (more seating in the 'new side') done by mid-September if all goes well."* Of course, with building work dates can change at short notice so keep a look out on the socials.



The **Bell Inn, Golden Green**: Landlords fear they might have to close the pub due to a six-week programme of road closures for gas main repairs. Bus services have stopped running to Golden Green and taxis are refusing journeys so customers can't get to the pub.



The **Man of Kent, Little Mill** also seems to be affected by the road closures, which seems very tough on its owners, having only just taken over. So if you can get out to these two pubs to support them, good on you.

The **Papermakers Arms, Plaxtol** is closed and on the market for £495,000 with agents Fleurets, after the company which owned it went into administration.

Work is going on at the former **Maid of Kent cafe/bar, Tonbridge**.

The **Brookers Oast, Beltring** will be closing on 7/9/26 as owners Whitbread announced the closure date for all of its remaining Brewers Fayre outlets.

Odey's Coffee Shop & Bar has opened in what was the **Philanthropist** in the Pantiles. The **Robin Hood, Tunbridge Wells** lease is on offer by Greene King.

The **Duck & Goose** is now open in the former Shuffle House in Tunbridge Wells. It's reported to be a nice venue but without real ale at the last visit.

The **Fleur de Lis, Leigh** - progress in refurbishing and reopening has been held up so it remains closed at present.

The **Duke's Head, Dunton Green** is now reopened and selling real ale.

The **Rose & Crown, Halstead** (closed for some time) is still on offer by the Wellington Pub Company: it's future is uncertain.

The **Oak, Rusthall** now serves Chinese food but no real ale at the last report. Could anyone local investigate, please?

The **Bricklayer's Arms, Chipstead** is NOT under new management: apparently, the current licensee has been there for a while.

The **Brickworks, High Brooms** have a happy hour offering £1 off a pint between 2.30-4pm

Dave Moore (campaign@west-kent.camra.org.uk)

Gravesend & Darent Valley Pub News



***A Tribute to Kevin Taylor
(photo: The Three Pillars)***

The Gravesend pub scene has lost a notable character and friend with the untimely passing of Kevin Taylor of the **Three Pillars**- Kevin and Joy started the pub under the Masonic Hall nine years ago after spells at the **Red Lion** in Strood, the **Tudor Rose** at Upnor and the **Gardeners Arms** at Higham. Kevin was always a genial host and a good judge of his customers and could be relied on for a knowledgeable discussion on any beer or pub topic. His funeral was very well attended and a tribute to him remained on display in the pub in July. The pub remains a family affair with Kevin's son Reece now in charge.

As of July two pubs in Dartford are running real ale loyalty card schemes. At the **Malt Shovel** the 10th pint is free and at the **Royal Victoria & Bull** the 9th is free. The **Cotton Mill in Swanley**, already our branch Pub of the Year, is in the running for a Kent award in the Best Small Business in Hospitality category in the UK Small Business Awards.

As these notes were being written the **Chequers at Heaverham** had just had a very interesting relaunch. It closed in September 2025 and while owners the St Clere Estate are considering future options for the building it has become the **Kentish Garden Pub**, operating entirely in the garden. The intention is to keep this up until September, weather permitting, as a complete pub with a variety of activities and using local produce where possible. It is currently open from Wednesday to Sunday, from noon to 10pm.

Pubs which do things differently must be a good thing and you'd have to say they've picked a good year for this.



***The Garden of the Bull, Otford
(photo: Dan Croker)***

The **Bull in Otford** has become part of the small Whiting and Hammond pub chain and is now refitted smartly with exposed beams, stripped wooden flooring and numerous prints, old photos and information boards decorating the walls. The bar sits alongside a fine old fireplace with a bull's head mounted above. While there is an emphasis on dining, there is plenty of space for drinkers in the bar area and also in the extensive garden to the side and rear of the pub. Three regular real ales are *Greene King Abbot*, *Larkins Traditional* and *Timothy Taylor Landlord*.

(Continued on Page 19)

Award winning beers from The Waterworks Brewery



Our **Pissoir Porter** has recently won three awards including a

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Gravesend & Darent Valley News (Continued from page 16)



Green Man supporters
(Photo supplied by the Campaign Group)

There are another three changing regional beers from brewers such as *Tonbridge, Gun and Lakedown*.

The pubs in Wrotham continue to evolve and this review is compiled from reports by Scott Goodwin, Roland Graves and Ken Baines. The **George & Dragon** did indeed reopen, run by Remus and Sophie and with a new décor and chef. The restaurant is open on Tuesdays to Sundays and much of the menu is Spanish-influenced with tapas and paella popular. Beer options are still being tested but the regular real so far is *Harvey's Sussex Best Bitter*.

Katie and Daryl at the **Rose & Crown** are now serving food on Wednesdays to Sundays with a Sunday carvery option. Recent new events include fortnightly bingo on Tuesdays. *Shepherd Neame Master Brew, Whitstable Bay* and *Spitfire* are regularly available.

The **Bull** features one changing real ale, usually local with *Tonbridge Coppernob* seen recently. The **Moat** at Wrotham Heath hasn't been mentioned often but it is popular with diners and regularly sells a *Bexley* beer, with their *Blonde* noted alongside *Adnams Ghost Ship*. There is a monthly quiz for which booking is required.

The **Ship** in Cobham reopened in late May after a refurbishment as a tenancy. The new tenants are keen on real ales and have a slightly relaxed tie with *Greene King* for them. The aim is to build up to two locally-brewed beers alongside two from *Greene King*. Recently spotted was *Kent Old Skool* and one of two *Greene King* beers was *Sixty Years of Hurst*. CAMRA members receive a discount here.

We hear that Andrew Turner of the nearby **Cock** at Luddesdown is recovering after surgery. We wish him well.

In early July it was announced that the local campaign group had, with support from an investor, bought the site of the **Green Man** at Hodsoll Street from Stonegate Inns.

The previous pub had had to be demolished for safety after the fire and they are now organising local plans and funding to a replacement community pub to be built in its place. The campaigning effort they have put into this is now starting to bear fruit.

Text by Adrian Moss

Calendar of Events – September - November

Please note: all dates given are provisional only. Please check with the relevant websites on the day.

September

Tue 1: Medway Camra AGM taking place at the 12 Degrees Rochester, starting at 19:30. All Members are invited to attend both old and new (Medway)

Thu 3: 19.30 King & Queen, East Malling (MMK)

Fri 4 - Sun 6: Brockley, SE4 Beer Festival by Craft Beer Folk <https://craftbeerfolk.co.uk/> (WK)

Sat 5: 11.00–19.00 East Malling Beer & Cider Festival (MMK). See MMK website at <https://mmk.camra.org.uk/festival> for more details

Sat 5 - Sun 6: Tonbridge Food and Drink Festival in the Racecourse sportsground, 11-6, free entry, might have some real ale and/or cider <https://www.facebook.com/TonbridgeFoodandDrinkFestival> (WK)

Sat 5 - Sun 6: Faversham Hop Festival. There will be a CAMRA Bar in East St: plus live music, stalls, great food, real ale, children's fun area with fairground <https://www.favershamhopfestival.org/> (WK)

Thu 10: 18.00 – MMK visit to Chequers, Aylesford, then Little Gem (MMK)

Fri 11 – Sat 12: Iron Pier Brewery Taproom 10th Beer Festival, live music <https://www.facebook.com/ironpierbeer> (WK)

Fri 11 – Sat 12: Horsham Brewery Beer Festival <https://horshambrewery.com/horsham-ember-beer-festival-2026/> (WK)

Fri 11 – Sun 13: The Tower, St. Leonards – Beer Festival. (WK)

Sat 12: 12.30 Visit to the Chequers, Laddingford (Charles & Tracy farewell). Catch bus 25 from King St Greggs at 11.40. (MMK)

Sat 12: The Cockpit, Chislehurst – Beer & Music Festival at Chislehurst & West Kent Cricket Ground, BR7 5HD. Tickets £12, beer, food, music, games <https://www.facebook.com/CockpitChislehurst> (WK)

Sat 12 – Sun 13: Kent Life Hops 'N' Harvest (Family &) Beer Festival, Sandling. Live music, hop picking demos, meet the brewer, food, drinks and farmyard fun <https://kentlife.org.uk/event/hops-n-harvest-family-festival/> (WK)

Thur 17 – Sun 27: Cask Ale Week 2026, the annual celebration of Britain's national drink – cask beer! <https://caskaleweek.co.uk/> (WK)

Fri 18: 16.30 MMK visit to Good Intent, West Farleigh, then walk to Bull, Barming. Bus 23A leaves King St Greggs at 16.03. (MMK)

Fri 18 – Sat 19: Halfway House, Brenchley – Oktoberfest <https://www.facebook.com/halfwayhousebrenchley> (WK)

Fri 18 – Sun 20: Sixth Bluebell Railway Beer Festival, Sheffield Park Station, 100+ ales, cider & perry <https://www.bluebell-railway.com/special/bluebell-beer-festival/> (WK)

Fri 18 – Sun 20: The Bull, Otford – Oktoberfest. (WK)

Fri 25 – Sun 27: Brickmaker's Alehouse, Bexhill – Autumn Beer & Cider Festival. (WK)

Sat 26: – MMK coach Trip to West Sussex (MMK)

October

Thu 1: 20.30 Beer Festival Wash-up, Market House, Maidstone (MMK)

Fri 2 – Sun 4: Hastings Tap Takeover, multiple venues around Hastings and St. Leonards, each showcasing an independent brewery of their choice <https://www.facebook.com/hastingsaptakeover> (WK)

Sat 3: 11.15 Bus 12 to Wings, Headcorn Aerodrome, 12.00, then walk (or bus) to White Horse, Headcorn, bus to Queens Head, Sutton Valence (MMK)

Thu 8: 19.00 Three Chimneys, Biddenden, then Red Lion (MMK)

Thu 8 - Sun 11: The Little Brown Jug, Chiddingstone Causeway - Oktoberfest (WK)

Thu 15: 18.00 Market House. Beer scoring tutorial. (MMK)

Thur 15 – Sun 18: Spa Valley Railway, Tunbridge Wells – 15th Real Ale and Cider Festival. All aboard for Ales, Ciders, Kent Green Hop Beers, Bands and Trains! 230 Real Ales, around 40 Kent Green Hop Beers, 14 Keg Beers and 80 Ciders. <https://spavalleyrailway.co.uk/> (WK)

Fri 16 – Sat 17: Craft Beer Festival — Time & Tide Brewing at Canterbury Cathedral Lodge, The Precincts, Canterbury, CT1 2EH

Sat 24: 13.00 Marden Village Club Beer Festival. Bus 23 leaves King St Greggs at 12.10, or go by train. (MMK)

November

Sat 7: 10.06 Bus Trip to Dunton Green and Sevenoaks (MMK)

Thu 12: 20.30 Business Meeting, Market House, Maidstone (MMK)

Sat 14: London Trip. For more details nearer the date, please refer to the MMK website (MMK)

Sat 21: Kent County Meeting for Kent branch representatives to discuss any relevant business including Good Beer Guide and competition announcements. Location will be in MMK branch.

Fri 27: 16.00 Maidstone West Walkabout, First & Last, White Horse, Cellars (MMK)



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What is "Real" Cider?

(And why we should care)



Real cider is made by fermenting juice of apples and certain other fruits, plus some permitted adjuncts. Bottled or draught cider that contains live yeast also qualifies, provided it has not been pasteurised, carbonated, or concentrated.

Traditionally, cider was made using locally sourced fruits, that were pressed and fermented using traditional cider production methods. Real cider is normally served still and is often cloudy.

Ciders are brewed in many different areas, including Asturias (*Cidra*, traditionally brewed in the North of Spain), and Normandy (French *cidre*) are among the best-known cider regions. It varies in alcohol content from less than 3% Alcohol by Volume (ABV) in French *cidre*, up to 8.5% ABV in some traditional English ciders. It is a good idea to check on this before drinking too much of it!

Each apple cider maker has their own blend of the hundreds of varieties of apples available. Sources and precise ingredients are usually closely-guarded secrets, and long-established family producers have handed down the production process to their sons and daughters.

Just like beer, cider has its different flavours. Dry ciders, for example, are often associated with Somerset, whereas Devon offers sweeter ciders.

Mass produced cider

Most of us, however, first experienced cider through industrially produced brands.

Rather than being made from all juice as a true cider would be, they're made with some apple juice, bulked out with sugar and water. Mass-produced cider sold in the UK is often made from imported apple concentrate. Artificial colourings, sweeteners, and preservatives are added to give it some flavour, and the liquid is filtered, pasteurised to kill the yeast, and then kept and served under carbon dioxide pressure.

Some of the least authentic "ciders" derive their alcohol content from fermented corn starch syrup which is then diluted with water. Malic acid is then added in order to get a bit of taste back into it. Doesn't sound very appetising does it? This produces a drink that can be refreshing, but has less flavour and character than real cider. With consumers demanding higher quality in the food and drink industry, it is time to support the local producers who are carefully crafting natural real cider, using sustainable methods.

Fancy trying some real cider? The East Malling beer festival also features ciders (and perries), many of them made locally. So if you feel a bit adventurous, why not give cider another look. Alternatively, why not try some real cider at the Marden Village Club Beer Festival? As an added bonus, real cider should be suitable for those on vegan or wheat-free diets.

Text: Dondayesta, Image by CAMRA

Meet the Licensee

The Woodcock, Iden Green

In this issue, we meet up with Lyndora Goodger of the Woodcock Inn at Iden Green



Lyndora Goodger

You cannot buy, and there's no substitute, for experience. This is graphically illustrated by Lyndora's long track record of success in the hospitality trade, as she leads the lovely team at The Woodcock Inn, Iden Green, near Benenden.

"I had the White Hart at Newenden as my first pub, at the age of twenty-eight, and have built a significant business in hospitality since then, running several pubs, as well as a successful catering company, serving many prestigious venues throughout the world of sport." Said Lyndora.

Nestling deep in the Kentish Weald countryside, on the edge of the Maidstone and Mid Kent CAMRA branch area, the Woodcock Inn is truly a real hidden gem and well worth seeking out!

"During the Covid pandemic we completely renovated and extended the pub, building a brand-new kitchen that's three times the size of the original, along with a beautiful garden room providing an extra 35 covers. Throughout that challenging period, we continued providing food for local residents, as well as customers at many of my sporting venues. I am a huge supporter of supporting local businesses, buying local whenever I can, which means that everything is cooked fresh, there's no frozen food served here!" she added.

Lyndora is also a firm believer in providing young people with a good foundation to begin their working life. "I have a wonderful team of young locals and if interested in catering, I take them to the prestigious kitchens at my Premier League customers, to gain invaluable culinary experience. Young people are our future, and I have also helped them to gain further employment through my vast network of contacts."

Painted every two years and adorned with an abundance of beautiful hanging baskets, the Woodcock Inn had Tonbridge Brewery's "Traditional", Long Man's "Long Blonde" and Harvey's "Sussex Best" available, to accompany their interesting and varied menus.

"If you haven't tried my Sunday Roasts, then you are definitely missing a treat and with a host of famous faces living locally, you never know who might be sitting at the next table!" smiled Lyndora. Check out www.thewoodcockinn-idengreen.com or call 01580 240009 for Opening Times, events, menus and other info.

by Tony Williams

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Pubs and Festivals



I visited the Prince of Ales in Rainham for their summer beer festival, which was packed on arrival with like-minded drinkers enjoying an ale or two. On offer were eight cask beers plus ciders and a key

keg beer. From the list of ales presented, I much enjoyed a pint (or was it two?) of the Portobello Brewery Market Porter beer and a Bristol Beer Factory beer called Follow Us.

In the middle of July, Past and Present in Gillingham held a World of Beers festival featuring eighteen bottled beers from around the globe. The countries represented included not only established beer-producing nations like Germany, Belgium and the United States but also unlikely places such as Turkey, Argentina and Corsica: I know Corsica isn't a country but part of France, but how many of us have actually drunk beers from this Mediterranean island?

All in all, a very good selection of beers ranging from pale ales to stouts, talking of which I was not too late to try a bottle of Nigerian Guinness at a hefty 7.5 % ABV. Unfortunately, on the day I attended the festival, {Friday} most of the bottled beers had already been drunk, obviously by a large number of beer drinkers eager to travel and drink their way around the world and sample something different.

by Mike Thomas

Congratulations to the Greyhound



'Many congratulations are due to Fran and Rich at the Greyhound in Charcott for winning the 'Food and Drink Business of the Year' award from the Tonbridge Business Awards 2026 scheme. Now entering their 10th year owning and running this rural pub and having worked

hard to build up their business, it is fitting that they have received this well-deserved recognition.

Recent visits to the Greyhound confirm the quality of their food and drink, and cask beers from the likes of Three Acre, Iron Pier and Canterbury Ales have accompanied the local Larkins Traditional Ale together with Charrington's Earl's Reserve cider on the bar.

Although located in a quiet hamlet the pub can easily be reached by taking a train to Penshurst Station followed by a 10 minute level walk along a surfaced public footpath across fields. Alternatively, Autocar run a limited bus service number 210 from Tonbridge to Charcott.'

by Don Croker (photo CAMRA)

Planning change is Good News for Pubs



An updated planning Policy Framework will require developers to prove that there is no reasonable prospect for a pub to continue as such before a change of use can be approved.

It seems likely that developers will need to supply evidence that a pub has been marketed as being for sale for at least 12 months before it can be converted to any other use, and councils will be expected to consider whether closing a pub would deprive a community of a place to meet up.

Under the new policy, development proposals should not result in a loss of “key community facilities” unless: there is no reasonable prospect of the use being retained; similar or better provision is made; or there is sufficient alternative provision locally.

Figures released by the British Beer and Pub Association (BBPA) show that 161 pubs closed during the first quarter of 2026, averaging more than two per day. Over the last five years, there were nearly 2,200 net pub closures, with the number of pubs falling from 46,829 in 2020 to 44,656 in 2025.

The BBPA has called on the government

to reduce business rates, reduce beer duty and cut VAT, along with proposals to lighten the regulatory burden. According to BBPA CEO Emma McClarkin, many of the closures are avoidable because even popular pubs find that *“their profits are wiped out by a disproportionate tax burden and huge costs.”*

She added that: *“We want to work with Government to establish a permanent long-term plan that will deliver*

permanently lower bills, a fairer system and ultimately protect this treasured sector. This means more people in jobs, precious community spaces protected, vibrant high streets, and more investment and growth.”

The CAMRA website highlights how pubs across the UK are being lost to conversion or demolition, as developers look to cash in on the desirable locations and unique architecture of pubs and social clubs. CAMRA chairman Ash Corbett-Collins supported the proposed changes in regulations, saying that they were *“fantastic news for pubs and communities.”*

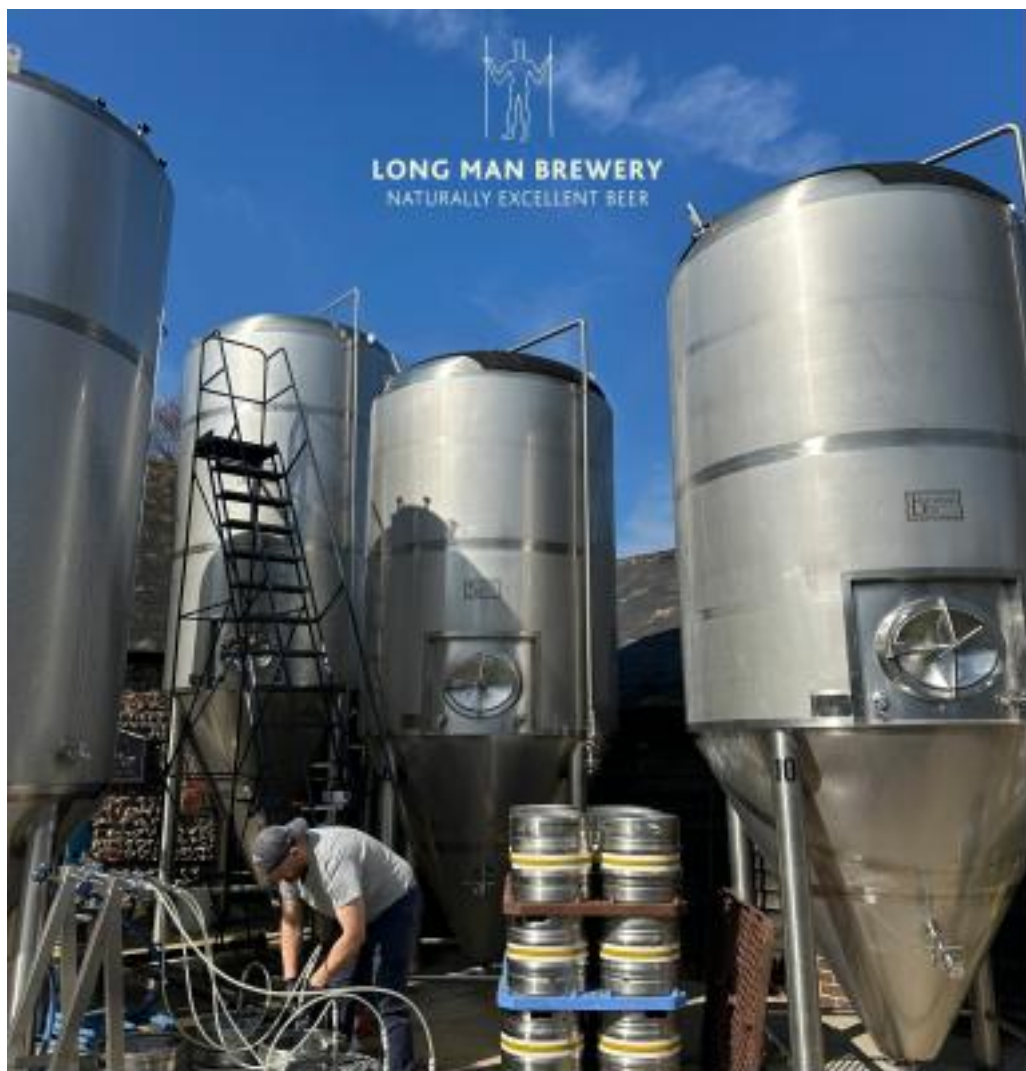
The organisation’s website offers in-depth guides for local communities who find their pubs closed or threatened with closure at <https://camra.org.uk/save-your-local-pub>.

A campaign headed by celebrity chef Tom Kerridge, #VATsTheProblem is calling on the UK Government to reduce VAT for hospitality businesses. If you wish to sign the petition, it’s not too late: go to the website <https://www.vatstheproblem.co.uk/> and add your name.

Text and photo by Don Andrews



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No Smoking in the Garden, please

Will local pubs follow "The Goat?"



A pub in Berkhamstead, the **Goat**, has taken the unusual step of banning smoking from its garden area. After the government's rather alarming

fire alert on

had reduced.

The pub does still provide a smoking area at the side of the pub, where there is much lower risk and ashtrays are readily available. A post on Facebook announced:

"No smoking in the back garden for now, please.

You can still smoke in the designated smoking area at the side of the pub. Just make sure every cigarette butt is completely extinguished and goes in the ashtrays provided."

At the time of going to press, the risk of fire is still very high. In the aftermath of a huge fire, in which 45 acres of farmland were burned near Trowbridge in Wiltshire, the local fire chief Shaun Milton urged people to "go to the pub" rather than have a barbecue, and the sale of disposable barbecues has been banned.

14th August, the manager, Jules Yeomans, took the unusual step of banning smoking from the garden altogether until the fire risk from the Summer heatwave

Quiz Night on Monday

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12 – 11 Friday and Saturday

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Tonbridge and Kent Weald Pub News and Views

Having moved from Dartford to near Hildenborough in Kent just a year ago I was keen to try out the local pubs having left Dartford behind after 32 years. One of my favourites out here is the **Windmill** in the Sevenoaks Weald. It was formerly run by the brilliant Matt and Emma Rudd, but shortly after we arrived in December 2018 I learnt he was selling up and moving to the **Nelson Arms** in Tonbridge.

New owner Richard arrived shortly after. New beers were introduced including the excellent range from Margate in the form of *Northdown Brewery*. *Pale Mary* is excellent in the low 4's abv with *He Bru* the big boy at around 5%.

Meanwhile Matt's Midas touch was taken to the run down **Nelson Arms** in a quiet residential street in Tonbridge. The atmosphere is very 'Windmill' with candles,

hops, soft lighting and a snug with leather backed chairs.

(Continued on Page 32)



The Nelson Arms

An advertisement for Mad Cat Brewery. It features a blue background with the text "MAD CAT BREWERY" in large, bold letters. Below the text are several bottles of beer, including "GOLDEN IPA", "PLATINUM BLONDE", "EMOTIONAL", and "AUGUSTINE". To the right, it says "Traditional & Craft Ales AVAILABLE IN PUBS ACROSS KENT CAN'T FIND IT? ASK YOUR LOCAL LANDLORD TO STOCK OUR BEER OR ORDER FROM OUR RANGE OF BEERS ONLINE www.madcatbrewery.co.uk". At the bottom, there is a yellow banner with contact information: "CONTACT US TO FIND OUT MORE 01795 597743 info@madcatbrewery.co.uk". A cartoon cat is running across the bottom, and a jester cat is on the right. Social media icons for Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram are also present.

Tonbridge and the Kent Weald Pub News and Views

(Continued from Page 31)

The other side houses a more sports orientated area and for music.

There are themed days like Pie Tuesday which my wife Wendy and I tried with the stunning *Prohibition* from the brilliant *Kent Brewery* to accompany excellent grub. *Arbor 'Rocker Man'* was also on along with award winning *Shere Drop* (4.2) from *Surrey-Hills Brewery*. Now it is super busy being so well run.

Onwards up the street and you'll find the **Fuggles Beer Café**. A superb range of both cask and keg with one of the best toasts I've ever had served by the excellent Owen. *Burning Sky* featured on my last visit with *Plateau* kicking things off at 3.5% abv, followed by *Aurora* at 5.6%. I can highly recommend a half 'n' half with these two brews.

When I lived in Dartford, we found that this

combo worked well in the **Queen**, South Darenth after a ride with *Kent Session* and *Brewers Reserve* regulars and both at similar ABVs. The rule is to do so with same styles. In this case IPAs.

While cycling, I have started to find some great country pubs like the **Greyhound at Charcott**, run by Fran and Richard and what a job they've been doing! Well kept ales from *Larkins Traditional* and *Porter*, through to guest pales and bitters. Food here is excellent with meat from Richard's family farm. A few miles climbing and I came across the **Rock Inn** situated a mile from *Larkins* brewery. This pub is about as country as you'll find in the county. The service is friendly, and there are usually three ales available. The house ale of course is *Larkins* but I have also enjoyed *Dark star Hophead* and a *Porter*.

Paul Tuohy (Tonbridge and Kent Weald):
Photo Dondayesta



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Beer Travellers

Travels in Czechia (Part III)

Day 4

We caught the usual tram and then a metro to Letnany bus station, and tickets to Litoměřice were purchased on board, the driver insisted on seeing our passports for anyone asking for an age related discount.



This is the normal arrangement but it was the first time we had been asked to show them. At an excellent discounted

rate for 45 KC (£1.60ish) for a journey of over an hour it was all worth the hassle, and was a very pleasant ride along scenic roads. The mood changed however as we drew nearer to our first destination as we drove through an old historic fort called Terezin. Construction of the fortified garrison was originally started in 1780 to stop the potential advance from Dresden, and was named in honour of the emperor's mother Maria Theresa, it took 11 years to build. In the second half of the 19th century the small fortress was used as a jail for political prisoners: Serbian student Gavrilo Princip, the assassin of Archduke Franz Ferdinand, was kept here until his death (from tuberculosis) in 1918.

In 1940 it became a prison and later a concentration camp, in the autumn of 1941 the Germans transformed the main fortress into a ghetto for the Jews who were brought here from all over Europe

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Travels in Czechia (Part III)

and subsequently dispatched to death camps.

It was with some relief then when we alighted the bus and walked through the pretty town of *Liternice*, with its interesting architecture towards the **Bishupsky Pivovar**.



The brewery equipment was on show in a large and impressive building. We chose to sit outside in the shade in the covered courtyard at the front of the building, and enjoyed a couple of their pleasing beers.

We retraced most of our steps, but only as far as the train station. We then took a shortish train journey to *Melník*, where we had approx 20 min walk to the next house of refreshment, but there seemed some confusion on how far it was and in which direction, it transpired that there was two possibilities, a brewery and a bar/ grill of the same name. After a quick

check with the organiser we established that the Bar/grill was the intended venue and we set the course accordingly.

It was quite well hidden but thankfully Google Maps directions found it ok, The **Nemy Medved** bar/grill had an enclosed covered courtyard, the multiple choices included an American pale ale called *Bison 12*, a Vienna lager called *Viden 11'* and *Knour 12'* which was a dark Lager, plus *Britnik12'* and *Vopicak10'* which were both Czech pilsners. I

believe I had the first and 3rd option and enjoyed both in the balmy conditions. We had a shorter bus journey to our next venue, the **Ládví**. I had a very reasonably priced and enjoyable Rib Eye Steak and chips with a blue cheese sauce and



at least 2 of their beers. Last stop was the **K club** near the Prague bus/coach station for the most expensive beer of the day but was to be expected in that location.

Text and Photos by Andy Osborne

A Czech dark beer



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Beer Festival Competition

We had a good response to the competition in the last Draught Copy. Those who got all of the correct answers went into a draw, and the two lucky winners received their free admission tickets before the festival. The correct answers are below. Well done!

Religious leader with time to talk	R	A	B	B	I	T			
Squeeze – a Western band	W	R	I	N	G				
Said it tasted funny	S	T	A	T	E	D			
Shorten a crossing	A	B	R	I	D	G	E		
Daily sex is ordered for word blindness	D	Y	S	L	E	X	I	A	
Bookish, promiscuous young man with debts	S	T	U	D	I	O	U	S	
Lose something in the garden	S	H	E	D					
Slow-moving, they like to eat rodents	O	W	L	S					
Me? Acting badly? Could be my personality	M	A	G	N	E	T	I	C	
Demonstrating how gin's made	S	H	O	W	I	N	G		
Models brook, but not very often	S	E	L	D	O	M			
With a gin cocktail, I left, losing my iciness	T	H	A	W	I	N	G		
It's heavenly to eat around four or six	D	I	V	I	N	E			
Can I be friendly?	A	M	I	A	B	L	E		
Marginal error is shocking	A	L	A	R	M	I	N	G	
A killer with two donkeys at home	A	S	S	A	S	S	I	N	
Cut energy? - that's harsh	S	E	V	E	R	E			
Melon is a messy pudding	S	E	M	O	L	I	N	A	
Stick a notice in this place	A	D	H	E	R	E			
Collect stories	A	G	G	R	E	G	A	T	E
His clothing	C	L	O	B	B	E	R		
Stiffen carbohydrate	S	T	A	R	C	H			
Measure the race badly	H	E	C	T	A	R	E		
White rose in a different way	D	T	H	E	R	W	I	S	E
A meal containing a send-off	L	A	U	N	C	H			
Sovereign produces a joke in a month	M	A	J	E	S	T	Y		

The four hidden towns were:

1) WHITSTABLE

2) DEAL

3) MARGATE

4) HYTHE

Many thanks to those of you who entered the competition but did not win. Better luck next year! Alternatively, join CAMRA and get free entry to all official CAMRA beer festivals. See your local area website for more details.



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Readers' Letters

We welcome feedback from readers at Draught Copy, although we can only accept letters by e-mail. Please include your name and an email address, and address letters for publication, clearly marked as such to: **DraughtCopy.Editor-@mmk.camra.org.uk**



been having should mean you are marked out as sensible, not neanderthal! And have none of you ever been to Oktoberfest?

C'mon guys, we all need to adapt to global warming! Before you know it, bitter beer will be a winter drink :-)

With kind regards

Jerry Whitmarsh

Dear Editor

I was very disappointed to read the article by Jeff Tucker in the current MMK Draught Copy about lager, which felt like a bit of a cheap shot.

Yes, there are a lot of rubbish lagers sold in the UK. But perhaps this is at least in part because CAMRA has historically written them off, and not engaged? Lager has a fresher, lighter flavour compared to bitter beer but it is still beer and it is capable of being a fine drink.

I don't drink any of the lagers mentioned in the article, but I do drink *Erdinger* beers which have real character and are exclusively brewed in Germany. As are *Lowenbrau* beers, at least those sold in the UK. *Staropraven* is generally not, but Lidl and other outlets do sell the original Czech brewed product. There are lots more, if you take the trouble to look; but actually the best lager I remember drinking came from the Swan in West Peckham, well known to you, when it brewed its own beers. Lovely, and intensely hoppy.

CAMRA is nothing if not a campaigning body, and I am well aware that if it were not for you we would all be drinking Red Barrel. So please, can you do something about lager as well? Honestly, preferring lager to bitter in weather like we have

Thank you for your Letter, Jerry, which is much appreciated.

As I understood it, Jeff's original article was not complaining about Lager as such, but was more about how certain brewing organisations are misrepresenting the products they sell, by claiming that they have some exotic foreign origin, when they are, in fact brewed in massive beer factories in Manchester or Northampton, and are substantially different in ABV from their continental cognomes. No offence to either city, which both boast some excellent beers, but they are not Rome or Madrid!

CAMRA is, of course, the Campaign for Real Ale, and lager rarely falls into that category. However, if you go to the East Malling Beer Festival, I am sure there will be some lager-ish beers available. From memory, a couple of Pilsners and Kölsch-type beers were available last year, and I am sure there will be similar beers on offer this time around.

Erdinger is, of course, an excellent brewery in its own right: however, the most commonly available product in the UK is not a lager, but a *Weizbier* or wheat beer, and I often drink it in places where there is no real ale on offer. However, I do insist on pouring it myself, as I have yet to see it served in the traditional manner in a British pub.

Crossword No. 49

devised by
Mick Norman

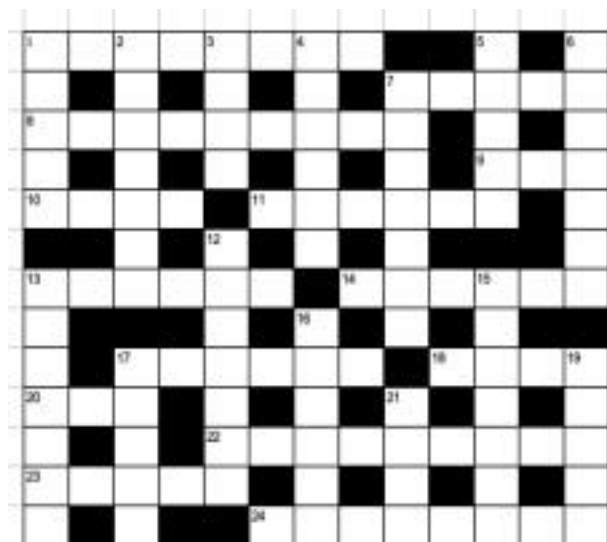
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The winner will be selected at random from all correct entries received.



Across

- 1) See 11
- 7) Cold house with big toilet? That's a non-starter! (5)
- 8) Stretches billionaires (9)
- 9) Means of propulsion for streetwalker, we hear (3)
- 10) Try a cricket match (4)
- 11),1 Rude French gesture during maths lesson? (6,8)
- 13) Name the late queen as visitor (6)
- 14) Endless pastime - it's a Tolkien character (6)
- 17) St. Thomas, initially doubtful about giants (6)
- 18) Wee Staffordshire town, apparently (4)
- 20) Half a bird is about average (3)
- 22) In favour of bonding atoms - loads of them? (9)
- 23) The speed of freezing point? (5)
- 24) Those abusing winter sports participants (8)

Down

- 1) London street often in action at Stonebridge Road (5)
- 2) Mad Laura's not stripped, resulting in excitement (7)
- 3) Silly goat in Roman attire! (4)
- 4) Some can do without Putin's product (6)
- 5) Baffle - it's a mistake, according to the auditor (5)
- 6) Sightseer - a member of 70s band? (8)
- 7) Descriptive of a fire, perhaps, using a mixture of gas, oil, and wood to begin with (2,5)
- 12) Ingest a potato to reveal German thugs (7)
- 13) Jaguar, for example, along with cats and dogs, may cover 5 (7)
- 15) Honey provider was very popular with girl groups in the 60s (7)
- 16) Deeply unfashionable, but possibly hot? (6)
- 17) American ass to lead at first (5)
- 19) Rock band twists (5)
- 21) Regretted sounding vulgar (4)

Solution to Crossword No. 48

Congratulations to

Roger James of Bearsted
Whose completed answer to the crossword published in Edition 213 was randomly selected on Deadline day!

Your voucher will be in the post!





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