

## IT'S HERE! OUR LOCAL PUB GUIDE

The *Gateway to Kent Pub Guide* is now on sale in many of our local pubs in the West of Kent. It is a colourful and attractive look at around 500 pubs in this delightful part of England, and, in its pocket-size format, very useful, too!

It features every pub or bar where you can buy a drink without a meal or other requirement. Each pub is listed with a description, its location and opening times, the facilities it offers and the range of beers you can expect.

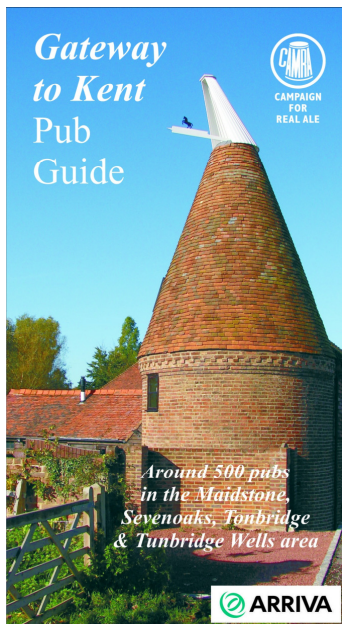
There are over 100 photographs of these pubs.

Published by West Kent CAMRA, *Gateway to Kent* is really good value at just £4.99.

Don't leave home without it!

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# DRAUGHT COPY

Draught Copy is the newsletter of the Maidstone, Bexley and Gravesend & Darent Valley branches of CAMRA, the Campaign for Real Ale. It is issued quarterly, in February, May, August and November and has a circulation of 2500 copies. Opinions expressed are those of the author of the article, and need not represent those of CAMRA or its officials. All articles are by the editor unless otherwise attributed.

## **Our advertising rates:**

£55 / £30 / £20 for a full / half / quarter page respectively.

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If you find a pub selling short measure, missing price lists, allowing smoking in the premises, or other illegal things in pubs, please have a quiet word with the landlord in the first instance. If you do not receive satisfaction, however, please ring the Council's Trading Standards on 08457 585497 for the K.C.C. area, or 0208 303 7777 for Bexley Borough. We should demand the very highest standards of service in our pubs.

The copy date for the next issue is 30 September 2009 for publication in November 2009.

# Fancy going to a Beer Festival? Try one of these:

## **CAMRA**

*www.camra.org.uk/page.aspx?o=events*

### **August 4 – 8**

The GREAT BRITISH BEER FESTIVAL at Earl's Court, London. Over 450 real ales for your delectation plus ciders and foreign beers from around the world. Go to *gbbf.camra.org.uk*.

### **September 8 – 12**

Always a popular event, the 23rd CHAPPEL BEER FESTIVAL, organised by Essex CAMRA will feature over 400 beers for you to try—almost as many as the GBBF itself!

See *www.essex-camra.org.uk/chappel*.

## **Non-CAMRA — Pubs and Clubs**

### **August 21 – 23**

**Rising Sun**, Twitton near Otford  
FIFTH ANNUAL GARDEN BEER FESTIVAL  
16 real ales plus cider and perry  
Steaks Friday evening, hog roast  
Saturday evening, ploughman's lunch  
on Sunday

### **August 21 – 23**

**Wheatsheaf**, Loose Road, Maidstone  
Another MINI-FESTIVAL  
Eight real ales to choose from

### **August 21 – 22**

**Black Horse**,  
Maidstone Road, Borough Green  
New licensees – new festival  
Nine real ales plus hog roast

### **August 25 – 31**

**Wilmington Cricket Club**,  
Oakfield Park, Wilmington  
CRICKET WEEK & MINI BEER FESTIVAL  
20 real ales plus cider  
*www.wilmingtoncc.org.uk*

### **August 28 – 31**

**Fox and Hounds**,  
Romney Street, near Shoreham  
AUGUST BANK HOLIDAY FESTIVAL  
15+ real ales and cider  
in large enclosed garden.

### **August 29 – 30**

**Stile Bridge**  
20 real ales and 6 local ciders.  
Tug o' War, hog roast & BBQ.  
Local farmers' and produce market.

### **September 3 – 5**

**Flower Pot**, Maidstone  
14+ real ales, plus BBQ and live music

### **September 18 – 20**

**Bull's Head**, Rushmore Hill,  
Pratts Bottom near Knockholt  
4 handpumps in bar, 14 ales (including mild) and cider in gala tent in large garden. Log fire outside all weekend, live music and barbeque  
*www.thebullsheadpub.net*

# European Rules Must Change to allow UK Government to Support Pubs - 15/07/2009

CAMRA, the Campaign for Real Ale, has announced it will be writing to MPs to urge them to support a groundbreaking new campaign to persuade the European Union to amend existing rules preventing the UK Government supporting pubs by introducing a lower rate of beer duty for draught beer sold in pubs.

John Grogan MP, Chairman of the influential Parliamentary Beer Group, is leading the campaign and has today tabled a Parliamentary Motion calling on the UK Government to seek a change to European Union rules. A reduced rate of duty on beer sold in pubs would help alleviate the severe problems facing UK pubs, which are closing at a rate of more than six a day.

The European Commission has indicated that it is willing to consider changes to current European Union rules and a review process is expected later this year.

Mike Benner, CAMRA Chief Executive, said: *'A lower rate of duty on draught beer sold in pubs would represent a golden opportunity for the Government to address the disparity between supermarket and pub prices, a problem directly associated with pub closures. This proposal would encourage a shift in alcohol consumption back to the regulated environment offered by well-run community pubs. This proposal would also stem the loss of community pubs and thereby reverse the decline of community life.'*

Benner continued: *'CAMRA first raised the need for a lower rate of duty in pubs in a submission to the Parliamentary Beer Group's Community Pub Inquiry back in 2006, and we are delighted that this novel idea has the full backing of the influential Parliamentary Beer Group.'*

*'An average pint of beer sold in the pub causes the consumer to swallow around 90 pence per pint in beer duty, VAT and employment tax revenue, and if community pubs are to survive, then the excessive tax burden they face must be reduced.'*

# KENT BREWERIES

Goacher's	01622 682112	<a href="http://www.goachers.com">www.goachers.com</a>
HopDaemon	01795 892078	<a href="http://www.hopdaemon.com">www.hopdaemon.com</a>
Larkins	01892 870328	
Millis Brewing Co.	01322 866233	
Nelson Brewing Co.	01634 832828	<a href="http://www.nelsonbrewingcompany.co.uk">www.nelsonbrewingcompany.co.uk</a>
Ramsgate Brewery	01843 868453	<a href="http://www.ramsgatebrewery.co.uk">www.ramsgatebrewery.co.uk</a>
Shepherd Neame	01795 532206	<a href="http://www.shepherd-neame.co.uk">www.shepherd-neame.co.uk</a>
Swan, West Peckham	01622 812271	<a href="http://www.swan-on-the-green.co.uk">www.swan-on-the-green.co.uk</a>
Westerham Brewery	01959 565837	<a href="http://www.westerhambrewery.co.uk">www.westerhambrewery.co.uk</a>
Whitstable Brewery	01622 851007	<a href="http://www.whitstablebrewery.info">www.whitstablebrewery.info</a>



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TO ACCOMPANY GOOD FOOD, ALL AT REASONABLE PRICES  
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Sunday 11am to 9pm (music nights & Bank Holidays to 11pm)

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1 New Road, East Malling, Kent

Email: [kingandqueen@tevitaverns.co.uk](mailto:kingandqueen@tevitaverns.co.uk)

# King & Queen "What's On" 2009

No reservations for live music (these are free events) - arrive early!!

The King & Queen, 1 New Rd, East Malling, Kent ME19 6DD Tel: 01732 842752

Saturday 6 <sup>th</sup> June	Day at the Races Lunch & Coach Included	Advance Tickets Phone for Details
Thursday 11 <sup>th</sup> June	Monthly Quiz Night	Quiz starts 8.30pm
Sunday 21 <sup>st</sup> June	Fathers Day	Bookings Recommended
Sunday 28 <sup>th</sup> June	Summer BBQ PLUS "Wok 'n' Woll"	BBQ Bookings Essential "Chan" from 8.00pm
*****	*****	*****
Thursday 9 <sup>th</sup> July	Monthly Quiz Night	Quiz starts 8.30pm
Sunday 12 <sup>th</sup> July	Acoustic Blues	"Danny & Pete" 8.00pm
Sunday 26 <sup>th</sup> July	"Stand Up" Comedy Night	Bookings Essential
*****	*****	*****
Sunday 9 <sup>th</sup> August	Open Mic' Night (For Musicians!)	PA Supplied Plug in & Play from 8.00pm
Thursday 13 <sup>th</sup> August	Monthly Quiz Night	Quiz starts 8.30pm
Sunday 30 <sup>th</sup> August	Bank Holiday BBQ PLUS "Kings of Swing"	BBQ Bookings Essential "Chris Rose" from 8.00pm
*****	*****	*****
Thursday 10 <sup>th</sup> September	Monthly Quiz Night	Quiz starts 8.30pm
Sunday 13 <sup>th</sup> September	Classic Rock Covers	"Usual Suspects" 8.00pm
Sunday 27 <sup>th</sup> September	Legends of the 60's	"Billy Shears" 8.00pm
*****	*****	*****
Thursday 8 <sup>th</sup> October	Monthly Quiz Night	Quiz starts 8.30pm
Sunday 11 <sup>th</sup> October	"Karaoke"	Great Prizes 8.00pm
Sunday 25 <sup>th</sup> October	"Wok & Woll" Entertaining Covers	"Chan" 8.00pm
*****	*****	*****
Sunday 8 <sup>th</sup> November	Acoustic Blues	"Migden & Gibson" 8.00pm
Thursday 12 <sup>th</sup> November	Monthly Quiz Night	Quiz starts 8.30pm
Sunday 22 <sup>nd</sup> November	"Stand Up" Comedy Night	Bookings Essential
Special Live Act December TBC	<u>We may change any of the above, or even add extra dates - please ring before to check timings etc.</u>	Tribute Band December TBC

# Back to Brno

by Jeff Tucker

Just after my first trip to the Czech Republic's second city, I bought the CAMRA *Good Beer Guide to Prague and the Czech Republic* to see what I'd missed, and it turned out to be quite a lot, so a return trip was called for. Ryanair, whose extra charges seem to get more ridiculous by the month, fly there daily from Stansted. At Brno airport, bus 76 runs every 30 minutes on the 20-minute trip to the Central Station. This can cost 30Kc, but a 24-hour city-wide ticket is only 80Kc, so that might be a wiser investment if you are planning to travel around on the buses, trams and trolleybuses.

Since I last went in 2007, the exchange rate has plummeted from 40 Koruna (Kc) to the pound, to about 27, and prices have gone up by at least 10%, so things are not quite the bargain they were, but still cheaper than Blighty!

Arriving at my hotel (the Grandhotel opposite the station, superb, highly recommended) at 9pm, I set off armed with my beer guide, and found the **Strakonicky Dudak** on Vachova, a cellar bar. The *Dudak* (5%) was nice but a bit gassy, at 25Kc for a half-litre. (All prices shown in this article are for half a litre of draught beer unless stated otherwise). This beer comes all the way from South Bohemia.

My next port of call was a return visit to the **Cernohorsky Sklep**, on Namesti Svobody, the main square. *Pater* at 4.6% (28Kc) and *Granat*, a dark 4.8% beer at 32Kc, were both very nice beers from the *Cerna Hora* brewery, of which more later.

Finally, I found the **Pegas** brewpub and hotel on Jakubska, just a couple of minutes' walk away ([www.hotelpegas.cz](http://www.hotelpegas.cz)). In this amazing place I sampled the excellent *Tmavy Lezak*, 5%, at 33Kc in an unusual 0.6litre glass. I vowed to return to try the other beers.

The next morning, I walked to the rather dingy main coach station to catch a bus to the town of Zlin, costing 100Kc for a two-hour journey. From there, a trolleybus took me to Otrokovice, where a corner bar by the terminus, **Hospudka U Pecivala**, had a 'modern traditional', very clean interior. Beers were *Svijany Maz*, (4.8%, 22Kc), which was pretty good, golden, not too gassy, and *Knize*, (5.6%, 24Kc), which was not quite as good. Both came with an 'ice cream sundae' head! Again, these beers had come from afar, in the far north of the country's Liberec region.



My morning bus journey took me through the town of Vyskov, where I spotted my target for the afternoon, the **Pivovar Vyskov**. The coach from Zlin cost 70Kc for a 90-minute trip. The Pivovar was a 10-minute walk when I eventually worked out how to get there (in the rain!) from the bus station. I tried the *Dzban* (= beer jug) at 4.7% (15Kc), which was pale and rather nice, and *Breznak* (5.2%, 16Kc), a tasty golden beer which came in a Weissbier-type glass. The 'brewery tap' was a smoky place with several TVs on the walls. Nice prices, though.

The coaches back to Brno didn't seem to run at a convenient time (i.e. when I was there!), so I tried the station nearby. A train was due in 20 minutes, and there was one standing in the station, but the place was deserted, so it was difficult to find out any information. I popped into the bar on the station, where *Dzban* was on sale at 18Kc, and the barman assured me that the train sitting there was going to Brno. I boarded it with some trepidation, and it eventually set off in the right direction 15 minutes late. The ticket cost 64Kc.

Back in Brno, I decided to check out the nearest Guide pub to the station, **Cernohorska Pivnice**, a cellar bar which was smoky and noisy. *Cerna Hora Kvasar* (5.7%, 26Kc) was not very interesting. The rump steak with green beans and bacon was very nice, though.

Just up the road, another Guide pub, **U Zlateho Mece** (At the Golden Sword) was virtually empty at 9.30. The *Budweiser Budvar Cerny* (dark), at 33Kc for just 0.4litre, was expensive but very nice. And so to bed.

Back to the bus station next day for a shortish coach trip to Cerna Hora (36Kc). It stopped right outside the brewery, which was founded in 1298 (Shepherd Neame, eat your heart out!). The restaurant, once I found it, had six draught and three bottled beers on offer. The *Sklepni* (4%, 18Kc) was unfiltered, and quite tasty, similar to Budvar.

My chosen lunch, from the menu with English translation, was Salami Platter (90Kc). This was very nice, but what I thought were cherry tomatoes, proved to be rather hot! I avoided the 'horse speciality' on the menu! Back to the beers, and *Kern* (4%, 18Kc) was slightly darker and very enjoyable.

Back on the bus to Brno, which runs every 20-30 minutes. Most buses from Cerna Hora terminate on the northern outskirts at Kralovo Pole for a tram connection to the centre. This one did, but it cost 37Kc, 1Kc more than the much longer journey on the way out.

From Kralovo Pole I made my way by tram to Mendlovo Namesti, to catch bus 52, which runs every 10-15 minutes, to the sleepy suburb of Zebetin, home of Brno's second brewpub, **U Richarda**. The first beer sampled was *Svetle* (5%, 26Kc), which was very nice. Deciding to give the sour cherry beer a miss, my next choice was *Psenicne*, a cloudy 5% wheat beer (25Kc), served with a slice of lemon, not a practice I am fond of. I found that the instruction 'Bez Citron' prevents it. The pub was a pleasant airy place, with hardly anybody smoking.

Back on the 52 to town, where I took a short walk (or it is one stop on tram 1) to **Hostinec U Putny** on Vaclavska, not in the guide, but it was advertising some interesting beers when I passed it earlier. This rather basic boozier had several *Cerna Hora* beers and *Strakonicky Dudak*, which was 26Kc. This brewery has been around since 1649, I learned.

From here I caught a number 5 tram to Namesti Svobody. **Pegas** was full, so a two-minute walk took me to **U Josta** on Ceska, listed in the Guide, where *Litovel* beers from the neighbouring Olomouc region are served. *Kvasnicove* (4.7%, 28Kc) was excellent, but I was less keen on the *Maestro* (4.1%, 28Kc, served in a Weissbier glass). This pub had a (rare) no-smoking area at the back, which made a welcome change. *Starobrno* and *Krusovice* beers were also available.

When in Brno, have a KFC! Bloomin' expensive, with five hot wings and large fries costing 104Kc. There were lots of other (mainly oriental) takeaways opposite the station, which were much cheaper.

Back at the hotel, I thought I'd check out the bar. The only beer on was *Starobrno*, the local brew now owned by *Heineken*. They wanted an exorbitant 70Kc for half a litre, so I decided not to bother!

Saturday was to be my last day, so I stayed local. A place which had caught my eye earlier was just round the corner from **Pegas**. It was advertised as a mediaeval pub, and promoted by characters in costume enticing the punters in, so I had to try it. **Stredoveka Krcma**, it was called, and it almost defies description, but I'll have a go! It is a candle-lit dungeon, with sheepskins adorning wooden benches, staff dressed in period costumes, and beer served in earthenware jugs. *Krusovice Cerne* (3.8%, 31Kc) was not the tourist rip-off price that I was expecting. Weird!

Back into the daylight, and a return trip to **Pegas**, where *Svetly Lezak* was superb, as was the *Psenicne* wheat beer. All beers are 5%, and 33Kc for 0.6litres, or 28Kc for 0.5. Chicken steak with asparagus, mushrooms and chips was 160Kc. They also have accommodation.

So, if you've done Prague, give Brno a try. It's less touristy, and everywhere is easy to get to. I'd recommend buying a copy of the beer guide (credit card orders on 01727 867201). Details of train and coach services are available (in English) at <http://jizdnirady.idnes.cz/vlakyautobusy/spojeni/> and you'll be amazed at the low fares. The four-star (and it was!) Grandhotel Brno can be booked for half the walk-in price at [www.booking.com](http://www.booking.com). Enjoy.

## Amend planning law to save pubs

CAMRA has called for planning law changes to stop pubs being demolished or converted to other uses without planning permission. Speaking at a meeting of MPs and Peers organised by the Save the Pub Parliamentary Group, CAMRA called for a change to planning rules to close the current loophole which allows pubs to be converted to shops, cafes, restaurants or financial services offices without the need for planning permission

- planning permission to be required before a pub is bulldozed
- a ban on the use of restrictive covenants which are imposed to prevent closed pubs from ever being reopened
- national policy guidance to require Councils to put policies in place to protect community pubs whether in a rural, suburban or urban location

## Brewery Snippets

*Larkins* will be using the farm's own hops from this autumn.

*Nelson* has a new brew, *Golden Galleon*, at 4.4% ABV.

Two others are imminent.

*Ramsgate* has added to its bottle conditioned ale range with:

*OOOKS* - 9% Barley wine, barrel aged with Bramling Cross and NZ Nelson Sauvignon hops

*Reserved* - 9% Barley wine, barrel aged in a French oak red wine cask

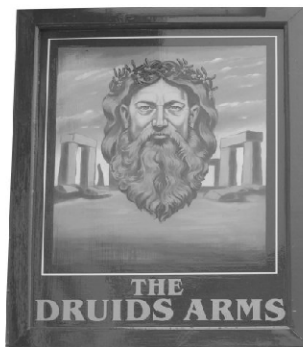
Its current seasonal beers are: *She Sells Sea Shells* and *Weizen Grog*

*Swan*, West Peckham now has *Ginger Swan* available

*Westerham* won 4 awards at the recent SIBA beer festival

# The Druids Arms

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- ❖ Regular *Good Beer Guide* entry  
with 3 Regular & 3 Guest Real Ales
  - ❖ Quiz Mondays at 8.30 with Cash Prize
  - ❖ Food served Mon-Sun 12-9
    - ❖ New Summer Menu
    - ❖ Live Bands Thurs and Sat Nights



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*Situated in the heart of the English hopping countryside,  
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a true village pub.*

*Within the wealth of old beams we offer  
a selection of Cask Conditioned Real Ales,  
traditional value for money menus including  
daily Specials, Sunday Roast & Children's Menu  
Our huge garden includes a large lit patio, children's play area,  
animal corner and big garden area, surrounded by countryside.  
Also B & B.  
We are proud that we have been awarded the Cask Marque for Real Ale.*

## MAIDSTONE CAMRA CHOOSES PUB OF THE YEAR

Members of Maidstone and Mid-Kent branch of CAMRA, the Campaign for Real Ale, have voted for their 'Pub of the Year 2009'. The winning pub this year was the **Flower Pot** in Sandling Road, Maidstone, which is run by licensees David and Julie Davenport.

A panel of judges selected the Flower Pot from a shortlist of three pubs, following voting by members of the local CAMRA branch, based on criteria such as community focus; atmosphere; campaigning; quality of beer; style and décor; service and welcome; and value for money.

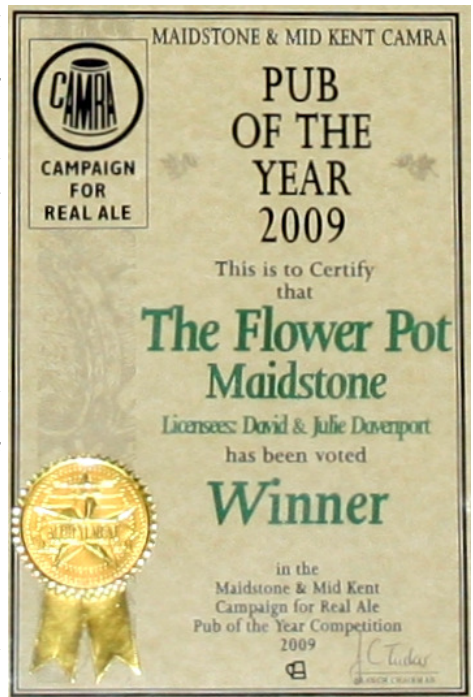
At a presentation evening at the pub, branch chairman Jeff Tucker said: "Since David and Julie have taken over at the Flower Pot, they have transformed it into a superb real ale

pub, the likes of which haven't been seen in Maidstone before. They are to be congratulated in winning this prestigious award."

David Davenport said: "It's thanks to the encouragement of the locals, and CAMRA members in particular, who have recommended a variety of beers to suit all tastes, that we've been given this accolade. We'll continue to offer what our customers want: top-quality real ale."

The pub, next to the Shell garage, regularly sells up to six real ales, including the Maidstone-brewed *Goachers Gold Star*, and rare ales from microbrewers throughout the UK, all at sensible prices. The recent first-ever beer festival went down very well with the regulars and visitors, with plans for further events.

The **Bull** in West Malling was a worthy runner-up, where the keen landlord, Trevor Norman, has increased the range of real ales in recent times.



Contact: John Mills 01732 840603 or email [jandj@larkfield98.freeserve.co.uk](mailto:jandj@larkfield98.freeserve.co.uk)

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**Redstart, Barming** – Found to be closed late June.

**Kentish Yeoman, Bearsted** – New manager, Mark Beckett, has *Courage Best* as a regular and at the time of a branch visit, the guest ale was *Adnams Best Bitter*. The restaurant offers Indian cuisine with a take-away service available.

**Oak on the Green, Bearsted** – *Goachers* beers are available here again after a short break.

**Old Plantation, Bearsted** – Recent visits found *Westerham Finchcocks Original Kentish Hop Ale* and *Summer Perle*, whilst *Flowers IPA* and *Harveys Sussex Best* are regulars.

**Rose, Bearsted** – This was very busy when the branch paid a visit and the loud music seemed popular. *Fullers London Pride*, *Harveys Sussex Best* and *Courage Best* were served but we did not stop for a second pint, wishing to preserve our hearing.

**Cock Inn, Boughton Monchelsea** – David and Jo have now been awarded Cask Marque accreditation for the quality and correct temperature of the beers sold. There is usually one guest ale on the bar and the regular beers are *Youngs Bitter* and *Special*.

**Crown, Cranbrook** – Re-opened with new manager Steve Hesketh and now serves *Harveys Sussex Best* as a regular ale and one guest. There has been some refurbishment and there is a secluded area to the rear of the pub of which I was not previously aware.

**Tiffins, Cranbrook** – This former Temperance Tavern is now a stylish brasserie/restaurant/wine-bar that offers good food and a selection of beers. *Harveys Sussex Best* is regular and two guests are available, *Exmoor Gold* and *Taylor Landlord* were sampled on my recent visit.

**Rising Sun, East Malling** – There are now two petanque pitches in the garden. *Goachers Fine Light* and *Theakstons XB* are the two regular beers and a guest ale - *Loddon Ferrymans Gold* recently making an appearance. Beers are priced at only £2-30/2-40 which makes it especially inviting.

**Bull, East Farleigh** – Jan and Jon keep *Fullers London Pride* and *Harveys Sussex Best* and offer a choice of good value and quality meals.

**Chequers, Goudhurst** – This has now been taken over by Brian Simms, who also runs Tiffins but has put a manager in here. The interior was

# The Rising Sun Inn

Fawkham Green : Longfield : Kent DA3 8NL

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A 16th century traditional country inn, situated in Fawkham Green with 40 seater restaurant, large log burning Inglenook fireplace and B&B accommodation. Situated near Brands Hatch with easy access from A20, M20 & M25.

A freehouse offering a wide range of traditional cask ales ranging from the good old favourites Fullers London Pride, Harveys Sussex Best, Courage Best & Directors. Also available two guest ales, one local on at any one time with special offer. Large selection of wines, spirits & draught lagers also available.

Homemade House Specials, full a-la-carte. Fish menu - all fresh from Billingsgate Fish market. Extensive bar menu, traditional Sunday roast dinners (Sunday only) all served 7 days a week either in our Inglenooks Restaurant or the bar area.

#### Opening hours;

Monday - Saturday 11:30am till 11pm

Sunday 12 noon till 10:30pm

#### Inglenooks Restaurant opening hours;

Monday - Thursday 12 noon - 9:30pm

**Monday - Thursday 2:30pm - 6:30pm LIMITED MENU**

Friday - Saturday 12 noon - 10pm

Sunday 12 noon - 9pm

We look forward to welcoming you  
from all at The Rising Sun Inn & Inglenooks Restaurant, Fawkham Green

wrecked after the former licensees left, so expect something special with Brian's artistic touch. Due to re-open early July.

**Eight Bells, Hawkhurst** – Calling in for a beer break (leak) on a bus pub trip we found *Dark Star Hophead* and the ginger flavoured *Summer Solstice* from the same brewery plus the regular *Harveys Sussex Best*.

**White Horse, Headcorn** – Has now re-opened following a short period of closure.

**Queen's Head, Mereworth** – The rear bar is now a restaurant. *Harveys Sussex Best* and a guest ale are served. This was *St Austell Doom Bar* on the last few visits.

**Bar Chocolate, Maidstone** – Formerly ME1, this town centre bar has been completely re-fitted in dark brown as an up-market bar/restaurant which aims to cater for a varied clientele, transforming from a meeting place during the day to a night spot for the evening. Poly carbonate is used rather than glass vessels. No real ale served. For details see <http://www.bar-chocolate.com/>

**Drakes, Maidstone** – *Adnams Broadside* and *Youngs Special* are the regular ales kept with guest appearances of *Wyehwood Hobgoblin*.

**Druids Arms, Maidstone** – Conveniently situated close to the Hazlitt Theatre and the shops in Week Street., manager Jodi Dixon has special offers on a selection of meals for two at this pub The there is always three regular ales from *Greene King* and up to three guest ales. Bands play in the courtyard each Thursday and Saturday evening.

**First & Last, Maidstone** – Just off the Tonbridge Road this pub well deserves a visit. The guest, *Fullers Summer Ale* proved popular with our members here, but the regulars *Adnams Bitters*, *Ringwood Best* and *Taylor Landlord* went down well also.

**Fishermans Arms, Maidstone** – At the bottom of Lower Stone Street, this *Shepherd Neame* pub has had a re-fit inside and licensee Susan Holcombe's husband Paul has installed a courtyard to the rear with a covered seating area. Regular ales are *Master Brew* and *Spitfire*.

**Hare & Hounds, Maidstone** – Re-opened early April after a re-fit and is now part of the SR Leisure group that also includes Earls. Manager Geoffrey has had various guest ales including *McMullen's AK*, *St Austell Proper Job* and *Thwaites Summat Special* and holds Karaoke sessions on Tuesdays & Thursdays.





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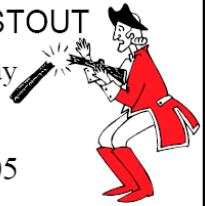
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**Wheatsheaf, Maidstone** – Rossa will be putting on a beer festival from Aug 20-22. *Courage Best* is the regular and 1 or 2 guests are available.

**King's Arms, Offham** – An old pub with wooden beams, opposite the Green with its quintain. The beers available were *Greene King IPA*, *Shepherd Neame Master Brew* and *Harveys Sussex Best*.

**Orchard Spot, Otham** – *Greene King IPA* and *St Austell Tribute* were found on the bar during a recent visit to this pub with adjacent wedding venue and night spot.

**Yew Tree, Sandling** - Matt and Liz continue to serve *Shepherd Neame* ales with *Whitstable Bay* now on for the summer whilst *Master Brew* and *Spitfire* are the regulars. The new summer menu is now available and the wine list has been updated.

**Bull, Snodland** – Madge & Mick have put on a guest ale, *Fullers 'Gales' HSB* when last visited, to join the regular *Courage Best*. The pub has a large saloon bar and separate public bar. A smoking area and a garden are provided adjacent to the car park.

**Royal Paper Mill, Tovil** – Some re-decoration has been carried out here. All *Goachers* beers are now served by gravity dispense.

**North Pole, Watlingbury** – Sadly, this former *Good Beer Guide* pub has now closed.

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The presentation of the CAMRA Gravesend & Darent Valley Branch Pub of the Year 2009 award to Garrett & Lynne, licensees of the **Bull** at Horton Kirby took place on Thursday 14<sup>th</sup> May, and was well supported by CAMRA members and local drinkers alike, enjoying a great selection of real ales from *Dark Star*, *Marble*, *Pictish* and *Saltaire* breweries, and once again a fabulous spread of food supplied by Lynne. Many of our members visited their outdoor festival at the beginning of June, choosing from a selection of 34 different ales, many exotic and unusual, from *Brewdog* (5 beers), *Dark Star* (6), *Marble* (4), *Pitfield* (5), *Ramsgate* (4), *Saltaire* (5), and *Thornbridge* (5), varying in strength from 2.7% ABV to a staggering 12.5% ABV. Garrett is loyal to a group of excellent small breweries and is always willing to try some new ones. He also likes to stock strong beers - 8 of the 34 festival ales were over 5.8% ABV – and some of us have little recollection of our journey home on the Saturday evening. Please make a bee-line for the **Bull**, as everyone is bound to find some beers to their taste.

Colin & Sue at the **Rising Sun** at Twitton, are hosting their fifth event, from 21<sup>st</sup> to 23<sup>rd</sup> August, with 3 beers on handpump in the bar and about 12 beers on stillage in the garden. Friday night is steak night throughout the year, so steaks are on the menu on the Friday evening, with a hog roast on Saturday evening and ploughman's lunch on Sunday to satisfy the taste buds.

The **Fox and Hounds** at Romney Street are also holding their fifth (or is it the sixth?) August Bank Holiday Beer Festival and **Wilmington Cricket Club** is up and running for the fourth year in succession.

The *Good Beer Guide* listed **Jolly Drayman** in Gravesend from 24<sup>th</sup> to 26<sup>th</sup> July with entertainment from Wadard Morris Men and music by the ever-popular Fiddlefit duo, who have appeared at local CAMRA beer festivals (including Gravesend and Bexley) and various local pubs.

New licensees have spruced up the **Black Horse** in Borough Green which now serves *Harvey's Best Bitter*, *Weston's First Quality* cider and a guest beer, being *Bath SPA* on my recent visit. The inaugural beer festival takes place on Friday 21<sup>st</sup> and Saturday 22<sup>nd</sup> August with nine real ales and a hog roast.

The **Black Lion**, Ash Road, Hartley has become a permanent beer festival which now has thirteen handpumps and up to as many beers on gravity "out the back". I've now been here three times recently and have found beers to my taste on each visit, particularly from the Norfolk breweries. I mentioned in the previous issue that I hoped not to be driving to the CAMRA meeting here. In fact the **Black Lion** is one of very few country pubs accessible by public transport late in the evening to my home in Dartford. Even better, I caught a train from work (London) to Longfield station followed a healthy half hour uphill walk to the pub. The last bus from New Ash Green leaves Hartley about 9.50pm, arriving in Dartford in time for a last pint at the **Dartford Working Men's Club**. There is an even later bus from Hartley to Gravesend about 10.15pm. The £2 per pint beers of the week of the CAMRA meeting were porter and stout from *Grain Brewery*, and with a mild and another porter making a total of four dark beers, which is refreshingly unusual. However there were still plenty of pale, amber and copper coloured ales to suit all palates and the quality is generally good.

This time around I have some news regarding pubs in Northfleet and Gravesend. Back in April, a couple of friends and I decided to walk from an Ebbsfleet United football match to our evening rendezvous in Gravesend, checking out all the pubs on route. We didn't bother with the **Plough** which had too many football fans and no real ale and always seems to be "under new management". Walking up the hill you find the **Rose**, set back from the main road, a *Shepherd Neame* tied house selling *Master Brew* and *Spitfire*, where the new management has certainly improved this pub. On a nearby corner of the main road one finds the closed and decaying **Coopers Arms**. The front door was surprisingly open, so I peeked inside and encountered an Asian gentleman who said that he was a builder (it certainly needs restoration) and that the building would later become a restaurant.

Halfway up the hill on the left is the **Edinburgh Castle** which has not sold real ale for years although we all enjoyed a half of *Hardy & Hanson's Keg Mild*, thinking that if this were dispensed by handpump we may have more incentive to visit pubs selling *Greene King* beers. Indeed *Greene King XX* is one my favourite milds but it is not available in Kent. There are three pubs and a hotel on route at the top of the hill, near the church. We missed out the **Coach & Horses** as the handpumps were bare, and we have heard that this pub has changed ownership so another visit is required. Over the road the **Queens Head** still sports three handpumps,

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long since used, and we were not upset that they were having a private function. The best beer, in my opinion, on our journey was to be found at **Ye Old Leather Bottel**, selling *Courage Best* and a decent drop of *Taylor Landlord*. Incidentally, I drove past here last week and the livery, including the pub name had disappeared, but I've been informed that the pub is undergoing repainting and refurbishment – another pub to revisit!

The long walk from here, along the Overcliffe to Gravesend, yields few pubs. The **Fox & Hounds**, on the corner of Rural Vale, was demolished in 2008 and the site is still fenced off, awaiting redevelopment, yet another casualty of the recession. We missed out the **Overcliffe Hotel**, as we did the **Granby Hotel** in Northfleet, and called in at the **Elephants Head**, which was selling the cheapest *Guinness* seen in a long while. From here we got a lift to the **Rum Puncheon**, our intended destination in Gravesend, where I gratefully sank a pint of *Dark Star American Pale Ale*.

Last week we held a meeting in Gravesend, starting at the historic **Ship & Lobster**, Mark Lane, on the riverfront at Denton Wharf. Lizzie and Wayne stock *St. Austell Tribute* and *Weston's Old Rosie* cider regularly and two guest beers from Waverley TBS wholesalers, and are keen to build up real ale trade in this out of the way location. On the way back into the town centre we drove past the **Canal Tavern**, which sells *Courage Best* and *Greene King IPA*. Our itinerary took us to the **Jolly Drayman**, always a favourite watering hole of mine, where *Morrissey Fox Blonde*, *Mordue Workie Ticket* and *Woodfordes Wherry* stood alongside the regular *Hop Back Summer Lightning*. Our other port of call was **TJ's Bar**, formerly the **British Tar**, near the Clock Tower. The regular beer is *Courage Best* with two guest beers, at the time being *Bridge of Allan Lomond Gold* and *Coach House Flintlock*. Being a sultry midsummer evening we sat in the extremely pleasant garden, with a raised decking seated area, a covered area for smokers, a large umbrella covering eight-seater wooden tables, a small lawn with a walled garden and well-tended flowers, shrubs and plants all around.

Checking information gleaned from other members, I visited three pubs I've never been to before (all previously keg only - shock horror!). The **Painters Ash** in Dene Holm Road, Northfleet is selling *Courage Best Bitter* and incorporates the **Painters Spice Restaurant**, open every evening and all-day Sunday with set price buffet nights on Tuesday and Thursday. The **Battle of Britain**, Shears Green, Northfleet, a large estate pub on the corner of Coldharbour Lane and New House Lane, has been rebranded a *Brakspear* house selling *Brakspear Bitter* and rather appropriately, *Spitfire*!

There is also a Spitfire menu with sandwiches, baguettes, snacks and grills. I was rather taken with the display of a large piece of shrapnel from a German fighter plane bearing the wording "Battle of Britain pilots drink on the house". Are any World War II fighter pilots still drinking?

The third pub was the **Woodlands** in Wrotham Road, Gravesend which was also selling *Shepherd Neame Spitfire* on one of two chrome plated handpumps dwarfed in the middle of a forest of seventeen tall metal pressure taps dispensing an array of keg lagers, bitters, ciders and stouts. Nevertheless the separate bar area is a comfortably furnished haven away from the very busy Beefeater restaurant which takes up most of the ground floor. There is a Premier Inn at the back of the garden which uses the Beefeater for breakfast and other meals.

Wetherspoons have opened another outlet in Dartford, formerly the **Litten Tree** in Spital Street. The **Flying Boat** opened to the public on Friday 19<sup>th</sup> June and is very pleasantly decorated, keeping the Edwardian central staircase as the main feature of an impressive building dating from 1910, originally built for Beadles as a motor car and motor cycle showroom with a roller skating rink at the rear. A large workshop replaced the rink and Beadles constructed floats here for the Sunderland flying boats, used in World War II, manufactured by Short Brothers of Rochester. The building was converted into a pub in 1998 and the workshops demolished. There is now a newly laid out, fenced patio area at the back with seating and tables for nearly 90 people, which is a sun trap during the day - so bring your sun block.

The **Flying Boat** is only a couple of hundred yards away from Wetherspoons **Paper Moon** at the other end of the High Street. During the April/May real ale festival this pub was fourth out of ten company pubs in their area selling 5,420 pints and Wetherspoons as a whole sold over three million pints of real ale over the festival period. By the time you read this, the refurbishment of the **Paper Moon**, both inside and out, will have been completed, so there will effectively be two "new" Wetherspoons in Dartford town centre.

Another Dartford pub, just outside the town centre, which has undergone substantial refurbishment recently is the historic **Malt Shovel** in Darenth Lane, off East Hill. This has been a favourite CAMRA members' haunt for many years and the changes to the rear of the saloon bar and conservatory are sympathetic to the style of the building. Happily the separate public bar has remained largely unaltered and now

houses the old Dartford Brewery mirror as a showpiece above the fireplace, which was formerly displayed in the conservatory. The **Malt Shovel** is a prime *Youngs* tied house and Neil keeps very good quality *Bitter* and *Special* and seasonal beers. *St. Austell Tribute* is another regular beer, and I thoroughly recommend the home cooking, available lunchtimes and evenings.

John Harris informs me that the **Foresters** pub-sponsored haircut of Bob Marsh, mentioned in the previous issue, raised £1,105 for Cancer Research. I've seen a post-haircut photograph and notice that Bob has changed from Hairy Scouse to Scary Scouse (apologies Bob – well done for supporting such a worthwhile cause).

On Saturday 30<sup>th</sup> May John visited the Fleetdown Community Centre, where the Dartford Firemen held a beer festival (shades of 1997) in aid of Arrow Riding Centre for the Disabled. The 1997 festival was the forerunner to the Real Ale Festivals in Dartford Central Park from 1998 to 2007. John says that 25 beers were on sale and the ones he tried were in excellent condition but unfortunately the event was not as busy as hoped. I was away on holiday at the time but was lucky enough the following week to sample some of the unsold beer returned to the **Dartford Working Men's Club**.

I shall end on a sad note, informing readers of the death of Bill Byram, former long-term steward of **Dartford Working Men's Club**. It is encouraging to report that his sons Geoff and Nick are keeping the traditions and standards of the Club well and truly alive.

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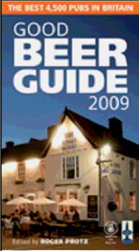
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At our April meeting in the **Jolly Millers**, Bexleyheath, *Adnams Broadside*, *Harvey's Sussex Best Bitter*, *Sharps Doom Bar* and *Hook Norton Old Hooky* were available – congratulations to Richard Bettinson on achieving his Cask Marque accreditation.

For St. George's Day evening, the **Robin Hood & Little John** offered *Wells & Young's Bombardier* and *Westerham British Bulldog* at greatly reduced prices. The pub was packed and customers were treated to some Morris dancing and a St. George and the Dragon Mummers play before tucking into some roast beef and Yorkshire pudding. In May the pub received its award for being Bexley CAMRA's Pub of the Year. Again our chairman, Martyn Nicholls, made an impassioned speech extolling the virtues of this delightful pub that has now won the award for the tenth consecutive time. Well done to the Johnson family for maintaining such a high standard over the years. Two milds were on offer, it being *Make May a Mild Month*, *Moorhouses Black Cat* 3.4% at £1.25 per pint and *Acorn Darkness* 4.2% at £1.75 per pint. Thanks for the excellent spread of food which wound up another enjoyable evening.

The **Harrow Inn**, Abbey Road, Abbey Wood, SE2 has been demolished apparently due to "safety concerns". Owners of the site, and indeed of several old South London pubs, HFHA Ltd, have twice submitted unsuccessful planning applications to build flats on the site. It is thought that there has been a pub on this site since 1715, although its final incarnation was built in about 1860. I can certainly remember it as a music venue in the early '70's when Pink Fairies, Bees Make Honey, Brinsley Schwarz and other pub rock groups played there.

In Erith the **Royal Alfred** (New Light), 101 Manor Road, built in 1866, has closed; known as the "New Light" locally because it could be seen from the river. It is rumoured to become a convenience store with accommodation above. The **Style and Winch**, ex Boundary, ex Plough, of 2 North End Road, freehold is up for sale but was still trading, although rumoured to be sold to a property developer for housing redevelopment.

In Picardy Road, the **Belvedere Hotel** suffered a serious fire on 4<sup>th</sup> May damaging the bar area and is being repaired. The closed **Belvoir Tavern** is now called **Sankofa House**, a bar and restaurant offering Afro-

Caribbean cuisine. The third pub in Lower Belvedere, the **Chequers**, remains boarded-up. In Upper Belvedere the **Fox** now stocks *Adnams Bitter* and *Wells Bombardier*.

**Crayford Social Club** has been selling *Taylor Landlord* and *Millis Kentish Red* on recently installed handpumps. The *Charlotte* in Station Road continues to sell three real ales, which included *Skinners Cornish Knocker* on a recent visit. The **Crayford Arms** prides itself on stocking the largest selection of real ales in Crayford. The five beers on handpump were supplemented by three on stillage for the occasion of Ian's 50<sup>th</sup> in June. The *Titanic Steerage* slipped down a treat. Thanks to Emma for the rumour that Crayford Town Hall may become a Rat and Parrot.

It is with much sadness that we report the death of Len Smith, long-term licensee of the **Royal Oak** (Polly Clean Stairs), Mount Road, Bexleyheath. This attractive, weatherboarded, country village style pub with a pleasant garden is now up for sale.

The **Tailor's Chalk** (J.D.Wetherspoon) 47-49 High Street Sidcup has opened on the site of the former **Hogs Head**, taking its name from a bespoke tailors shop which once stood on part of the site; Julie Rogers is the manager. This now gifts us with four JDW establishments in the Borough. The other pub in Sidcup High Street, the **Black Horse** (Enterprise Inns), remains closed, leaving the **Portrait** (Smith & Jones) in Main Road as the only nearby alternative.

Our oldest JDW, the **Wrong 'Un** in Bexleyheath Broadway, celebrated its 15<sup>th</sup> birthday on 9<sup>th</sup> June. The **Furze Wren**, near Bexleyheath Clock Tower, still seems to have the best selection of guest ales (up to 4). The next JDW beer festival runs from 28<sup>th</sup> October to 15<sup>th</sup> November.

Bexley branch would like to congratulate Adrian Moss on becoming a sexagenarian this October, someone who has done umpteen jobs within CAMRA including being the custodian of mushy peas at the Great British Beer Festival; thank you for your help at our festival over the years.

At our AGM in June we were unable to elect a committee. Now is your chance to help invigorate and revitalize Bexley Branch by volunteering before the branch folds, so if you fancy becoming Chairman, Secretary, Treasurer, Membership Officer or Pubs Officer please come along to the **Crayford Arms**, Crayford High Street on 9<sup>th</sup> September at 8.30 for an EGM to decide the future continuance of the Branch.

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**CAMRA Gravesend & Darent Valley Pub of the Year 2008 AND 2009 !!**

## FOURTH BEXLEY BEER FESTIVAL – APRIL 2009

Once again held at Sidcup Sports Club, this year we didn't sell out, but from a campaigning point of view it was very successful. As we sold out early last year and were opening all day Thursday this year we ordered 76 firkins of beer (75 different), a large increase in cider and, something different, an array of German bottled beers, plus some fruit wines.

Again there was a plentiful selection of British beers varying in style, strength and flavour and certainly the dark ale aficionado had nine milds and stouts and four porters to choose from. Beer of the Festival, as voted by customers, was *Thornbridge Jaipur*, with *Blackfriars Old Habit* second and *Orkney Red Macgregor*, *Westerham's Audit Ale* and *Sambrooks Wandle Ale* all joint third. All in all 140 people voted for 47 different beers. The first cask to run dry was again the *Jaipur*, followed by *Dorset Coastguard* and *Marston Moor Honey Rabbit*.

The cider votes resulted in local producer *Magic Bus* in first and second place with *Kriek Bus* (winner) and the *Original Magic Bus* (runner-up) and *Westcrofts Janet's Jungle Juice* finished third. Perry of the festival was *Big Tree*, also locally produced, from Hartley.

We would like to thank the following: Ian, Jennie and Robin at **Sidcup Sports Club** for their help and advice; Stuart Birch of **Wetherspoons** for arranging the t-shirt sponsorship via the new pub, the **Tailor's Chalk** in Sidcup High Street; organiser Paul Simons for suggesting the non-controversial logo; Smart T's for designing and printing the t-shirts; Robert Wicks from *Westerham Brewery* for sponsoring the glasses and supplying several excellent beers; Adele at Flying Firkin and Linda at AVS for supplying the majority of the beer; *Ascot*, *Brodies*, *Cambridge Moonshine* and *Sambrooks* breweries for their beer; Tony Johnson of *Fullers* for sponsorship via an excellent cask of *London Porter*; Peter Gager (chairman of Ipswich CAMRA) for bringing two casks from *Bartrams Brewery* and working so hard at the festival.

Eternal thanks to all the CAMRA members, from branches far and wide, who gave up their free time to help set up, staff, and take down the event.

This year we had two organizers, Alan Boakes and Paul Simons, who managed to bring together everyone and everything to ensure that the festival ran with its customary smoothness – Bexley Branch is indebted to you both.

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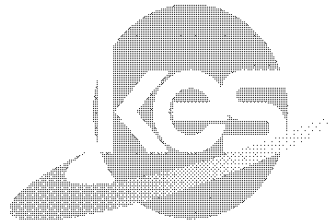
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# West of Wells

by Andy Osborne

This trip to the part of the High Weald west of Tunbridge Wells started on a bright sunny morning with just the odd cloud. I purchased my usual versatile Explorer ticket on my first bus. It cost a mere £6.50 for a whole day's travel and, although this was an Arriva bus, most bus companies in fact offer similar tickets. Three further bodies joined the count before we reached the main meeting point in Maidstone.

The next leg of the journey was a Number 6 onwards to Tunbridge Wells. By now our party had grown to eight, and increased to nine shortly afterward. On arrival in the town most people decided to visit the extremely well-placed Wetherspoons pub, the **Opera House**. As it turned out, there were too many beers on tap to mention them all but I did notice *Gold Rush* from the Scottish brewery, *Harviestoun*. Having tried some of their beers on previous occasions, I opted for *Gold Rush* and I have to say I liked it; and asking around the group, it appeared to be the popular choice. That must stand testament to the fame and quality of this brewery, considering the huge choice available on the day.

Our wait for the 291 bus, taking us to our main scheduled destination, was longer than it should have been. We later discovered that the delay was due to road-works. This part of our journey took us through the beautiful countryside bordering Ashdown Forest and the pub in the historic village of Hartfield was no less picturesque. The **Anchor** dates from the 14<sup>th</sup> century and is listed in the *Good Beer Guide*. At the rear of the pub could be seen a pleasant beer garden. The interior was equally pleasant, lots of wood-panelled walls and heavily beamed ceilings, and our welcome was very friendly. The three ales on offer this day were *Horshams Best Bitter*, *Larkins Traditional* and *Harveys Sussex Bitter*. But just as the pints were being drawn something strange occurred - the first and then the second of the three beers sputtered alarmingly and then ran out. The landlord hastily scurried down to the cellar to put on fresh, new barrels but this two-out-of-three deficit left only the *Harveys*, which although a justifiably fine beer, is readily available in our own area. With this in mind most of our merry band hunkered down to wait for the new offerings all looking at each other, with hardly a foamy beer in sight

anywhere when this strange lack of beer was overtaken by a more wide-eyed and bizarre event. One of our party, who shall remain nameless to protect the innocent, but to give you a clue is normally the first to the bar, came and sat down grasping nothing less (*or nothing more either, come to that...*) than a glass of "cola". So disconcerting was this that my initial thoughts were to check his pulse and temperature (and perhaps run a couple of in-depth sanity checks too?). But my dizzy spell was a little premature when it was established, after several sharp intakes of breath and head-shaking, that he had actually been serving at an extended session at a beer festival the previous night - and having arrived home quite late, was feeling somewhat fragile. Normality eased back soon enough though, as at least one of the missing beers suddenly became available and, justifying the wait, it proved to be excellent quality. Now, having been joined by an old friend of the organiser, the crew increased to 10.

We left this charming pub in time to catch another 291 bus, but this time heading back to Tunbridge Wells. Initially the plan was to visit three pubs in three villages *en route* but, as it became clear the same road-works were still causing delays, we took a collective decision to miss one of the remaining two. The winner was the **Crown** at Groombridge, a 16<sup>th</sup> century pub also listed in the *Good Beer Guide*. It sits on a hill with a church opposite. Outside the pub there were several tables and with the village green adjacent, this was the ideal place to sit in the sun and have some lunch. In the winter months the inglenook fireplace would give a wonderfully warm welcome.

There were three handpumps serving *Harveys Sussex Pale Ale* (I believe this is also known as *Hadlow Bitter*), *Larkins Traditional* and a guest which was not available at the time. Most of us ordered food here and so we all decided to take advantage of a couple of spare tables outside the inn. The beer and the food were both good.

The next move was another 291 back to Tunbridge Wells, saying goodbye to the tenth member. A short walk after disembarking from the bus and we arrived at the **Grove Tavern** in the older part of town. (In fact a board outside claimed it was the oldest pub in Tunbridge Wells.) Inside was a traditional wooden floor. Here the beers on offer were *Harveys Sussex*, *Timothy Taylor Landlord* and *3 Threads* from the *1648 Brewery*. This last beer, unfortunately, was not as good as we expected but it certainly was not returnable. However to give full marks to the landlord, he picked up

on this lack of enthusiasm for it and offered a replacement to anyone not totally happy with it. In fact he replaced the barrel, and then all three beers were in excellent form. I tried a piece of very tasty ham and egg pie made by a local butcher, which was part of a “Pie and Pint” Promotion. We were made to feel very welcome in this pub so we stayed for a second drink. This pub also had a deserved entry in the *Good Beer Guide*.

The earlier decision to miss out one of the stops meant we had time to visit a second pub in the town, so after a five to 10 minute walk we arrived at the **Royal Oak**, a large traditional pub with an island bar and wood panelling. On offer were *Harveys Sussex Bitter*, *Dark Star Hophead*, *Wychwood Hobgoblin* and *Larkins Traditional*. I can certainly vouch for the *Hophead* which I liked so much I didn't drink anything else. Reports from others in the group showed the other beers in similarly fine fettle.

From here another short walk took us back into town centre. At the bus stop we split into two groups. One group returned to Maidstone while myself and the rest went back via West Malling where we stopped off and had a last drink in the **Lobster Pot**. This pub has recently been taken over and we were pleased to see *Everards Tiger*, *Black Sheep Bitter*, *Young's Special* and *Adnam's Bitter*, (if I remember correctly). I *believe* I had the Black Sheep and I am fairly sure I enjoyed it. The other members reported favourably on their choices.

This expedition had not been without its hiccups, but due to some sound decisions by the organiser Jeff, and the group as a whole, it had turned out yet to be another very enjoyable foray into the wilds West of Wells.

*[Hiccups? Your editor felt very disgruntled and foolish after he realised he'd mistakenly turned up fully a week early for this trip and was then otherwise engaged on the actual day itself. Harumph! Ed.]*

## **Congratulations to the Whitstable Brewery**

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# CAMRA BRANCH MEETINGS

CAMRA branches arrange socials and trips throughout the year. Non-members are welcome to come along to our meetings. If you would like more information, or would like a lift (if possible), please ring the local branch contact – see **Local News** sections.

**BEX** = Bexley, **GDV** = Gravesend and Darent Valley, and

**MMK** = Maidstone & Mid-Kent (*OBM* = Open Business Meeting)

## AUGUST

- 6 **MMK** **George**, Trottiscliffe, then **Plough**
- 12 **BEX** **Crayford Arms**, Crayford - *OBM* & Special Pub presentation
- 13 **MMK** **Wild Duck**, Marden Thorn, then **Bell**, Staplehurst
- 20 **MMK** **Wheatsheaf**, Maidstone (beer festival)
- 22 **MMK** Bus trip to Wittersham (**Swan** summer beer festival)
- 27 **MMK** **Kentish Quarryman**, Ditton, **Bricklayers Arms**, New Hythe

## SEPTEMBER

- 3 **MMK** **Globe & Rainbow**, Kilndown, then **Green Cross**, Goudhurst
- 9 **BEX** **Crayford Arms**, Crayford  
*!! EGM – Future continuance or winding-up of branch !!*
- 10 **MMK** **Crown & Horseshoes**, Langley, then **White Horse**, Otham
- 17 **GDV** **Rose**, Overy St., **Malt Shovel** then **Ivy Leaf**, Darenth Lane
- 17 **MMK** **Bell & Jorrocks**, Frittenden (*OBM*)
- 17 **BEX** **Old Wick**, Bexley, *AGM* (provisional)
- 24 **MMK** **Woolpack**, Benover then **Chequers**, Laddingford
- 26 **MMK** Bus Trip - **Old House/Golding Hop**
- 30 **GDV** **Rum Puncheon**, West Street, Gravesend (*OBM*)

## OCTOBER

- 1 **MMK** **Duke of Wellington**, Ryarsh, then **Angel**, Addington
- 8 **MMK** **Peacock**, Iden Green, then **Tiffins**, Cranbrook
- 14 **BEX** **Tailor's Chalk**, High Street, Sidcup (provisional)
- 15 **MMK** Maidstone Walkabout - **Olde Thirsty Pig**, **Pilot**
- 15 **GDV** **Ship**, Wilmington, **Red Lion** then **Lamb**, Swanley Village
- 22 **MMK** **West End Tavern**, Marden, then **Unicorn**
- 24 **MMK** Roland Trip to Cowden Pound
- 28 **GDV** Northfleet Social: **Painters Ash**, **Battle of Britain**, **Earl Grey**
- 29 **MMK** West Malling walkabout, start **Lobster Pot**

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