



## **EAST MALLING BEER & CIDER FESTIVAL**

### **SATURDAY, 4 SEPTEMBER 2010**

We're back! The CAMRA Maidstone and Mid-Kent branch has found a new home for its much-loved annual beer festival. After nearly three years of looking, we have been welcomed by East Malling Research into their extensive grounds. The one-day event is being organised and staffed by volunteer members of the Maidstone and Mid-Kent Branch of CAMRA, the Campaign for Real Ale.

"We're delighted to have found such an appropriate site for the Festival," commented Jeff Tucker, the branch chairman. "East Malling Research is at the heart of Kent's fruit-growing heritage, and has developed some classic varieties of hops over the years. With its spacious grounds, it's the perfect venue for the event."

Ian Clennett, the Festival organiser, said: "Regular visitors to Maidstone and Mid-Kent CAMRA Festivals will find all their favourite attractions when they arrive. There will be over 75 real ales, many from local Kent microbreweries, with more ciders than ever before. We'll also have music to keep everyone entertained. It promises to be the perfect day out for real ale and cider enthusiasts."

Further details of admission costs, transport arrangements and opening hours will be announced in due course.

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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 June 2010 for publication in August 2010.

Visit our website at:- <http://maidstoneandmidkentcamra.co.uk>

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

## **CAMRA**

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

### **YAPTON BEEREX**

**May 14–16**

Yapton & Ford Village Hall

Near Arundel, West Sussex

65+ real ales from small brewers only, plus cider + food.

Open: Fri 6-11pm; Sat 11-3.30pm, then 6-11pm; Sun 12noon-3pm.

### **CAMBRIDGE BEER FESTIVAL**

**May 24–29**

Jesus Green, Victoria Avenue, Cambridge

200+ ales, 80+ ciders/perries, plus foreign beer, wines + meads

### **KENT & E. SUSSEX RAIL BEER FESTIVAL**

**June 11–12**

Tenterden Town Station

Open: Fri 6pm-10.30pm; Sat 11am-10.30pm (or until beer runs out)

Free to CAMRA members

*kesr.org.uk/special-events/*

### **KENT CAMRA BEER FESTIVAL**

**July 22–24**

Merton Farm, Merton Lane

Canterbury CT4 7BA

More than 120 real ales and ciders

*www.kentbeerfestival.com/*

### **GREAT BRITISH BEER FESTIVAL**

**August 3–7**

Earls Court, London

see *gbbf.camra.org.uk* for details

## **Non-CAMRA—Pubs and Clubs**

**May 6–8**

### **Flower Pot**

Sandling Road, Maidstone

### **3RD BEER FESTIVAL**

18 ales, milds and cider (see ad p10)

**May 21–23**

### **Lenham Working Men's Club**

High Street, Lenham

### **FIRST BEER FESTIVAL**

15-20 Ales on offer—starts 4pm Fri.

**May 28–31**

### **Stile Bridge**

Staplehurst Road, Marden

### **BRIDGESTOCK!**

25 real ales plus 6 ciders (see ad p9)

**May 29–30**

### **Olde George Inn**

Church Street, Shoreham S'oaks

### **MINI BEER FESTIVAL**

12 real ales - from noon both days

**June 4–5**

### **Fleetdown Community Centre**

### **DARTFORD REAL ALE FESTIVAL**

Over 30 cask beers

Friday 5-10.30pm, Sat. 11-10.30

**July 10**

### **Dartford Working Men's Club**

Essex Road, Dartford

### **ALL DAY SUMMER BEER FESTIVAL**

from 12 noon to 11pm. Over 30 real ales, cider and hog roast

# The Robin Hood Beer Festival

25<sup>th</sup>, 26<sup>th</sup> & 27<sup>th</sup> June

Hog



Live  
Music



Roast



01634

861500

[the.robin.hood@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:the.robin.hood@hotmail.co.uk)  
[www.therobinhood-pub.co.uk](http://www.therobinhood-pub.co.uk)

# 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	
Moodleys Brewery	01892 889877	<a href="http://www.moodleys.co.uk">www.moodleys.co.uk</a>
Millis Brewing Co.	01322 866233	
Nelson Brewing Co.	01634 832828	<a href="http://www.nelsonbrewingcompany.co.uk">www.nelsonbrewingcompany.co.uk</a>
Old Dairy Brewing Co.	01580) 243185	<a href="http://www.olddairybrewery.com">www.olddairybrewery.com</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>
Wantsum Brewery	0845 0405980	
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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**RESTAURANT OPEN ALL DAY  
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**SUNDAY LUNCH ~ MIDDAY TO 4PM**

- **REGULAR QUIZ NIGHTS** •
- **LIVE BANDS** •

Bar open Monday - Friday 10am to 11pm, Saturday 11am to 11pm  
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)

# YEW



# TREE



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NEW WINE LIST SHOWCASING SOME CLASSIC GRAPE VARIETIES FROM AROUND THE WORLD

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# **CASK MARQUE TO SPONSOR BRITAIN'S BEST-SELLING BEER GUIDE CAMRA GOOD BEER GUIDE 2011**

CAMRA, the Campaign for Real Ale, is pleased to announce that Cask Marque, the renowned industry watchdog and leading body in the recently successful National Cask Ale Week, has pledged its commitment to sponsoring CAMRA's flagship publication, the Good Beer Guide 2011.

CAMRA's Good Beer Guide is now in its 38th edition and remains Britain's best selling beer guide. Released in September, the 38th edition will list the best 4,500 pubs in the land, as chosen by CAMRA's 110,000-strong membership, as well as a comprehensive guide to all UK breweries currently in operation. Pub entries are judged by local CAMRA members on the quality of their real ale.

Paul Nunny, Cask Marque Managing Director, said: *'The Good Beer Guide is dedicated to rewarding pubs with high standards of beer quality, and as a leading pursuer of excellence in the cask ale industry, Cask Marque is delighted to be teaming up with CAMRA once again.'*

Cask Marque has now sponsored the Good Beer Guide seven times, and this commitment to the Guide was praised by editor Roger Protz. He said: *'Cask Marque has striven for years to ensure that Britain's best pubs continue to meet the high standards of beer quality expected by today's discerning consumer. And I can state with great confidence that they have succeeded!'*

*'Cask Marque's support of the Guide shows that it remains a vital text for anyone wishing to find the perfect pint in their local area, and CAMRA is looking forward to releasing the new edition in September after a year of relentless pub inspections by its 200+ UK branches.'*

## **RIFLE VOLUNTEERS**

Wyatt Street, Maidstone - Phone 01622 758891

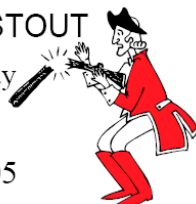
**A REAL TRADITIONAL MAIDSTONE PUB**

**SERVING GOACHER'S FINEST ALES AND STOUT**

Good Home Cooked Food Available Every Day

Good Beer Guide Listed This Century

Maidstone CAMRA Pub Of The Year, 2005





**Stile  
Bridge**

BEER & MUSIC

28th - 31st

**May  
2010**

**BRIDGESTOCK**  
SPRING FESTIVAL

**25 Cask Ales and 6 Real Ciders!**

*Friday 28th*

**9pm - Fleeting Hearts  
3-piece Indie Rock Band**

*Saturday 29th*

**2 O'clock - Charity Tug 'O' War (team entries welcome,  
phone Matthew on 01622 - 831236) HOG ROAST  
3-6pm - Splinter Sessions : : 7-9pm - Live Band TBC  
10-12am - Surface Duo**

*Sunday 30th*

**12-4pm - Local Produce Market : : 12-4pm - Trad Jazz Band  
4-6pm - Live Music TBC  
6-9pm - Crooked Style (entertaining Celtic duo)  
ALL DAY BEEF SPIT ROAST  
Free Shuttle Bus from Marden Station : : Please Call for Details**

*Monday 31st*

**2pm - Morris Men  
3pm - The fantastic Chill Billies  
(Ticket Only Event)  
£10 event includes Hog Roast**

**Stile Bridge Pub & Restaurant**  
On the A229 at the foot of Linton Hill  
Staplehurst Road • Marden • TN12 9BH

**stile.co.uk**  
01622 831236

# THE FLOWER POT

CAMRA MAIDSTONE AND MID KENT PUB OF THE YEAR 2009, 2010

Goacher's Gold Star and Young's Bitter plus four guest ales, and at least one real cider always available

Jam night Tuesdays from 8.30pm

Live Bands

Hot and cold food served daily 12 to 6pm

## *3<sup>rd</sup> Beer Festival* *Thursday 6<sup>th</sup> to Saturday 8<sup>th</sup>* *May 2010*

18+ Ales including 3 Mild's

Also 3 real ciders

Live Music each day

Featuring Kits Coty Morris, Jumbo Gumbo, The Blues Mothers

96 Sandling Road, Maidstone, Kent, ME14 2RJ

Tel: 01622 757 705

Web: [WWW.FLOWERPOTPUB.COM](http://WWW.FLOWERPOTPUB.COM)

E-Mail: [FLOWERPOTPUB@HOTMAIL.CO.UK](mailto:FLOWERPOTPUB@HOTMAIL.CO.UK)

## Brewery Snippets

The **Old Dairy Brewery** ([www.olddairybrewery.com](http://www.olddairybrewery.com)) is currently in dispute with the Heidsieck Champagne company of France in a bizarre tussle over the use of the name **Red Top**. One uses it as the name of a beer, the other as a name for its Champagne. The French see this as being highly confusing and want ODB to desist. Will they? We'll wait and see...

**Westerham's National Trust Viceroy India Pale** was selected as one of the Ten Best Beers by Roger Protz in the Independent 25 March 2010. Brewed for the trust by **Westerham Brewery** in Kent, the beer celebrates Lord Curzon, who restored fine buildings in both India and England. It's honey-coloured with spicy hops, plum fruit and juicy malt on aroma and palate, and a tart, fruity and hoppy finish.

**Wantsum Brewery** were pleased that their **Hengist Brew** was voted the best beer at the Dover Winter Beer Festival back in February this year.



## AVS CASK BEERS

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*We can hold over 1000 firkins under temperature control, ensuring our customers are receiving them in optimum condition!*

- ◆ Family-run business
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- ◆ Ever-changing monthly promotions
- ◆ Permanent stock holding of over 60 different brands of cask ale
- ◆ Supplying licensed trade; public houses, working mens' clubs, sports clubs and hotels
- ◆ We also supply beers for beer festivals - from the CAMRA Great British Beer Festival to pub festivals
- ◆ Helping our customers wherever we can
- ◆ Distribution service for breweries through the SIBA scheme
- ◆ Stocking the full range of Westons Ciders



For more information, to receive our stock lists or to place an order..

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*Traditional Irish Music every 2nd Sunday afternoon*

*Special Lunches and parties catered for*

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*Wide selection of real ales  
and ciders*

*Traditional Lunch Menu*

*Sunday Roast Specials*

*Evenings Tues to Sat  
Authentic Thai Restaurant  
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*B & B en suite accommodation*

*Large garden area*

## **The Chequers Inn**

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[www.chequersladdingford.co.uk](http://www.chequersladdingford.co.uk)

**Award winning traditional village inn  
situated in the hopping countryside**



**Charles and Tracey welcome you to their 15th Century Inn**

- Cask conditioned real ales
- Traditional value-for-money menus, daily specials, Sunday roasts and children's menu
- Very large garden with children's play area & animal corner
- 4 diamond bed & breakfast accommodation

We are proud of our

- Real Ales, Real Food, Real Staff & No Gimmicks

CAMRA Good Beer Guide & Cask Marque award

# The Crown, Otford



- ❖ *A Traditional 16<sup>th</sup> Century Village Inn*
- ❖ *Traditional Homemade pub food served daily*
- ❖ *Four Fine cask conditioned ales & a Cider on tap*
- ❖ *CAMRA registered & Good Beer Guide 2009 & 2010*
- ❖ *Cask Marque awarded*
- ❖ *Perfect Pint award & 5 Star award for Guinness*
- ❖ *Four stars for "Scores on the doors" Sevenoaks Council*

*100 yards from the church, behind the duck pond  
10 High Street, Otford, Sevenoaks TN14 5PQ  
Phone: 01959 522847*

*Email: [fengiescatering@aol.com](mailto:fengiescatering@aol.com)*

*Website: [crownpubandrestaurant.co.uk](http://crownpubandrestaurant.co.uk)*

# Hats off to Stockport

by James Young and Bob Barton

Its football club shares the nickname 'The Hatters' with Luton Town. When your train from Euston stops there you know Manchester is the next stop, eight miles north. That was the sum total of my knowledge of Stockport. But the *Good Beer Guide* awards the town eleven entries, and there are four pubs on CAMRA's *National Inventory of Historic Pub Interiors*. A town worthy of further investigation, surely? So, keen to go pub hunting after the National Winter Ales Festival in Manchester (and after consulting with local drinkers there), we decided on Stockport. We weren't disappointed.

You know the urban myth that it always rains in Manchester? Well, Stockport is nearby, so our advice is to take an umbrella. However, after visiting a few of these friendly hostelries, any rain clouds evaporate, metaphorically speaking. One of the highlights is the **Crown Inn**, less than ten minutes walk from the station, in the shadow of a 100ft-high railway viaduct, which is one of Britain's biggest, a gargantuan landmark for miles around. Unless you're on a train, in which case you hardly notice it. A finalist for CAMRA National Pub of the Year 2008, there are 16 handpumps serving an array of fine ales, including examples from *Moorhouses*, *Copper Dragon*, *Pictish* and *Shropshire Brewery*. Four rooms with a Victorian feel radiate from the bar, and there is a display in the hallway about the viaduct.

A short stroll away, back across the other side of the main road and tightly squeezed into a pedestrianised shopping street, is the **Swan With Two Necks**, a pub owned by the town's brewery, *Robinson's*. Its long, narrow interior, hardly changed since the 1930s, is remarkable for its varnished wall panelling. We supped the local *Hatters Mild*, sitting opposite a fire blazing in the Tudor style fireplace. The landlord explained the pub's unusual name is derived from 'two nicks' rather than 'two necks'. Swans were marked to show they belonged to the monarch (as they still are on the Thames) and the birds once waddled up the street, the River Mersey running below. He also pointed out a 'bullet hole' in the stained glass, reputedly made accidentally by a boisterous World War One soldier on leave. This sounded like folklore, but generated lively banter among the locals.

A few minutes' walk away, beside an ornate bridge in a surprisingly olde-worlde lane off High Street, is the **Queen's Head**. Not only does the

front bar of this bustling, narrow *Sam Smith's* hostelry resemble a Victorian parlour, it has cosy snugs warmed by a wood-burning stove and serves the cheapest real ale in town, *Old Brewery Bitter* at £1.40 a pint. The friendliness of staff and customers towards us southerners was heart-warming, and we knew we were privileged when “the smallest gents’ toilet in Britain” was ceremonially unlocked for us to view.

A slightly longer walk – past **Winter's**, which must be the country's only pub with painted figures striking hourly chimes; the glazed Market Hall, resembling a smaller version of London's great Crystal Palace; and past the less great Matalan store – took us to the **Arden Arms**. What a gem! This Grade II listed *Robinson's* pub, also on CAMRA's Inventory and branch pub of the year 2009, was once a mortuary but is now a multi-roomed hostelry (one of them reached by going through the bar!) and decorated with wood panelling, quarry tiles, chandeliers and a grandfather clock. We sipped *Robinson's Old Tom*, served from a bar-top mini-barrel, with reverence (its ABV is 8.5%) and wished this was our local.

Our final port of call was the **Railway** nearby, looking run-down from the outside and in a seemingly uncared-for part of town, but inside was an Aladdin's Cave of ale. The bare-boarded bar boasted 11 handpumps, many serving *Pennine Brewery* beers and other equally tasty gems. There's a board showing the pub's ambitious selection of Belgian, German and other foreign bottled beers. Our favourite *Pennine* ale was *Railway Sleeper*, at 4.2% a flavoursome, well hopped ale.

We could have carried on but reluctantly had to start our homeward trek. A free Metroshuttle bus runs every 12 minutes and stops almost opposite the **Railway**. As we rode back to the train station, we congratulated ourselves on choosing Stockport as a stopover and agreed we'd be back.

A Stockport Town Centre Ale Trail can be found at [www.visit-stockport.com/stockport\\_eat\\_drink.asp](http://www.visit-stockport.com/stockport_eat_drink.asp). Advance tickets with Virgin trains from Euston to Stockport start at £11 each way: [www.virgintrains.co.uk](http://www.virgintrains.co.uk).

**SPADEWORK**, a local charity that teaches practical skills to students with special needs, is having an **Open Weekend** at their Nursery and Farm Shop in Teston Road, Offham from Friday, May 7th through Sunday, May 9th (10am–4pm). Besides Vintage Tractors and Morris Dancing, there are a BBQ and Real Ale Tent. Do come along, quench your thirst, and support this event and a very worthwhile cause. [www.spadework.net](http://www.spadework.net).

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

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**Nevill Bull, Birling** – Joe had put on *Rudgate Ruby Mild* when the branch visited at beginning of March, a change which proved popular with the regulars as well. Previously the guest had been *Sharps Doom Bar* which had been a fixture for at least 6 months. The other regular ales are *Shepherd Neame Master Brew*.

**Cock Inn, Boughton Monchelsea** – *Youngs Bitter* was joined by *Youngs London Gold* recently. *London Gold* is what used to be *Kew Gold* but the hops no longer come from Kew. The regular guest ale is *St Austell Tribute*.

**Buffalo's Head, Chart Sutton** – A decent pint of *Shepherd Neame Master Brew* was served here when we visited in February but I am informed it has now been closed until a buyer is found.

**Bird in Hand, Coxheath** – Now sold and no longer a pub. It seems odd that an area as large as Coxheath cannot support a single pub yet there are two butchers and a plethora of takeaways.

**George Hotel, Cranbrook** – Now concentrates on food but serves good beer. *Shepherd Neame Amber* and *Spitfire* were on when I called in.

**Kentish Quarryman, Ditton** – Andrew & Mandy Boyle have taken over at this former club and have been serving Sunday lunches. *Sheps Master Brew* was on the bar at time of last check but another will be added when trade picks up.

**Hawkenbury, Hawkenbury** – Russell is now free of tie.

**Eight Bells, Hawkhurst** – Possibly holding a Beer Festival in June. Serving *Dark Star Hophead*, *Harveys Sussex Best* and *Fullers London Pride* as a guest at time of last visit.

**Kent Cricketer, Hawkhurst** – Re-opened mid-March after having been closed following the departure of the previous lessee. The landlord, Graham, is new to the trade and we wish him the best of luck for the future. A nice pint of *Harveys Sussex Best* was served and it is hoped to have it on permanently.

**Oak & Ivy, Hawkhurst** – A visit here found a Quiz going on in the bar and a Steak Night taking place in the restaurant, both being well supported. *Dark Star Hophead*, *Harveys Sussex Best*, *Marston's Pedigree* and *Wells Bombardier* were on the bar.



# The Rising Sun Inn

Fawkham Green : Longfield : Kent DA3 8NL

☎ 01474 872291



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

**Woodcock, Iden Green** – South of Benenden, in an isolated area but worth the trip. Relax in the large garden after a good walk in the surrounding countryside. A rare outlet for *Greene King XX Mild*, and Andrew also keeps *Abbott, IPA* and *Morland Original* from the same brewery.

**Chequers, Laddingford** – From 1<sup>st</sup> May CAMRA members may receive one free half pint of real ale per person per visit when ordering any main course meal on presentation of their valid current membership card. This offer will be available every day except Sundays and not during real ale festivals. Charles and Tracey usually keep *Adnams Bitter, Fullers London Pride* and *Harveys Sussex Best* plus a guest beer.

**George, Leeds** – Noted for its food but a good pint of *Late Red* was also found.

**Ten Bells, Leeds** – This pub is now under the control of Spencer Thain who also has the **Lower Bell**, Blue Bell Hill. Both pubs organise live music regularly. The usual selections from *Greene King* will be found at both venues.

**Dog & Bear, Lenham** – A hotel in the village centre that caters for sports fans with TV in the bar. Serving *Shepherd Neame Master Brew* and *Spitfire*.

**Red Lion, Lenham** – An old timber framed building on several levels it has a decent size Function room upstairs with massive beams. Keeps *Shepherd Neame Master Brew, Fullers London Pride, Fullers Gale's HSB, Harveys Sussex Best* and *Taylor Landlord*.

**Walnut Tree, Loose** – Apparently now over 23s only. Serves *Shepherd Neame* beers including the seasonal ales.

**Brickmakers, Maidstone** – Now taking guest ales from *Nelson* plus the regular *Master Brew*.

**Flower Pot, Maidstone** – Hearty congratulations again to David and Julie Davenport on their becoming the MMK CAMRA Branch Pub of the Year for a second year running. [*Certainly my favourite Maidstone pub* – Ed]

**Pilot, Maidstone** – Our reporter was surprised to find *Fullers London Porter* on here; apparently part of a reciprocal agreement with *Harveys*. The usual *Armada, Sussex Best* and *XX Mild* were on plus my own favourite *XXXX Old*.



## The Cock Inn

Heath Road  
Boughton Monchelsea  
Kent ME17 4JD

**01622 743166**

Lovely old coaching inn dating from the 16th century, the Cock is a superb country pub, serving excellent food and beers in spacious, welcoming surroundings.

---

- ❖ Roaring Fire in Winter and Patio Garden for Summer nights
- ❖ Extensive Menu and Specials Board
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**Ye Olde Thirsty Pig, Maidstone** – The historic pub has now started providing food and opens at midday. The regular ale is *Master Brew* and also has a good selection of 2 or 3 guest ales, mostly from microbreweries. Well worth a visit.

**River Bar, Maidstone** – Closed.

**Royal George, Maidstone** – Having been closed for some time this is now to be converted for use as accommodation for 15 young homeless people.

**White Horse, Maidstone** – Has a new licensee and holds regular music on Saturdays and a quiz alternate Tuesdays. Food is available lunchtimes and evenings. Beers found here were *Greene King IPA*, *Harveys Sussex Best*, *Sharps Doom Bar* and *John Smiths Cask*.

**Stile Bridge, Marden** – For the second year the branch enjoyed their post Christmas meal here, for which we thank Matthew, Marc and the staff. There is now a house beer from *Westerham* that is labelled as *Bridgestock* which seems to be going well. We had five beers available for consumption that evening and they were all greatly appreciated.

**Unicorn, Marden** – Both snacks and *a la carte* meals are offered here and may be eaten in either restaurant, bar or garden. Regular ales are *Harveys Sussex Best* and *Shepherd Neame Master Brew* and up to two guest ales which may be from a regional or local brewer. [www.unicorn-pub-kent.co.uk](http://www.unicorn-pub-kent.co.uk)

**Wild Duck, Marden Thorn** – This pub was closed following a visit from various creditors.

**Bricklayers Arms, New Hythe** –The telephone number has changed from that quoted in the Gateway Guide to Kent Pubs. It is now 01622 715938. There is also a Bar Billiards table in place of the previous Pool table. Food is now available lunchtimes and evenings. *Courage Best* and a guest ale are kept.

**White Horse, Otham** – Has been sold and it is feared that it may be turned into housing which would mean no pub in the village. Local action may be needed in order to keep it going.

**Duke of Wellington, Ryarsh** – A lively jazz session is held in the bar on Thursday evenings but quieter for a meal in the restaurant where monthly Gourmet Evenings take place. There is also a Dry Cleaning

service. *Harveys Sussex Best, Sharps Doom Bar, Westerham Grasshopper* and a guest, *O'Hanlons Firefly* on last visit. [www.dukeofwellingtonryarsh.com](http://www.dukeofwellingtonryarsh.com)

**White Horse, Sandway** – To be found South of Lenham, mainly a restaurant serving British and Mexican style food. Jenny, Peter and Jane also offer a function room for events. Beers come from the nearby *Whitstable* brewery at Grafty Green. *Native* was on at my visit; the more favoured *East India Pale Ale* not being available. [www.the-white-horse.com](http://www.the-white-horse.com)

**Lord Raglan, Staplehurst** – A short walk up Forge Lane from the Arriva 5 bus route at Cross-in-Hand. Not open Sundays but during the rest of the week a good selection of meals are served. Regular beers are *Harveys Sussex Best* and *Goachers Fine Light* supplemented with a guest beer and *Double Vision* cider.

**Harrow Hill Hotel, Warren Street** – Mind the pot holes on the way up here but enjoy the view when you arrive. This is a good walking area. The hotel bar is serving good food together with *Goachers Fine Light* and *Gold Star*.

**North Pole, Watlingtonbury** – Planning permission has been granted for the extension to the restaurant here and work has begun. We shall have to wait and see what provision will be made for real ale drinkers.

**Lobster Pot, West Malling** – Yet another licensee change here after a brief closure. Punch Taverns have applied for planning permission to amend the internal layout and make general improvements.

**Swan on the Green, West Peckham** – This pub sells beers from their own brewery at the rear and offers food sourced from local suppliers. Watch the village cricket with a pint (or three). Usually keep *Swan Bewick, Cygnet, Fuggles* and *Trumpeter* but occasional seasonal changes.

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It's that time of year again when we announce the CAMRA local pub and club of the year, as voted by members of the local branch. For the third year in a row the worthy winner of Pub of the Year is the **Bull** at Horton Kirby, narrowly beating the **Cock** at Luddesdown, which had won the title for the previous three years (2005 to 2007). Third place went to the **Jolly Drayman** in Gravesend, just ahead of the **Old House** at Ightham Common. The Club of the Year, for the umpteenth time in a row, is the **Dartford Working Men's Club**, a former CAMRA National Club of the Year and several times Kent Club of the Year.

Garrett and Lynne continue to run an excellent real ale pub at the **Bull**, sourcing beers from a distinguished range of microbreweries, attracting real ale aficionados from far and near, as the quality and choice are always very reliable. The home-cooked food is good too and Lynne puts on an excellent spread for the open "bingo" quiz on the first Thursday evening of each month. The generous prizes on offer, together with the ale and fodder, make this an enjoyable monthly event. The Pub of the Year presentation takes place during the evening of Thursday 27<sup>th</sup> May, which happens to be the fifth anniversary of Garrett and Lynne taking the reins at the **Bull** and re-opening the pub, so this will be a great celebration party day with great beers and great food. A few rare and unusual milds will be on offer during the *Make May a Mild Month* promotion and anyone buying a pint of mild at the **Bull** throughout the month of May will be entered into a draw to win a brilliant prize!

The pub also enters a team in the Dartford Independent Quiz League on Monday evenings and, as you can guess, the **Bull** is my favourite "away" venue. The other pub teams in the League, outside the Dartford built-up area, are the **Jolly Millers** at South Darent (selling *Courage Best* and *Fullers London Pride*), the **Fruiterers Arms** in Crockenhill (*Courage Best* and commendable *Harvey's Best*) and the **Plough** at Wilmington (up to four real ales). The season finished in March, won narrowly by the Stage Door, Dartford team (of television *Eggheads* fame – but not fortune). The new season starts in September and the League would welcome new pub and club teams and individual players. Please contact Bob Belton on the above numbers or email [bob.belton@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:bob.belton@hotmail.co.uk) if you are interested.

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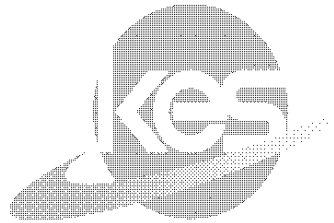
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On a circuitous route from Farningham Road station, to the away match at the **Jolly Millers**, I called in at the **Ship** at Sutton-at-Hone, serving a good drop of *Sharps Doom Bar*, and the **Queens** in South Darent. Here *Greene King* beers are the norm, and I tried *Hare Raiser*; beers from the local *Millis* brewery are often stocked. I also visited the **Bridges** by the viaduct, which serves *Harvey's Best*, *Dark Star Hophead* and two guest beers, sometimes also from *Millis*. We've heard that the **Fighting Cocks** at Horton Kirby has changed hands recently and now stocks *Westerham* beers amongst others in good condition. I've not been there recently but will certainly try it in the summer, as I like the very large garden leading down to the river Darent.

National Cask Ale week ran from 29<sup>th</sup> March to 5<sup>th</sup> April and a number of local pubs took part by staging various events, from beer quizzes, darts competitions and music nights to more esoteric features, such as the *Borough Green Best Beer Belly* competition. Full marks to Alison Pilkington at the **Black Horse** for planning this and several other activities, including a comedy night, a beer quiz, acoustical musical entertainment with Bill Douglas and a 50's & 60's band, *Five Wheel Drive*. The **Black Horse** has three new handpumps and Alison intends to keep one regular beer and two changing guests. *Ringwood Best Bitter* and *Woodfordes Wherry* proved very popular recently; *Black Sheep Bitter*, *Young's Bitter* and *Harvey's Bitter* have also been more regularly available, and there are possible plans to stock local Kentish beers as guests.

Mark & Fiona Fenge at the **Crown** in Otford also planned a number of events, including Round Robin darts, beer quiz and bingo, with their esoteric activity being a *Beer Mat Building* competition. Beer tasting of six different ales in third of a pint glasses at 90 pence a third was also featured, which is an excellent way to acquire a taste for different cask ales during this special Cask Ale Week or any other week. Third of a pint tasters, in a wooden frame holding five glasses, have been a feature for a few years now at the **Dartford Working Men's Club**, which planned to stage an open quiz and a *Beer Banquet*, with guest speaker John Boyce from *Mighty Oak Brewery*, during National Cask Week. Unfortunately, being away at Easter, I was not able to attend any of these events but would like to hear from those that did.

Usually I write about recent pub beer festivals but January to March is a lean time for non-CAMRA festivals. The St. George's festivals at the **Crown** in Otford and the **Dartford Working Men's Club** and the Early



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May Bank Holiday events at the **Jolly Drayman** in Gravesend and the **Rising Sun** at Twitton will have taken place between me writing this and you reading this, so I can't report, but trust that all went well at all these and other venues. Please remember to contact the editor well in advance to place an advert for future events or contact us at Gravesend & Darent Valley for a brief mention on page 3 and in this article. Summer is a-coming-in and is the best time to arrange outdoor garden beer festivals, as the **Fox & Hounds** at Romney Street and the **Rising Sun** at Twitton can testify in recent years, come rain or shine.

Congratulations to the winner of the competition for the weekend away at the **Wroxham Brewery Tap**, sponsored by John Frankland, owner of **Ye Olde Black Lion** in Hartley. Please take the time to visit this enterprising pub near Longfield to sample some of the Norfolk beers, which now include *Grumpy Bitter*, *Old Grumpy* and *Gone Fishing*, brewed specifically for the **Black Lion**. The branch is planning a weekend outing to the **Wroxham Brewery Tap**, as none of our regular members won the competition, and it sounds an interesting and worthwhile place to visit.

More snippets of news from the villages have been forthcoming. The **Darnley Arms** in Cobham changed hands just over a year ago and the landlord has made great strides to give this pub a reputation for good quality food and real ale. *Greene King IPA* has been retained and the well-renowned *Dark Star Hophead* is now a regular beer, with *Otter Bitter* and *Hogs Back TEA*, amongst others, featuring as guests. The **Green Man** at Longfield Hill, a Vintage Inn restaurant pub, has a growing reputation for real ale and we enjoyed *Harviestoun Bitter & Twisted* and *Harvey's Best* recently.

The **Crown Point Inn** at Seal Chart, just off the A25 between Seal and Borough Green, changed ownership in February and has been transformed once again. The emphasis is still on providing good restaurant food where the carvery looks very appetising and a third handpump has been installed with *Skinners Betty Stogs*, *Westerham Freedom Ale* and *Westerham British Bulldog* on offer during my visit.

The **Chequers** at Darenth is another pub which has changed hands recently and we understand that the new landlord is keen to regain the good following for real ale by expanding the range and quality of beers. Carol is now running the **Cressy Arms** in Wilmington on her own, still serving three real ales and the **Orange Tree** opposite is a *Shepherd Neame* pub displaying a "To Let" sign.

Moving into Dartford, the **Windmill** in Lowfield Street is closed with an uncertain future. The **Courthouse** in Spital Street has re-opened and is advertising a carvery at £3.95 every day, except Monday, and is also serving breakfasts and evening meals. The carvery is excellent value according to friends and is a brave attempt to challenge the nearby **Flying Boat** in providing good value meals. The **Foresters** in Great Queen Street was selling three handpumped beers with *Timothy Taylor Landlord* joining *Courage Best* and *Shepherd Neame Spitfire* at the Dartford Independent Quiz League presentation evening in March. The **Temple Belle** in Henderson Drive has finally been converted and re-opened as a Tesco Metro. A local reader has ironically commented that it now sells a far more interesting range of beers than it ever did as a pub!

News from Northfleet is that the **Prince Albert** in Shepherd Street had been closed following civil disorder, according to the *Gravesend Reporter*, and a new landlord is being sought. The **Rising Sun** in Seymour Road and the **Dover Castle** in Dover Road have both re-opened, although

neither is believed to sell real ale. The **Coopers Arms** (aka **Pips**) in the High Street, closed for many months, has now become a cafe and take-away restaurant.

And so to Gravesend where **Bar Riva**, in the Town Pier has re-opened and the **White Post** in Pelham Road has finally been demolished. The best pubs in Gravesend for real ale are all free houses, with the **Jolly Drayman**, **Rum Puncheon**, **Ship & Lobster** and **Crown & Thistle** being the best of a good bunch, according to votes received in the Pub of the Year competition. The *Wetherspoons* pub, the **Robert Pocock**, has much improved beer quality over recent months.

Wetherspoons - that reminds me – I'm supposed to pick up the 96 trail from the Bexley Branch article on page 32. The event at the **Flying Boat** was the Meet the Maker of the Big Tree Cider Company who was pressing apples in a barrel in the garden in the pouring rain. The resultant apple juice was, in my opinion, far more pleasant than the cider on offer. I preferred the peat-based beer, *Gael Rua*, from the *Hilden Brewery* of Northern Ireland inside the pub in the dry.

Finally to the **Paper Moon**, where the manager, Chris Smith, and his team had provided excellent nibbles to go with the three beers, *Golden Braid*, *Incubus* and *Skrimshander*, all from the *Hopdaemon Brewery*, and five *Whitstable Brewery* ales: *Native*, *Winkle Picker*, *Pearl of Kent*, *Oyster Stout* and *Kentish Reserve*. Tony Prins, the brewer from *Hopdaemon* gave a short presentation but was curtailed, as he and Julian Hetherington from *Whitstable*, who had travelled together, had to leave early owing to a family crisis. Chris assured us that both Tony and Julian would return for "Meet the Brewer" evenings in the coming months, but never mind, we thoroughly enjoyed their beers and the snacks and this was a pleasant end to a very enjoyable day. I called by two days later on the Friday evening and all the Kentish beers had sold out. Hopefully, this event was successful for *Wetherspoons* and will be repeated in other areas.

**CONGRATULATIONS TO JANE HOYAL** from Platt, our winner in last issue's Wordsearch competition, sponsored by John Frankland of **Ye Olde Black Lion** in Hartley. Jane and her husband, a home brewer and CAMRA member himself, can look forward to a splendid weekend away at the **Wroxham Brewery Tap** cottage in Norfolk.

## FIFTH BEXLEY BEER FESTIVAL – APRIL 2010

Hosted once again by **Sidcup Sports Club**, this year the festival sold out by 9pm on the last day and was a real success. For the first time we entertained more than one thousand customers during the three days, who consumed around 5,000 pints of real ale, cider and perry. The lovely April weather allowed people to go outside on Saturday to watch cricket, rugby and tennis whilst enjoying their beverages.

Again we had a good selection, 64 firkins, of British beers varying in style, strength and flavour and certainly the dark ale aficionado had 6 milds, 7 stouts and 7 porters to choose from, along with 5 wheat beers; our organiser Alan Boakes has developed a taste for them. The first cask to run dry on Friday afternoon was *Mary Jane* from *Ilkley Brewery*, followed by *Bowmans South Sea Spice* and *Dark Star American Pale Ale*. The public vote came up with joint winners, being *Allgates Mad Monk*, a Russian stout and the aforementioned *South Sea Spice*. The favourite ciders, chosen by the customers, were the winner, *Magic Bus Woblee Bus* (raspberry flavour), and runner-up, *Big Tree Fruity Beauty* (strawberry flavour); *Perfick Pear* became the perfect perry. Appreciation goes to Nick and Geoff Byram of **Dartford Working Men's Club** for topping us up with three extra firkins on Saturday morning at very short notice and Chris Cooter of *Magic Bus Cider* for ferrying in some extra cider.

We would like to acknowledge the following: Ian, Jennie, Robin and John Dowden and their staff at Sidcup Sports Club for their help and advice; Sharon Flockhart, her son and the kitchen team for the excellent food; Stuart Birch, manager of the Harvest Moon in Orpington, for arranging the Wetherspoons sponsorship; Robert Wicks, MD of *Westerham Brewery* for sponsoring the glasses and supplying several excellent beers;

Special thanks to Graham Austin, Vic Beale, Andy Wheeler, Pat Ward and all the CAMRA volunteers who made this such a memorable event.

Most of all we extend our gratitude to Alan Boakes, the festival organiser, and Karen for keeping him sane and happy – Bexley Branch is indebted to you.

Here's looking forward to Bexley number six!

Contact: *Martyn Nicholls* on 01322 527857 (H)  
or *Graham Austin* on 07939 145429 (M)  
or email [contacts@camrabexleybranch.org.uk](mailto:contacts@camrabexleybranch.org.uk)

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The Budget in March meant beer duty rose by 2% from midnight on the 28<sup>th</sup>, the day the clocks went forward, with a huge 10% rise in the cost of cider, not differentiating between mass-produced fizzy white ciders and traditional ciders made from real apples by local cider producers, who will be hit disproportionately hard. As to the question whether there should be a minimum price for a unit of alcohol, *London Evening Standard* readers voted 41% Yes, 59% No.

At our well attended meeting in January at the **Charlotte** in Crayford we encountered and enjoyed *Caledonian Kiss Me Quick – Drink Me Slow* alongside the regular *Ringwood Fortyniner* and *Shepherd Neame Spitfire*. Burns Night in the **Robin Hood and Little John** allowed us to drink *Cairngorm Scottish Bard* at £1.95 per pint, before we tucked into the traditional haggis and neeps (thank you Caterina) Our four *J.D.Wetherspoons* pubs also celebrated a Burns Week with a Scottish ale plus haggis, neeps and tatties for £3.99.

February saw the branch meeting in the **New Cross Turnpike**, our Welling JDW, where we had a fine selection of beer to sip, sup and enjoy, including *Tring Side Pocket for a Toad* 3.6%, *Caledonian Deuchars IPA* 3.8%, *Bath Dark Hare*, a lovely stout at 4%, *Burton Sovereign Gold* 4% and *Lymestone Ein Stein* at 5%. Thanks to manager Jason Batty for reserving us a table and providing an excellent spread of food, not forgetting the superb quality of the beers.

In March we had a trip to Upper Belvedere to visit the **Prince of Wales**, a corner pub built on what was once Lessness Heath. Landlady Helen has been here for twenty years and the pub now offers four real ales *Courage Best*, *Black Sheep Bitter*, *St.Austell Tribute* and a guest from *Westerham*, which was *Freedom Ale* when we were there. Our guest speaker was Bromley councillor and prospective Parliamentary Conservative candidate, Colin Bloom, a CAMRA member who seemed sympathetic to some of CAMRA's aims, but would like to get elected!

The Pub of the year 2010 is the **Crayford Arms** in the High Street, which after a complete refurbishment has vastly improved with the new

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landlords. The pub sign features the Coat-of-Arms of the Draper family who owned the manors of Howbury and Newbery of Crayford. Previously owned by *Crowley's* of Croydon, then *Reffell's* of Old Bexley, it is now a *Shepherd Neame* tied house selling five real ales, including the seasonal plus brews from their microbrewery. Congratulations to Sharon, John and Paul. The CAMRA presentation is due to take place on Wednesday 26<sup>th</sup> May at 9pm (see branch diary).

The runner-up was again the **Black Horse** in Albert Road, Old Bexley, a popular back street local belonging to *Enterprise Inns* that sells *Courage Best* plus two guest ales. A presentation to landlord Julian will be made at our branch meeting on 14<sup>th</sup> July.

In third place was the **Rose**, Broadway, Bexleyheath, handy for ASDA, and built in 1955, replacing the original of 1834 which was destroyed by a bomb in 1941. At least four real ales are always available, regularly including *Harvey's Bitter*.

Thanks to everyone who voted (Bexley branch members only) and a total of thirteen different pubs all received votes. The **Robin Hood and Little John** was ineligible this year after the branch voted that the previous

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year's winner could not compete, but do come along on the 12<sup>th</sup> May, when there will be one or two milds available as part of *Make May a Mild Month*.

The Punch Taverns **Harrow** in Northend Road, Erith, has been demolished to make way for flats. A pub had been on that site since 1840, although rebuilt in 1904, and then enlarged in 1936 making the saloon on the right larger and adding a games room, later used as a restaurant. It used to have a large forecourt until the building of the dual carriageway left it as a roadside pub, albeit with a large car park at the rear. My own reason for remembering this pub is that when I played football for Trojans F.C. I was elected captain (the only ever elected one, everyone else was selected) after a vote at that pub. Once leased to *Russell's Brewery* of Gravesend before becoming a *Truman's* pub, it had sold both *Courage Best* and *Ruddles* in the past.

In Mayplace Road West, Bexleyheath, the **Bricklayers Arms** is to become a restaurant and take-away, after planning permission for flats was refused. Two years ago the pub was bought by *Enterprise* and refurbished, but it never became profitable. It takes its name from the Barham family who not only ran it but built the cottages opposite in 1849. The current building was rebuilt in 1906.

The **Blue Anchor**, Bridgen Road, Bexley is now selling *Greene King IPA*. In Lower Belvedere, the **Belvedere** had *Black Sheep Bitter* as its guest ale. Near to Falconwood Station, the **Falcon**, a *Harvester* has applied to have handpumps installed. Bexleyheath has lost its **Zero Degrees** connection, with **OHM** being painted white and called **Pure**, and the **Zero Bar** being converted into a pizzeria.

From 22<sup>nd</sup> to 25<sup>th</sup> March *Wetherspoons* organised a Kent Brewery Festival at five local pubs, three in Bexley branch area and two in Dartford. A special event day took place, themed as an ale trail on the 96 bus route, during the afternoon and evening of Wednesday 24<sup>th</sup> March, with all Kent brewery beers priced at £1.79 per pint. The trail commenced at 4pm at the **New Cross Turnpike** in Welling, with a showcase of four *Nelson Brewery* beers on handpump, including *Jack Knife* and *Nelson's Blood*, with free tasters of bottle-conditioned *Loose Cannon* bitter and *Dogwatch* stout.

Onward to the **Wrong 'Un** in Bexleyheath Broadway where the four showcase beers were from *Westerham Brewery*, being *Grasshopper Kentish Bitter*, *1965 Special Bitter Ale*, *William Wilberforce Freedom Ale*, and *WGV*



single hop varietal. Robert Wicks, *Westerham Brewery* founder and MD, gave an evocative and very interesting presentation about the history of the *Black Eagle Brewery*, which closed in 1965. The current brewery was founded in 2004 and Robert is brewing some beers to similar recipes and styles of the former brewery, using a preserved yeast strain from 1957, just before the brewery was taken over by *Taylor Walker* (subsequently *Ind Coope*, then *Allied Breweries*) and all the hop varieties currently used are grown in Kent. WGV stands for Whitbread Goldings Variety and used to be the most commonly used variety in Kent. Ian Wright, Bexley branch Pubs Officer gave a talk about CAMRA generally and specifically about pubs and activities in the local area.

And so to the **Furze Wren** at the Clock Tower end of Bexleyheath Broadway by which time, 6.30pm, over twenty people had joined the trail. Curry tasting and beer tasting were the welcome events at the **Furze Wren**, where a selection of curries, rice and bhajis certainly helped to soak up the beer. Beer tasting was courtesy of *Shepherd Neame Brewery*, the oldest in the country, founded in 1698 and the largest in Kent. Stewart Main, the head brewer, with over forty years brewing experience at various breweries, including *Dryburgh* in Edinburgh, and *Hook Norton*, gave an informal presentation, accompanied by generous tasters of six different *Shepherd Neame* beers, showcased at the bar, of which *Double Stout* was new to me. All ales were in perfect condition.

Continuing down the hill to Crayford by 96 bus and onwards to Dartford and the **Flying Boat** and **Paper Moon** where Gravesend and Darent Valley branch pick up the trail in the article on page 27.

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## A Jaunt to John Harvey Country

by Andy Osborne

It was a wet and windy morning when I set off on this trip to and around Lewes (East Sussex), home to the *Harvey's* brewery. Although not ideal weather I could at least go with a clear conscience that I shouldn't instead be doing jobs in the garden in preparation for summer. I was joined by one other on my way into Maidstone by bus. Once in the county town we met with four more enthusiasts and boarded a No 7 bus to Tunbridge Wells, but not before we had a chance to grab some breakfast; a seventh member joined us just out of town.

On arrival at Tunbridge Wells we just had time for a quick refreshment and so the nearby **Opera House** was chosen. Already inside were a further two additions to our number. Available at the bar were *Westerham 1965 Special Bitter*, *Oakham JHB*, *Abbot Reserve*, *Theakston's Old Peculier* plus the regulars being *Spitfire*, *Ruddles Best*, and *Abbot Ale*. Most went for the *JHB*, which was an excellent pint.

The next leg involved a 29A to take us to Lewes; unlike on previous trips the weather did not allow us to enjoy the spectacular views that you can witness from the top deck of a bus. Once in Lewes, the focus of today's trip; we stayed on the bus for a short while as it passed through the main town and alighted shortly after passing by the **Black Horse**, our next stop off. The landlady Jo used to run a successful real ale pub in Maidstone and always gives us a warm welcome when we visit as well as a chance for her to catch up on the local Maidstone news (Gossip). We had a choice of three beers which in no particular order were *Greene King IPA* and *Hare Raiser* plus *Hanson's Olde Trip*, the second being the most popular on the first round. I subsequently tried the *Olde Trip* and found both to be good. Most if not all decided to take advantage of the reasonably priced menu; this was very enjoyable as well as good value, especially the home made chilli con carne made with the local butcher's produce.

We now had to retrace our steps back into Lewes to wait for a minibus, run for the local Cuckmere community and staffed by volunteer drivers. We caused a bit of a commotion when the nine of us got on, causing the locals to have to move their shopping from seats and aisles to allow us to sit down, obviously not used to having their bus so full but hopefully they will forgive us.

After a short trip we arrived at the **Ram Inn** in Firle. This is a rambling old country pub with dark painted walls and low beamed ceilings. It has

two fires in amongst the many rooms and is known for its locally sourced quality food; it was certainly very busy the day we visited. It is in the *Good Beer Guide* and used to be a Watneys pub. There were three beers on tap: *Harvey's Sussex*, *Harvey's Porter* and *Arundel Castle* and at the best price of the day of £2.60 - £2.70. As the pub was so busy, there was little seating available, so we adjourned to the yard/garden where several large round tables looked to be the answer. However, this was not ideal as it was not the warmest of days. Fortunately for us, one of our more inquisitive members had discovered that the adjacent outbuilding was open and, on entering, was found to consist of two rooms with various pieces of furniture, one having several chairs and a Toad in the Hole table (see Draught Copy #155 — Ed). First up, two members from our county town challenged two from an outer suburb who lost the first but went for best of three but after losing again decided to let two members from another suburb take on the Maidstone boys. After early promise they failed miserably and it was left to the former pair to return and after a close finish retire as current champions, as the minibus had returned to take us back to Lewes.

The **Gardeners Arms** in Lewes can be found almost opposite the *Harvey's* brewery shop and is a compact two-bar pub and is also in the *Good Beer Guide*. Pictures of local bygone days adorn the walls. Frequent readers of this newsletter may remember this is a favourite of mine especially with its regular large selection of microbrewery beers, which on this occasion were *Wentworth Challenge* and *Best Bar None*, *Prospect Goldrush*, *Green Jack Canary Pale Ale*, *English Winter* by *Black Country* plus *Harvey's Sussex* and *Porter* and also *Nottingham Supreme Bitter*. All the beers were in fine fettle. Three members left slightly before the main party to make a fleeting visit to the nearby, GBG-listed **John Harvey Tavern**, right by the brewery. It had five beers available on our visit: *Sussex*, *Old Ale*, *Porter*, *Armada Ale* and *Hadlow Bitter*. It was quite a lively pub with wood panelled walls, slate floors, it also has a good selection of food and wines available and I believe there is a quieter side bar.

We rejoined the others as we waited for the 29 which would take us back to Tunbridge Wells; we broke this longest part of our journey by stopping off in Five Ash Down where we visited the **Pig & Butcher**. Three or four *Harvey's* beers available and we were given a warm welcome. I don't know if it's my imagination but this pub seems different every time I have visited over the years. Then it was back on another 29 to Tunbridge Wells where we went our separate ways. This concluded a very enjoyable day and I would like to thank all who played a part.

# What do you look for in a good pub?

Local ales, ciders and perries?  
Award winning food?  
Genuine imported draught beer?  
Weekly live music?  
Warm and friendly atmosphere?

Stopped looking yet....?

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# BRIDGE STOCK

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*Food Market*

**TRAD JAZZ**

splinter | sessions

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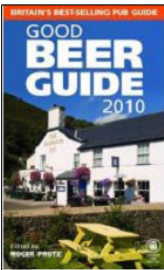
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We offer Harveys Sussex Best, Adnams Best,  
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Open Mic Session – 1<sup>st</sup> Thursday every month from 7.30pm  
Chilli Supper served for performers

Live Music Monthly – Check Website for Details

## **FAST CASK — MARSTONS SHOW THE WAY FORWARD**

Cask Ale Week at the beginning of April saw the launch of a new real ale storage technology from Marston's Brewery plc. Fast Cask™ allows beer to 'drop bright' quickly during its secondary fermentation in the cask. Normally, when ale casks are disturbed, either during delivery or when being manhandled in the cellar, the yeast rises up in suspension and can take several hours or more to sink to the bottom and leave the beer clear once more. This can be a severe logistical problem for pubs with small cellars.

With Fast Cask, Marstons have patented a process that solidifies fresh yeast into 'beads' that soak up the sugars in the beer and permit ongoing secondary fermentation while retaining sufficient mass that they fall quickly to the bottom of the cask. Once the beer has undergone its primary fermentation in the brewery, the original yeast is recovered and replaced with these beads of yeast within the cask. Purists might take issue with this slight change to the 'traditional way', but Marstons were quick to reassure drinkers that nothing else has changed: the beer still arrives in casks which have to be tapped and spiled (to allow the beer to breathe) before serving. You just get your pint quicker!

This process now makes it far easier for outlets that do not normally serve cask ale due to reasons of space (small pubs) or movement (trains and ships, for example) to consider doing so. And because finings (from fish swim bladders) are no longer needed to help clear the beer, the product is acceptable to vegans.

Fast Cask is currently under scrutiny by CAMRA's Technical Committee.

**MENCAP SUMMER FAYRE** MENCAP's annual Summer Fayre at Cobtree Hall in the SE corner of Mote Park will be held on **12th June** this year. CAMRA will have its usual bar offering up to seven real ales, the majority of which will have been donated from kindly breweries and local landlords. All proceeds from beer sales will go direct to MENCAP to help with the excellent work of their charitable trust. The bar will open at 11.00 and continue until all the beer is sold — so come early for the best choice.



# May is Mild Month

CAMRA promotes Mild throughout May and celebrates National Mild Day on Saturday 8 May 2010.

This year our local CAMRA branches are encouraging at least one pub in their area to stock at least one Mild during May for their customers to try. Why not speak with your local licensee?

## What is mild?

**Milds** are black to dark brown to pale amber in colour and come in a variety of styles from warming roasty ales to light refreshing lunchtime thirst quenchers. Malty and possibly sweet tones dominate the flavour profile but there may be a light hop flavour or aroma. Slight diacetyl (toffee/butterscotch) flavours are not inappropriate. Alcohol levels are typically low.

**Pale milds** tend to have a lighter, more fruity aroma with gentle hoppiness.

**Dark milds** may have a light roast malt or caramel character in aroma and taste.

**Scottish cask beers** may have mild characteristics with a dominance of sweetness, smooth body and light bitterness.

Original gravity: less than 1043

Typical alcohol by volume: less than 4.3%

Final gravity 1004 - 1010

Bitterness 14 - 28 EBU



# It takes all sorts to campaign for real ale

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## Join CAMRA today...

Complete the Direct Debit form below and you will receive three months membership free and a fantastic discount on your membership subscription. Alternatively you can send a cheque payable to CAMRA Ltd with your completed form, visit [www.camra.org.uk](http://www.camra.org.uk) or call 01727 867201. All forms should be addressed to Membership Secretary, CAMRA, 230 Hatfield Road, St Albans, AL1 4LW.



### Your Details

Title ..... Surname .....

Forename(s) .....

Date of Birth (dd/mm/yyyy) .....

Address .....

..... Postcode .....

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Tel No (s) .....

### Partner's Details (if Joint Membership)

Title ..... Surname .....

Forename(s) .....

Date of Birth (dd/mm/yyyy) .....

Please state which CAMRA newsletter you found this form in? ..... Draught Copy, MMK .....

	Direct Debit	Non DD
Single Membership (UK & EU)	£20 <input type="checkbox"/>	£22 <input type="checkbox"/>
Joint Membership (Partner at the same address)	£25 <input type="checkbox"/>	£27 <input type="checkbox"/>

For Young Member and concessionary rates please visit [www.camra.org.uk](http://www.camra.org.uk) or call 01727 867201.

I wish to join the Campaign for Real Ale, and agree to abide by the Memorandum and Articles of Association.

I enclose a cheque for .....

Signed ..... Date .....

Applications will be processed within 21 days

Mem Form 0108



### Instruction to your Bank or Building Society to pay by Direct Debit

Please fill in the form and send to: Campaign for Real Ale Ltd, 230 Hatfield Road, St Albans, Herts AL1 4LW



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- You can cancel a Direct Debit at any time by writing to your Bank or Building Society. Please also send a copy of your letter to us.

detached and retained this section

Banks and Building Societies may not accept Direct Debit Instructions for some types of account.

# 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)

## MAY

- 1 **GDV** 1pm social – **Jolly Drayman Beer Festival**, Gravesend
- 3 **GDV** 1pm social – **Rising Sun Beer Festival**, Twitton
- 5 **GDV** **Rum Puncheon**, Gravesend (*OBM*)
- 6 **MMK** Maidstone Mild in May, **Society Rooms**, then **Flower Pot**
- 12 **BEX** mild social, **Robin Hood and Little John**, Bexleyheath.
- 13 **GDV** PotY runner-up & mild social at **Cock**, Luddesdown
- 13 **MMK** **Red Lion**, Biddenden, then **Three Chimneys**
- 19 **GDV** mild social – **Campbell Arms**, Northfleet
- 20 **MMK** AGM, **Bush**, Aylesford (followed by *OBM*)
- 26 **BEX** PotY presentation at **Crayford Arms**, Crayford
- 27 **GDV** PotY presentation & mild social at **Bull**, Horton Kirby
- 27 **MMK** Maidstone Mild in May, **Rifle Volunteers**, then **Pilot**
- 29 **MMK** Bus Trip to Hastings, Westfield and Newenden

## JUNE

- 3 **MMK** Bat & Trap, Benenden, 7.30, then **King William IV** and **Bull**
- 9 **BEX** **Charcoal Burner**, Sidcup
- 10 **GDV** **Dartford Working Mens Club**
- 10 **MMK** **Dirty Habit**, Hollingbourne, then **Sugar Loaves** and **Windmill**
- 12 **MMK** MENCAP fete at Mote Park, Maidstone
- 17 **MMK** Ramble at 7.30. E. Farleigh Stn. to Barming **Bull & Redstart**
- 24 **MMK** **Queen's Head**, Mereworth, then **Swan**, West Peckham
- 26 **GDV** 1pm, Cobham Crawl, **Ship** then **Leather Bottle & Darnley Arms**
- 30 **BEX** 8pm AGM at **Crayford Arms**, Crayford.

## JULY

- 1 **MMK** Bat & Trap, Aylesford Rec, 7.30, then **Little Gem** and **Chequers**
- 7 **GDV** **Old House**, Ightham Common, then **Crown Point**, Seal Chart
- 8 **MMK** **Smarden Bell**, 8.30, then Headcorn walkabout
- 14 **BEX** **Black Horse**, Bexley
- 15 **MMK** **Red Lion**, Lenham (*OBM*)
- 18 **MMK** Sunday Ramble E/W Farleigh meet E. Farleigh Stn. 11.10
- 22 **MMK** Sutton Valence Walkabout, start **Queens Head** 8.30
- 28 **GDV** 8pm **Black Lion**, Hartley
- 29 **MMK** Bat & Trap, Bearsted, 7.30, then **Oak** and **Plantation**
- 31 **MMK** Bus Trip to Horton Kirby and Hartley

■ OLD 1066 ALE ■ BEST DARK ALE ■

REAL MILD ALE ■ FINE LIGHT ALE ■ GOLD STAR



REAL MILD ALE ■ FINE LIGHT ALE ■ GOLD STAR

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