

Draught Copy



CAMPAIGN
FOR
REAL ALE

Free Newsletter
for the

Maidstone & Mid-Kent,
Gravesend & Darent Valley
and Bexley areas of Kent

Winter 2011

No. 165

Thank You for Drinking Us Dry!



East Malling Beer and Cider Festival 2011

Well, we promised more this year, we gave more, and in return more of you came to East Malling Research a few weeks ago and drank all our beer and cider to the last drop!

We promised a great day out, and so it was. Our thanks go to the organisers, the very hard-working staff, East Malling Research, the bands, the food vendors and everyone else who made staging this event such a success. But most of all, we are grateful to you, our visitors and customers for being there and part of it all.

We look forward to doing it again in 2012 and seeing you then.

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DRAUGHT COPY

Draught Copy is the newsletter of the Maidstone and Mid-Kent, 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 2700 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:

£69 / £40 / £24 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 24 December 2011 for publication in February 2012.

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

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www.camra.org.uk/festivals

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Canterbury Ales	01227 732541	<i>www.canterbury-ales.co.uk</i>
Canterbury Brewers	01227 455899	<i>www.thefoundrycanterbury.co.uk/ canterbury-brewers</i>
Farriers Arms	01233 720444	<i>www.thefarriersarms.com</i>
Goacher's	01622 682112	<i>www.goachers.com</i>
HopDaemon	01795 892078	<i>www.hopdaemon.com</i>
Hop Fuzz	07850 441267	<i>www.hopfuzz.co.uk</i>
Kent Brewery	01634 780037	<i>www.kentbrewery.com</i>
Larkins	01892 870328	
Millis Brewing Co.	01322 866233	<i>www.millisbrewing.com</i>
Moodleys Brewery	01892 889877	<i>www.moodleys.co.uk</i>
Nelson Brewing Co.	01634 832828	<i>www.nelsonbrewery.co.uk</i>
Old Dairy Brewing Co.	01580 243185	<i>www.olddairybrewery.com</i>
Ramsgate Brewery	01843 868453	<i>www.ramsgatebrewery.co.uk</i>
Royal Tunbridge Wells Brewing Company	01892 618140	<i><a href="http://www.royaltunbridgewells
brewing.co.uk/">www.royaltunbridgewells brewing.co.uk/</i>
Shepherd Neame	01795 532206	<i>www.shepherd-neame.co.uk</i>
Swan, West Peckham	01622 812271	<i>www.swan-on-the-green.co.uk</i>
Tonbridge Brewery	01732 366770	<i>www.tonbridgebrewery.co.uk</i>
Wantsum Brewery	0845 0405980	<i>www.wantsumbrewery.co.uk</i>
Westerham Brewery	01959 565837	<i>www.westerhambrewery.co.uk</i>
Whitstable Brewery	01622 851007	<i>www.whitstablebrewery.info</i>

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CIDER PRODUCERS OF KENT – BIG TREE CIDER

Ten years ago, Ray Claridge tried a new hobby. From a huge Bramley apple tree in his garden in Hartley, Kent, he harvested all its apples, bashed them all with a large piece of wood, poured the pieces of apple into a hired cider press and watched the juice flow. As his sons grew older, one by one they became interested in the cider that he was producing, or as they saw it, free alcohol. Gradually, he acquired three helpers, and the family and friends began scrumping in the local orchards. Thus, a 25-litre barrel yearly output expanded to 100 litres.

After successfully selling cider at the Swan at Wittersham's Beer and Cider Festival, Ray's family decided to form **Big Tree Cider**. They joined *Produced In Kent*, a membership organisation dedicated to promoting local food, drink, products and services in Kent, bought a large apple press, an electric scrapper and a large number of 200-litre barrels. Deals were struck with local orchards, whereby they were provided with apples free of charge, in return for making their juice. The most beneficial arrangement, for all concerned, was with Broomfield Farm, Meopham. They provided the apples, Big Tree Cider created the juice, and the apple cuttings were returned to the farm as food for the pigs that live in the orchard of fellow *Produced In Kent* member, Roundwood Orchard Pig Company.

In their first year of membership they reached the final of the prestigious Taste of Kent Awards for 2009. Production increased to 3,000 litres per year and they were invited to sell to the Kent Beer Festival, the Chelmsford Festival, and with immense pride were also asked to sell to the Great British Beer Festival at Earls Court, London. Since then, they have increased production year-on-year, have bought new equipment and are forging more relationships with local orchards and better links with local pubs and restaurants.

Big Tree Cider now consists of Ray, his wife Chris, their three sons David, Graeme and John, David's new wife Hayley (Chief Squasher) and head of transport and Senior Apple Picker, Colin, who is Chris' brother – a true family set up. May they live *Appley Ever After!*

www.bigtreecider.co.uk

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Brewery snippets...

Abigale – *Samphire* and *Ridgeway Pale Ale* continue as the two regularly brewed beers. *Bramling* at 4.1% using Bramling Cross hops was a one off, but may be brewed on an occasional basis. *Leas Lift Festival Ale*, a pale at 3.8% ABV, has been brewed for the Leas Lift Festival. The festival organisers have released some casks to Free Houses in the Folkestone area.

A best bitter at 4.4% ABV was brewed for the Ashford Rugby Club beer festival, and proved very popular. It will now be brewed on a regular basis, and will be released to the trade towards the end of September or early October. James has not yet decided on a name for this beer, which will be malty, darker in colour than *Samphire*, and brewed with WGV and Admiral Hops.

James is currently brewing as much as he can as a one man operation.

Black Cat—Marcus is still brewing *Original* and occasionally *Hopsmack*. He's going part-time with his flying job next year so he can dedicate more time to the brewery. A small expansion next year is well possible.

Canterbury Ales – Brewer Martin Guy has changed the recipe for *The Millers Ale* partly due to a shortage of Bramling Cross hops. It will be brewed with Pacific Gem along with a little crystal rye malt. Martin will be brewing a 5%-ish porter ready for Christmas. He has so far held back from this as he feels the style benefits from a little ageing but space currently precludes this.

Hop Fuzz – is a new brewery based in West Hythe. The man in charge is Daryl Stanford. The first beer was launched at the White Hart, Hythe on 1st October.

Kent Brewery – A new beer - *Harvest Moon* 4.6%- was launched at the **Harvest Moon** in Orpington. It is available in London at **Cask Pub and Kitchen** and locally at the **Bull**, Horton Kirby, **The Flower Pot**, Maidstone, **Nevill Bull**, Birling and other key pubs throughout Kent.

A special ale was produced for the recent Beer Festival at the **Flower Pot** in Maidstone - **Chilli Ginger**. Toby has just started brewing this year's **Porter**. There are plans to introduce at least two new beers before the end of the year.

Larkins – They have successfully harvested 3 varieties of hops for use in their own beers over the coming year. *Platinum Blonde* has sold very well

and is now being replaced with *Porter* which will be released the first week of November. They have agreed to supply the Spa Valley Railway with an early cask.

Nelson – had a stall at the Faversham Hop Festival weekend selling 6 of their beers in cask and in bottled form at £2-50 a pint/bottle (500ml). To celebrate the brewery's 5th Anniversary of being under Pier's ownership, he brewed a 4.9% ABV bitter, simply named *Birthday*. A straw-coloured ale, it was made using six varieties of hops and was described as a very bitter beer!

Powder Monkey has been selected by Wetherspoons for its National Guest Ale listing between September and November. Wetherspoons say that *Nelson* is the smallest brewery selected during this particular quarter, so the brewery is, as you can imagine, very busy.

Old Dairy – Experimenting with a lager to be available soon.

Old Forge (Farriers Arms) – Five beers have brewed in their first year: *Farriers 1606*, *Winter Ale*, *Bishop's Brew* (stout), *Summer Ale* and *Church Roof Ale* 4.0%, brewed for their recent festival with a contribution from each pint to the church roof fund. Total donated over £200.

Ramsgate – *DoppelHop*, a 6% Octoberfestbier and *Green Hop Ale* (4.8%) are among the current seasonal brews.

Royal Tunbridge Wells – had a very successful opening of their first pub with sales vastly over predictions .

Wantsum – Four kilns (72 gallons) of *Dynamo* were supplied to the Great British Beer Festival and James reports that it all sold and received very favourable feedback. No new beers but James is going to brew *Mild* on a regular basis as there is a demand for it. Brewing of *Black Pig* will restart shortly and will be available during the autumn/ winter period. A stronger version of *Black Pig* at about 14ABV is being considered for the Christmas period.

Whitstable – had a record month in August, sales-wise and business is very good. Again they had a stall at the Faversham Hop Festival weekend dispensing a range of their beers. Whilst at the South East SIBA Festival in Tonbridge in July, the Best Bitter category was won by the *East India Pale Ale*, similarly the Standard Bitter category was won by *Native*, which then took the top accolade as the Overall Champion Gold.

Heading South in CZ

by Jeff Tucker

Say 'Czech Republic' and everyone thinks 'Prague'. It's a nice enough place, but it has become a bit of a tourist mecca. As with most countries, the more interesting parts can be found outside the capital. Train and coach travel can be planned (in English) at <http://jizdnirady.idnes.cz/vlakyautobusy/spojeni/>.

One of the southernmost towns in the Czech Republic is Ceske Budejovice, the regional capital of South Bohemia, with a population of 95,000. It is the home of REAL Budweiser, known as *Budvar*, not the American rice drink more often found in British pubs. Smaller breweries are found in the area, which can be reached easily by cheap public transport.

On arrival at Prague airport, the easiest way to get to the main station is by express coach AE, which runs every 30 minutes and costs 50KC. KC is Koruna, or Czech Crowns, for which the exchange rate is about 28 to the pound. The coach will deliver you to the upper level of the station, which houses the former ticket hall, with all its slightly faded grandeur, and the **Fantona Kavarna** cafe. My first beer was *Budvar Tmave* (dark), very nice at 35KC for half a litre, which is the default quantity served in the country. The route from there to the station concourse and ticket office is a little tortuous.

The trains to Ceske Budejovice run hourly and take 2hr 40min to cover the 169Km at a cost of 213KC. Train fares are set according to the distance travelled regardless of the route, and do not vary. The last half hour turned out to be a replacement bus service, to cover long-term reconstruction works on the track.

I was staying at the **Penzion U Nadrazi**, which was conveniently situated almost opposite the station and even closer to the bus station. The rooms were very clean and modern, if a little basic, but I would recommend it. The price of a single room was just 700KC per night.

Armed with a guide to four local pubs which I found on the Internet, I made the ten-minute walk to the centre of town. The first on the tour was **Restaurace Masne Kramy**, a cavernous place with a large no-smoking area. Another *Budvar Tmave* and a *Svetly* (light) were 35KC and very

enjoyable. The latter is the one found more often in the UK, usually in bottles. Dinner was delicious – chicken, bacon, mushrooms and chips selected from the English menu, costing 157KC.

The second pub turned out to be wrongly placed on the map, but I eventually found it in the opposite direction. **U Tri Sedlaku** (The Three Farmers, I think) is in the traditional style, although the furnishings are obviously quite modern. *Kozel Tmave* at 27KC was not as good as *Budvar*; similarly *Pilsner Urquell* (29KC) was eclipsed by *Budvar Svetly*. Interesting old brewery photos adorned the walls.

A left turn down Ceska brought me to **Potrefena Husa** (Grazing Goose), which had a very modern trendy interior, in contrast to the exterior. *Staropramen Cerny* (black) from Prague at 32KC was not bad, though.

Straight on out of this pub led shortly to the **Budvarka Pivnice**, a beer hall with a vaulted ceiling. *Budvar dark* was the choice here. Time for bed!

The next morning involved a train trip to Plzen, home of the country's other famous beer, *Pilsner Urquell*. The place to head for is **Na Parkane** next to the brewery museum. Here can be found *Kvasnicovy Pilsner Urquell*, a yeast beer. This pub is supposedly the only place in the world where it can be found! It was quite bitter and hazy, costing 36KC.

Back on the train from the imposing Plzen station, I got off at Strakonice, home of *Nektar Brewery*, a ten-minute walk from the station if you can follow the map! There was no restaurant on site, but **U Papeze** (the Pope!) across the road sells *Nektar Dudak* (21KC) and the yeast beer *Kvasnicovy* (23KC), neither of which was that inspiring. Back on the train to Ceske Budejovice.

Pubs around the station are few and far between, being mainly gambling establishments full of slot machines, so I headed for the town centre again. I came across the **Polo Pizzeria**, an Italian restaurant which offered *Budvar* at 35KC. Returning to my hotel via a different route, I found the **Crash Bar**, a student-orientated venue on Zizkova.

This sold *Svijany* beers all the way from the Liberec region in the far north of the country. When asked why, the owner said they were cheaper to buy than the local beers. *Knezna*, a 5.2% dark beer (33KC) was pretty good, but not on the menu as such. Believe it or not, it was normally mixed with cola to make a drink sold as 'diesel' - sacrilege! *Kvasnicak*, a 6.1% yeast beer (31KC) was not cloudy as expected, but good.

My last full day involved a 45-minute bus ride south to Cesky Krumlov, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, and home to *Eggenberg* brewery, which offers guided tours (in English if required) daily. The no-frills bus terminal in this hilly town overlooks the centre, but the route to get there is not obvious. I eventually found it, and asked for directions to the brewery.

The town centre is truly beautiful, but cars are allowed seemingly throughout, which spoils the effect somewhat. Anyone intending to visit the brewery assembles at the brewery gate at 11.00. On this day, six of us turned up, including an American couple, so the tour was conducted in (pretty good) English by the brewmaster. The price of 130KC included two beers in the adjacent restaurant. The brewery dates from 1560 and is more modern inside than out. Bottles committing suicide in the bottling plant seemed to be a regular occurrence, the floor awash with beer and broken glass!

In the restaurant, *Svetly Lezak*, 5%, was rather nice, as was *Kvasnicove*, another non-cloudy yeast beer. On the way back to the bus station, I came across the **Theatre Club Antre**, with a garden overlooking the river which dominates the town. This sold *Bernard* beers from Humpolec in the adjacent region of Vysocina. *Specialni Cerny Lezak*, 5.1% and 30KC, was my favourite beer of the trip so far, while *Svetly Lezak*, 5% and 29KC, was also pretty good.

Back on the bus to Ceske Budejovice and another visit to **U Tri Sedlaku** for a *Kozel Tmavy* and the *Gambrinus*, which was not bad at 25KC, followed by **Budvarka** again for a *Budvar dark*.

The next day I was due to return home at lunchtime, so I just had time to check out a pub which I had seen from a trolleybus trip, advertising *Platan* beers from nearby Protivin, which I hadn't encountered before. This was **U Cerneho Konicka** (The Black Horse), also on Zizkova, which was amazingly busy at 11.30. The 11 degree beer at 25KC was very nice, as was the *Kvasnicove*, 30KC, served in a weissbier glass.

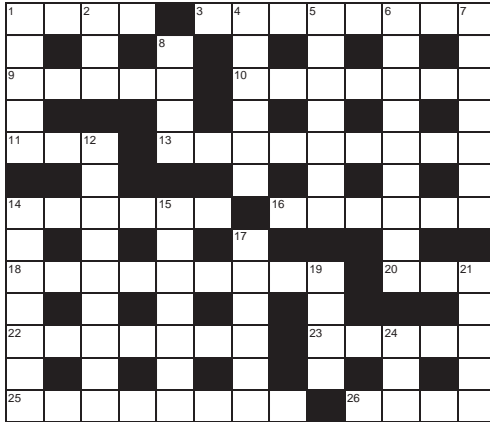
Sadly, it was time to head back to Prague airport, by bus, train and coach. Whatever you do, don't arrive there thirsty. A half litre of *Pilsner Urquell* will set you back a whopping 145KC, four times the price of the most expensive beer I came across on the trip.

There was a lot which I didn't have time to see, so another visit is planned for 2012, a branch trip this time.

The Draught Copy Crossword No. 5

compiled by MICK NORMAN

Solution in next issue



Solution to Crossword No. 4
in issue No. 164



Asterisked clues are themed, and may lack definition

Across

- 1* Endless island (4)
- 3 Strong drink might be said to make the heart grow fonder, perhaps (8)
- 9 Thatcher - in short, the mother of molten rock (5)
- 10 Sir Ron Evans initially confused by art treasures (7)
- 11 Tint that is lost in Bath, maybe (3)
- 13 Hairy Cher upset at pecking order (9)
- 14* May accompany 1 or 8 - or 3 (6)
- 16 Moved round little boy and departed (6)
- 18 Caine's character in the grip of winter weather - needs energy source (9)
- 20 Enforced silence? It's a joke! (3)
- 22* Part of fish is no good internally (7)
- 23* Some evidence of redeye as team photo is taken (5)
- 25 Admirers horrific spectres (8)
- 26* Hospital work less socially acceptable (4)

Down

- 1 Infectious disease prevalent in Oldham? (5)
- 2 Ear worm (3)
- 4* Nonsense by Lear (6)
- 5 Brewer's lorry backing up behind the pub, where the ostler ostled? (7)
- 6 Uncontrolled movement for observing tweeters (9)
- 7 See 19, roughly attempted (3)
- 8* Mother's on heroin (4)
- 12 Gets familiar with odd content of accounts (9)
- 14 A match for the devil (7)
- 15 Crime perpetrated by supplier of stolen goods (7)
- 17 Meals consumed, say, in china (3,3)
- 19 Doris's lifespan (4)
- 21 Pearly Bill? (5)
- 24 A party resulting in much consternation (3)

Contact: John Mills 01732 840603 or email jandj@larkfield98.freemove.co.uk

Oak on the Green, Bearsted – Following our Bat & Trap game we had some of the regular 1648 brewery beers followed by *Goachers Fine Light* but *Kent KGB* was also found here in September.

Old Plantation, Bearsted – Run by Nigel & Susan Williams, this pub has a 32 seat eating area with steaks for only £7 on Tuesdays. Quiz night is Monday and music features regularly. Serves *Adnams Bitter*, *Sharps Doom Bar*, *Flowers IPA* and a guest ale (recently *Old Dairy Red Top*). www.oldplantation.co.uk

King William IV, Benenden – There is a new licensee here, Lyndora Woodger.

Red Lion, Biddenden – The only pub now left in the village has a good menu and offers *Fullers London Pride* and *Shepherd Neame Master Brew*.

Three Chimneys, Biddenden – Served straight from the cask we found there were three *Adnams* beers here: *Bitter*, *Gunhill & Lighthouse*. Also had *St Austell Tribute* on.

Lower Bell, Blue Bell Hill – Spencer had a new backbar installed a while ago. Music features heavily here with Jam nights on Mondays and live bands Fridays, Saturdays and some Sundays. *Greene King IPA & Abbot* plus guest(s) on the pumps.

Cock, Boughton Monchelsea – *Shepherd Neame Bishops Finger*, *Master Brew* and *Spitfire* are usually on here together with a seasonal ale.

Cranbrook, Cranbrook – Closed with permission to convert to flats.

Cobdown Sports & Social Club, Ditton - *York Guzzler*, in excellent form, was reported a couple of times recently by our correspondents.

Bell & Jorrocks, Frittenden – Sean & Rosie were our hosts for the September branch business meeting and provided us with *Adnams Bitter*, *Harveys Best & Woodfordes Wherry* - these being their regular ales. The guest was *Rother Valley Hoppers Ale* and also some *Otter Bitter* from the cellar when the cask ran out late on.

Pepper Box, Harrietsham – Between Harrietsham and Ulcombe this is a pub that deserves a visit if you have not found it yet. Three *Shepherd Neame* beers are kept.

Black Pig, Hawkhurst – Seems to be rapidly gaining a good reputation as we had to park some distance away. We sat in the garden on a busy evening and drank *Dark Star Hophead*, *Harveys Best*, *Larkins Traditional* and *Westerham Hop Rocket*.

Eight Bells, Hawkhurst – Thanks to licensee ‘Jack’, who was kind enough to donate towards the funds for tombola at our beer festival when we visited in July. There is always *Dark Star Hophead* available here and on our visit we also sampled *Harveys Best* and *Rother Valley Level Best*, a beer not often seen in the rest of the branch area but always welcome.

Sugar Loaves, Hollingbourne – Had to reduce the choice to 2 in order to prevent the beer stagnating but now the road has re-opened, hopefully the trade will increase again.

Windmill, Hollingbourne – The pub trade has suffered here due to long running road works and it seems that the licensee has ceased trading due to lack of business. Hopefully a new lessee will be found soon.

Globe & Rainbow, Kildown – Now have a *Westerham* beer named *Globe & Rainbow Bitter* here with a guest *Westerham Flyer*. See website www.globeandrainbow.co.uk for details of upcoming events.

Chequers, Laddingford - The vintage vehicle event on August attracted a good following and many of the additionally available beers were sampled by a goodly collection of CAMRA members, mostly from Gravesend, arriving in a 1960s coach.

Hamlets Hotel, Larkfield – I was pleasantly surprised to find three ales on here – *Hogs Back TEA*, *Royal Tunbridge Wells Sovereign Blonde* and *Shepherd Neame Spitfire*.

Old Rectory, Leybourne – Has had a re-vamp with the bar being moved and increasing the floor area. Most visitors will be there for the food as it is now branded as *Fayre & Square*; however, there are *Courage Best* and *Adnams Broadside* on the bar.

Walnut Tree, Loose – The opening hours have changed again here, so to avoid a wasted journey these are the latest known: 2-12 Mon-Tue, 12-12 Wed, 11-12 Thur, 11-01.30am Fri-Sat; 12-9.30 Sun. Selling *Shepherd Neame Master Brew* and current seasonal offerings. Tel 01622 743493.

Flower Pot, Maidstone – David now has Cask Marque accreditation. Some additional seating has also been added. The nine handpumps are kept very busy and special brews from *Thornbridge* are often seen here. The TV screens displaying the beers currently available is now linked to the till so that changes may be seen as soon as they happen.

Stile Bridge, Marden – A close runner-up for our Pub of the Year this is a great pub that offers a varied choice of ales, good food and frequent music events. There always seems to be something different here, maybe additional pub memorabilia, internal re-arrangements or a new bottled beer available. *Adnams Lighthouse* is a regular and *Westerham* beers feature

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often with several other guests. Strawberry flavoured *Fruli* is always on the bar for those with a sweeter palate together with both Cider and Perry.

New Swan, Sandhurst – This is now being extended and will include a restaurant. May well be open before Christmas.

Good Intent, West Farleigh – Pauline Horton runs this pub with assistance from partner Steve and son Ben. The regular beers are *Larkins Traditional* and *Harveys Sussex Best* but these are occasionally changed for a seasonal ale from either brewery. There should soon be a third pump which will enable some more flexibility. As well as good value meals, Pauline has added a Tapas menu with dishes at £2.50 each for who prefer a little variety and are not requiring a full meal. The Nu-Venture 23 bus stops outside.

Bull, West Malling – The five handpumps are kept busy here particularly at weekends and on Monday when the quiz is held. *Youngs Bitter* and three ever changing guest ales keep the clientele happy. Many thanks to licensee, Trevor, who was kind enough to donate towards the tombola at the East Malling Beer & Cider Festival as well as acting as a judge for the Beer of the Festival and providing a meeting room for the festival organising committee's meetings.

George, Yalding – Joe Morris, our longest serving licensee, had the regular *Adnams Bitter* and guest *Caledonian Autumn Ale* on the bar on our recent visit. This is a well-kept pub that offers good food and has a large car park backing on to the river.

Walnut Tree, Yalding – There have been some changes in the beers available here with *Harveys Best* as a regular and three guest ales *Jennings Cumberland*, *Sharps Cornish Coaster* & *Skinners Betty Stogs* when the branch visited.

Did you know that you can find recent issues of *Draught Copy* online at <http://maidstoneandmidkentcamra.co.uk/aboutus.aspx?>

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Looking back over the last four issues I've noticed that my opening paragraph has always begun on a happy note. Issue 161 heralded the re-opening of the iconic **Old House** at Ightham Common, the only pub in our area regularly dispensing real ale direct from the cask by gravity. The following issue made hay about the re-opening of the equally iconic **Vigo** at Fairseat, which has subsequently offered beers from breweries other than *Goachers*, notably *Blue*, *Red* and *Gold Top* from *Old Dairy Brewing Company* in Rolvenden. The summer issue was full of sunshine with the news of the **Cock** at Luddesdown becoming the local Pub of the Year and the **Dartford Working Men's Club** winning the Club of the Year yet again. **DWMC** was also voted Kent Club of the Year and finished as one of three national runners-up. Last time we were pleased to report the speedy re-opening of the **Bull** at Horton Kirby which is reasserting itself as a haven for dedicated real ale drinkers.

I'm writing these musings enjoying the balmy late September Indian Summer weather and the happy news this time round concerns the re-opening, in August, of former National CAMRA Pub of the Year, the **Crown & Thistle** in Gravesend (see ad on p33), which closed "temporarily" in April this year. I called in very briefly on my way to the September business meeting at the **Three Daws**, but colleagues say that the style and atmosphere of the pub have altered little, keeping five changing real ales and cider and maintaining the tradition of allowing customers to bring in "take-away" meals for consumption inside the pub. The branch is very fortunate to have all the above excellent pubs and club to visit in harsh economic and social times and long may they continue.

On the downside however we do need to mention a couple of recent pub closures in August and September. The tiny local, the **Fruiterers Arms** in Crockenhill, known locally as the **Mud Hole**, is a sad loss and I remember happy times supping *Harvey's Sussex Best Bitter* as a visiting player for various Quiz League and Bat & Trap teams. We're not sure whether this closure is permanent and would appreciate some information. The other recent closure which does seem permanent is the **Phoenix** in Hythe Street, Dartford, which stands forlorn in an industrial area suffering from the closure and systematic demolition of the buildings of the Glaxo SmithKline (formerly Wellcome) chemical works, which had been for many years the largest employer in Dartford. The **Phoenix**, which did not sell real ale in its latter years, was one of four

pubs, stretching back decades, in this part of Hythe Street north of the railway station, and now only the **Hufflers Arms** remains. Incidentally only the **Stage Door** survives in Hythe Street south of the station. Who can remember and name the other three? - one of which appears in "A Drinkers Tale" on page 29 of the previous issue.

A number of pubs which have closed within the last couple of years or so, that have remained vacant, will definitely not re-open as pubs, as planning permission for conversion into other uses, mostly residential, is sought and usually granted. Gravesend and Northfleet in particular suffer from this blight. The **Dover Castle** in Northfleet and the **Little Wonder** in Edgar Street, Gravesend will be converted in to flats and pubs in Gravesend such as the **Terrace Tavern**, the **Westcourt** and the **Trocadero** are standing idle. The Sports Bar themed **Bar Liquorice**, formerly the **Call Boy**, in Harmer Street, closed recently and other theme bars in Gravesend, most of which do not sell real ale, are struggling for custom. However, to my mind, the saddest of all closed pubs suffering from planning blight is the listed and now derelict **Red Lion** in Borough Green which has become an eyesore on a busy road junction.

We held a social in September in the Borough Green area starting at the **Black Horse and Hoodens** which deservedly appears in the 2012 *Good Beer Guide*, serving a changing range of guest beers with *Old Dairy Red Top* and a house beer, *Hoodens Bitter*, brewed by *Westerham Brewery* as regular offerings. Our next stop was the **Harrow** in Ightham Common, principally a restaurant but with a very traditional separate bar area where the regular real ales are *Loddon Hoppit* and *Shrimpers Ale*, having recently replaced a *Greene King* range. Our final destination that evening was, of course, the friendly **Old House** where I sampled the very fine *Fyne Jarl*.

Our country pub social in July took us to the Ash/New Ash Green area. The **Anchor & Hope** dispensed an excellent pint of *Harvey's Sussex Best Bitter* and we enjoyed *Westerham Clackers Ruin* at the **White Swan**. We made an impromptu stop at the **Royal Oak** at West Yoke, New Ash Green, which has recently been tastefully refurbished by *Shepherd Neame*, and I recommend the *Canterbury Jack*, an easy drinking, light summer bitter. During the August country social we visited the **Rising Sun** at Cotman's Ash selling *Westerham Hop Rocket* and *Cotleigh Seahawk*, followed by the **Chequers** at Heaverham with *Shepherd Neame* beers, then to the **Bell** in Kemsing with *Greene King* beers, finishing up at the **Chequers** in Farningham with a *Tryst Amarillo Hop Trial*.

I managed to call in at two of the August beer festivals this year. As I was driving that Saturday, I sampled halves of *Moorhouse's Black Cat*, *Fyne Maverick* and *Tring Side Pocket for a Toad* at the **Rising Sun** in Twitton and took away containers of *Goddards Scrumdiggity* and *Wolf Lupus Lupus* for evening enjoyment. Best regards to Colin & Sue and helpers who work hard to keep this semi-annual event on track. Fortunately I live within walking distance of Oakfield Park and sampled several of the twenty odd beers at **Wilmington Cricket Club**. Our thanks go to Colin Wright, as always, for organising this festival and putting on numerous dark beers, supporting mild, stout, porter and old ale styles. My beer of the festival, however, was *Royal Tunbridge Wells Golden Ticket*, with *Liverpool One Three Graces* not far behind, showing my personal preference for lighter coloured ales.

For drinkers favouring dark beers, may we recommend the **Wat Tyler** in Dartford High Street, always offering stouts and porters, and has been awarded a place in the 2012 *Good Beer Guide*. Please also call in at the well managed **Paper Moon** opposite where Chris and Kelly are still showcasing *LocAle* beers from *Westerham*, *Millis*, *Nelson* and *Kent Brewery*. Staying in Dartford the **Fox & Hounds** in Lowfield Street is under new ownership, offering a greater choice of real ales in more pleasant surroundings than before. I called in on my way home from the Wilmington beer festival and I'm sure I sampled *Brains SA*, living up to its nickname "Skull Attack" on that occasion, as my brain was definitely already out of kilter.

The other GBG 2012 pub in Dartford is the **Malt Shovel** in Darenth Road, often labelled "the country pub in town". We would especially like to thank Neil Browne, the landlord, and Luke the barman for looking after us so well at our open business meeting on the 27th July, with very reasonably priced *Brakspears Bitter* and tasty bites to eat for the lucky attendees. Neil reserved the entire public bar for us and we fully appreciate having a separate area for formal meetings, so much so that we are returning for a business meeting on 27th October. In mid to late October and early November the **Malt Shovel** and the **Court House** will be featuring 12 beers outside the normal *Wells and Youngs* range, including rarities for the area such as *Copper Dragon Golden Pippin*, *Hop Back Summer Lightning*, *Otter Ale* and *Sambrooks Wandle PA*, so hurry along.

No, we are not deserting the **Dartford Working Men's Club** – heaven forbid – we are just ringing the changes. **DWMC** is still the venue for the

CAMRA Kent Region Meeting on Saturday 12th November. Remember the *2Kents* beer brewed at *Shepherd Neame* for the joint **DWMC** and **Bull** festival a couple of years ago? A party of intrepid drinkers is descending on *Hop Daemon* brewery in Newnham in October to help brew a special beer for the Club beer festival on 21st October which you'll probably have sampled by the time you read this! The excellent **Twin Restaurant** is expanding its premises in Copperfield Court and Nick and Geoff Byram inform us that Twin will have three handpumps, initially offering *Dark Star Hophead*, *Shepherd Neame Spitfire* and probably the *Hop Daemon* ale. By now you will have missed the opening night but there will plenty of other opportunities to sample the fare.

This time we shall conclude by inviting all local CAMRA members to the branch Annual General Meeting at the **Jolly Drayman**, Wellington Street Gravesend on Wednesday 7th December 2011 (snow permitting – remember 2010?). Two of our most helpful and industrious members, Eric and Wendy Woods, are standing down from the committee at the AGM and we are looking for other members to become active, particularly computer-literate people to help maintain the branch website. As chairman I would like to thank Eric and Wendy for their assistance and perseverance since they joined CAMRA at the Gravesend Beer Festival at the Woodville Halls in 1997. And Gravesend & Darent Valley Branch would like to wish everyone seasonal felicitations for the coming Yuletide and much prosperity and happiness in 2012. Gosh – a leap year – even I get a birthday!

It's good to see a pub re-opening! The **Crown and Thistle**, 44 The Terrace, Gravesend had been closed since the beginning of April. I went there on the last warm Sunday of the year recently with my wife, and I enjoyed a fine pint in the garden at the back.

The Crown and Thistle Public House was opened in 1839 by a waterman, Edward Colyer. The premises were built as a fisherman's cottage in 1707 - the year of the parliamentary union formed between England and Scotland: hence the name. The building was extended upwards during the mid nineteenth century and added to at the back towards the end of the twentieth century. The pub is run by Warwick and Helen Gordon, Directors of the Kentish Heritage Pub Company Ltd, which has owned the pub since 2001. The company has employed a number of different managers, with a highlight in 2003 when the pub was awarded CAMRA National Pub of the Year. (*See page 21*)

I would certainly like to go back there again. [Ed.]

CIDER AND PERRY HAVEN IN EAST SUSSEX HAILED FOR OUTSTANDING CONTRIBUTION BY CAMRA

CAMRA National Cider and Perry Month, October 2011

POMONA AWARD 2011 WINNER - National Collection of Cider and Perry, Middle Farm, Firle, Lewes, East Sussex, BN8 6LJ, 01323 811622, www.middlefarm.com

CAMRA, the Campaign for Real Ale, has today lauded praise on the National Collection of Cider and Perry at Middle Farm, near Lewes, East Sussex, presenting the outlet with its Pomona Award 2011 for an outstanding contribution to the cider and perry industry.

Presented during CAMRA's National Cider and Perry Month in October, the Pomona Award is named after the Roman Goddess of apples, and is awarded annually to the individual or organisation which has done the most to promote real cider and perry over the previous 12 months, or for ongoing work championing the industry.

In judging the Award this year, CAMRA's Cider and Perry Committee received many entries from across Britain via CAMRA members and members of the public, but it was the National Collection of Cider and Perry, undoubtedly the biggest permanent showcase of real cider and perry in Britain under one roof, who shone out as the undisputed winner. Also producing its own cider, Pookhill, the outlet supplies many pubs and beer festivals on a wholesale basis.

Andrea Briers, CAMRA Cider and Perry Committee Chairman, said:

'This formidable collection was a stand-out winner this year, as no-where else in Britain offers such a selection of real cider and perry in such a variety of styles. For the first time drinker or the cider enthusiast, the National Collection of Cider and Perry is the definitive place to visit to sample and buy the best produce from around Britain and learn more about Britain's historic cider and perry making industry thanks to the knowledge of the staff who work at Middle Farm.'

Rod Marsh, a Company Director at Middle Farm was delighted to accept the Pomona Award 2011. He said:

'People's perceptions of cider are altering, and there's now a wider audience for the drink. We started selling cider back in 1981, and have since strived to showcase it as a drink of real quality. With the input of the people who work here at Middle Farm, we feel we are really getting somewhere, and at present, we're showcasing more cidermakers than ever in our collection.'

Contact: *Rob Archer* at camr@rcher.org.uk
or *Martyn Nicholls* on 01322 527857 (H)
www.camrabexleybranch.org.uk

Let's start with a belated thank you to Yvonne Ward for decorating the hall at Bexley Beer Festival in advance of the Royal Wedding. Bexley's seventh attempt will again be the week after Easter, 12-14 April 2012, Thursday evening until Saturday night. Staffing forms and Pub of the Year voting forms will be sent out in January.

A big thank you to Bob Belton, author of the GDV articles, for typing up the notes for these articles for the past few years and changing an indecipherable scrawl to a readable article together with his embellishments. Good luck to Ian Wright and Helen Rogers for continuing with this.

Our 'Eltham Extravaganza' in June began in the **Bankers Draft**, a pub-sized JD Wetherspoons, at one time believed to be the smallest in their estate, where certainly a lot of leg work was needed to visit the toilet. Alongside the usual *Greene King Abbot*, *Ruddles* and *Courage Directors* was *Highgate Hanky Panky* 4.0% (which ran out) and *Phoenix Wobbly Bob* 6.0%.

The intrepid advance scouting party that visited the **Old Post Office** found lots of hand pumps, but only one with a pump clip, depicting *Ringwood Bitter*. The scouts were informed that a new management team was due to take over, so hopefully the situation has improved.

And so to the **Park Tavern**, where eight real ales greeted us, *Shepherd Neame's Bishop's Finger*, *Kent's Best* and *Whitstable Bay*, *Loddon's Ferryman's Gold* and *Hullabaloo*, *Acorn Barnsley Gold*, *Skinners Heligan Honey*, and, finally, *Rudgate Battleaxe*. What a fine selection. The impressive green tiling outside denotes that it was once a Truman's pub, like its sister pub, the **Rum Puncheon** in Gravesend and vast transformation has taken place, making it a must-visit if you are in the area.

July's meeting took place in the backstreets of Bexley in the **Black Horse**, so that landlord, Julian Buckley, could be presented with his Pub of Year Runner-Up certificate (his umpteenth). Beer on the bar was *Harvey's Best*, *St Austell Tribute* and their new 3.8% *Trelawney* using Galaxy hops from Tasmania to give it a "peachy" quality. August saw us in the **White Cross** along North Cray Road where we were slightly disappointed by the selection of *Courage Best* and *Directors*, *Bombardier* and *Harvey's Best*. September and a visit to the **Fox** in Upper Belvedere. (thanks for the plate

of snacks), where we enjoyed *Young's Bitter*, *Special*, *Bombardier* and *Sharp's Doombar*.

Congratulations to the **Southampton Arms**, Gospel Oak on winning the London Pub of the Year award, while our own **Robin Hood and Little John** came a very commendable second. The **Robin Hood** has, of course, won this award three times and has never been outside the top five.

Members of our Branch were all greatly excited by the prospect of a micropub opening in Lessness Avenue, Bexleyheath, on the site of a former car spares shop. Unfortunately, planning permission was not granted. The micropub concept as pioneered by Martyn Hillier with the **Butcher's Arms** in Herne would have meant the premises concentrating on real ale with no lager or spirits being sold.

In Northumberland Heath, the **Royal Oak** has an over-60's special where *Courage Best* is just £2 a pint Monday to Saturday, 11.00 am-4.00 pm and Sunday 12.00 noon-4.00 pm. *Courage Directors* is also available. Just along the road the **Duke** has *Courage Best* and *Sharp's Doombar*. Into Brook Street and the wonderful old green Truman tiling of the **Brewers Arms**, where *Wells Bombardier* and *Courage Best* are on offer. Further down, the **Duchess of Kent** (*St Austell Tribute* and *Sharps Doombar*), which, over the August Bank Holiday, raised £1,300 for Cancer Research, during which the landlord, Alan Jones, had his hair and beard shaved off.

Karen McKie (pub landlady) of the **Anchor** in Bridgen Road, Bexley, asked regulars to donate outgrown children's football boots for the Project Fair Play scheme. Over 80 pairs were collected and given to the Youth Sports Trust for distribution. The **Golden Lion** in Bexleyheath raised £530 for the Great Ormond Street Hospital charity, in total the 76 Southern Division Stonegate pubs raised over £93,000 for the children's charity. It sells *Bombardier* and *Greene King IPA*, as well as a house beer, brewed by *Greene King*.

Further up The Broadway, the **Ivory Lounge**, having suddenly closed, has re-opened as "The Real China", a licensed Oriental buffet restaurant, where children under 140cm tall can eat for half price. After refurbishment by new owners, the **Royal Standard** in Lion Road has re-opened, but, alas, has no real ale. The **Jolly Millers** is still trading, although sporting a "to let" sign. The **Cross Keys**, Erith, was pulled from public auction and remains closed, future unknown. Handy for Bexleyheath Railway station, the **William Camden** is selling *Greene King IPA* and *Abbot*. The **Old Wick** has been granted planning permission to be converted to flats.

The **Yacht** has *Bombardier*, *London Pride* and *Spitfire* on the bar, while the

Traveller's Home, a Sizzling Pub Company pub, is selling *Brakspear Bitter* and *Spitfire*. The **Royal Standard** (Upper Belvedere) has replaced *Courage Best* and *Directors* with *Hook Norton Bitter* and *Old Hooky*; it also has a guest ale available.

Our 'Greenwich Guzzler' in July saw us start in the **Ashburnham Arms** where a range of *Shepherd Neame* beers was enjoyed by the four members who made the journey. We were also joined by two members from the local South East London Branch. From here it was but a short stroll up Royal Hill to the **Richard I (Tolly's)** for a fine selection of *Wells & Youngs* beers; here we were joined by yet another local member who had just missed us at the previous pub. Moving on once again, we were serenaded by Status Quo, who were performing in the grounds of the Naval College, singing 'In the Army Now'. Our final stop was the **Plume of Feathers** where we were joined by Bob Belton (Gravesend Branch). Here we enjoyed *Harveys Sussex*, *Fullers London Pride*, *Hogs Back Summer Ale* and *Adnams Bitter*.

Our August 'Dartford Drink-up' saw us start in the **Rose** in Overy Street where we found *Courage Best* and *Courage Directors* both in good condition before moving on to join more of our party and a local member at the **Malt Shovel** in Darenth Road. Here a selection of *Wells & Youngs* beers was complemented by *St Austell Tribute* and *Bath Summer Hare*, all in top condition and a good example of why this pub is a regular in the *Good Beer Guide*. Finally, we went along the road to the **Ivy Leaf** where we found *London Pride* and *Sharps Doombar* at the bar, also in good condition.

On August Bank Holiday Monday four of our members joined one Gravesend member (Mick Norman) on their annual seaside crawl to Deal. (Adrian Moss also went but on a different train and we kept missing him in the various pubs). We started at the far end of town (Walmer really) at the **Berry** where *Kent Zingiber*, *Limestone Stone the Crows*, *1648 Lammas* and *Springhead Olivers Army* were on the bar. Then, Mick led us along the seafront to **The Port Arms** where we enjoyed a pint of *Bombardier* followed by a pint of *Tribute* in **Dunkerleys**. In the **Bohemian**, *Banks Original*, *Youngs Special* and *Sharps Doombar* were available while the **Clarendon** had *Shepherd Neame Master Brew* and *Whitstable Bay*. After a break for some of us to revive ourselves with fodder, we continued to the **Ship** to find *Caledonian Deuchars IPA*, *Fullers London Pride*, *Dark Star Hophead*, *Ramsgate No7* and *Seasider*. Moving ever onwards, we next visited the **Albert** which had *Adnams Lighthouse*, *Kent KGB* and *Nelsons Blood* available. Finally, on our way back to the station,



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we just had time to pop into the **Hole in the Roof** for a swift half of *Youngs Best*. Our thanks go to Mick Norman for a well organised day out.

Our 'Bromley Booze-up' in September started in the **Partridge** where a very nice range of *Fullers beers* was available, including the autumn special *Red Fox*. Here we met up with a local member and also our regular visitor from Gravesend Branch (Bob). We then moved across the road to the **Greyhound**, a recently opened Wetherspoons emporium where we found *Welton Black Dragon* and *Johnny English, Thwaites Nutty Black* and *Three Castles Knights Porter* to complement the normal Wetherspoons range of beers. Our last watering hole of the evening was the **Red Lion**, a *Greene King* freehouse. Here, along with the *IPA* and *Abbot*, there were *Davenports Lone Wolf*, *Harveys Sussex Best* and *Skinners Splendid Tackle*.

It's a shame that more local pubs do not put on a Christmas ale, a bright festive pump clip with a Christmassy name would surely attract non-real ale drinkers and, who knows, they might enjoy it. Don't forget to buy your loved one a copy of the 2012 *Good Beer Guide*.

Finally, a 'Merry Christmas and Happy New Year' from all involved with Bexley branch.

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A Bar With No Beer!

by Jeff Tucker

While on holiday in Lancashire, I picked up a leaflet at Bury station for the East Lancashire Railway, which runs steam trains from Heywood to Rawtenstall, via Bury. They have a superb bar on the platform at Bury, called **Trackside**, which sells nine mainly local beers and, unlike most preserved railways, is open all day and evening, not just when the trains are running.

Anyway, back to the point of this piece. The leaflet listed attractions at each station along the line, and one caught my eye in Rawtenstall, so I decided to pay it a visit. It's a bar in Bank Street, there's no real ale; no beer at all, in fact, no spirits or any kind of alcohol, and claims to be the last one of its kind in the country. Any ideas?

It's a Temperance Bar, called Fitzpatrick's, and it's a fascinating place. Opened in 1890, the interior doesn't seem to have changed much in 120 years, and a variety of non-alcoholic cordials are available, along with herbal potions and traditional jars of sweets.

The Temperance Movement was popular in the 19th and early 20th centuries, and temperance bars were everywhere. Alcoholism was rife, and the Movement offered membership to anyone who 'signed the pledge', agreeing to a life of total abstinence.



If you are up that way, try staying at the Castle Guest House in Bury, www.guesthousebury.co.uk, which is good value and friendly, in a quiet but not picturesque area of Bury, and just a few minutes' walk from the Railway. Take a steam train to Rawtenstall to visit Fitzpatrick's, then back to Bury to enjoy a pint or three in **Trackside**. A wonderful day out!



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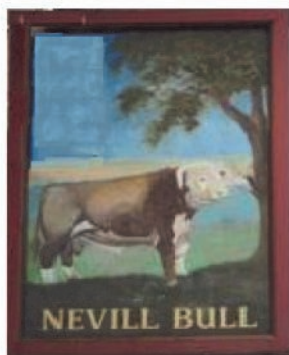


For more information, to receive our stock lists or to place an order..

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Signed _____ Date _____

Applications will be processed within 21 days

MMK—Draught Copy

12/10

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The Direct Debit Guarantee

- This Guarantee is offered by all banks and building societies that accept instructions to pay by Direct Debits.
- If there are any changes to the amount, date or frequency of your Direct Debit The Campaign for Real Ale Ltd will notify you 10 working days in advance of your account being debited or as otherwise agreed. If you request The Campaign for Real Ale Ltd to collect a payment, confirmation of the amount and date will be given to you at the time of the request.
- If an error is made in the payment of your Direct Debit by The Campaign for Real Ale Ltd or your bank or building society, you are entitled to a full and immediate refund of the amount paid from your bank or building society.
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Please pay Campaign For Real Ale Limited Direct Debits from the account detailed on this instruction subject to the safeguards assured by the Direct Debit Guarantee. I understand that this instruction may remain with Campaign For Real Ale Limited and, if so will be passed electronically to my Bank/Building Society.

Signature(s) _____

Date _____

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)

NOVEMBER

- 3 **MMK** **Redstart**, Barming, then **North Pole**
- 9 **BEX** **Royal Oak**, Bexleyheath
- 10 **MMK** **King William IV**, Benenden, then **Bull**
- 12 **BEX** 6pm – **Jolly Drayman Beer Festival**, Gravesend
- 12 **GDV** 6pm – **Jolly Drayman Beer Festival**, Gravesend
- 16 **GDV** Eynsford walkabout, **Malt Shovel**, **Plough**, **Castle**, **Five Bells**
- 17 **MMK** **Bull**, West Malling (*OBM*)
- 19 **MMK** Bus Trip - TBA
- 23 **BEX** **Charlotte**, then **One Bell**, then **Crayford Arms**, Crayford
- 23 **GDV** **Charlotte**, then **One Bell**, then **Crayford Arms**, Crayford
- 24 **MMK** **White House**, West Farleigh, then **Good Intent**
- 25 **MMK** Curry at the **Shamrat**, 8.00. Meet in **Pilot** from 7.00

DECEMBER

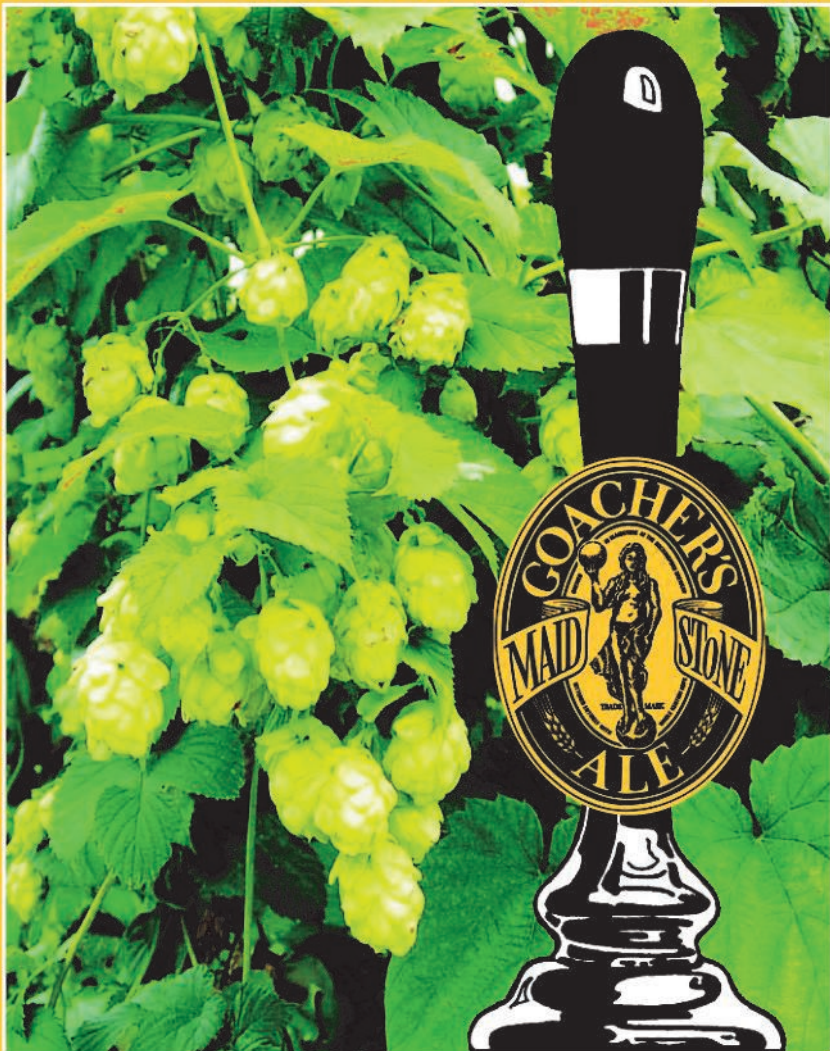
- 1 **MMK** **Woolpack**, Benover, then **Chequers**, Laddingford
- 7 **GDV** **Jolly Drayman**, Gravesend (*AGM*)
- 8 **MMK** **Marden Village Club**, then **Unicorn**
- 8 **BEX** 8pm – Christmas meal – **Greek Taverna**, Bexley
- 14 **BEX** **Jolly Millers**, Bexleyheath (*OBM*)
- 15 **GDV** 8pm – **Black Lion**, Hartley (provisional)
- 15 **MMK** **Nevill Bull**, Birling, then **Duke of Wellington**, Ryarsh
- 17 **MMK** Bus Trip - TBA
- 22 **MMK** **Swan**, Maidstone, then **Flower Pot**
- 27 **BEX** 12noon social – **Robin Hood & Little John**, Bexleyheath
- 29 **MMK** W. Malling walkabout, start **Scared Crow**

JANUARY

- 4 **GDV** **Dartford Working Men's Club** (*OBM*)
- 5 **MMK** **White Horse**, Otham, then **Wheatsheaf**, Maidstone
- 6 **MMK** 8pm – **Rifle Volunteers**, Maidstone - Goacher's Old Evening
- 11 **BEX** **Charlotte**, Crayford (*OBM*)
- 12 **MMK** **Stile Bridge** (*OBM* & GBG selection)
- 18 **BEX** **Great Harry**, then **Earl Haig**, Bexleyheath
- 19 **MMK** **Queens Head**, Mereworth, then **Swan on the Green**
- 25 **BEX** **Wrong 'un**, then **Robin Hood & Little John**, Bexleyheath
- 26 **MMK** **Bull**, Linton, then **Chequers**, Loose

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* FINE LIGHT ALE * GOLD STAR * OLD 1066 ALE * BEST DARK ALE



* SILVER STAR * FINE LIGHT ALE * GOLD STAR * OLD 1066 ALE

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