

# Draught Copy



CAMPAIGN  
FOR  
REAL ALE

Free Newsletter  
for the  
Maidstone & Mid-Kent,  
Gravesend & Darent Valley  
and Bexley areas of Kent

Spring 2014

No. 174



CAMRA has launched an online petition calling on the Government to introduce a Pubs Watchdog immediately to protect pubs from closure due to unfair practices in the tied pub sector.

In the first 24 hours after the petition launched, CAMRA secured over 15,000 signatures.

The petition comes ahead of a Commons Debate scheduled for Tuesday 21 January where Toby Perkins MP, the Shadow Business Minister, will urge the Government to stop dragging its feet and introduce legislation critical to the longevity of the pub industry.

An 8-week consultation into reform of the large pub companies was launched last year, which promised to introduce a Statutory Code and an Adjudicator.

But despite 96.2 percent of people responding to the consultation supporting the need for regulation, the Government is still delaying its plans.

*Continued on page 8*

# 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 published quarterly in February, May, August and November and has a circulation of 2800 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 15 March 2014 for publication in May 2014.

Visit our website at [www.mmcamra.co.uk](http://www.mmcamra.co.uk)



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

**CAMRA** [www.camra.org.uk](http://www.camra.org.uk)

## **BATTERSEA BEER FESTIVAL**

**FEBRUARY 5—7**

Battersea Arts Centre (BAC)  
Grand Hall Entrance  
Town Hall Road, Lavender Hill  
[batterseabeerfestival.org.uk/](http://batterseabeerfestival.org.uk/)

## **WHITE CLIFFS FESTIVAL OF WINTER ALES**

**FEBRUARY 7—8**

Maison Dieu (Town Hall)  
Dover CT16 1DL  
75 winter & strong ales, none less than 5% ABV  
[www.camra-dds.org.uk/diarycamrabeer.htm](http://www.camra-dds.org.uk/diarycamrabeer.htm)

## **SUSSEX BEER & CIDER FESTIVAL**

**MARCH 6—8**

Hove Town Hall, BN3 4AH  
240 real ales, plus cider and perry  
[www.sussexbeerfestival.co.uk/](http://www.sussexbeerfestival.co.uk/)

## **LONDON DRINKER BEER FESTIVAL**

**MARCH 12—14**

Camden Centre, Bidborough Street  
London WC1H 9AU  
[www.camranorthlondon.org.uk/](http://www.camranorthlondon.org.uk/)

## **PLANET THANET EASTER BEER FESTIVAL**

**APRIL 18—19**

Winter Gardens, Fort Crescent,  
Margate CT9 1HX  
200 real ales, cider, perry and bottled beers

## **BEXLEY BEER FESTIVAL**

**MAY 15—17**

Old Dartfordians Sports Club,  
Bourne Road, Bexley, DA5 1LW

## **Non-CAMRA—Pubs and Clubs**

**February 21—22**

**Orpington Liberal Club**  
7 Station Road, Orpington BR6 0RZ  
25+real ales  
[www.orpingtonliberalclub.co.uk](http://www.orpingtonliberalclub.co.uk)

**February 27—March 2**

**Kings Arms**  
Teston Road, Offham  
20+real ales and ciders  
[kingsarmsoffham.co.uk](http://kingsarmsoffham.co.uk)

**April 11—13**

**Bell & Jorrock**s  
Biddenden Road, Frittenden  
[www.thebellandjorrock.co.uk](http://www.thebellandjorrock.co.uk)

**April 17 (evening)—21**

**King & Queen**  
New Road, East Malling  
15+real ales  
[www.kingandqueeneastmallings.co.uk](http://www.kingandqueeneastmallings.co.uk)

**April 18—21**

**Crown**  
High Street, Otford  
20+real ales and ciders  
[www.crownpubotford.co.uk](http://www.crownpubotford.co.uk)

**April 25—27**

**Three Hats**  
Milton Regis ME10 2AR  
Welsh Beer Festival

# HARVEYS

The Sussex Brewers

are delighted to have  
achieved the following  
awards at local CAMRA  
festivals during 2013



**Bev Robins Shield** 'Best Sussex Beer' Sussex Beer Festival, Hove  
- 'Prince of Denmark'

**'LocAle of the Festival'** Yapton Beerex - 'Wild Hop'

**'Beer of the Festival'** South Downs Beer & Cider festival, Lewes - 'Wild Hop'



Additionally the brewery took six awards at the British Bottlers' Institute Competition and won the 'Best Stout or Porter Trophy' at the International Beer Challenge 2013.

***Time Honoured Beer - Locally Revered***

**Tel: 01273 480209 • [www.harveys.org.uk](http://www.harveys.org.uk)**

# KENT BREWERIES

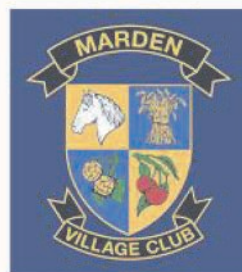
<b>Black Cat Brewery</b>	07948 387718	<a href="http://www.blackcat-brewery.com">www.blackcat-brewery.com</a>
<b>Canterbury Ales</b>	01227 732541	<a href="http://www.canterbury-ales.co.uk">www.canterbury-ales.co.uk</a>
<b>Canterbury Brewers</b>	01227 455899	<a href="http://www.thefoundrycanterbury.co.uk/">www.thefoundrycanterbury.co.uk/</a>
<b>Caveman Brewery</b>	07769 710665	<a href="http://www.cavemanbrewery.co.uk">www.cavemanbrewery.co.uk</a>
<b>Goacher's</b>	01622 682112	<a href="http://www.goachers.com">www.goachers.com</a>
<b>Goody Ales</b>	07790 443810	<a href="http://www.goodyales.co.uk">www.goodyales.co.uk</a>
<b>HopDaemon</b>	01795 892078	<a href="http://www.hopdaemon.com">www.hopdaemon.com</a>
<b>Hop Fuzz</b>	07850 441267	<a href="http://www.hopfuzz.co.uk">www.hopfuzz.co.uk</a>
<b>Kent Brewery</b>	01634 780037	<a href="http://www.kentbrewery.com">www.kentbrewery.com</a>
<b>Larkins</b>	01892 870328	<a href="http://www.larkinsbrewery.co.uk">www.larkinsbrewery.co.uk</a>
<b>Mad Cat Brewery</b>	07960 263615	<a href="http://www.madcatbrewery.co.uk">www.madcatbrewery.co.uk</a>
<b>Millis Brewing Co.</b>	01322 866233	<a href="http://www.millisbrewing.com">www.millisbrewing.com</a>
<b>Musket Brewery</b>	07967 127278	<a href="http://www.musketbrewery.co.uk">www.musketbrewery.co.uk</a>
<b>Nelson Brewing Co.</b>	01634 832828	<a href="http://www.nelsonbrewery.co.uk">www.nelsonbrewery.co.uk</a>
<b>Old Dairy Brewing Co.</b>	01580 243185	<a href="http://www.olddairybrewery.com">www.olddairybrewery.com</a>
<b>Old Forge Brewery</b>	01233 720444	<a href="http://www.thefarriersarms.com">www.thefarriersarms.com</a>
<b>Pig and Porter</b>	01424 893519	<a href="http://pigandporter.co.uk">pigandporter.co.uk</a>
<b>Ramsgate Brewery</b>	01843 868453	<a href="http://www.ramsgatebrewery.co.uk">www.ramsgatebrewery.co.uk</a>
<b>Ripple Steam Brewery</b>	07917 037611	<a href="http://www.ripplesteambrewery.co.uk">www.ripplesteambrewery.co.uk</a>
<b>Rockin' Robin Brewery</b>	07779 986087	
<b>Shepherd Neame</b>	01795 532206	<a href="http://www.shepherd-neame.co.uk">www.shepherd-neame.co.uk</a>
<b>Spencer's Brewery</b>	01233 610215	<a href="http://www.spencersbrewery.co.uk">www.spencersbrewery.co.uk</a>
<b>Swan, West Peckham</b>	01622 812271	<a href="http://www.swan-on-the-green.co.uk">www.swan-on-the-green.co.uk</a>
<b>Time and Tide</b>	07840 327265	<a href="http://timeandtidebrewing.co.uk">timeandtidebrewing.co.uk</a>
<b>Tír Dhá Ghlas</b>	01304 211666	<a href="http://www.cullinsyard.co.uk">www.cullinsyard.co.uk</a>
<b>Tonbridge Brewery</b>	01732 366770	<a href="http://www.tonbridgebrewery.co.uk">www.tonbridgebrewery.co.uk</a>
<b>Wantsum Brewery</b>	0845 0405980	<a href="http://www.wantsumbrewery.co.uk">www.wantsumbrewery.co.uk</a>
<b>Westerham Brewery</b>	01959 565837	<a href="http://www.westerhambrewery.co.uk">www.westerhambrewery.co.uk</a>
<b>Whitstable Brewery</b>	01622 851007	<a href="http://www.whitstablebrewery.info">www.whitstablebrewery.info</a>

# Marden Village Club

Albion Road, Marden, Kent TN12 0PD

Phone: 01622 831427

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



## Runner-up in Maidstone CAMRA Club of the Year 2012 award

*We invite new members to join our club and enjoy the Real Ales offered at club prices*

*The club has regular entertainment, snooker, pool and darts*

*We are affiliated to the Kent Association of Working Mens Clubs & Institutes (1996)*

### Quiz Night on Monday

Open 12 – 2.30 and 5 – 11 Monday – Thursday

12 – 11 Friday and Saturday

12 – 10.30 Sunday

**The Bull  
High Street  
West Malling**



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www.wellieboot.net



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Cask Conditioned Ales – Westerham Grasshopper and 4 Guest Ales, which could include Old Dairy Spring Top, Timothy Taylor Landlord, Sharps Doom Bar, Black Sheep Best, Skinners Betty Stogs, Adnams Ghost Ship - the list is endless but all well kept!

Open all day every day with food served all day!

Traditional pub favourites along with A La Carte and blackboard daily specials

## THE DRAUGHT COPY CAMRA DISCOUNT LIST

Here are the pubs and clubs we know of that offer discounted pints to any card-carrying CAMRA member. The discount applies to whole pints only.

<b>Anchor</b> , Bexley	10p per pint
<b>Bell</b> , Smarden	10p per pint
<b>Bell &amp; Jorrocks</b> , Frittenden	20p per pint
<b>Cock Inn</b> , Boughton Monchelsea	20p per pint
<b>Earl Haig</b> , Bexleyheath	10p per pint
<b>Flower Pot</b> , Maidstone	10p per pint
<b>Jolly Fenman</b> , Blackfen	10 percent
<b>Olde Thirsty Pig</b> , Maidstone	10p per pint
<b>Wheatsheaf</b> , Loose	Buy 10, get 11 ( <i>over min. 5 visits</i> )

Please email the editor ([dc@braymead.com](mailto:dc@braymead.com)) to let us know of any other hostelries offering similar discounts.

### *Petition (continued from front page)*

CAMRA is now sending out a clear message to the Government that enough is enough. With 26 pubs pulling their last pint every week, a Pubs Watchdog is urgently needed to ensure our best loved pubs are protected.

The support the petition has acquired so far is vital evidence to the Government that reform is desperately needed and is supported by the general public.

CAMRA's Chief Executive Mike Benner said: *"Pubs are closing as a result of big pub companies squeezing the profits of publicans with costly rents and high beer prices. Our petition is the latest demonstration of public dissatisfaction at the way far too many publicans are treated by the big pub companies."*

Sign the petition here [www.pubscandal.org.uk/](http://www.pubscandal.org.uk/)





# I get my kicks on route, er, 5!

by Jeff Tucker

In the first of a new series, we highlight one of the bus routes in the *Draught Copy* area, and look at the pubs along the way. Most of the pubs featured are within a short walk of a bus stop, although two are a few minutes off-route.



The 5 is run by Arriva hourly for most of the day, Monday through Saturday, with a limited evening service, and two-hourly on Sundays during the daytime. The route runs from Maidstone in the north, through Loose, Linton, Staplehurst, Sissinghurst, Cranbrook and Hawkhurst, continuing to Sandhurst except on Sundays, when it diverts to Hawkhurst Moor. The timetable for route 5 can be found at [www.traveline.info](http://www.traveline.info). Click on **South East**, then **Find A Timetable**, and put in the town or village of your choice along the route.

Full details of all the pubs mentioned, including last-known opening times, can be found on CAMRA's excellent new *WhatPub* site – [www.whatpub.com](http://www.whatpub.com). It's best to check with the pubs beforehand, just in case you have to wait an hour for the next bus outside a closed pub!

So, ding ding, and off we go! I won't list the pubs in the centre of Maidstone, as they are too numerous, so first up is the **Wheatsheaf**, just five minutes out of town, at the junction of the A229 to Hastings and the A274 to Tenterden. Rossa has been behind the pumps here for nearly 30 years, and keeps two or three guest beers in addition to *Courage Best*. Several beer festivals are held throughout the year, with extra beers on the bar served by gravity.



Next along the Loose Road is the **Swan**, which sells *Harveys Best* along with a guest beer. The bus stops outside the door, almost. Loose has two pubs; the **Walnut Tree** is a *Shepherd Neame* house, again with a stop outside. Three beers from the Sheps range are normally available.

The **Chequers** is a short but hilly (coming back) walk into Loose Village from the stop after the **Walnut Tree**. You may find a beer from the new *Musket* brewery here, as one of the five real ales on offer. The setting, next to the stream, is lovely.



Back on the bus past Linton Corner to Linton church will bring you to the **Bull**, another Sheps pub in a very old building, with three beers on. If you get off the bus here, look out for the somewhat unusual bus stop!

Next up is the **Stile Bridge**, just before the turn-off for Marden. Again, the bus stops right outside, but crossing the road can be a challenge at times. Marc keeps five real ales on, including some from Kent microbreweries and others which are unusual for the area. The décor is very eclectic; more items seem to have been added every time we go there! Ask about the Grisly Club. The food's pretty good, too. All in all, one not to be missed.

It's over a mile on the bus to the next pub, the **Lord Raglan**. You need to get off at Cross-at-Hand, then it's a ten-minute walk northwards along the lane, but it's worth the effort for *Goacher's* and *Harveys* beers, plus an interesting guest. The Raglan is also known for good food, but beware, it is closed in the afternoons and all day on Sundays.



The next place with any pubs is Staplehurst, which has the **Railway Tavern**, a pub that has changed hands recently and is much improved, by all accounts. As you might expect, it's by the station (and a bus stop). There is usually *Youngs Bitter* here, plus a guest.

Towards the southern end of the village is the **Kings Head**, another Sheps pub with two or three of their beers in a nice old beamed building. Prices for beer and food seem to be unusually reasonable (for Sheps!).

With the former Knoxbridge being closed, the next village is Sissinghurst. Get off just after the bus turns right and walk back about 200 yards to the **Milk House**. This used to be the Bull, and has recently reopened. The initial range is *Adnams*, *Harveys* and a guest.

Next is the picturesque Wealden town of Cranbrook, famous for its windmill and school. There are currently only two pubs open, though the **Crown** is set to reopen at some point as a restaurant-cum-pub. Meanwhile, the choice is between *Sheps Master Brew*, *Spitfire* and a seasonal beer in the **George**, a historic pub, and *Greene King IPA*, *Abbot* and one or two other GK beers in the **White Horse** almost opposite.

# THE LOBSTER POT

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- OPEN MIC EVERY OTHER SUNDAY 3-CLOSE
- £2.99 REAL ALES EVERY WEDNESDAY
- LIVE MUSIC EVERY SATURDAY
- LOCAL AND NATIONAL REAL ALES
- POKER MONDAY NIGHTS
- HALF PRICE COCKTAILS EVERY TUESDAYS

*Selection of wines, prosecco and  
champagnes, and premium spirits.*

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Kent  
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lobster pot west malling



@TheLobsterPotWM

Resuming our journey, there's nothing to cause us to get off the bus until the outskirts of Hawkhurst. The **Great House** at Gills Green is a few yards off the main road just down the hill from the former station. Here you will find *Harveys* and a guest or two, often from *Old Dairy* brewery.

In the centre of Hawkhurst are two pubs; the **Royal Oak** sits right on the crossroads, and sells *Adnams Broadside* and one guest beer. The **Queens** is just beyond the bus stop and has recently reopened. Beers noted have included *Shepherd Neame*, *Rother Valley* and local micros at times.

The bus route changes at this point on Sundays. On other days, it continues to Sandhurst, passing the **Oak and Ivy** in the countryside in between. *Harveys* and *Doom Bar* are usually accompanied by a couple or more interesting guest beers. There isn't an actual bus stop, but the driver will let you off here on request. The route terminates in Sandhurst, where the **Swan** offers refreshment in the form of *Harveys* in a fairly modern pub which replaced an older one on the same site.



On Sundays, however, the bus continues southwards in Hawkhurst up to The Moor, where there are two good pubs. These are walkable from the village centre on other days if you're feeling energetic, or catch buses 304/5 or 349 if not!

The **Black Pig** is passed first. It has up to four beers, which may well include the obligatory *Harveys*, plus *Larkins*, *Dark Star* and a local micro. Food is featured heavily as well.



A few hundred yards further on is the **Eight Bells**, where the Sunday bus terminates. This large, two-bar pub had *Harveys* and *Dark Star Hophead* regularly at the time of writing, but had just changed hands, so the range may alter.

For the best value on the bus, buy an Explorer Ticket from the driver of your first bus. It costs £7 and is valid on just about every bus anywhere in Kent and East Sussex, irrespective of operator, so you can use it to get from where you live to Maidstone, Cranbrook or Hawkhurst to pick up the 5.

Happy pubbing!

# Cider Delights

What could be more natural in such a traditional apple growing area than to produce cider. Made from the juice of freshly pressed culinary and dessert apples, strong still ciders are made sweet, medium or dry and are an excellent alternative to beer.

Biddenden Vineyards also produce a range of specialist ciders including *Monks Delight Reserve* cider matured in oak addition to the range, a bottle-



produce a range of specialist spiced mulling cider, *Special* whiskey casks, and a new fermented cider.

Why not go along to Biddenden for a free guided tour on selected dates. This will give you a chance to learn about the vineyard, ciders, wines & juices. Depending on the time of year, visitors will be able to see the apples being prepared in the apple pit before descending into the apple press. Once the apples have been pressed the juice is then pumped out to the tanks and made into either cider or apple juice.

See [www.biddendenvineyards.com/visiting-us/](http://www.biddendenvineyards.com/visiting-us/) for details of times and dates.

## Orpington Liberal Club Beer and Cider Festival

Friday, 21 February to Saturday, 22 February.  
11am to 11pm both days.

25 stunning real ales plus ciders and perries, all at just £2.70 a pint. Advance booking essential. See web site for listings, further details and to book tickets.



One of the four finalists for CAMRA National Club of the Year 2014

CAMRA Greater London Regional Club of the Year 2013

CAMRA Bromley Club of the Year 2013

We're in the CAMRA Good Beer Guide 2014

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

 @OrpLibClub  
 OrpingtonLiberalClub

# Kent Cider Makers

Badgers Hill Farm	01227 730573	
Biddenden Cider	01580 291726	<i>www.biddendenvineyards.com</i>
Big Tree Cider	01474 705221	<i>www.bigtreecider.co.uk</i>
Broomfield Orchard	01227 362279	
Castle Cider Co	01732 455977	
Core Fruit Products	01227 730589	
Double Vision Cider	01622 746633	
Dudda's Tun Cider	01795 886266	<i>www.duddastuncider.com</i>
East Stour Cider Co	07880923398	<i>danbaldwin@tiscali.co.uk</i>
Green Oak Farm	01304 821630	<i>info@greenoakfarm.co.uk</i>
Johnson's Farmhouse Cider	01795 665203	
Kent Cider Company	07738 573818	<i>kentcider.co.uk</i>
Kentish Pip Cider	01227 830525	<i>www.kentishpip.co.uk</i>
Kings Wood Cider		<i>danbaldwin@tiscali.co.uk</i>
Magic Bus Cider	07887 747569	
Merry Moon	07707 309041	
North Downs Cider	07747343892	
Pawley Farm Cider	01795 532043	<i>pawleyfarmcider@tiscali.co.uk</i>
Rough Old Wife Cider	01227 700757	<i>www.rougholdwife.com</i>

For a useful map of Kent cider makers,  
mostly clustered around Canterbury and East Kent,  
please take a look at the website of  
CAMRA branch DDS (Deal, Dover, Sandwich & District)  
*www.camra-dds.org.uk/pubscidermakers.htm*



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

**Old Plantation, Bearsted** – This is no longer in the hands of Enterprise Inns, having been sold to a private owner. Despite the efforts of local supporters, Maidstone Borough Council has declined making this pub an Asset of Community Value (ACV), as in their opinion it did not conform to the requirements of the relevant Act. However, the licensees have been given an initial 12-month contract to continue running it, and it is now free of tie. We paid a visit in early December and found *Goachers Fine Light, Best Dark, Harveys Sussex Best* and *Fullers Jack Frost* as a guest. Special deals often apply on beers and food prices are reduced by 50% in late afternoon. So PLEASE go and visit.

**King William IV, Benenden** – This has now been bought from *Shepherd Neame* by Mark Reid who owns the **Bull** just across the other side of the green. It is expected that it will be run with different beers and menu but otherwise in a similar style. It should be re-opened soon.

**Nevill Bull, Birling** – Kate is holding two Meet the Brewer evenings on Monday 17 February when Paul from Tonbridge Brewery will be there, and again on Monday, 24 March with the guys from Musket Brewery. On each occasion, three beers from the brewery will be on the pumps and free nibbles will be available.

**Kings Arms, Boxley** – Local resident, Graham Maskell, has the lease here and runs it with the assistance of manager Jano Marko. All tables seemed to be laid expectantly for dining. There is a large garden to the rear, which is welcoming during warmer times. Negotiations have taken place to provide an additional area near the church in order to solve village parking problems. The beers are *Greene King IPA, Harveys Best* and *Sharp's Doom Bar* with one guest ale. The new website is [www.thekingsarmsmaidstone.co.uk](http://www.thekingsarmsmaidstone.co.uk).

## RIFLE VOLUNTEERS

Wyatt Street, Maidstone - Phone 01622 758891

A REAL TRADITIONAL MAIDSTONE PUB

SERVING GOACHER'S FINEST ALES AND STOUT

Good Beer Guide Listed This Century

Maidstone CAMRA Pub Of The Year, 2005



# SHEP'S ALE AT ITS BEST!



WE ARE A SMALL TRADITIONAL PUB  
LOCATED NEXT TO COUNTY HALL AND A COUPLE OF MINUTES  
WALK FROM MAIDSTONE EAST STATION AND BUS STOPS -  
IN COUNTY ROAD - BY THE PRISON GATES.

IN THE GOOD BEER GUIDE FOR A NUMBER OF YEARS AND CASK  
MARQUE ACCREDITED. TO TICKLE YOUR TASTE BUDS WE OFFER  
THE BEST:

- REGULAR CASK ALES
- SEASONAL ALES / NEW CLASSIC COLLECTION RANGE
- SPECIAL ALES FROM THE PILOT BREWERY
- REGIONAL BEER FESTIVALS

TO KEEP OUR PATRONS AMUSED WE HOST REGULAR QUIZ &  
DARTS MATCHES. HOLD CHARITABLE EVENTS. OFFER A VARIETY OF  
ENTERTAINMENT & ARRANGE EXCURSIONS. CLUBS ARE WELCOME  
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FRIENDLY. WE CAN'T COMPETE WITH MAIDSTONE'S FOOD OUTLETS  
BUT CAN MAKE YOU A SWELL SANDWICH TO SOAK UP THE BEER!

NEXT TIME YOU VISIT MAIDSTONE WHY NOT WANDER AWAY FROM  
THE CROWDS AND DISCOVER US . . .

STILL NOT TEMPTED - VISIT OUR WEBSITE  
[www.theswaninmaidstone.co.uk](http://www.theswaninmaidstone.co.uk)





**MUSKET**  
BREWERY



# New Year - NEW BEERS!!

Musket Brewery Limited is a new, independent, Maidstone-based Micro Brewery located at Loddington Farm, Linton, specialising in brewing premium REAL ALE at realistic prices.

The brewers are CAMRA members Mark Stroud and Tony Williams, who are able to offer carefully brewed ales direct from the brewery for pubs, clubs and events.

Real Ales include:-

- \* **FIFE & DRUM – a 3.8% Golden Ale**
- \* **FLINTLOCK – a 4.2% Best Bitter**
- \* **MUZZLELOADER – a 5% Winter Ale**

To assist in repeat “Guest s**ALE**ability” and increase turnover for the licensed trade, Musket Brewery offers a significant promotion campaign on initial orders.

**Contact Musket Brewery to find out more!!**

**079671 27 27 8**

**info@musketbrewery.co.uk**



**DDS Scheme**

*“There’s more in the barrel”* at  
**www.musketbrewery.co.uk**



**Horseshoes, East Farleigh** – James Miller has taken over as manager at this large M & B restaurant. Now reduced to 2 beers, *Harveys Best* and *Adnams Lighthouse*, to ensure it is kept in good order. [www.thehorseshoeseastfarleigh.co.uk](http://www.thehorseshoeseastfarleigh.co.uk)

**King & Queen, East Malling** – Has been serving *Kent Pale* regularly, joining the *Harveys Sussex Best* and *Sharps Doom Bar*. There is also a guest. [www.kingandqueeneastmalling.co.uk](http://www.kingandqueeneastmalling.co.uk)

**Vine, Goudhurst** – After a long (and expensive) restoration time this grade II listed building re-opened on December 9. It is now a pub and high quality restaurant serving some very different and interesting dishes. On opening, drinkers had two brews from *Old Dairy*, *Red Top* and *Blue Top*, *Pig & Porter Starvation Point Porter* and *Dark Star Hophead*. So that should certainly be an invitation to visit. [www.thevinegoudhurst.com](http://www.thevinegoudhurst.com)

**Freemasons Arms, Ham Hill** – This sports-oriented pub has several TVs with Sky Sports and is now being run by Hayley Honey. Food is available lunchtimes and evenings with Sunday roasts being served 12-7. The meals are good value and substantial and may be taken in the small restaurant area. Music is played most Saturdays. The regular beers are *Fullers London Pride* and *Sheps Master Brew*.

**Queens, Hawkhurst** – Having been closed since February 2013, this hotel has been re-fitted and re-opened on November 22. The eight double en-suite rooms should also have been renovated and in service by early 2014. The comfortable restaurant is now operational and food may be enjoyed in the bar area where the large fireplace remains a feature. There is a function room that will hold at least 100 seated guests. *Rother Valley Level Best*, *Shepherd Neame Whitstable Bay Pale Ale* and a guest ale from a local brewery were on the bar when I visited. The guest was *Old Dairy Red Top* at that time. [www.thequeensinnhawkhurst.co.uk](http://www.thequeensinnhawkhurst.co.uk)

**Wealden Hall, Larkfield** – This has had an extensive re-fit and re-opened on November 1. The front door is now in use again, saving the long walk round the back. An inner glass door cuts down any problems caused by external elements. The ground floor now has three separate sections with eating in the central part. The bar has been reduced in length and now has a flat top so the old sloping top problems no longer exist. The upstairs eating-area now benefits from a bar but the real ale remains downstairs. The toilets, both downstairs and up, have also been smartened up. Beers served are *Green King IPA* and two others from the GK range.

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**Wheatsheaf, Loose** – Rossa Kenny held a beer festival from Thursday 17th October to Sunday 20th October featuring 7 *Rockin' Robin* beers. There were three new brews; *Old English* (4.2%) old ale, *Rocking Rossa* (4.2%) best bitter (a special one-off) and *Birthday Boy* (5.1%) green hop best bitter using 7 home-grown hops. Existing brews featured were *Hoppin' Robin*, *Reliant Robin*, *RPA* (Robin Pale Ale) and *Stoutly Robin*. [www.thewheatsheaf-maidstone.co.uk](http://www.thewheatsheaf-maidstone.co.uk)

**Brenchley, Maidstone** – This former NatWest Bank has been re-fitted as a pub and opened on November 29. The elegant interior has now been revealed again with wood panelling, huge oak columns and a large central glass dome. An extensive menu is provided all day. The bar stretches across the width and has three handpumps at each end. The beers initially were *Caledonian Deuchars*, *Theakstons XB*, *Courage Best*, *Shepherd Neame Spitfire* and *Whitstable Bay Pale Ale*. There was also a pump labelled *MUFC* of unnamed provenance but believed to be *Master Brew*. [www.thebrenchley.co.uk](http://www.thebrenchley.co.uk)

**Poppy Fields, Maidstone** – This is a new-build 180-seat restaurant/pub for Marstons, who are moving into the south-east. It is due to be opened in March and is at the entry to the 20/20 trading estate.

**Beeches, Mereworth** – This well-known restaurant on Seven Mile Lane has been updated and is now welcoming drinkers to the bar. Open every day from 11am. It has a very good food menu using local producers and has the added bonus of beer. Free music is provided by local bands on Friday evenings. Recent visits found *Shepherd Neame Master Brew* as a guest with *Sharp's Doom Bar* as a regular. [www.beechespubanddining.co.uk](http://www.beechespubanddining.co.uk)

**The Milk House, Sissinghurst** – As noted in last issue, this is now open and a visit, using the Arriva 5 bus, revealed that they were serving *Adnams Bitter*, *Harveys Best* and *Old Dairy Red Top*. The lessee is Dane Allchorne. The whole pub has been re-modelled and is now more open-plan, thus allowing wheelchair access. A disabled toilet has been installed. The bar remains on the right hand side and leads to the garden, terrace and play area. To the left and connected to the bar through an archway is the large restaurant. The four letting rooms all bear names in keeping with the dairy theme. The car parking area is now extensive. The toilets are to the rear of the bar; the gents on the left, apparently as women are always right. Opening times 9-11 (midnight Fri-Sat). Meals served 12-3, 6-9.30 and 12-3 Sun but a small grazing menu is available all day. [www.themilkhouse.co.uk](http://www.themilkhouse.co.uk)

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**Bull, Snodland** – A trip here found the lessee, Joe Heyburn, to be providing *Courage Best* at a very reasonable £2.90. There is usually a guest ale on as well, *Bombardier* and *Wadworth 6X* being previously noted.

**Monk's Head, Snodland** – Derek and Rebecca took over here in September. The pub has games in the right-hand bar, with pool, darts, a TV and a juke box. On the left is the more tranquil saloon bar. A good size conservatory at the rear may be used for functions. *Sheps Master Brew* is on the bar.

**Teston Club, Teston** – This small, comfortable club has two large rooms, both equipped with 60inch TVs and bars. There is a full size snooker table in the front room and adequate seating. There are also associated photographic and golf societies. We were pleased to confirm this as our branch Club of the Year. *Sharps Doom Bar* is a regular and there is a guest beer. The new steward is Damian Steele, following the retirement of the long serving Willie Brennan. [www.testonclub.co.uk](http://www.testonclub.co.uk)

**Swan, Sutton Valence** – This Grade II Listed building has been sold by Enterprise and is now the subject of a planning application for conversion to a single residence. It has been closed since the beginning of 2013. Parking has always been difficult here so it seems odd that any private individual would want such a house where everyone is able to park immediately outside it.

Coming back from France early in the New Year, I was amazed and pleased to see a solitary handpump in the bar of P&O's *Spirit of France* ferry. At first I thought that this can't be possible, but on seeing *Marston's Pedigree* on the pump clip, I realised that the Marston *fastcask* technology had allowed this to happen. The pint that then materialised was in pretty good nick, too! [www.fastcask.com/faqs.asp](http://www.fastcask.com/faqs.asp)

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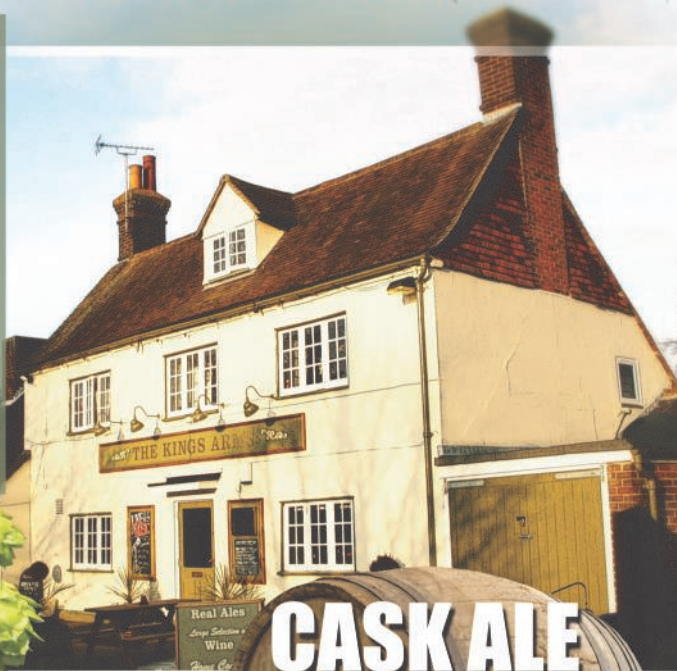
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I'm writing these notes during the lull between Christmas and New Year and there is a lull in the weather after the extreme winds and violent storms of 23/24<sup>th</sup> December. On the evening of the 23<sup>rd</sup> I called into the **Ivy Leaf** in Dartford, sampling jolly good halves of *Hopdaemon Skrimshander* and festive *Dorset Brewing Company (DBC) Christmas Ale* on my way to the well attended open quiz evening at the **Malt Shovel**. Sitting in the conservatory, enjoying the *Young's Winter Warmer*, we thought that the roof would be torn off but there were no serious mishaps until I was hit on the back of the head by a flying signboard on my way home, luckily no serious injury (no sense, no feeling). As far as I am aware there was no serious wind damage, loss of electricity or flooding to pubs in the Gravesend and Darent Valley branch area. Our sympathies extend to all those people who suffered from flooding in the Maidstone, Tonbridge and other severely affected areas in Kent. Hopefully all is now well but, for all we know, you may be reading this during blizzards in February, such are the vagaries of the climate.

As mentioned in the last issue we held the branch *Annual General Meeting* at the **Three Daws** in Gravesend on 4<sup>th</sup> December 2013. We indicated that *active members are becoming thin on the ground and we would appreciate some extra help* but this plea fell on stony ground, as the **AGM** was poorly attended, although some non-active members responded to our email requests by offering to help with surveying pubs for the 2015 *Good Beer Guide* and the online *CAMRA WhatPub* database. This would be really helpful and we'd be more than happy to see new faces and hear fresh opinions at our meetings as we really need some assistance to keep the branch going on an even keel. Please don't be intimidated, we don't bite (well not all of us) and you're welcome to bring friends... and dogs, as long as they don't bite. The **Three Daws** is an attractive historic riverside pub which now serves up to five different real ales in consistently good condition with *St.Austell Trelawny*, *Millis Gravesend Guzzler* and *Theakstons Old Peculier* being my choices that evening.

In a pleasant secluded part of Gravesend we hear that Roger Bartlett, the long standing landlord of the **Windmill** in Shrubbery Road retired in the autumn. I called in just after Christmas to find a welcoming atmosphere and thriving local support, including Roger on the customer side of the

bar. The beer range is good, and a chalkboard, similar to the one in the **Crown & Thistle**, shows current and forthcoming beers and a price list. There appear to be three standard regular ales and two guests, being Christmas beers *Batemans Rosey Nosey* and *Thwaites Yule Love It* on my visit, with *Hardy & Hanson's (Greene King) Rockin' Rudolph* and *Sambrooks Wandle* coming next. The **Windmill** is another very attractive historic traditional pub with three separate bars and a superb garden. I also called in at the **Millers Cottage** a few yards up the hill, which was offering *Spitfire* and *Young's London Gold*, having sold out of *Skinners Betty Stogs*. I'm pleasantly surprised that two pubs with such diverse character still survive in this quaint narrow street.

I'm glad to report that another favourite Gravesend venue, the **Jolly Drayman**, once again hosted its bi-annual beer festival in November. The pub was very busy on the Friday evening and I thoroughly enjoyed the live music (not usually my cup of tea) and the beer range was interesting with a good spread of beer styles and colours. *Salopian Lemon Dream* was my favourite and the *Otley Hop Angeles* was very good. This excellent pub always stocks four good real ales, and I believe it was a good idea to restrict the festival beers to the former restaurant area, as it was extremely difficult to reach the main bar through the musicians and the crowd.

We continue to receive good reports from drinkers regarding the **Robert Pocock Wetherspoons** pub in Gravesend town centre, which now has a manageress keen on promoting real ale. I called in during the *Wetherspoons* October beer festival, and again in late November, and was very impressed with the general ambience and beer quality, particularly *Green Jack Red Robin*.

The **Waterloo Tavern** in Wellington Street, also in Gravesend, now sells *Wells Bombardier* regularly and is trying guest beers with *Moorhouse's Black Cat* sampled on a recent visit. The **Henry Simmonds** in Borough Green has had a change of licensee and now sells *Sharps Doom Bar* regularly and was offering *Elgood Black Dog* recently. It's interesting and pleasing to note that several pubs are experimenting with dark mild ales and we'd like to hear about others.

Two pubs sell mild regularly, being the iconic **Cock** at Luddesdown, always offering the excellent *Goacher's Real Mild Ale*, and the **Rose** near Northfleet station, selling *Millis Kentish Dark*. Sadly, the **Coach & Horses**, 25 The Hill, Northfleet, one of the pubs selling mild as a guest beer, is

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currently closed with an uncertain future. However the **Edinburgh Castle** halfway down the hill towards Ebbsfleet United Football Ground now sells real ale, being *Sharps Doom Bar* but has also offered *Morland (Greene King) Old Golden Hen*.

The aforementioned *WhatPub* is the new “work in progress” national pub database on CAMRA website, to date including nearly 36,000 pubs selling real ale, many entries with basic details which constantly require expanding and updating. Generally, landlords are very helpful assisting us to complete *WhatPub* survey forms and we have found some useful information regarding pubs not often referred to in my notes.

For instance we were well received in the charming riverside village of Eynsford, where the river Darent is prone to flooding by the old bridge and permanent ford. Luckily the overflow didn't cause much damage to buildings on Christmas Eve. The **Five Bells** is a traditional local, with separate public and saloon bars, appearing in the 2014 Good Beer Guide serving excellent *Harvey's Sussex Best Bitter*, *Dark Star Hophead* and various other beers, such as *Goddards Ale of Wight*, in good condition. The **Malt Shovel** is a large “Brewers Tudor” style pub which sells good food and two regular standard beers and a guest, being *St.Austell Trelawny* on our visit. Both pubs stock beers from the *Long Man* brewery in East Sussex. The bar staff were very helpful at the **Plough**, predominantly an upmarket restaurant but providing a pleasant area for non-diners. *Sharps Doom Bar* is the regular real ale; *Wychwood Hobgoblin* the guest beer during our survey visit and *Dorset Brewing Co (DBC) Frosted Jack* was available over New Year. The fourth pub in the village the *Shepherd Neame* tied **Castle Hotel** re-opened, after refurbishment, just before Christmas.

The **Chequers** at Heaverham, near Kemsing, is a pleasant *Shepherd Neame* tied house where the new licensees, Mark and Alexandra Waters, made us very welcome. *Master Brew* and *Late Red* were on during our survey visit, although the pub is able to obtain seasonal and special beers from *Shepherd Neame*. The **Chequers** has a notable Kentish weatherboard exterior, a very large garden with Bat and Trap pitches and an adjacent Tudor barn which can be hired for private functions.

Speaking of special *Shepherd Neame* beers I've heard through the hopvine that *Porter* has been brewed this season and spotted, I believe, at the **George** in Meopham. I've looked for but not found the *Porter*, much to my chagrin, having come across the seasonal *Christmas Ale* at the **Royal**

**Oak** in Dartford and the **Orange Tree** in Wilmington, which ale, in my opinion, is nothing special.

My colleague Bob Marsh surveyed the **Hufflers Arms** in Hythe Street Dartford which had not been a CAMRA favourite. It serves just one real ale, which varies, with two at Xmas and New Year. Bob had a very nice *Good Stuffing* from *Wells & Young* (I sampled and enjoyed the same beer at the **Whitstable Labour Club** prior to witnessing Ebbsfleet United's wind assisted victory against Whitstable Town in the F.A. Trophy). The **Hufflers** has a single spacious wood-beamed bar and a large paved beer garden with a children's play area, and there is live music on Friday and Saturday evenings. Parking is at a premium but the railway station and bus stops are very close.

The branch held a social in Wrotham in the autumn and all three pubs are worth revisiting for the beer quality. The **Bull Hotel** offered *Old Dairy Red Top* alongside the regular *Dark Star Hophead*; the *Shepherd Neame* tied **Rose & Crown** was friendly but unusually did not offer a seasonal beer that evening. The landlady at the **George & Dragon** made us very welcome and this traditional pub is much improved on the beer front serving up to five different real ales, and I enjoyed the *Harvey's Best Bitter* and *Hook Norton Old Hooky*.

Perhaps my favourite find on my own *WhatPub* survey round was the **Plough** at Basted, near Borough Green. This pub had been somewhat run down and was closed for a short while in the summer until a new landlord took over and transformed the establishment, selling good home cooked food and several real ales. I've mislaid my notes with full details but I do remember drinking and enjoying *Adnams Lighthouse* and *St.Austell Trelawny*. Another visit is imperative (see branch diary).

The **Amazon & Tiger** in Harvel is a friendly pub with enthusiastic hosts. Located out in the sticks not far from Meopham, this pub offers a regularly changing beer range, usually offering at least one ale from a brewery in Kent, although I chose *Caledonian Autumn Red* during the survey visit. This pub is always well worth a visit, especially in summer as the garden leads to the village cricket green. It also has an operational bar billiards table, very rare nowadays, almost as rare as the daddlums table at the nearby **Vigo**, which also specialises in *LocAle* Kent beers. Also not far away is the **Villager** at Vigo Village, which has replaced the standard *Greene King IPA* with local *Millis* beers, being *Dartford Wobbler* and *Kentish Red* at the time.



On reviewing *LocAle* outlets in the area my colleagues have noted that both the **Jolly Millers** and the **Bridges** in South Darenth no longer stock *Millis* beers. The other pub in the village is the **Queen**, which now sells *Greene King Abbot Ale* and *Young's Bitter* regularly plus two guest beers mainly from *Dark Star* in Sussex and the fairly local *Kent Brewery* in Birling. Superb quality *Dark Star American Pale Ale* was tasted at the reasonable price of £3.10 a pint, with halves at the correct price of £1.55. Not far away, the **Chequers** at Farningham priced *Crouch Vale Yakima Gold* at £3.40 a pint, albeit excellent quality, but charged £1.90 a half on separate visits by different people, so it was not a mistake. An extra 20p for a half in not acceptable in my view; remember my gripe in the Autumn 2013 issue? Information regarding excessive overcharging for half pints is gratefully received. Please also let us know about outlets for local Kent beers, especially *Millis* and *Caveman*, brewed in our area, and the relatively nearby breweries of *Goachers*, *Larkins*, *Kent*, *Tonbridge*, *Westerham* and the new *Musket Brewery* in Linton and *Hop Stuff Brewery* in Woolwich Arsenal.

Even the **Dartford Working Men's Club** has not stocked beers from all of the above breweries, but during 2013 **DWMC** sold 457 different real ales from 156 different breweries, not to mention the various ciders and perries. *Caveman* beers are always available here and the spicy *Caveman Christmas Club* at 6.4% ABV was my favourite of the Christmas beers sampled on New Year's Eve, and the *Anarchy Rum and Raisin* slipped down a treat.

As you may have guessed I am a supporter of Ebbsfleet United Football Club, despite living in Dartford, and quite enjoyed Ebbsfleet's club record of nine consecutive wins, whilst Dartford FC had lost nine matches in a row. All came to earth with a bump, with defeat against Dover Athletic, but the good news is the **George & Dragon** at Swanscombe, the home of *Caveman Brewery* is just a ten minute walk up the hill from the ground. We drowned our sorrows downing a selection of the nine (that number again!) wonderful ales on offer that evening. I know, but couldn't remember, that nine was correct as someone has posted a photograph on Twitter dated 29<sup>th</sup> December. Three *Caveman* beers were amongst them, being the spicy *Christmas Club*, *Mesolithic* and *Evolution #2*, a rather sweet hazelnut coffee porter at 5.5%.

Cheers everybody!

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Welcome to the New Year from all at Bexley CAMRA.

Our meetings for the past quarter were held at the **Jolly Millers** Bexleyheath (October), **Royal Oak** Northumberland Heath (November) and **Railway Tavern** Bexley (December). As always we thank the licensees for accommodating us.

Our socials during the quarter have been many and varied. Early in October we had our Beer Festival workers' outing which basically is a thank you to everyone who worked at the Bexley Beer Festival back in April and helped it be such a success. A coach took the 34 of us firstly to the home of *Kent Brewery* for an informative tour hosted by Paul and Toby the brewers and was followed up by some time spent sampling *Enigma*, *Pale* and *Brewers Reserve*, before Vic Beale presented them with a certificate for joint winner of beer of the festival. Sadly it was all too soon time to move on to our next destination the **Bowl** at Hastingleigh. The pub is a small locals' pub owned by a gentleman who also runs an antique emporium next door. Here we were able to sample the *Ramsgate Green Hop Ale* and *Hopdaemon Golden Braid*; sadly the third beer, *Hopdaemon Incubus*, was not available. After a stay of about an hour, we re-boarded the coach and made our way to Canterbury where we had about two hours of free time. Many of the people tried several pubs, including the **Foundry** (a small brewpub). Finally we made our way back to the **George & Dragon** where a buffet had been laid on by Bron & Bob and a presentation (again by Vic Beale) to James & Nick of *Caveman Brewery* for the other joint winner of Beer of the Festival. Here we were able to sample *Caveman Palaeolithic* (which ran out) and *Hunter Gatherer*, *Marble Ginger 5.1* (also ran out) and *Chocolate*, *Fyne Fladda Rock* and *Wells Bombardier*.

Our main October social was a mini pub crawl starting at the **Royal Oak** in Bexleyheath (also known as the **Polly Clean Stairs**). Here we were given a choice of *Sharps Doombar*, *Harveys Sussex Best* and *Fullers London Pride*. A steady stroll from here took us to our Pub of the Year, the **Robin Hood & Little John** where they had on offer a full range of beers including *Brakspear Bitter*, *London Pride*, *Brains Reverend James*, *Adnams Bitter* and *Broadside*, *Harveys Sussex*, *Sharps Doom Bar* and the guest ale, *Shepherd Neame Whitstable Bay*.

Also in October some of our members attended the Bromley Branch Beer Festival held at Westcombe Park Rugby Club. It turned out to be a very enjoyable event, and on the Saturday, we were treated to a rugby match between Westcombe Park and Old Dartfordians (our Beer Festival venue). To our delight ODs ran out comfortable winners.

In November, five of our members teamed up for a quiz in aid of Great Ormond Street Hospital held at the **Robin Hood & Little John**. We came away as winners after some 50 (it must be said) fairly easy questions. Our social saw us in Belvedere. Starting at the **Eardley Arms**, we enjoyed the *Shepherd Neame Spitfire* which was available, before proceeding down the hill to our scheduled next stop the **Leather Bottle**. Unfortunately upon our arrival it was noted that both hand pumps were devoid of clips and upon asking whether there was any real ale we were informed that they had ceased to stock any due to lack of demand. So with heavy hearts we carried on down the hill and turned right to our other destination the **Belvedere Hotel**, where we were greeted by a friendly landlady and *St Austell Trelawny* in excellent condition.

December saw us enjoying our Christmas social where 13 of us gathered at the **Wrong Un** in Bexleyheath for an evening of merriment. We enjoyed food at a 10% discount thanks to the manager Rob and a range of beers that included *Sharps Doom Bar*, *Greene King Abbot* and *Ruddles*, *Hop Stuff Fusilier*, *Fullers Chiswick*, *Adnams Shingle Shells*, *Westerham Gods Wallop*, *Green Jack Red Robin* and later *Jennings Redbreast*. A good time was had by all who attended and certainly set us all up for a good festive season. Between Christmas and New Year as always we gathered at the **Robin Hood & Little John** for our Twixmas social crawl. This year saw 11 of us gather although only 9 actually left the pub on the crawl. Our route this year took us through the following pubs with members dropping out at various points: **Wrong Un** (2 drop outs), **Rose**, **Kings Arms** (1 drop out), **Furze Wren** (1 drop out), **Jolly Millers**, **Prince Albert**, **Wellington** and finally ending up at **Crayford Arms**.

In pub news and other bits, whilst out on his travels, Ian Wright discovered a beer (*Rogue – Hazelnut Brown*) at the **Draft House** on Tower Bridge Road priced at £10 per pint. OK, it was 33%ABV. More locally, the **Wellington** in Crayford is threatened with closure, a planning application has been lodged to build flats in place of the pub and car park. We are planning to try and get the pub listed as an Asset of Community Value. Shortly after praising Pete at the **Charlotte** in the last

issue it was noted that the price of a pint went up 10p. Our status on *WhatPub* is continuing to get nearer to the gold standard as more of our pubs get descriptions added but we still need more descriptions and photos of some.



Recent issues of *Draught Copy* online can be found at [www.mmkcampa.co.uk/#!\\_\\_draught-copy](http://www.mmkcampa.co.uk/#!__draught-copy)

**DIARY TIME!** We are now beginning our preparations for the **Fifth EAST MALLING BEER & CIDER FESTIVAL** at East Malling Research on Saturday, 6th September 2014.

You won't want to miss it, I'm sure...



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## Real Ale in Romney

One autumn day, around 30 of us travelled to the area of Romney Marsh in a classic coach. This 1963 AEC Reliance with Harrington bodywork is owned by a friend of one of our party and who very kindly agreed to take us for the cost of the fuel.

Our first call of the day was **The Red Lion** at Snargate, identified by CAMRA as one of the Best Real Heritage Pubs, a superb unspoilt 16<sup>th</sup> century pub that has been in the same family for 100 years and is universally known as Doris's. The inside is decorated with posters from the 1940s and the Women's Land Army. The pub holds a beer festival in June and a mini-festival in October.



We arrived slightly before the pub opened at lunchtime, joining a number of other people awaiting the opening, and I was slightly amused at the change of outlook as the initial interest in our old bus gave way to a slight panic as the realisation suddenly dawned on them that if they got too distracted they could end up literally behind a coach load at the bar.

Once inside we found a good selection of ales from small breweries, such as *Goachers Mild*, *Whitstable Oyster Stout* plus their green hop beer, another green hop beer from *Spencers Brewery*, and *Wentworths Castillo*. I tried the *Spencers* but much preferred the *Oyster Stout*. The pub has a variety of old pub games such as skittles, shut-the-box and some I didn't recognise. It is worth mentioning they have limited opening hours so worth checking if you decide to pay this gem a visit.

All aboard again for the short trip to the **Bell** at Ivychurch. This is also in the CAMRA *Good Beer Guide (GBG)* as are all the pubs mentioned today, and is adjacent to a church like many other Marsh pubs. The licensees have achieved an enviable reputation, winning the local branch pub of the year in three of the last four years. The pub was also once the centre for a band of smugglers, the *Romney Marsh Owlers*.

*Hook Norton Old Hooky*, *Hop Fuzz Pacific Jade*, *Sharp's Doom Bar*, *St Austell Trelawny* and *Henry's IPA* from *Wadworth* were the offerings from this very welcoming pub. I first chose the *Pacific Jade*, which is an American

style brown ale finished with the New Zealand hop of the same name, which I have to say was very enjoyable.

Most of us ate here and I found the food very tasty as well as excellent value for money.

On leaving, we started our return to the Maidstone area but still had two more stops planned. The **Farriers Arms** at the village of Mersham, south of Ashford, is a community-owned, Grade 2 listed pub with its own five-barrel microbrewery (*Old Forge*) adjacent to the pub. I had the pleasure of attending their first beer festival back in late July and thought it was very well run and seemed to be a real community affair. Other events are also held. Once inside we found two of their own brews at the bar, *1606* (named after the year the inn was founded) and *Harvest Plenty* plus two guest ales, *Knights Ale* from *Canterbury Ales* and *Sharp's Doom Bar*. Food is served in the bar or in their Anvil Restaurant.

A very careless or lazy driver had parked precariously on the corner of the car park, and unsuccessful attempts to find the owner meant our driver had to use his best manoeuvring skills to preserve his cherished paintwork whilst negotiating our escape.

Our final call was to the **Five Bells** at East Brabourne, a 16th-century inn at the foot of the North Downs, convenient for walkers on the North Downs Way, and specialising in Kentish beers, ciders, wines and food. Breakfast is served as well as lunches and evening meals. Families are welcome and there is live music on Tuesday evenings.

This popular pub appeared to be all things to everyone, a successful restaurant by all accounts, in that they were very busy on the day of our visit despite it being very early in the evening, plus a good range of ales and various sections to the bar where you could find a table to enjoy the beer without sitting amongst diners. The ales on the bar were *Lodden Gravesend Shrimpers*, *Goachers Best Dark*, *Ramsgate Gadds No 5* and a house beer called *Black Velvet Stout*, which was of excellent quality and a fitting end to the day.

Andy Osborne

Thanks to the *Good Beer Guide* for information used. And thanks, too, to Roland, for piloting us around in his smart coach!

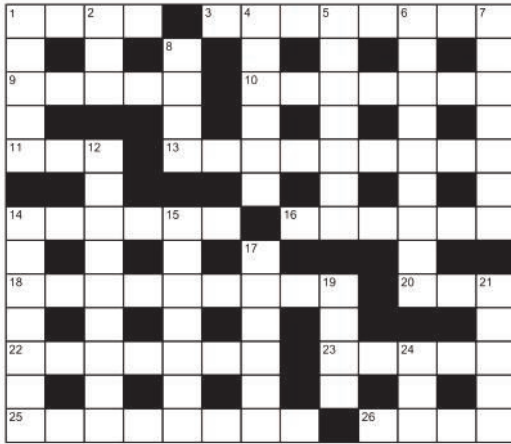




# The Draught Copy Crossword No. 13

compiled by MICK NORMAN

*Solution in next issue*



## Solution to Crossword No. 12



### Across

- 1 Fry, the much missed comedian (4)
- 3 Backing musical by Mr O'Connor? Tranquiliser required! (8)
- 9 Sporting trophy remains (5)
- 10 Drug user, or the dog that led to her arrest? (7)
- 11 Title desired to some extent (3)
- 13 Diver tore around - now ready for bed! (9)
- 14 Vicious footballer and pundit (6)
- 16 School is head of maths division (6)
- 18 Use old mini - dead loss for transport to party venue (9)
- 20 Nigel, yearning to see the huge cathedral (3)
- 22 African dictator has no twitch, but is very foolish! (7)
- 23 Wide country lane? (5)
- 25 Height may form part of royal address (8)
- 26 Call may follow Tinker (4)

### Down

- 1 About a girl in school (5)
- 2 A Scotsman's exclamation at finding a lake with no head (3)
- 4 Bearing flower for Christian festival (6)
- 5 Is one a cat, travelling from the continent? (7)
- 6 Elfin rite, sadly without issue (9)
- 7 Peerage for deranged Rod (male) (7)
- 8 European capital also providing a fresh start (4)
- 12 Raving MEP's disastrous launch of 'new, improved version' (9)
- 14 Careless elf is ham-fisted - held to be inconsiderate (7)
- 15 Greedy git, perhaps, has surplus weight (7)
- 17 Post script - is church included in the sign? (6)
- 19 Island with talent to head north (4)
- 21 Ifield's salutation to Shannon? (5)
- 24 Number looked after by 14 down individual (3)

*For a chance to win a crisp £10 drinking voucher please send your completed grid to our compiler:*

*Mick Norman  
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Norwood Lane  
Meopham  
DA13 0YE*

*no later than March 15th.*

*A photocopy is acceptable, as is a scanned copy emailed to:  
mlr\_norman@yahoo.com*

*Congratulations to Rory Kehoe from Henley-on-Thames who won the tenner last time.*

## **Introduction**

Those wishing to close and redevelop a pub will invariably state that it “isn't viable” and that nobody could reasonably expect to turn it into a commercially successful business. In fact, the country is peppered with now-thriving pubs where such claims were once made. There are also many examples of failing pubs being given a new lease of life by enterprising and imaginative owners. Here are just a few of those success stories.

### **The Raven, Llanarman-yn-Ial, Denbighshire**

The pub closed in 2009 and seemed destined to become housing when it failed to reach its reserve price at auction. The local community was then approached by the makers of a TV programme (“Save Our Boozer”) who offered help if they took the pub on and didn't mind being filmed. They only had two and a half weeks to get it ready for reopening but did it. The enterprise was a success so a company limited by guarantee, Raven Mad Ltd, was set up to acquire and run the pub. It is staffed entirely by volunteers, apart from a full-time chef, and any profits can only be used to fund community projects. A committee of nine runs the pub on a day to day basis with sub-groups responsible for various elements such as cellar management, accounts and a wine club. The Raven has been taken back to being a traditional country pub serving real ales and good food. It was local CAMRA Pub of the Year in 2011 and is in the 2013 Good Beer Guide.

### **George & Dragon, Hudswell, North Yorkshire**

This, the first community-owned pub in North Yorks, was officially opened by the local MP, William Hague, in June 2010. It had closed in August 2008. A group of villagers founded the Hudswell Community Pub Initiative and set about raising funds. Shares cost £500 each, offering an annual dividend of 3.5%. Only 40% of the shares ended up being bought by villagers after the prospectus was made widely available. Enough money was raised by this means and by a variety of grants and awards to enable purchase of the freehold and extensive renovations and improvements. Tenants were found who quickly built up good relationships with residents; they have a free hand to run the business as they choose. The pub is now busier, friendlier and more profitable than ever before. It has also brought the community closer together and several social groups regularly use the pubs.

### **Pineapple, Kentish Town, London**

When the pub closed in 2001, the lease was assigned by the departing licensees to a property company who promised to keep it open. Needless

to say, they spoke with forked tongue and instantly submitted a planning application for conversion to expensive flats. The regulars, though, weren't going to let 133 years of pint-pulling go down the drain and set up an action group. Their first success was to get the pub listed by English Heritage in just eight days! – which put a large spoke in the developer's wheels. They drummed up publicity by getting support from the likes of Ken Livingstone, Jon Snow and Rufus Sewell. Hundreds of objections helped lead to the planning application being refused. Today it is one of NW5's treasures. Always packed, it sells a great range of real ales (including *LocAles*), has its own brand of quirky theme nights and offers a bohemian, inclusive atmosphere which has inspired a new generation of “craft” London boozers. It was local CAMRA Pub of the Year in 2012 and is *GBG* listed.

### **Devonshire Arms, Cambridge**

Once arguably the city's worst pub became, in 2012, officially the best when crowned local CAMRA Pub of the Year. Until its closure in 2009 it had been a scruffy, somewhat intimidating place and one of very few city pubs not to sell real ale. The local Milton Brewery bought it from Punch Taverns, subjected it to a thorough refurbishment and reopened it early in 2010. This was at a time when Cambridge was suffering a spate of pub closures so why was the Dev an immediate success? The refurb obviously helped a lot – there's now a wood-panelled front bar with cosy seating areas and a spacious, comfortable back bar with wood-burning stove and patio doors to a small garden area. The most positive change was the arrival of lots of real ale – five Milton beers, three guests and real cider. High quality, good value food was also an innovation. The licensees have created a friendly, welcoming atmosphere which attracts a great mix of customers from the cosmopolitan area around the pub.

### **Bridge End Inn, Ruabon**

Reopened in 2009, it was only three years later that this became the first Welsh winner of CAMRA's national Pub of the Year contest. The McGivern family took it on after it had been shut for six months. They aimed to create a pub offering a wide range of traditional beer styles rather than focusing on food. As a result they built up a mixed trade of locals and beer lovers from all over Britain. At the time of the award, CAMRA described the pub as “*an unbelievable success story and a perfect case study of a local outlet playing a pivotal role at the heart of a small community*”. The Bridge also has its own micro-brewery, producing McGivern Ales.

*Continued on page 45*

# THE QUEENS HEAD



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## **Wheatley, Ben Rhydding, West Yorkshire**

This imposing inn in an upmarket suburb of Ilkley was closed by Punch Taverns in 2002. Local residents formed SUP, Save Us Pub, and were told by Punch that they had been “unable to find a suitable retailer to invest to reopen the site” - though it was suspected they hadn't tried very hard. Soon after, developers submitted a planning application for residential use. This was refused and went to appeal. SUP put huge effort into fighting the appeal and their hard work paid off when, after an inquiry, the appeal was dismissed. There was then a hiatus as Punch continued not to market the pub at a reasonable price but eventually the penny dropped that change of use wasn't going to happen. The pub was sold to Individual Inns, a small chain who run five pubs in the north of England and who extensively and expensively renovated the place. Although quite “gastro”, it retains a pubby bar area with plentiful local real ales. The ambience is actually quite appropriate for the rather swanky area it sits in.

## **Albion Ale House, Conwy, North Wales**

The Albion Vaults (as it then was) was closed by Punch Taverns in 2010, deemed no longer profitable. Fortunately it was purchased by a consortium of local micro-breweries (Purple Moose, Conwy, Great Orme and Bragdy'r Nant). After a sensitive refurbishment which fully respected its unspoilt inter-war interior (the pub is on CAMRA's National Inventory of Historic Pub Interiors) the Grade 2 listed building reopened in February 2012 as the Albion Ale House, selling beers from the owner-breweries plus guest beers and local ciders. This is an excellent example of how to properly restore a heritage pub interior and also how to reap success by concentrating on the essentials of a great pub – good conversation and good beer – there is no TV, no juke box, no fruit machine, no pool table. The Albion is in the 2013 Good Beer Guide and was local Branch Pub of the Year 2013.

## **Conclusions**

All these pubs are now thriving concerns which are vital parts of the communities they serve. There is no magic recipe for success but all our examples have one thing in common – quality. You certainly can't just open pub doors and expect people to flood in these days – you have to make it worth their while to make the effort by offering something special. Another common factor is real ale. This is something you can only get on draught in a pub and one big reason why folk will get off their settees and visit the local (or not-so-local) Finally, all the pubs are closely connected to their local communities. Those where the former customers went so far as to buy the pub have clearly secured a great deal of local commitment but other examples show you don't need to go so far to gain such loyalty.

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# CAMRA BRANCH DIARIES

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.

Meetings are at 8.30pm unless otherwise noted.

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

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

## FEBRUARY

- 6 **MMK** **Walnut Tree**, East Farleigh, then **Horseshoes**
- 6 **GDV** **Amazon & Tiger, Harvel; Vigo, Fairseat; George, Meopham**
- 8 **MMK** Bus Trip to **Chequers**, Laddingford, for Winter Warmers
- 12 **GDV** **Paper Moon, Dartford, then Malt Shovel, Ivy Leaf**
- 12 **BEX** **Earl Haig, Bexleyheath**
- 13 **MMK** **Dirty Habit**, Hollingbourne, then **Sugar Loaves, Windmill**
- 15 **MMK** Bus Trip – Whitstable & Faversham
- 20 **MMK** **Swan**, Maidstone, then **Flower Pot**
- 20 **GDV** **Three Daws, Gravesend. [OBM]**
- 22 **MMK** Post-Xmas meal, **Cock**, Boughton Monchelsea
- 26 **BEX** **Furze Wren, Bexleyheath [GBG selection]**
- 27 **MMK** **White House**, Hunton, then **Walnut Tree**, Yalding

## MARCH

- 6 **MMK** **Beeches**, Mereworth, then **Swan**, West Peckham
- 6 **GDV** **Blue Anchor**, St.Mary's Platt, then **Plough**, Basted
- 12 **GDV** **Rising Sun**, Twitton, then **Chequers**, Heaverham
- 12 **BEX** **George Staples, Blackfen**
- 13 **MMK** **Walnut Tree**, Loose, then **Chequers**
- 19 **BEX** 8pm Under 30's Social – **Tailors Chalk**, Sidcup
- 20 **MMK** **Red Lion**, Lenham [*OBM*]
- 20 **GDV** **Echo, Gravesend, then Millers Cottage, Windmill**
- 22 **MMK** Bus Trip to **Five Ashes**, Hailsham, and E. Hoathly
- 26 **BEX** 8pm **Prince Of Wales**, Belvedere, then **Fox, Royal Standard**
- 27 **MMK** **Lord Raglan**, Staplehurst, then **Stile Bridge**
- 29 **BEX** 12noon – Soho Crawl – Meet Charing Cross

## APRIL

- 3 **MMK** **Oak & Ivy**, Hawkhurst, then **Bull**, Benenden
- 9 **GDV** **Malt Shovel, Dartford [OBM]**
- 9 **BEX** **New Cross Turnpike, Welling [OBM]**
- 10 **MMK** **Milk House**, Sissinghurst, then **Bell & Jorrocks**, Frittenden
- 12 **MMK** Bus Trip – Dartford, Swanscombe, Gravesend
- 17 **MMK** Sutton Valence walkabout, meet **Queens Head**
- 18 **MMK** Good Friday Ramble – Peshurst Station to Weald
- 19 **GDV** **12:30 Beer Festival Social – Crown, Otford**
- 23 **BEX** 8pm Welling social, **Anchor In Hope**, then **Plough & Harrow and New Cross Turnpike**
- 24 **MMK** **Hare & Hounds**, Maidstone, then **Society Rooms**
- 26 **MMK** Bus Trip to **Chequers**, Laddingford for beer festival

\* REAL MILD ALE \* CROWN IMPERIAL STOUT \*

\* 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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