

Draught Copy



CAMPAIGN
FOR
REAL ALE

Free Magazine

By Maidstone & Mid-Kent
CAMRA
incorporating Gravesend &
Darent Valley and Bexley
Branches

Winter 2017/8

No. 189

**EAST MALLING
BEER AND CIDER
FESTIVAL SEES
RECORD
ATTENDANCE**



DRAUGHT COPY

Draught Copy is the magazine of the Maidstone and Mid-Kent branch of CAMRA, the Campaign for Real Ale, also incorporating news from Bexley, and Gravesend & Darent Valley branches of CAMRA. It is published quarterly, in March, June, September and December and has a circulation of 3,200 copies. Opinions expressed are those of the author of the article, and need not represent those of CAMRA or its officials.

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The copy date for the next issue is 21 January 2018 for publication in February/March 2018.

Website: *www.mmk.camra.org.uk*

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LOCAL BEER & CIDER FESTIVALS

CAMRA Festivals:

December 2017

- 5-9 **34th Pigs Ear Beer and Cider Festival,**
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No U18's. Assistance dogs only. Wheelchair access.
www.pigsear.org.uk/festivals.htm
Twitter: @pigsearcamra Facebook: camra.elac

February 2018

- 2-3 **25th White Cliffs Festival of Winter Ales,**
Maison Dieu (Town Hall), Biggin Street, Dover, Kent, CT16 1DL.

March 2018

- 2-3 **North Sussex Equinox Beer & Cider Festival,**
Drill Hall, Denne Road, Horsham, RH12 1JF.
50+ beers, plus real cider and perry.
Open: Fri 6-10pm then Sat 11:30am-4.30pm and 6.30-10pm.
Tickets £6 Fri, £7 Sat afternoon, £4 Sat evening, incl souvenir glass and free pint for CAMRA members. *camra.equinox@gmail.com*
- 14-16 **London Drinker Beer and Cider Festival, Camden Centre, Bidborough St, WC1H 9AU.**
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Wed & Thu: 5pm -10.30pm £4 (£3 CAMRA members); Last admission 10pm.
Fri: 12 - 10.30pm £4 (£3 CAMRA members); Last admission 10pm.
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See website for further information and ticket info: *www.northlondon.camra.org.uk*

Other Events:

January 2018

- 24-27 **Flower Pot, Winter Beer Festival,**
96 Sandling Rd, Maidstone, Kent ME14 2RJ.

February 2018

- 9-10 **6th Tonbridge Juddians Rugby Club Beer Festival,**
The Slade, Tonbridge, Kent TN9 1HR.
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Map available at www.kentcamra.org.uk/kent/breweries



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Nightingale Cider Co		<i>www.nightingalecider.com</i>
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HAT TRICK FOR MAIDSTONE LOCAL.



Having already been voted Pub of the Year by local CAMRA members and Kent (West) branches, popular Maidstone pub the Flower Pot in Sandling Road has received a further accolade, being selected as overall Kent Pub of the Year by regional judges, placing it among the top 16 Real Ale pubs nationwide. The Flower Pot beat off the Lanes Micropub, Dover - the Kent (East) section winner – to claim the title.

The Flower Pot – a winner of the Kent Pub of the Year title in 2010 and 2011 - has been described as a “must-visit” when in Maidstone, serving up to 10 different Real Ales, many from microbreweries both in Kent and throughout the UK, along with a selection of ciders and perries. Landlords David and Julie Davenport took over the running of the Free House in 2006, rapidly gaining a reputation for the quality and selection on offer.

A judging panel assessed the merits of two finalists based on criteria such as style, décor, furnishing and cleanliness; service, welcome and offering; community focus and atmosphere, alignment with CAMRA principles and overall impression.

Ian Clennett, Chairman of the Maidstone and Mid-Kent Branch of CAMRA said: “Picking up the Kent Pub of the Year title is further reward for the great job that David and Julie have done. Real Ale fans know that the Flower Pot is a great example of the best of what British pubs have to offer – a warm and welcoming atmosphere, excellent service and a fantastic range of beers.”

David Davenport said: “We’re delighted that Kent CAMRA members have chosen us as Pub of the Year. We aim to offer a variety of Real Ales to suit all palates and tastes, and the award is a sign that our approach is popular with our regulars, CAMRA members and drinkers from further afield.”

As Regional Pub of the Year, the Flower Pot advanced to the Super-Regional Pub of the Year judging, but didn’t make it into the final four pubs from which CAMRA’s National Pub of the Year will be chosen.

The Flower Pot

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EXTREME PUBBING!

by Jeff Tucker

Some pubs are at least two miles from the nearest public transport, and therefore not easy to get to if you don't want to drive. Other pubs are served by bus once a day, or even once or twice a week in some cases, which usually involves a walk either to or from the pub, to catch the nearest more frequent bus or train.

This article features a pub which has buses passing the door about every two hours in each direction during the day, but this is of little use, as the pub doesn't open until 5pm on Monday to Saturday, after which there is only one bus each way, fourteen minutes apart!

The pub in question is a delightful little hostelry in the small village of Coldred, just off the A2 towards Dover. The **Carpenters Arms** was the local CAMRA branch Pub of the Year in 2015, and is a true village local, with all sorts of activities going on, and seems to be well supported by the locals.

Just along from the pub is a bus shelter adorned with hanging baskets, and across the road is a pretty duck pond. Inside the pub, the furnishings are simple, and Colin, the landlord, chats away to the customers.



This pub had been on my 'to do' list for many years, so I decided to pay a visit in July. There is a bus from Dover, route 89A, which now leaves at 17.50 (17.35 on Saturdays), arriving in Coldred at 18.25 (or 18.10). Alternatively, bus 89A leaves Canterbury at 17.40 on Mondays to Fridays, arriving at Coldred at 18.39. The only way to get home was a 25-minute walk to Shepherdswell station, where I caught a train back to Chatham, and buses home from there.

On Mondays to Fridays, bus 89A leaves Canterbury at 15.35, arriving at Coldred at 16.29, so you will have to wait half an hour until opening time, then the next bus at 18.39 picks you up, heading for Dover.



The Carpenters Arms is well worth a visit, a fine example of a no-frills village pub like we used to have everywhere, before pub food took over.



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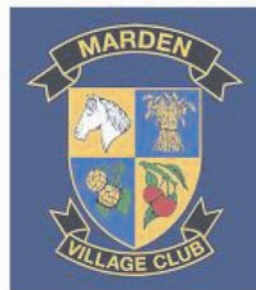
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REAL ALE FESTIVAL REPORTS RECORD NUMBERS



A spectacular overnight thunderstorm failed to deter real ale and cider enthusiasts who turned up in record numbers to CAMRA's East Malling Beer and Cider Festival, held on Saturday September 2nd at NIAB EMR, the world-famous horticultural research station in East Malling, with the last pint being served as the final drumbeat sounded on the music stage.

The event, the eighth organised and staffed by local real ale and cider campaigners at the venue, featured 77 different Real Ales, many brewed locally, 36 varied ciders and perries, all from Kent producers, live music from Sur Les Docks and Reptilia, and a guest appearance from Radio Kent DJ Roger 'Twiggy' Day playing tracks from decades past.

Jeff Tucker, organiser of CAMRA's East Malling Beer and Cider Festival, said: "Real ale and cider fans showed their continued support of the Festival, which was blessed with fantastic weather. It was great to see such a large turn-out, with every drop of ale and cider sold by the time we called 'Last Orders'. We reckon that our volunteers managed to serve a pint every 3.5 seconds."

Ian Clennett, Chairman of Maidstone and Mid-Kent CAMRA, said: "The Festival is now well-established as a popular event for all the family, with the wonderful surroundings at East Malling making the perfect backdrop. We will be back in early September 2018



with an even bigger and better event."

'Beer of the Festival', as selected by a panel of Real Ale enthusiasts, was *Orkney Best*, from Swannay Brewery in Evie, Orkney, with 77, from Heavy Industry Brewing in Henlan, Denbighshire, as runner-up, *Orkney Best* was also the fastest-selling beer, as drinkers rushed to sample the winning brew. A separate panel adjudged *Red Love*, from Biddenden, as winner in the Best Cider or Perry category, with *Ciderfect*, from BEARDspoon in Sellindge as runner-up. The fastest selling cider was *Salted Caramel* from Dudda's Tun in Doddington.



A pledge by Festival organisers to donate a sum equivalent to unused drinks tokens returned by visitors raised £340 for Demelza, the children's hospice, which provides vital care to families across Kent, East Sussex and South East London.

Quiz Night on Monday

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12 – 11 Friday and Saturday
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**The Bull
High Street
West Malling**



Contact: John Mills 01732 840603 or email pubs.officer@mmk.camra.org.uk

For more information on these pubs, see CAMRA's online pub database whatpub.com

West Malling Golf Club, Addington – For a round of golf, followed by a pint of *Shepherd Neame Spitfire* and a meal then this club will fulfil your needs. This clubhouse is open to non-members as well.

Bull, Barming – The makeover following the takeover by Stonebridge was completed and re-opened in August with Neil O'Hagan as the manager. The walls have many photographs of old buses and pen and wash pictures of Maidstone scenes. There is a large covered terrace with tables at the rear. Beers from *Kent, Tonbridge, St. Austell* and *Sharps* breweries but there are also various ciders on pump and bag-in-box. www.classicnns.co.uk/thebullmaidstone

Bull, Benenden – There are now three very well fitted letting rooms here, all with king-size beds. On the bar are *Dark Star Hophead, Harveys Sussex Best Bitter, Larkins Traditional* and one guest.

Larkins Alehouse, Cranbrook – On 6 October this new micropub in the High Street opened its door in what was previously a flower shop. The two sisters that run the business were originally called Larkin and lived in Cranbrook for many years. Four cask ales and several ciders are kept but



there are also some wines, spirits, prosecco and soft drinks. Operating times are 12-9 Mon-Wed; 12-10 Thu & Fri; 12-10.30 Sat; 12-6 Sun.

<http://larkins-alehouse.co.uk> Facebook: [larkinsalehouse](https://www.facebook.com/larkinsalehouse)

Knoxbridge, Frittenden – Operating hours are now, Closed Mon; 12-9 Tue-Thu; 12-10:00 Fri & Sat; 12-6 Sun. Runs poker nights at 8pm on Wednesdays. Usually keeps *Harveys Sussex Best Bitter* and often the local *Brumaison BB* plus another guest ale which could be from anywhere. <http://www.theknoxbridge.co.uk>.

Harrietsham Club, Harrietsham – Held its customary beer festival in September and some members dropped by to help consume the beer. The club is looking for more members so why not call in. Pool and snooker tables in the main room whilst the bar has darts and real ale.

Royal British Legion, Hawkhurst – Darts and pool may be played in the bar and there are two snooker tables. The function room has its own bar.

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Here you will find a pint of *Harveys Sussex Best Bitter* or a beer from Shepherd Neame but also maybe something from further away.

Wings Bar & Restaurant, Headcorn – Situated on the airfield this facility offers both *Harveys Sussex Best Bitter* and most appropriately *Shepherd Neame Spitfire*.

Bower, Maidstone – This pub has been keeping *Rockin' Robin Reliant Robin* on permanently recently.

Cherry Tree, Maidstone – The new licensee has had a second handpump installed which initially had *Skinners Betty Stogs* as a guest, the permanent beer being *Harveys Sussex Best Bitter*.

First & Last, Maidstone – Now opens at 3pm and keeps the northern favourites *Timothy Taylor Boltmaker* and *Landlord*.

Fox, Maidstone – It has been reported that a new licensee took over in October and now keeps *Greene King IPA* and one guest ale.

Maidstone Rugby Club, Maidstone – A member always finds a good pint of whichever *Shepherd Neame* beer is currently available and sometimes a *Goachers* beer may also be found.

Old Thirsty Pig, Maidstone – Recently refurbished the upstairs Stone Street room using traditional lime plaster, bespoke oak furniture, and thick plush cushions. To add to this, the toilets have been upgraded, new benches in the beer garden and have purchased a fully automatic defibrillator which sits in the bar which, as far as they know, is the only pub in Maidstone to have one. The pub hosts the monthly 'Maidstone Brewers' meetings where home-brewers of all levels meet on the last Tuesday of every month between 19:30 and 21:30. The pub has won the 'Worth a Butchers Pub of the Year' in Maidstone.

Queen Anne, Maidstone – This has re-opened following a re-fit. Food is now served daily. The pub opens at midday and closes midnight (or later) all week. The licensee, Leslie Collier, welcomes all and the pub is also LGBT friendly. The large enclosed rear patio has a covered smoking area, a



fish pond and a large banana plant. After a long drought, real ale is available again. *Fuller's London Pride* was the first ale on the pump but *Wychwood Hobgoblin Gold* has also been found in good condition. Facebook: queenannemairstone

Stag, Maidstone – Continues to provide good food and gravity served beers. Regularly keep *Mad Cat*, *Musket* and *Rockin' Robin* with *Adnams*, *Long Man* and *Purity* brews occasionally appearing.

George, Trottiscliffe – Now has an ACV granted to help stave off any predatory buyers. The George is being mainly used by visitors to the village requiring meals. Otter beers have appeared here but the main offering has been *Shepherd Neame Whitstable Bay Pale Ale*.



Plough, Trottiscliffe – The parish council has also applied for an ACV here which has been granted by Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council. The planning application to turn this into housing is still to be decided but has had strong objections by the local residents that previously used it. The Plough was used by the darts team and for meetings.

Early Bird, Weaving – This Shepherd Neame pub had a re-fit during October and now has a new licensee.

Malling Town Club, West Malling – A mini beer festival has been held here and was appreciated by participants.



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The summer season of local pub beer festivals has been and gone. Unfortunately some were affected by bad weather but the big events at the **Three Daws** and **Jolly Drayman** in Gravesend in August were both very busy. One that we missed was the Octoberfest at the **Windmill Tavern** in Gravesend in September (!). The weather on the Friday night was distinctly autumnal but I hear things improved considerably later on.



Progress on the *Iron Pier Brewery* has been a little slower than reported in the last issue of *Draught Copy* but they now have their HMRC registration and should be producing beer by the time you read this. The first beers brewed will be a best bitter and an English hopped pale ale, which will allow them to get the measure of the kit before beginning to produce other styles. The next to follow will be a US-hopped session pale and a porter, all of which should be available in time for Christmas. Official launch events are planned in Kent and London. The site will include a taproom and they hope to have this open in December as well.

Another new local brewery which started up without a great fanfare about a year ago is *No Frills Joe* at Greenhithe. This is situated at the brewer's home and produces unfinned hazy beers. So far a pale ale, an IPA and a stout have been brewed. A taproom has been built in the garage and is open from 6 to 10pm on certain evenings.

The new Marston's pub at Ebbsfleet, mentioned a couple of editions back, has now opened close to the A2 as the **Spring River**. A large hotel is attached and, as expected, there is an extensive food menu. A recent report mentioned a very busy bar with four real ales at a reasonable price. Rumours have surfaced of another similar Marston's pub possibly to be built in Dartford, as part of the redevelopment of the Glaxo Smith Kline site.

The **Invicta Bar** in Gravesend opened in September opposite the Civic Centre, in what once was a private club. The bar is narrow but quite deep and has an attractively modern décor. Features include a large yellow

sofa at the front and a piano at the back. The intention is to be different from all the other pubs in the town, therefore you will find a large range of imports and craft kegs, together with a range of highly unusual wines and spirits. Three hand-pumps have been installed, with two real ales always available at the time of writing, intended to be one lighter and one darker. The most recent offerings were *Gadd's Seaside* and *Number 5*. By the time this issue appears the pub should also be offering food, described as high-end English pub food.

In Gravesend, the **Jolly Drayman** has been offering food since October. Lunches are served in the bar on Mondays to Saturdays and what had become something of a spare room now operates as a restaurant serving dinners on Friday nights and Sunday lunches. Further up Wellington Street the **Waterloo** also has a restaurant serving lunches every day.



The **George** in Queen Street was reported a few months ago to be in the process of gradual internal redecoration without actually closing. This was followed by an external repaint and the whole job is now complete. The furniture has all been re-trimmed too, which makes the pub look quite comfortable.

Another Gravesend pub which has recently had some work done is the **Echo**, which now has a new bar back with blue lighting to show off the enormous collection of bottles of spirits. Cask Marque accreditation has now been achieved and an enjoyable pint of *Gale's Seafarers* was available on my visit, alongside the regular *Sharp's Doom Bar*.

As the deadline for submission of this approached, it seemed that the **Rum Puncheon** in Gravesend, a long-time Good Beer Guide regular, was about to change management, possibly after a short period of closure. There had been rumours around for some time so it will be nice to see the pub settle down again.

Another report from the **Chequers** in Crockenhill suggests it is still improving a year after the new people moved in. A recent visit found a very busy pub with *Upham Punter*, *Woodforde's Wherry* and *Draught Bass* (which





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you don't see that often around here) with the regular *Courage Best*. Themed nights are apparently going well, with a "French evening" at the end of September.

In Wrotham, the **Rose & Crown** has continued to serve real ale since the new landlords took over in May. They always have three *Shepherd Neame* beers on, *Master Brew*, *Spitfire* and *Whitstable Bay*, with the occasional seasonal or special, *Late Red* during October. They have also introduced a curry night on Tuesdays to complement their quiz night on Thursdays, fish night on Fridays and traditional Sunday lunches. The **George &**



Dragon continues to serve five real ales, with *Harveys Best Bitter* being a regular alongside four ever-changing guests. They also host the local cricketers, bowlers and walking footballers. The walking footballers meet every Tuesday at 19.00 on the Recreation Ground, followed by food and

drink in the George & Dragon. The pub also offers Thai meals on Thursdays and Fridays, booking advised in the evenings. The **Bull Hotel** also has two real ales and to find eleven in three pubs in a small village is quite unusual.



A similar number of real ales can usually be found in the three pubs in Cobham. A recent visit found *Taylor's Landlord* at the **Leather Bottle**, unusual, as all beers here generally come from Greene King. The **Darnley Arms** had two guest beers, *Taylor's Golden Best* and *Canterbury Ales Miller's Ale*, as well as three ciders, while *Greene King Radio X*



Amplified Pale Ale was on at the **Ship**. Up the road in Luddesdowne, the monthly guest brewery for September at the **Golden Lion** was *Shepherd Neame*, with *Westerham* to follow in October. The *Westerham* month was to feature two green hopped beers.

Sadly, we have to report the death of John Robinson this summer. John was an active local member for many years and held several posts on the branch committee, including that of chairman, before returning to his native Yorkshire in the early nineties. He persuaded me to join CAMRA in 1977 so the fact that I've written this is really down to him.

Contact: Rob Archer at camr@rcher.org.uk or Martyn Nicholls on 01322 527857
www.bexley.camra.org.uk

Greetings from all at Bexley CAMRA.



In pub news; The good news is that the **Jolly Millers** has re-opened. On my visit, they were serving *Brakspear Bitter* and *Oxford Gold*, both in good condition. The landlady hopes to extend the range once real ale sales take off, utilising the other two handpumps. The **Kentish Belle** tell us that they

now expect to be open in mid-November, so quite possibly by the time you read this, complete with Stockley the trainee guide dog, they will be selling real ale and cider together with wine. We are also awaiting further news on two more micropubs in our area, one on the edge of Sidcup and one in Barnehurst (yes, the same location but under different guidance). The sad news is that the **Coach & Horses** in Bexley closed its doors for the final time on 6th October. Despite the branches attempt to obtain Asset of Community Value



status for the pub, we were turned down by the council citing proximity of other local pubs and restaurants. The **Volunteer** in Bexleyheath also appears to be under threat. It has been noticed closed recently of an evening and had been having trouble with its cellar.

If you have any other pub news please contact us either using the contact details at the top of this article or our Pubs Officer Ian Wright on 07779 319196 or bexleypubs@yahoo.co.uk. The easiest way for you to do this though is when you are in the pub is to log on to WhatPub.com with your tablet or smartphone and check out the details shown and advise us at the time of any changes. We would also ask all CAMRA members to use WhatPub to submit beer scores for our branch pubs. Whenever you visit a pub in our branch area, simply go to Whatpub.com and find the pub, go to submit beer score and follow the simple instructions (*ED: See whatpub article in this magazine*).

Our monthly branch meetings have taken place on the second Wednesday of each month as usual, in August we visited the **Broken Drum** Blackfen, September the **Wrong 'UN** Bexleyheath and in October the **Green Man** Welling. We thank the licencees for accommodating us.





It may not have gone unnoticed that the brewery has been shrouded in scaffolding since April.

Every six years we undertake redecoration works, painting the wood, iron work and signage to maintain the appearance of our Grade II listed building. It gives us a chance to examine every element of the fabric and, inevitably, attend to the constant wear and tear that occurs with the passage of time.

A programme of works, involving stone masons, joiners, roofing contractors, lead workers and glaziers has ensued under the supervision of our maintenance staff and consultant architects

The brewery was rebuilt in 1881 by Messrs Card & Son of Lewes from designs of the eminent brewery architect William Bradford of Carlton Chambers, Regent Street, London. During construction work, they unearthed the weather vane that sits on the top of the brewery tower. Dated 1621, it is believed to have originally graced St Thomas a Becket's Church in Cliffe High Street. In 1985, the smaller tower was added to the original in order to increase our production capacity. Built in the exact style of the existing building, it was the recipient of a Civic Trust Award and our listed status followed shortly afterwards.



In many ways, Harvey's is a 'heritage site'. Behind its brick façade you will find a production area that has been maintained over the centuries to reflect a time honoured brewing process. Sacks of UK grown malted barley and bales of locally grown hops are held within the original stores and brewing equipment has been maintained or replaced to perpetuate a method of production that has withstood the test of time. It takes a large number of dedicated staff to ensure that standards and procedures are maintained.

In an age where many companies are relocating to alternative sites and constructing breweries that are more automated and cost effective, we feel that the heritage of Harvey's is well worth protecting and maintaining. We are fortunate that many devoted customers share these same ideals and continue to enjoy a range of our award winning local beers.

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Since the last issue, our socials have taken us far and wide.



In August, we combined our branch meeting with the presentation of the runner up in our pub of the year competition to the **Broken Drum**. We also had our very first ever branch cider pub of the year presentation at the other end of the month to Liz & Mark Twort at the **Hackney Carriage** in Sidcup. They were also presented with the certificate for third place in our pub of the year competition.

The August Bank Holiday Monday saw some of us join Gravesend branch on their annual seaside crawl. This year it was to Folkestone. Once again we were blessed with good weather and a plethora of good pubs and ales. Despite having to run for the train home it was an eminently enjoyable day out and I would like to take this opportunity to thank Mick Norman for his work in planning the day. For those that didn't go, there was a social nearer to home at the **Broken Drum** and **George Staples** in Blackfen.



Our September Social was in Sidcup, once again visiting the **Hackney Carriage**



and then across the road to the **Iron Horse**. The latter, although more of a music venue, serves two real ales. The one I tried that evening was the *Bexley Brewery Golden Acre* and was in good condition. It is very handy for the station being literally at the bottom of the entrance to the downside platform.

In October, we had our Festival Workers trip. This year we took the train from St Pancras to

Nottingham where we had some six and a half hours to enjoy the delights of Nottingham and its surrounds plus the fact that it was the final day of the Nottingham Beer Festival. Twenty six people made the trip and amazingly all twenty six actually made the train home. Our other social is to Woolwich but this is after the copy date and so will be reported in the next issue.

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WHAT PUB, BEER SCORING AND THE GOOD BEER GUIDE

by Danny Clark

You are more than likely aware of the “Good Beer Guide”, CAMRA’s flagship publication, that lists the best pubs in the UK, but what you may not know is how those pubs are selected. Mainly, it is as a result of beer scores being submitted by CAMRA members from across the country, the unfortunate reality is that those scores are mainly derived from the very few branch activists that visit the pubs within their branch. As a CAMRA member you can send in beer scores to the local branch via the What Pub website and if you have ever wondered why your favourite pub that sells really good beer, isn’t in the Good Beer Guide then this may well be because its hasn’t had enough visits rating the quality of the beer. Entering the scores doesn’t automatically get your pub into the Good Beer Guide as scoring beers is the first stage of a multi stage process, but beer scoring on a consistent basis contributes to the process of selection of pubs that go into the Good Beer Guide.

You don’t have to be an “expert” to begin scoring and the process is pretty simple. Please remember though that it is not about your personal favourite beer receiving the highest score, or that the reason that you are doing it is just to get your favourite pub into the Good Beer Guide. You will more than likely try a beer that isn’t to your normal taste but what you need to consider is the quality of the beer. Ask yourself whether the publican has kept it in good condition and how have they served it, and score it in accordance with the scoring system in What Pub, which is quite simple to use.



WHATPUB In order to submit your scores you need to login to What Pub which is CAMRA’s online pub guide. The address is www.whatpub.com and you can access the website by using your smart phone whilst you are still drinking your pint. The website contains over 35,000 pubs from all over the UK.

In order to start submitting scores via What Pub you will need to;

- 1.Login. To do this you will need your CAMRA membership number and your CAMRA password.
- 2.Start searching for your pub by name. The easiest way to do this is ei-

ther by the name of the town/village or, if in a large city like London, the post code.

3. Locate the "Submit Beer Score" on the tab bar underneath the pub photo if you are using a smart phone or on the right hand side of the screen if you are using a computer.

4. Enter the date, score, brewery name and the name of the beer as the fields automatically pop up. If the beer that you are drinking is new or a one off by the brewery then you may need to type in the full name.

5. Click the "submit" button and your score will be winging it's way to the local branch's Pub Officer.

Another added bonus is the fact that the website will automatically keep a record of all your scores and when you made them so you can look back to see what beers you have had in a particular pub and how you rated them.

The branch Pub Officer then collates the scores and makes them available to each branch business meeting in order that a discussion can be had on how the pubs are doing. Members are then encouraged to visit any

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pub where scores would suggest that a particular pub that isn't in the Good Beer Guide may be doing well enough to warrant their inclusion. This second phase is where scores submitted for a pub are "tested" by other members to ensure that the pub is a valid candidate for the Good Beer Guide. As an example, Maidstone and Mid Kent Branch has over 150 pubs that require a visit each year and there is only a minute number of active members that score the pubs. If only one member is scoring, say a 4 every time they visit the pub, then such a good score has to be "validated" by other active members. This "testing" period is normally between November and January. This will advantage pubs where scores are consistent and also those pubs where a reasonable number of scores have been submitted.

The third phase is the choosing of the pubs to be entered into the latest edition of the Good beer Guide. The Pub officer will produce the statistics and there will be a discussion by those members that attend a special business meeting at the start of the year. This isn't about beer quality as the beer scores will speak for themselves, but more about whether any of the pubs should be taken off of the list. Good reasons will include change of ownership, new cellar manager, the pub has stopped selling real ale or has been put up for sale. The list of tabled pubs is considerably longer than the number of pubs allocated to the branch for the Good Beer Guide.

The next meeting to discuss pubs to be entered will be held on January 11th, 2018 at the Marden Village Club, Marden and all Maidstone and Mid Kent branch members are welcome. Please remember that the branch has an allocation of only 17 pubs to be entered into the Good Beer Guide.



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BEER TOUR OF SOFIA, BULGARIA

by Danny O'Sullivan



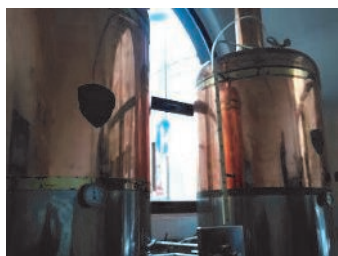
Christmas 2016 was looming so what better than look for good beer and Christmas Markets, somewhere where we hadn't been before. After scrolling down Ryanair's list of places to fly, most of which that we had never heard of, we decided a trip to the capital of Bulgaria was in order, so at £45 for a return flight for a 5 day break in Sofia we set about finding some good bars

to hit. We knew some Bulgarians locally in Thanet who had told us about the cheapest beer in Europe that could be found in Varna for 40p a pint, though they thought it might be more expensive in the capital. And they were right.

During the economic crisis, a few years ago, there was a popular joke in Bulgaria. "Come to Bulgaria - there is no crisis here since we are 10 years behind!" The same could apply to the beer sector. Bulgaria is far behind the booming craft beer market in the USA and parts of Europe, but still has plenty to offer and is slowly catching up.



At the moment Bulgaria is undergoing its own local beer revolution. It started a little over five / six years ago by home brewers all over the country who decided to look for an alternative to the regular lagers that were the only choice available at that time. Their guinea pigs at first were their families and close friends but soon the word spread like happy yeast in a wort. Apart from the big brands and a couple of brew pubs such as **Pri Kmeta** in Sofia (not working any more) and **Luc's** in Tryavna (still up and running) there was not a single local micro-brewery at that time. Now beer lovers have a much bigger choice and the number of micro-breweries is on the rise, though not many yet in Sofia, unfortunately. We stayed in a hotel with a great name, Hotel Cheap, and at about 35 euros a night was a great place to rest your head and not too far from the centre.



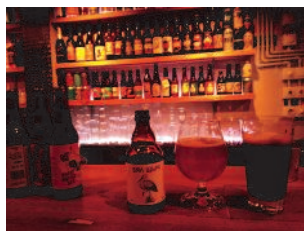
The first bar we headed for was **The Beer Ale House**, at "Hristo Belchev" 42, 1000, a bar/restaurant that had its own microbrewery. Each table is equipped with a "fountain" of live beer! Separately, the menu is packed with dozens of species of Bulgarian and foreign beers and tasty treats to eat. It was quite dark and had some local

football on the TVs. Prices were reasonable. The beer was called 'Live beer'.. I couldn't find another name for it. I assumed the others being served weren't live. The beer had a meter so you paid for whatever you drank. Made me think of the old fashioned methods of paying for your electricity. It was about £1.50 a half litre. 7 leva a litre in the Bulgarian currency; it was around 2.25 leva to £1 when we visited. And for those who wanted to diversify, they offered two types - *Leikeim Weisse Hell* and *Hobgoblin* and another 27 kinds of bottled beer from the Czech Republic, England, Germany, Belgium and France. So here is the place for good and quality beer. After this we tried a couple of other bars but the beer was of the fizzy variety and about £1 for a half litre of local ale, often *Glarus*.



The next bar we tried was **Kanaal**. This place was very different from most bars we visited. A Fantastic craft beer selection, including 4 IPAs on tap, which is always a winner... A cool and funky atmosphere for those who like that sort of thing. **Kanaal's** wide range of different international and domestic ales, lagers, and stouts may impress even the most fastidious of beer enthusiasts. From strong Belgian beers through quirky English ales to young Bulgarian craft lagers, at **Kanaal**, you may definitely quench your thirst.

However, I found the place a bit overpriced since its location is not very central and the garden it has is pretty small. Quite a long way from centre at ul. Madrid 2, Sofia 1505. I enjoyed two stouts, one a chilli stout. However they worked out at over £5 a pint making this place very expensive for a Bulgarian bar.



We found several other bars that served cheaper ale but none that was particularly inspiring and reminded me of what bars were like back in the 70s. Several had smoking areas in the bars. Another throwback.

Our favourite pub was **Halbite Pub**. This pub was very difficult to find as it around the back of a main street - the address is ul. Neofit Rilski 72, Sofia 100. "Halbite" (This means "The Beer Mugs" in Bulgarian) is a chain of beer houses, dating back to 2000. Here you'll find the best selection of local and imported beers, served at an appropriate temperature in unique mugs,

accompanied by the right dish! Whether you're looking for a light lager, a strong stout, ale, wheat, white, bock or fruit beer - you'll find them all here. Several kinds of draught beers, as well as most of the rare bottled beers, are available here. I enjoyed a *Glarus* porter at 5% and £2 a half litre.

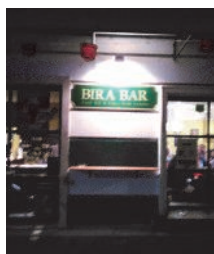
Totally hidden with no name in English and in a back court yard, just find it by the address. Fair prices and the staff were attentive and friendly to us tourists. We tried a typical Bulgarian meal here but found it very salty.



On our final day we found a typical English pub in... Sofia, **BiraBar**. The best thing is the cask beer. Always 3 on tap - *ESB*, *London Pride* and... a guest beer - mainly from *Fuller's*; Sheps has been seen here. There is a great variety of Bulgarian beers, not only craft

ones. We were recommended to try every Lomsko type, *Glarus* and *Blek Pine*. I enjoyed a pint of *ESB* at about £2.50 and £1.40 cheaper than that found at The **Australian Arms** in Ramsgate. It wasn't as good as in the Aussie Arms but it had travelled a long way to Sofia.

BiraBar is a traditional English micro pub in the heart of Sofia. They were the first pub in Bulgaria, where you can try English cask ale as it is served in the UK. The beer is unfiltered, unpasteurized and without additional carbon dioxide.



Here, in a warm and traditional setting, you will find original English cider made from apples without additional sugar.

You will find them at Sofia, Paris 8 str., 10 meters away from Dondukov blvd.

My conclusion after a few days in Sofia is that the beer scene has a way to go to catch up with Poland. I was told about 4 micro-breweries in Varna, several hundred miles away. Bottle shops are being set up at speed with local and European craft ales on sale. I am sure that in a few short years Bulgaria will be a great place for good beer.



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Yowler Craft Cider Sparkling apple cider created from 100% Kentish Apples



THE FAMOUS FOUR

by Jeff Tucker

Let us go back in time to 1974, when the first edition of CAMRA's Good Beer Guide was published. The brewery section of the book listed, as it does today, every known brewery in the UK. As well as the 'big six' such as *Allied Breweries*, and the family brewers, including *Harveys* and *Shepherd Neame*, four homebrew pubs were listed, all that remained of a once flourishing part of the brewing scene.

These 'famous four', who are all still trading, were:

All Nations, Madeley, Shropshire

Three Tuns, Bishops Castle, Shropshire

Blue Anchor, Helston, Cornwall

Old Swan, Netherton, West Midlands (aka Ma Pardoe's)

I have been to the **Old Swan** a few times in my travels, but had never visited the other three. As two are in the same county, I decided to head for Shropshire.

Madeley is now officially part of Telford new town, a soulless place, in the far east of the county. Bishops Castle is in the far south-west. Shrewsbury is roughly equidistant from both, so I based myself there for a few days.

Bus 96 runs from Shrewsbury about every 1-2 hours, travelling via Ironbridge to Madeley Centre, which seems to be the nearest bus stop to the pub. If coming from Telford, bus routes 1 and 4 offer about eight buses an hour, and run in the evening. Madeley is quite a nice, well-kept, leafy village. From the bus stop, turn left, go down some steps into Church Street, follow the road round to the right, and Coalport Road is on the left. At the end of this road is the pub, high up on the bank. All in all, it was about a ten-minute walk from the bus.



The **All Nations** was first licensed in 1832, and has been in the hands of only three families since then. It is completely unspoilt, with no juke box, pool table, or meals served. Food is limited to filled rolls,

local pork pies and sausage rolls.

The house beer, *All Nations Bitter*, £2.50 a pint, now seems to be brewed at *Brough's Brewery* nearby. Two guest beers were also available, and the pub is open all day, every day.

Bishop's Castle is also connected to Shrewsbury by bus, this being the 553, which runs five or six times a day, taking an hour. The **Three Tuns**

is very close to the first bus stop in this small market town. I didn't know this, so carried on to the Boar's Head stop, which involved an uphill walk back to the pub, via the livestock market, which was full of cows and farmers.



Unlike, the **All Nations**, you can't miss the brewery alongside the pub. It claims to have been established in 1642, some 56 years before self-styled 'Britain's Oldest Brewer', *Shepherd Neame*!

The beer is not just brewed for the **Three Tuns** – indeed, I have drunk one of their beers in the

Three Tuns at Lower Halstow, near Sittingbourne. (No doubt some people thought it was a house beer!). When I told the workers taking a break outside the brewery, they were impressed!

The front bar of the pub is very traditional, but the back room has been extended sympathetically, and they do a good trade in food.



Four *Three Tuns* beers were on, so I tried the *Rantipole* at 3.8% (£3.00), which was very nice indeed, and the *XXX* at 4.3%, which was less to my taste.

I had a wonderful time in Shropshire, not paying more than £3.30 a pint anywhere. I think Helston could be on my list for next year...



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A MILLERS TALE FROM ROTHERHAM (PT 2 OF 2)

by Mike Todd

Continuing on from Mike's article in the last Draught Copy....

7th Jan 2017 FA Cup Round Three: Rotherham Utd 2 Oxford Utd 3

Difficult to know what to say... Odemwinge injured himself during the pre-match warm up - and it was the last time that he was to "appear" in a Millers' shirt. Blackstock was brought in as a late replacement for him, he was given a rating of 2/10 in a local press match report..! The Millers were dreadful in the first half and only a great performance by keeper Price, including saving a penalty, kept us in the game. We should have gone on to win the match - but more shocking defensive errors did for us in the end.

8th Jan 2017 Maltby Juniors v Westfield Utd (Local Sun League Under -18)

There were about 50 fans on the Tivoli End. I only stayed for a few minutes of the match, and then headed into the town centre. For those of you who have been to see your team play at Millmoor, and visited the nearby pubs, the three years exile at Don Valley stadium sadly finished off many of the hostelrys near the ground; **Millmoor Hotel** - demolished, **Woodman** - now a cafe, **Queens Hotel** - now a shop/office, **Moulders Rest** - boarded up, **Royal Standard** - demolished, **Kingfisher** - demolished, **Travellers Rest** - demolished ... and even the Zone nightclub - demolished.

9th Jan 2017 The Bluecoat, The Crofts (GBG17)

This Wetherspoons pub has probably won more awards from CAMRA than any other pub in the Rotherham area. It is close to the town centre, hidden away just up the hill from the **Stone and Taps** (you can cut through to it from the **New York Tavern** and the **Cutler's Arms**, via a steep alleyway).



This pub has several levels, and also has outside drinking areas. This particular visit

was on a Monday night, so there was a "Monday Club" price reduction. Amongst the beers on sale were *Dukeries Ray of Sunshine*, *Bradfield Farmer's Stout*, *Rudgate Charlotte's Web* and *Springhead Left Lion*, all of which were £1.85 per pint. A previous CAMRA national champion beer, *Springhead Roaring Meg*, was on sale for £1.99 per pint. It is one of my favorites and it went down a treat. The others were good too.

10th Jan 2017 Rotherham Utd Reserves 3 Grimsby Town Reserves 4

Another trip to Roundwood for a lunchtime kick off, but this time I thought I'd

check out the pubs near the ground that had previously sold real ale in the Rawmarsh Hill/Rawmarsh High Street area, but... the **Star** wasn't even open, and the **Earl Grey** had a handpump, but no real ale due to "supply problems", so I had a Guinness (again). The Rawmarsh/Roundwood area has been a real ale desert for many years. The match itself was quite entertaining, with a very young Millers side taking on a more mature Grimsby outfit. Millers centre forward Kuda Muskwe worked his socks off, and, although not a natural goal poacher, set up two goals and scored one with a powerful shot. Could be some hope for the future there.

11th Jan 2017 Albion Road Working Men's Club, Albion Road

This is a traditional CIU affiliated working men's club with a concert hall and an upstairs snooker room. The club is close to the town centre, but is hidden away at the bottom of Albion Road, just off Wellgate. It only has a narrow frontage, but is much bigger inside than you initially think which you realise once you step inside. This club is often quiet during the week, but fills up at weekends. One real ale on handpump - *Chantry Bow Jingles*. I had a chat with the Bar Manager. He told me the club had sold various real ales in the past. One of the owners of Chantry Brewery is an ex-workmate of his, so when Chantry started brewing he gave their beers a try. He was impressed by the quality of the beers and reliability of the deliveries, so he has stuck with Chantry ever since. There is normally a changing beer from the Chantry range available, but there is presently not enough turnover to put on another handpump. The club is quite close to the **Bluecoat**, via an alleyway.

13th Jan 2017 Commercial Hotel, Station Road, Chapeltown

Strictly speaking, this free house is actually just over the border in Sheffield, but it is fairly easy to get to from Rotherham town centre by 66 bus, or by train via Meadowhall. The **Commercial** is only about 200 yards from Chapeltown station/town centre. This pub has been in several previous issues of the CAMRA Good Beer Guide, specialising in beers from local



microbreweries and beyond. Until recently, before the brewery folded, this was a great outlet for the Wentworth beers. Five real ales were available on the night, with *Toolmakers Fine Finish*, a crisp pale ale, probably being the best of the bunch. The **Commercial** is also good for food, and has darts, pool, bar billiards,

a snug and a meeting room which hosts the local folk club and other events. There is plenty to keep you amused, and well worth a visit. The newish Wetherspoons pub, the **Wagon and Horses**, next to the station is also worth a visit.

14th Jan 2017 Rotherham Utd 2 Norwich City 1

A much better performance by the Millers, although helped by Norwich centre forward Oliveira getting sent off early in the game after landing a right hook on Millers defender Broadfoot, right in front of the referee. An entertaining match... but we remain bottom of the league.

I met up with a couple of Canaries-supporting friends after the game for a pint in the **Bluecoat**. The *Ilkley Crossroads Pale Ale* had a hoppy citrus flavour, and was deceptively easy drinking for 5.4%, and then we went down to the **New York Tavern**. I had a couple of pints of the appropriately named *Mighty Millers* to celebrate.



16th Jan 2017

Train back to London via Doncaster. Had enough time to have a pint in Donny between connecting trains. The **Railway Hotel**, West Street, is very close to the station; just turn right as you leave the station main exit. As usual, there were two real ales on the hand pumps - today's selection being *Moorhouse Blonde Witch*, which I chose, and *Wells Good Stuffing*.



The real ales were £2.90 per pint, but only £2.60 with a Camra membership card. As usual in the **Railway**, it was a tasty pint. Unfortunately, I didn't have enough time to visit any other nearby pubs on this occasion, but the **Leopard** and the **Corner Pin** are only a few yards further away. Both usually have a good selection of beers, and the **Corner Pin** also gives a discount to CAMRA members.

I hope that Mike will not mind me stating that as an addendum to this article, the Millers were subsequently relegated and will play the 2017/18 Season in EFL League One. Mick Allen GDV Camra

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CAMRA DISCOUNT LIST

Here are the pubs we know of that offer discounted pints to any card-carrying CAMRA member. The discount applies to whole pints only. Please email the editor to let us know of any other hostelrys offering similar discounts.

All Chef & Brewer pubs	10 percent
Anchor, Bexley	10p per pint
Campbell Arms, Northfleet	20p per pint
Cellars Alehouse, Maidstone	10p per pint, 5p per half
Cock Inn, Boughton Monchelsea	20p per pint
Crayford Arms, Crayford	10p per pint
Earl Haig, Bexleyheath	10p per pint
Flower Pot, Maidstone	10p per pint
George Staples, Blackfen	20 percent (<i>also buy 6, 7th free</i>)
Jolly Drayman, Gravesend	10p per pint
Jolly Fenman, Blackfen	10 percent
Moody Mare, Mereworth	Discounted to £3.00p per pint
Olde Thirsty Pig, Maidstone	10p per pint
Old Prince of Orange, Gravesend	20p per pint
Portrait, Sidcup	10 percent
Queen Anne, Maidstone	10p per pint, 5p per half
Stag, Maidstone	10p per pint (<i>off guest beers</i>)
Swan, Loose Road, Maidstone	20p per pint, 10p per half
Unicorn, Marden	15 percent
We Anchor in Hope, Welling	10 percent
Yacht, Bexleyheath	10 percent
Ye Olde Black Horse, Sidcup	10 percent

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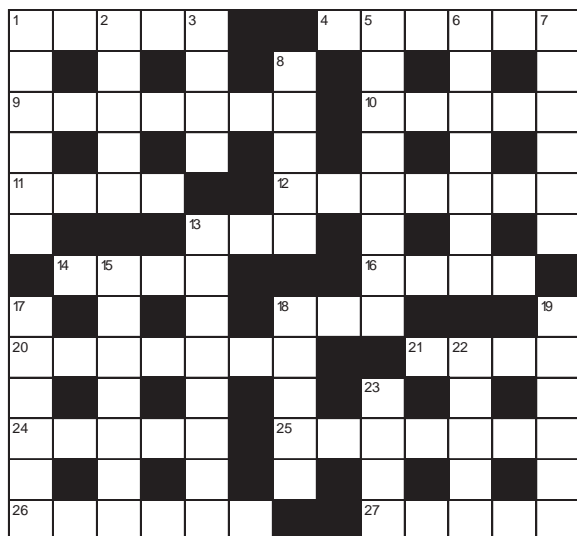
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Crossword No. 28

compiled by MICK NORMAN



Across

- 1 Digit - the means to a lift? (5)
- 4 Official in backward roll for temporary housing (6)
- 9 Lentil Sue is mostly cooking in the kitchen (7)
- 10 In the nude? (5)
- 11 The best District Auditor at the opera (4)
- 12 Cold village near Maidstone (7)
- 13 Organ, maybe private (3)
- 14 Former Kent and England cricketer is short on speed (4)
- 16 In whisky, a git perhaps? No - the reverse! (4)
- 18 Kitsch, whichever way you look at it (3)
- 20 Earring lost, so more annoyed (7)
- 21 Zodiac found in the river (4)
- 24 The ultimate line in petals - initially a flower (5)
- 25 Expensive occasion for the queen? (7)
- 26 Deadly weapon, we hear (6)
- 27 Remains of old garments (5)

Down

- 1 In colour - that's the spirit! (6)
- 2 Finish the wrong way round? (5)
- 3 Cultivated shrub, missing core (4)
- 5 Strained, perhaps, but with the strongest libido (8)
- 6 Stealing a kiss, is destined to become obsessed (7)
- 7 Top fruit? (6)
- 8 Golfer's nightmare? A piece of cake! (5)
- 13 Old Italian Prince: 'I hate running the country!' (8)
- 15 Gin drunk by Fitzgerald, the seductive TV cook (7)
- 17 Crate floating on the river (6)
- 18 Smelly card? (5)
- 19 Warships in El Salvador, especially (3)
- 22 Part-time job a matador might undertake (5)
- 23 They often have it in the Commons (4)

Solution to Crossword No. 27

W	A	T	E	R	L	O	O		H	B
I		R	A	T		P	R	O	B	E
G	L	A	D	I	A	T	O	R		N
H	V	L	E	O		S	U	N		
T	R	A	M		C	R	I	N	G	E
		I	S		S	O				T
I	S	L	E	O	F		S	U	N	S
C				R	T		N	U		
E		S	P	R	A	I	N		A	L
L	O	O		O	S		L	P		A
A	L		W	E	S	T	E	R	H	A
N	A	I	L	S		U	E			E
D		D			M	E	A	S	U	R

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CAMRA BRANCH DIARIES

CAMRA branches arrange socials and trips throughout the year. If you would like more information, please ring the local branch contact—see **Local News** sections. **Meetings start at 20:30 unless otherwise stated.**

BEX: Bexley, GDV: Gravesend and Darent Valley, MMK: Maidstone & Mid-Kent

November Bex 22 Eltham Social, Long Pond & Park Tavern

December MMK 5 10:57, Bus & Walk to Little Mill

GDV 6 Three Daws, Gravesend – Annual General Meeting

MMK 7 West End Tavern, Marden, then Unicorn

Bex 13 Brch Mtg, White Cross, Sidcup

GDV 13 Malt Shovel, Dartford – Christmas Social

MMK 14 Fishermans Arms, Maidstone, then Olde Thirsty Pig

MMK 16 12:00, Bus/Train Trip to Peckham & Nunhead

Bex 18 19:00, Christmas Social, Door Hinge, Welling

MMK 21 20:00, Malling Jug, West Malling, then Bull and walkabout

Bex 28 12:00, Twixmas Social, starting Robin Hood & Little John, Bexleyheath

MMK 28 Druids, Maidstone, then Old House at Home, then Stag

January GDV 4 Dartford Working Men's Club – Open Business Meeting

MMK 5 Goacher's Old Evening, Rifle Volunteers

Bex 10 Brch Mtg, George Staples, 273 Blackfen Rd , Sidcup

MMK 11 Biz Mtg. & GBG selection, Marden Village Club

MMK 15 Bus & Walk to Petteridge and Brenchley

GDV 17 Ship & Lobster, Robert Pocock, Jolly Drayman, Gravesend

MMK 18 Royal Oak, Hawkhurst, then Queens, then Great House

Bex 24 20:00, Bexleyheath Social, starting Kentish Belle, Bexleyheath

MMK 25 George, Trottiscliffe, then Duke of Wellington, Ryarsh

Feburary GDV 1 Foresters, Malt Shovel, Ivy Leaf, Dartford

MMK 1 Brickmakers, Maidstone, then Flower Pot

MMK 8 Spitfire, Kings Hill, then Moody Mare, Mereworth

MMK 13 Bus & Walk to Dunks Green

Bex 14 Brch Mtg, Jolly Millers, Bexleyheath

MMK 15 Red Bull, Eccles, then Kings Arms, Boxley

GDV 22 Open Business Meeting & Good Beer Guide Selection, venue tbc

MMK 22 White Horse, Otham, then Potting Shed, Langley

Bex 28 20:00, GBG selection meeting, Furze Wren, Bexleyheath

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