

Draught Copy



CAMPAIGN
FOR
REAL ALE

Free Magazine

By Maidstone & Mid-Kent
CAMRA

incorporating Gravesend &
Darent Valley and Bexley
Branches

Spring 2019 No. 194



Maidstone and Mid Kent
CAMRA Vintage Bus tour



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

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For further information about all pubs mentioned in this publication (or indeed anywhere in the UK), please refer to CAMRA's national pub database: *www.whatpub.com*

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LOCAL BEER & CIDER FESTIVALS

CAMRA Festivals:

March 2019

1/2 North Sussex Equinox Beer & Cider Festival

Drill Hall, Denne Rd, Horsham, RH12 1JF

Website: www.northsussex.camra.org.uk/equinox

50+ beers, + real cider + perry.

22/23 29th Sussex Beer Festival

Brighton Racecourse, Freshfield Rd, Brighton, BN2 9XZ

Website: www.sussexbeerfestival.co.uk

150+ real ales from across the UK, 40+ ciders + perries.

April 2019

13 London Spring Cider Festival

Matchstick Pie House, Arches 213/214 Edward Street, London, SE8 5HD

One day cider + perry fest. 30 ciders + perries, plus bar and pies.

Open: 12noon-10pm, last entry 930pm.

Admission: CAMRA members + students £1, non-membs £3.

19/20 14th Thanet Easter Beer & Cider Festival

Winter Gardens, Fort Crescent, Margate, CT9 1HX

Website: www.thanet-camra.org.uk

180+ ales & 60+ ciders. Open: Fri 12noon-930pm, Sat 12noon-7pm.

Entry: Fri £6, Sat £3 (Card-carrying CAMRA membs free both days).

Fast track entry for CAMRA membs Fri. Live entertainment both days.

May 2019

2/5 Reading Beer & Cider Festival

Christchurch Meadows, George Street, Caversham, RG4 8BY

Website: www.readingbeerfestival.org.uk

480+ beers, 145+ ciders, foreign beers, 55+ key keg ales + UK wines.

9/11 14th Bexley Beer Festival, Old Dartfordians Sports Club War Memorial Club

House, Bourne Rd, Bexley, DA5 1LW

Website: www.bexley.camra.org.uk

90+ beers, ciders & perries. Refundable souvenir glass £3,

hot & cold food avail. Snacks + soft drinks avail at Club Bar.

Thu 2-11pm; Fri 11am-11pm; Sat 11am-9pm,

CAMRA membs & under 26s: free with ID/memb card, non-CAMRA membs £3.

17/19 30th Yapton Beerex,

Yapton & Ford Village Hall, Main Road, Yapton, BN18 0ET

Website: www.facebook.com/YaptonBeerex

60+ real ales, ciders + perries + food.

24/26 Eastbourne Beer & Cider By The Sea

Western Lawns, King Edwards Parade, Eastbourne, BN21 4UH

Website: www.eastbournebeerfestival.co.uk

60 + real ales, 30+ ciders + perries + range of foreign bottled beers, wine + cocktails.

Other Events:

May 2019

24-27 Bull Beer Festival

The Bull, Lombard Street, Horton Kirby DA4 9DF,

Website: www.thebullhortonkirby.com

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Canterbury Brewers	01227 455899	www.thefoundrycanterbury.co.uk
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G2	01233 630277	www.g2brewing.com
Goachers	01622 682112	www.goachers.com
Goody Ales	01227 361555	www.goodyales.co.uk
Hopdaemon Brewery	01795 892078	www.hopdaemon.com
Hop Fuzz Brewery	07858 562878	www.hopfuzz.co.uk
Iron Pier Brewing	07900 234644	www.ironpier.beer
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Time & Tide	07840 327265	www.timeandtidebrewing.co.uk
Tír Dhá Ghlas Brewery	01304 211666	www.cullinsyard.co.uk/brewery
Tonbridge Brewery	07962 016286	www.tonbridgebrewery.co.uk
Turnstone Ales		See Facebook page
Wantsum Brewery	0845 0405980	www.wantsumbrewery.co.uk
Westerham Brewery Co.	01732 864427	www.westerhambrewery.co.uk
Whitstable Brewery	01622 851007	www.whitstablebrewery.co.uk

Map available at www.kentcamra.org.uk/kent/breweries



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Nightingale Cider Co	07788 973968	<i>www.nightingalecider.com</i>
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Rough Old Wife Cider	01227 700757	<i>www.rougholdwife.com</i>
Tiddly Pomme's Woolly Pig	01795 529100	<i>www.tiddlypommeshop.co.uk</i>
Turners Cider	07825 394164	<i>www.turnerscider.co.uk</i>
Wise Owl Cider	01233 850664	<i>wiseowlcider@gmail.com</i>

Map available at www.kentcamra.org.uk/kent/cider

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Affiliated to the Kent Association of Working Mens Clubs & Institutes (1996)

At the end of October I joined a group of Maidstone and Mid Kent (MMK) CAMRA members, on a ride out by vintage bus, to the south-east of the county. The idea of the trip was to visit four pubs, all unspoilt and all full of character. Starting on Romney Marsh, we then moved on to the charming little town of Hythe, before finishing the day at Coldred; a tiny village in the North Downs, a few miles to the north-west of Dover. The sun shone all day, the four pubs we visited were all good, and the company I shared the journey with was first class. The coach we travelled in was an AEC Reliance, which was no doubt the height of luxury in its day. It still bore the legend, and paintwork, of its former owners, Camden Coaches of Sevenoaks.

I joined the bus at Headcorn station, which was an easy journey for me from Tonbridge, and after a pleasant journey through Tenterden, and Appledore, we reached our first port of call. This was the unspoilt and National Inventory listed, **Red Lion** at Snargate, aka "*Doris's*". We arrived



Picture: J Tucker

15 minutes before opening time, which gave people a chance to stretch their legs, walk down the lane for a look at the 13th Century church of St Dunstan, take a few photos or make use of the outside gents.

The Red Lion's nickname comes from its former, legendary landlady, Doris Jemison, who sadly passed away in April 2016. The pub is now run by Doris's daughter Kate, and her partner. It has been in the hands of the Jemison family since 1911 and features on CAMRA's National Inventory of unspoilt Heritage Pubs. The **Red Lion** is believed to date back to 1540, but unlike many pubs of a similar age, the inside has not been modified, leaving a series of inter-connecting rooms. The walls are decorated with a series of original World War II and other memorabilia.

Although there is a set of three hand pumps on the marble bar top, they have not been used for many years. Instead all beers are served direct from casks stillaged behind the bar. Local beers feature prominently on the menu, with Maidstone brewer *Goacher's* being a firm favourite.

There were two *Goacher's* beers available on our visit; *Dark Mild* and *Imperial Stout* and I can personally vouch that both were in good form. Kate and her partner were behind the bar, and were pleased to see us. We spread ourselves out, with most people decamping to the largest of the pub's three rooms, which is at the front of the building. A small group of us stayed close to the bar, swapping tales of previous visits.

The visit wasn't solely out of nostalgia, as with new licensees in charge at the **Red Lion**, albeit from the same family, we were keen to see what changes, if any, had taken place. The pub's exterior has been given a new coat of paint, the outside gents now has a Perspex roof (no more getting wet whilst taking a pee), and there is also running hot water and an electric hand-dryer. There aren't any other changes though, as apart from crisps and nuts, the **Red Lion** still doesn't serve food.

After an hour and a quarter at the **Red Lion** it was back on the bus and off to the **Bell** at Ivychurch. This was our scheduled lunch-stop. The journey through the winding lanes of the Marsh took just over 10 minutes, and we could see the pub, right in front of the 14th Century parish church, as we approached the village.



Picture: J Tucker

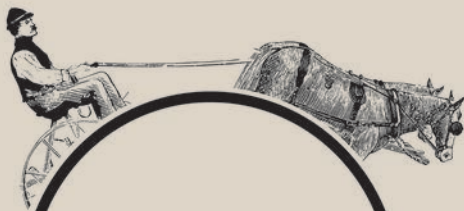
The pub dates from the 16th Century, but has a modern, flat-roofed extension which houses a games area. The proximity of pub and church harks back to medieval times, and for many the two form the perfect combination. The **Bell** is surprisingly large inside, with a long single bar area. The bar counter is opposite the entrance, whilst the area to the left is given over largely to diners.

The pub was expecting us for lunch, and tour organiser Nigel had notified everyone's choice of meal beforehand. The way in which the pub's staff got our party of twenty-eight all sat down, before bringing the food out on a table by table basis, was certainly impressive and the food didn't disappoint either.

There were four beers on tap; *Adnam's Broadside*, *St Austell Trelawney*, a beer from *Navigation Brewery*, whose name escapes me, plus the ubiquitous *Sharps Doom Bar*. I started off with the *Trelawney*, before moving onto the *Adnam's Broadside*. We left the **Bell** after paying for our food, and finishing our beer. It was a nice gesture when the landlord came over and thanked us individually for our custom, as we made our way out.

It was then back on the coach for the half hour journey to Hythe. Hythe itself, is a pleasant little town, and was one of the original Cinque Ports. We were heading for the **Three Mariners**, a small and pleasant back street local built on a corner, offering good beer, two distinct rooms, friendly staff and log fires in winter. It is also dog friendly.

Most of our party piled into the left hand bar, but a small group of us opted for the other bar, where we even managed to grab a table. The beer offering was *Adnam's Lighthouse*, *Old Dairy Blue Top* and *Young's Bitter*. I went for the *Blue Top*, as I am a big fan of *Old Dairy* beers.



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The sun was beginning to set as we left the pub for our final stop of the day. This was to be the **Carpenter's Arms**, in the tiny village of Coldred. The coach headed out of Hythe and towards Sandgate, where the sea looked as calm as a millpond, as we drove along the front. We then headed up the hill into Folkestone and on towards Dover.

Most of us had never heard of Coldred, but for the record its main claim to fame is the Grade 1 listed church of St Pancras, which dates back to Saxon times. There is also a duck pond opposite the pub, although as it was dark when we arrived, I don't think any of us noticed it, despite the coach pulling up alongside.



The **Carpenter's** has 18th Century origins, but is a relatively anonymous-looking, white painted building. It is sited slightly below road level, meaning customers have to negotiate a flight of internal steps in order to gain access. The pub has been in the same family for over 100 years, and with its two bars, simple furniture and plain décor, has remained largely unchanged for 50 years.

As well as a proper, old-fashioned pub, the **Carpenter's** is very much the village local. It was quite cosy in the pub, and the space taken up by our party and the pub regulars meant seats were at a premium. We all managed to squeeze in though, and then settled down to enjoy some good beer and some equally good conversation.

There were several interesting beers on sale, including *Gadd's No. 5*, which really hit the spot, plus a slightly stronger offering, also from *Gadd's*, called *War Horse*. This was a strong, dark beer brewed to mark the 100th anniversary of the ending of the Great War. Other beers included *Rockin' Robin Reliant* and *Tropic Fiesta* from *Beatnikz Republic*.

The **Carpenter's** is only open evenings, so a visit using public transport is virtually impossible, but given Coldred's proximity to Dover (approx. 6 miles), a taxi for a group of three or four persons shouldn't prove too expensive.

My thanks to Nigel Deas of MMK CAMRA for organising the trip, and to Roland Graves and Colin Godlement, for driving us safely, there and back.

More of Paul's blogs can be found on his blog :

<https://baileysbeerblog.blogspot.com/>

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

Nevill Bull, Birling – Re-opened and now run by Charlotte Slattery and is connected with the Kings Arms, Offham. See their new website (under construction) for opening times as it is not currently open all week, www.nevillbullbirling.com, or a call to 01732 849045 may be useful to avoid a wasted journey. *Kent Pale* and *Tonbridge Countryman* seem to be permanent with one other local ale.



Bull, Benenden – Always busy here with plenty of heating from the open fires. A recent visit saw *Dark Star Hophead* and branch members found *Larkins Traditional* and *Harvey's Sussex Best Bitter* were also in good order.

Beer Barn, Boughton Monchelsea – This has now closed down as Robin is now running Rockin Robin on the Green in Barming as well as brewing his beers.

Eight Bells, Hawkhurst – The new licensee here is James Rogers. Opening times: Closed Mon; 12-3, 5-11 Tues-Thurs; 12 -11 Fri-Sat; 11:30-4 Sun. There is no longer any Sports TV. See website for further information <https://theeight-bells.co.uk/>. Adnams have fitted new beer lines and ales will be from Adnams and two guests sourced locally.



Woodcock, Iden Green – This has been closed for over a year but should be re-opening soon as it is believed to have been taken over.



Chequers Inn, Loose – On Bank Holiday Monday (May 27) the pub will be supporting the Loose Village Duck Races. This event is always very popular, especially with children and is supported by many of the local villagers. At least 4 beers will be available, *Rockin' Robin Reliant Robin*, *Harveys Sussex Best*, *Sharps Doom Bar*, and one guest from *Canterbury Ales*. There will be an outside bar serving cask ale on gravity.

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Drakes, Maidstone – Re-opened on 18 January with licensees Ollie and Rosaline facebook - *Drakes-Cork-and-Cask-391123834786232*.

Eagle, Maidstone – A post-Christmas visit found the usual *St Austell Tribute* and guest *Theakstons Christmas Ale*. The juke box had a wide selection of numbers so something for all ears and seemed very popular.



Rifle Volunteers, Maidstone – Polly and Alex supplied pies and gravy when pre-ordered for the customary occasion when *Goachers Old 1066 Ale* appeared in January. Two pins of the renowned ale were supplied and gravity dispensed. The first disappeared in quick time

with many satisfied customers. The second cask was diminishing rapidly when I left and no doubt also soon succumbed. Members from four of the Kent CAMRA branches had joined together for the occasion. Other ales on the pumps were *Goachers Real Mild Ale*, *Fine Light Ale*, *Crown Imperial Stout* and *Gold Star Strong Ale*.

Swan (Loose Road), Maidstone – The kitchen here has been loaned out to a pizza business which has some good deals if eaten in the pub. *Harvey's Sussex Best Bitter* and *Sharp's Doom Bar* are served.



Wheatsheaf, Maidstone – Landlord Rossa Kenny provided a free Christmas meal in December for local senior citizens, as he has done for many years. Thirty seven of his regular customers were treated to a drink and a very tasty three course meal. *Greene King Flanders*

Field and *Courage Best* were available on hand pump for real ale drinkers.

Marden Village Club, Marden – A sixth pump has been added and will be used for dark ales. This was greatly appreciated by the branch when we visited in January for our business meeting. Guests ales were *Kent Christmas Pudding* and *Tangerine Session*, *Loud Shirt Hypnosis Pale*, *Ramsgate Gadds' No 5*, *Dark Star Revelation* and the permanent *Shepherd Neame Master Brew*.



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Although by the time this issue appears we might be looking forward to spring weather, these notes were compiled in the depths of winter, with memories of Christmas and winter beers in local pubs. The **Chequers** at Crockenhill featured at least three Christmas specials as my contacts reported finding *Wychwood Bah Humbug*, *Brains Festive Cheer* and *Hardys and Hansons Rocking Rudolph* there. A carol singing session in the bar was very well supported with added mince pies at the end which went down well with a Christmas beer or two. More people are reported to be visiting the pub since its introduction into the Good Beer Guide. Monday quiz nights are popular and on Thursdays there is a 20% reduction in the price of main meals.



Nearby in Swanley, the **Cotton Mill** had an *Ilkley Xmas ale* on a recent visit, as well as *Adnams Mosaic*, *Great Heck Dave* and *Titanic Plum Porter*. Looking towards springtime they will have a street food van outside every weekend and improvements will be made to the outside seating area. Opening times will be revised to 12pm-10pm every day except for a 4pm close on Sundays. The quiz night here is Thursday.

In the far corner of our area, the **Bell** at Kemsing, a *Greene King* tied house, has regularly been selling *Hogs Back TEA* and *Timothy Taylors Landlord* as well as their own beers. Home-cooked pub food is available here and said to be very good. This is a traditional village pub with a small public bar at the front, the main bar in the middle and a separate function room towards the rear. There is a collection of small ceramic bells and lifelike pencil sketches of bygone local characters in the middle bar.



A trip out delivering the previous edition of Draught Copy found a group of pubs with interesting beers to offer. The **Railway Tavern** at Longfield had *Castle Rock Pale Ale* and a *Palmers Christmas ale*, alongside the standard *Sharp's Doom Bar*. The **Black Horse** at Stansted had *Tonbridge Coppernob* and *Velvet Stout*, alongside the regular *Larkins Traditional* and *Young's Bitter*. The **Green Man** at

Hodsoll Street was serving *Harvey's Sussex Best Bitter* and *Old Dairy Red Top* in very good condition.

Along the Darent Valley, the **Queen** at South Darenth had two seasonal beers from *Kent Brewery* over Christmas and the New Year, *Yule Log*, a chocolate cream stout, and *Christmas Pudding*, a winter warmer.



The nearby **Jolly Millers** is reported often to sell beers from *Canterbury Ales* and *Dartford Wobbler* alongside *Sharp's Doom Bar*, though *Hardys and Hansons Rocking Rudolph* has also been spotted there. The **Bull** at

Horton Kirby continues to offer *Dark Star Hophead* and four changing beers. The highlight of our recent branch visit to the pub was a *Tonbridge* brew called *Drew's Special Stout* (5.2 % ABV).

This would not be available anywhere else and Danny, the landlord, had helped with the brewing. A donation from the price of each pint was to be made to the Cure CJD Campaign. This is not the first time the pub has had a special beer with a donation to charity.



Up on the main road, the **Ship** at Sutton-at-Hone did indeed reopen in the summer as suggested two issues ago. Two real ales are available and both change regularly. One recent report mentions *Hop Back Summer Lightning* and *Wychwood Bah Humbug*

and another *Upham Best Bitter* and a *Timothy Taylors* pale ale. Further along, the **Papermakers** at Hawley has been selling *Adnams Ghost Ship* and *Fuller's London Pride*. Almost in Dartford, the



Cressy Arms at Wilmington has, since the New Year, been free of tie for real ales. Thanks to licensee Mark Lewins for sending us the update. He plans to stock beers from *Bexley* and *Dartford Wobbler* alongside *Sharp's Doom Bar*, at £3.30 per pint.



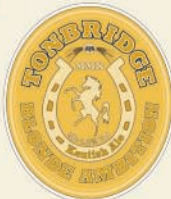
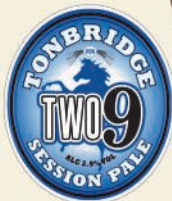
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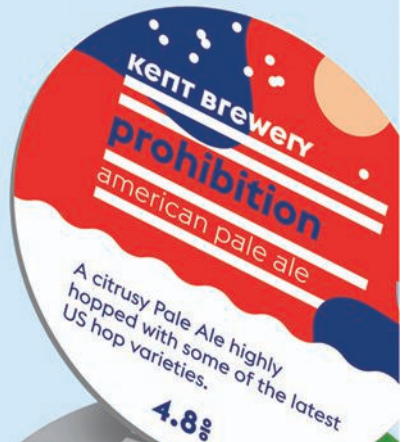


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And that is almost the only mention of Dartford for this issue. It seems that little of note has happened there for a while, although if anyone knows different I'd like to hear about it and provide an update next time.

The **Robert Pocock** in Gravesend is in the middle of an interesting time on the real ale front. Like the **Queen** at South Darenth, they had *Kent Brewery Yule Log* and *Christmas Pudding* on sale, which reportedly stole the show between them. Charlie Deadman at the pub reckons he'll try to convince the brewery that *Yule Log* ought to be available all year round. Just before Christmas they



featured a *Chocolate Oatmeal Stout* from *Reunion* brewery from South London. Talks are in progress about a meet the brewer event and maybe even a brewery tour. Mid-March will see the start of the next Wetherspoon beer festival, featuring up to 30 British breweries and 5 international brewers from countries including France and New Zealand. These will also be featured at the **Flying Boat** of course, keeping Dartford in the mix. Finally in April or May (dates yet to be confirmed at the time of writing) there will be the Kent vs Essex ale festival featuring 5 microbreweries from each county.



The **Somerset Arms** in the town reopened in December under the flag of the Craft Union Pub Company. As these notes being finished the pub had no real ale but it was reported that two handpumps were imminent and one would feature a guest beer. If so, more news will follow next time. **TJ's** now has a loyalty card scheme whereby the ninth pint becomes free. The usual real ale is *Greene King IPA* but there is often a second choice as well. Visitors, at times when there is less televised sport, can watch a rolling programme of slides or film of scenes from the town or the river on one of the screens.



As mentioned last time, the **Grapes** closed for a short time in early November and reopened under new management. The pub is now open on Mondays again. No major changes to the décor are planned or needed, as it had been recently redecorated. However work is due to take place in the kitchen, after which traditional, pub food will be available. This is expected to be complete by the end of

January. Live music is planned for Fridays and Sundays with a couple of open mic nights per month. On a recent Monday the jukebox was playing a fairly eclectic selection of music. The regular real ales are *Shepherd Neame Whitstable Bay* and *Spitfire*.

Two contrasting stories from Shrubbery Road in Gravesend. The **Miller's Cottage** had closed by January, though a banner outside was advertising for new lessees, with a possible freedom from tie. Just down the road the **Windmill Tavern** changed hands



late last year. Again, little change to the interior is planned. There is a new chef, so food will be emphasised more, with Sunday lunches. Events are planned, particularly using the marvellous garden, and beer festivals will return, with the first planned for June. The pub has dealt with bookings for the nearby tennis courts and bowling green and this continues to be the case. *Greene King IPA* and *Shepherd Neame Master Brew* are regulars, and on my visit were joined by *Marston's Pedigree*, *St Austell Tribute* and *St Austell Proper Job*.

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www.bexley.camra.org.uk

Happy New year from Bexley CAMRA.

14th Bexley Beer Festival 9th - 11th May

Marking the centenary of the first flight across the Atlantic by John Alcock and Arthur Whitten-Brown in a modified Vickers Vimy bomber, originally designed and built in the Vickers factory in Crayford (about a mile away from the site of the beer festival), our logo depicts the plane with the Kentish White Horse (Invicta) wing walking with the obligatory pint in his hand. Thanks to Heritage Lottery Funding there will be several 'Alcock and Brown – Knights of the Air' projects throughout 2019.



The historic flight left Newfoundland, Canada on 14 June 1919 and flew 16.5 hours to Clifden on the west coast of Ireland. Commemorative plaques designed by local schoolchildren and community groups, two exhibitions and a special free family celebration day at Hall Place & Gardens on Sunday 21st July that will include a model plane flying Guinness Book of Records attempt, will all be part of the ambitious project.

The project will also include the opportunity for people of all ages to take part in the fun by either volunteering or participating in some of the aviation themed activities. For more information on the Alcock and Brown Centenary Project Group (Crayford) and how to get involved email :- janet.hearn-gillham@ntlworld.com

The 14th Bexley festival will take place on the 9th - 11th May at the Darfordians Community Sports Club, Bourne Road, Bexley. DA5 1LW (see the advert on page 33 for more details).

Updates available nearer the date on www.bexley.camra.org.uk, facebook - [camrabexleybranch](#) or twitter - [bexleycamra](#).

Bexley branch would like to invite you to volunteer with us; This can be absorbing, physically demanding and exhilarating but also very enjoyable as well as a chance to make new friends, learn new skills and try new beers.

Participation does not need previous experience, but you must be a CAMRA member. Training is provided as necessary and we're flexible on hours. Volunteer forms are available at: http://bexley.camra.org.uk/beer_festival.html

Social news

It is a bit of a theme with us in Bexley these days that we find ourselves playing “catch-up” on some of our presentations. On this occasion, I think we picked a good time to do so. Many readers will recognise the picture as that of Bexley’s long-standing Festival Bar manager to 2017, Vic Beale, a man of many jaunts, with whom we finally managed to catch up so we could stage the presentation, at the **Wrong’Un**, when he was with us for our Christmas meal on December 8th. An engraved tankard had been purchased to complement the framed certificate, commemorating his years of service at the Bar. We could have given him a large pile of 2ps to count, but I don’t think that would have worked...



Bexley Pubs a roundup of recent news from Bexley Chair, Roland Amos.

Volunteer, Bexleyheath: When the Wellington-owned **Volunteer** (Church Rd, Bexleyheath) closed in November 2017, some were moved to take control of their fate. At the dawn of 2018, a consortium of regulars was formed, consisting of a landlord, accountant, property manager, builder, electricians, plumbers, gardener, project manager, fire officer and an IT specialist. They began enquiring into the possibility of taking over the lease, and found themselves competing for it against agencies with less sympathetic views than their own towards the property; but they managed to secure an initial 6-year lease, forming themselves into the Volunteer Pub Company, a PLC with Michael Regan as Director.



A public house since 1865 and one of the thousands of pubs around the country set up to recruit volunteers for the armed forces, the “Volly” is situated some 150 yards from the Broadway. It had been visibly suffering up to the end of 2017 and the team had issues with the state of the property in general, both inside and out. I can still visualise the forlorn and empty look it had just after it closed.

Photo by the author.

Dartfordians Community Sports Club

War Memorial Club House
Bourne Road, Bexley, Kent
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14TH BEXLEY
BEER FESTIVAL
9TH - 11TH MAY 2019



90+ Beers & Ciders Refundable Souvenir Glass, Hot & Cold Meals,

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Thursday 9th May

2pm-11pm

Friday 10th May

11am-11pm

Saturday 11th May

11am-9pm

CAMRA members and under 26s (with proof of ID) FREE,

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But now the pub is back with regular opening hours, decorated simply and off tie but taking stock from *Greene King*, and can get back to being a local focus again for its football teams, golf society and music events. There are usually two beers on the bar at any time (I've just tried the *Truman's/Iron Pier Roll Out the Barrel*; *Courage Best* was also on), but the pub is surviving for now without a food offering. I'm told this had to be deferred to 2019 pending work behind the scenes on the kitchen.

Whatever happens here, this is a triumph for the group. They seem to have been spared no effort in achieving their aim – as will be understood when it is noted they have made their way past a number of ancillary cost issues in completing the agreed re-appointing of the premises, a position for which they had not initially bargained.

Alongside these independent efforts, CAMRA has something to add here – we got them added to the National Community Pubs database, making the Volunteer only the 8th such pub in Greater London, and, in time for the 2018 CAMRA Pub Saving Award, Bexley Branch forwarded their story for consideration by the award judges. The Campaign has just informed us that they have attained 2nd place (the winner being the group who saved **The Packhorse**, South Stoke, Bath, last year's having been **The Harrow** in Stockbury, Kent). The presentation date will not be known yet, but watch out for it.

Coach House, Bexleyheath: We heard in October this was going to be closed by *Greene King* as the new freeholder, the lease being retained for now by the current tenant. With the **Traveller's Home** (Long Lane) and **Bear and Ragged Staff** (London Rd, Crayford) apparently suiting their local profile, *Greene King* have started thinking about some kind of redevelopment.

Here our efforts don't solely rely on pub campaigning, since we think a statutory listing will be possible before an application goes in given the historic pedigree of the structure. The scribbler of this article has devoted some time recently to raising an ACV (Asset of Community Value) on this pub in support of current legislation and with assistance from quite a number of Bexley Historic Society signatories. We await developments.





Elsewhere, the **Lord Kitcheners** (Wrotham Rd, Welling) seems to have been closed by Milton and sold on to Tesco's. No planning application seen yet. The **Duke** (Bexley Road, Northumberland Heath) was seen to be



under refurbishment when we visited the area (for the **Brewer's Arms** and the **Duchess of Kent**) towards the end of August, and reopened shortly afterwards, but I have no later reports of it. There are also ominous rumblings about the **Running Horses**, the last pub in Erith.

On a lighter note, one of our socials was to the **Iron Pier** brewery tap in Gravesend, a trip which took us first to the **Campbell Arms** for a warm-up pint. A good crowd from branches across London and North Kent was in attendance, accompanying us to the Taproom for 1 pm on the Saturday, and enabling us to fill the place and complete a presentation to



James, of the Beer of the Festival certificate from Bexley's 2018 Festival for their *Best Bitter*. A few *Perry Street Pales* and *Wealdway IPAs* went down before we resumed our tour via the **Darnley Arms** and the **Cricketers**, to finish at the **Compass**.



Photo: Alan Bartlett



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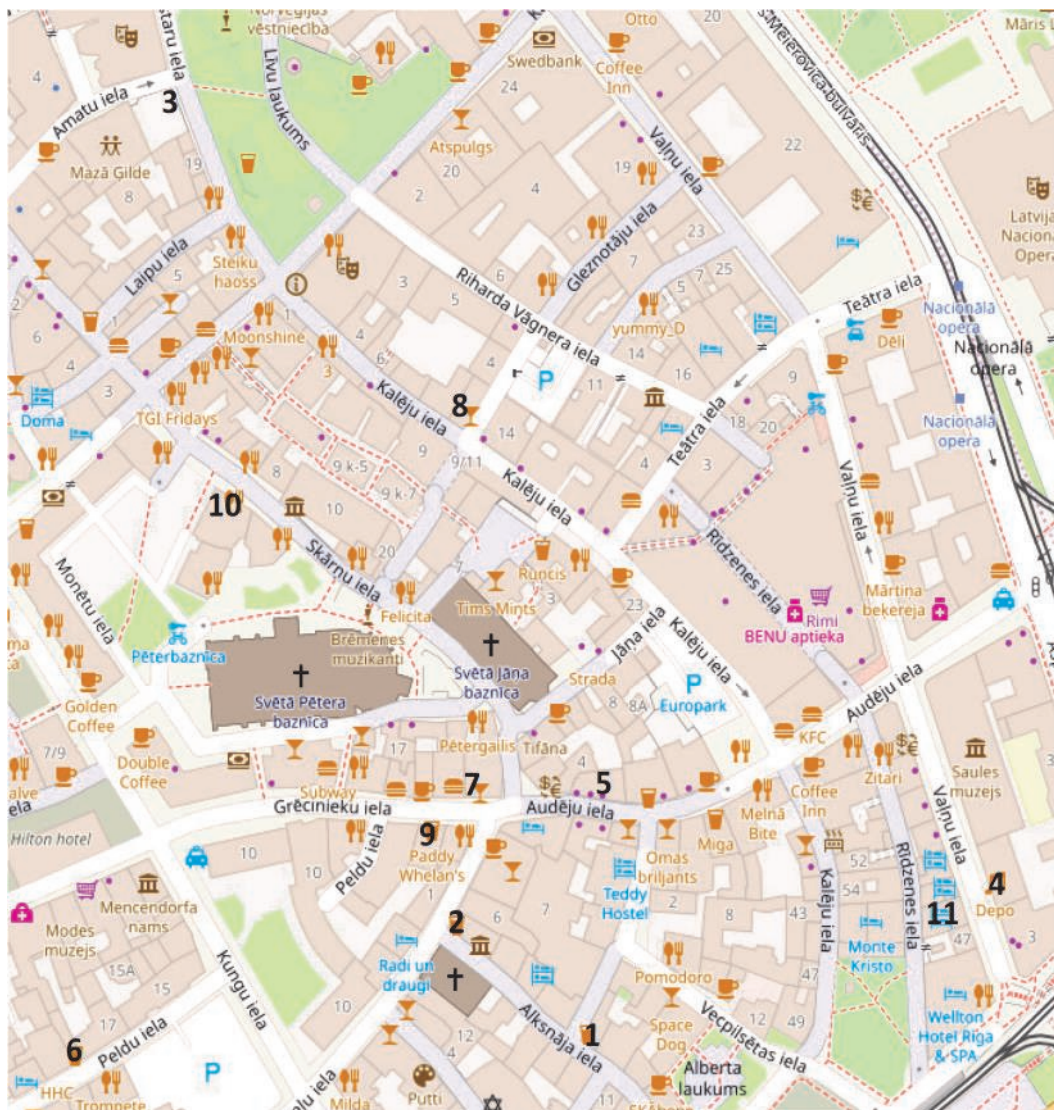


DRINKING IN RIGA

by Mick Allen

This is a continuation of our trip to the ex-USSR Baltic States, allowing three nights in each of Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia. Following on from my last postings about Vilnius, this time round it is the turn of Riga, a destination increasing in popularity for the range of beers served in the City's many bars and pubs.

Once again, for the purposes of maps, I have just included a (very!) basic city map; the Tourist Information Centres all provide free, more detailed maps of the maze of small narrow and cobbled streets. I have also omitted hours of business, as these vary with season.



Having arrived in Riga late afternoon, following a 4 hour coach journey from Vilnius (still no railway line, although the initial agreements for a new high speed link have been reached), there was some time for drinking. All of the pubs apart from one that I mention are accessible without the use of public transport and the beers were all in the €4-5 range for ½ litre. Also note that there are a few quality bars and microbreweries located to the north east of Riga, just out of the centre.

The first bar on the evening's itinerary was the **Funny Fox** (7), located at Grēcinieku iela 1. No food offering in here, so it was off over the road to **Paddy Whelans** (9) at Grēcinieku iela 4, which was serving food. Claimed to be the first Irish themed pub in the Baltics, on offer were 4-5 Latvian beers, plus a large selection of bottled and other draught ales. I had the *dark* (*Tumšais*), a dark lager from the *Užavas Brewery*, based close to the Baltic Coast, west of Riga. Back from here to the **Funny Fox**. Another dark beer in here from *Lielvārdes Brewery* (also on the Baltic Coast), plus a lager from *Lāčplēša Brewery* (based 30 miles inland from Riga, also on the River Daugava). It was shortly time to leave here and retire, as the dreaded Karaoke Machine was being set up.



The next day, after a good walk around Riga, it was a stop in the **Colonel Brewpub** (3), found at Meistaruiela 23. Despite the name, there is no brewery here, and the beers marked 'dark' and 'light' are sourced from the Peter's Brewhouse close by. Hence, I'm guessing these are rebadged beers. I selected the *Dark*. Also on offer here were around a dozen foreign beers. More sightseeing in the afternoon, in order to build a thirst for a tasty (and expensive) *La Chouffe*, in the aptly named **Kwak Inn** (8). Found at Gleznotāju iela 2, it doesn't take much working out that this is a Belgian Beer Bar. From here it was onto another Belgian bar, **Bon-**

Vivant, (2) (Mārstaļu iela 8) for a rather bland *Cēsu lager*, instead of a Belgian beer.

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The infamous **Armoury Bar** (1) (Vecpilsētas iela 11) was next on the list. I say infamous, as this is probably the only bar in Europe where there is a selection of guns behind the bar that you can



handle - just ask the landlord. I don't recommend the rocket launcher, though, as it weighs almost 20kg! A honey beer, *Medalus*, in here from the *Iļģuciema Brewery* (Riga) went down nicely. For the last beer of the night it was a short walk to **Easy Beer** (5) at Audēju iela 8. This bar has relocated from the other side of St Peter's Church and offers twelve beers, at least three of which are local, with dispensers lined up on the wall. It is a self-service system here; you are given a touch credit card (I think there is €20 on the card) that you place on a pad next to the pump. That activates the pump and you choose as little or as much beer as you like. The card is read by the staff at the end of your session and you pay for what you've drunk. I'm hoping it would be too complicated to instigate this for handpumps in the UK!

Our final day in Riga started with a visit to the largest indoor market in Europe, by the railway station. This is housed in five large buildings constructed from former Zeppelin hangars. From there we headed to the Latvian Academy of Sciences for an panoramic view of Riga. This building was constructed between 1951 and 1961 as a 'gift' from Stalin. From there we caught the train out to *Jūrmala*, a summer beach resort on the Baltic. Found a great little bar here, **Alus Krodziņš**, at Jomas iela 64. Soup and a roll and a basement price (€2.88) ½ litre of unfined *Brūža* from the *Cēsu Brewery* were appreciated here. A thirty minute train ride brought us back to Riga, in time to have a quick look around the Railway Museum and at the Soviet Victory Monument, before the evening's entertainment.



First up was **Folkklubs ala Pagrabs**. Situated at Peldu iela 19, this is a large basement bar with live, mostly folk based entertainment, most nights of the week. Temptation had the



upper hand in here, and I went for a paddle of five beers from a selection of twenty one available. The food in here is also of good quality and value. **Peter's Brewhouse** was a short walk away, at Skārņu iela 9. The first and only brewery located in the old town,



I managed to have a chat with the brewer Gleb (who also works the bar). He brews a *blonde* ale, a *red* ale, and a *dark* ale, on a small kit, to the side of the bar. I opted for the *dark* ale. The brewery has been in operation since early 2015. The last two bars of the

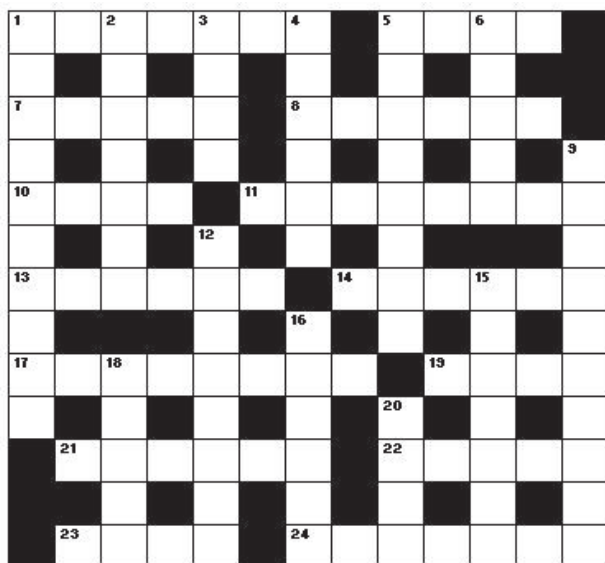


evening were opposite each other in Vaļņu iela, namely **Depo** (4) and the **Old Town Backpackers Hostel** (11). In **Depo** a *Mežpils Alus* was tried. *This beer may not have even been brewed in Latvia, though, as the brewery is part of the Carlsberg Group.* The **Old Town Backpackers Hostel** had a fairly large and cheap beer list, but the premises were not to my taste, with a VW Campervan fashioned into a serving area. A nightcap of what I thought was going to be a traditional Latvian cider was ordered in here. Unfortunately it was of the fizzy variety.

Still, onwards and upwards for the journey to Tallinn the next day...

Crossword No. 33

compiled by MICK NORMAN



Solution to Crossword No. 32

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

Across

- 1 Drunk as an egg, perhaps (7)
- 5 Tap umpire for means of delivery at the bar (4)
- 7 Whore set off foreign leader (5)
- 8 A steep decline in old currency (6)
- 10 Takes drink slowly, but finds Ipswich is in the middle of Southend! (4)
- 11,14 Disgusting drab stodge - dodgy firm involved at this sporting arena (8,6)
- 13 There's confusion about this TV woman (6)
- 14 See 11
- 17 I sin - a gin sling for a badge (8)
- 19 "You're an idiot" heard by army division (4)
- 21 Luxury car Dean crashes while on a mission (6)
- 22 Vera...Vera - to some extent a party girl? (5)
- 23 Vent one's spleen at army conservationists (4)
- 24 13, initially a loner, becomes Beatles girl (7)

Down

- 1 A trout's head found in wee lake by the French emporium (10)
- 2 City president useless, so may be toasted (7)
- 3 Great stride taken by Oslo people (4)
- 4 Dawg produces number two (6)
- 5 May appear on a stamp after Thatcher (8)
- 6 Cracker philosophy? (5)
- 9 Dave Turner, rescued by Indiana Jones perhaps (10)
- 12 PC monitor? (8)
- 15 Professor riding in Vauxhall? Quite the opposite for 60s folkie (7)
- 16 Fix instrument (6)
- 18 Ay sir - ravaged, war-torn country (5)
- 20 Rock band available for nothing (4)

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Ye Olde Black Horse , Sidcup	10 percent

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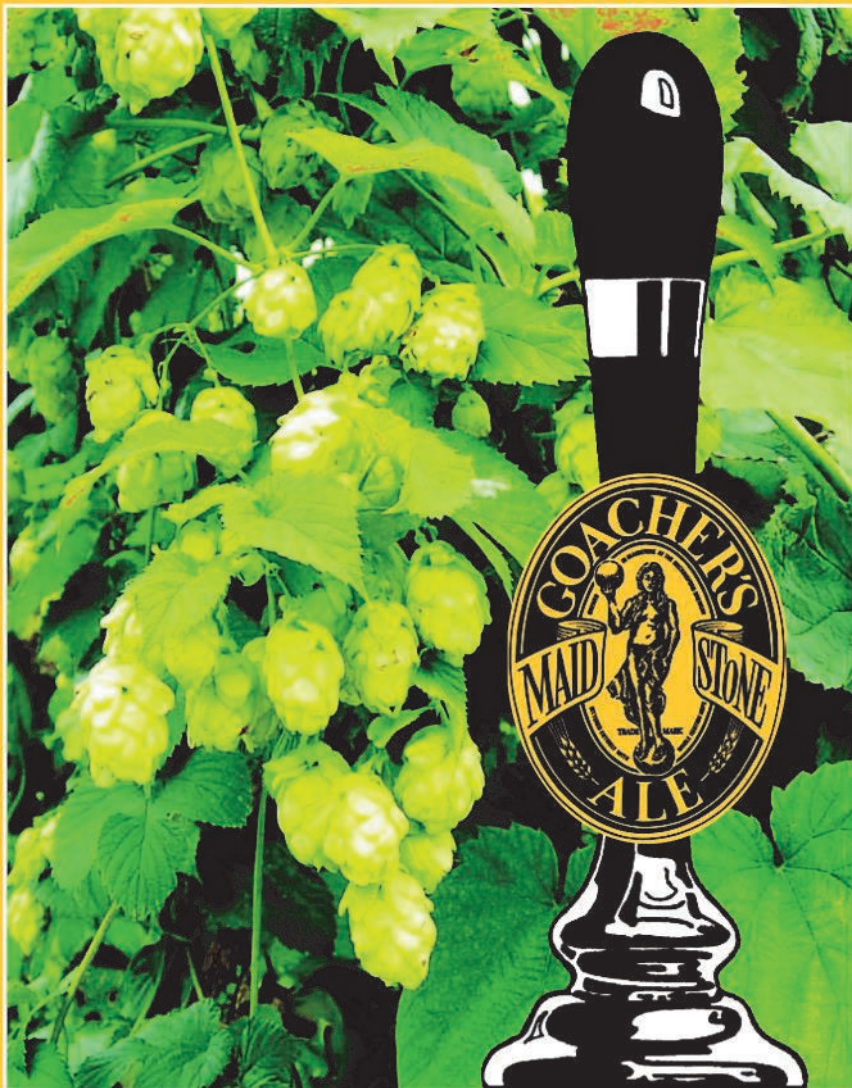
If you would like more information, please ring the local branch contact—see Local News sections. Meetings start at 20:30 unless otherwise stated.

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

February	BEX	28	20:00, Good Beer Guide selection meeting, Furze Wren, 6 Market Place, Bexleyheath DA6 7DY
	GDV	28	Open Business Meeting & Good Beer Guide Selection, Dartford Conservative Club, Dartford
	MMK	28	Nevill Bull, Birling, then Duke of Wellington, Ryarsh
March	MMK	7	George, Yalding, then Chequers, Laddingford
	BEX	13	20:00, Brch Mtg, Penny Farthing, 3 Waterside, Crayford DA1 4JJ
	GDV	14	Rising Sun (Cotman's Ash), Bell, St Edith's Club (Kemsing)
	MMK	14	Open Business Meeting, Red Lion, Lenham
	MMK	16	10:38, Bus Trip to Shoreham
	MMK	18	10:50, Bus & Walk, Bramling to Ickham
	MMK	21	Oak & Ivy, Hawkhurst, then Great House
	MMK	23	19:30, MMK Annual Dinner – King & Queen, East Malling
	BEX	27	20:00, 89 bus crawl Social, Starting the Bull, 151 Shooters Hill, London SE18 3HP
	GDV	27	Railway (Longfield), Rising Sun (Fawkham)
April	MMK	28	Brickmakers, Maidstone, then Flower Pot
	MMK	4	Teston Club, then Robin on the Green, Barming
	BEX	10	Brch Mtg, tba.
	GDV	11	20:00, Open business meeting, Three Pillars (Gravesend)
	MMK	11	Bell & Jorrocks (beer festival)
	MMK	13	10:50, Bus Trip to Sheppey
	MMK	15	10:50, Bus & Walk to Paddlesworth
	MMK	18	Black Horse, Thurnham, then Oak on the Green, Bearsted
	BEX	24	20:00, Pub of the Year debrief Meeting, Royal Oak, 68 Mount Road, Bexleyheath, DA6 8JS
	GDV	24	20:00, Ship (Sutton-at-Hone), Chequers (Darenth)
May	MMK	25	Pilot, Maidstone, then Olde Thirsty Pig
	MMK	27	11:40, Bus/Train trip to Chequers, Laddingford beer festival
	MMK	2	Larkins Ale House, Cranbrook, then Knoxbridge
	GDV	8	20:00, Bull, Rose & Crown, George & Dragon (Wrotham)
	MMK	9	Branch AGM/Biz Mtg, Style & Winch, Maidstone
	MMK	16	Lord Raglan, Staplehurst, then Cock, Boughton Monchelsea
	GDV	23	20:00, Dead Pigeon, Twelve Degrees, Flippin' Frog (Rochester)
	MMK	23	Marden Village Club, then Stile Bridge
	MMK	25	10:11, Bus Trip to Snargate
	MMK	28	10:58, Bus & Walk Crockham Hill to Chart
June	MMK	30	Dog & Gun, Maidstone, then Kings Arms, Boxley
	BEX	15	Noon, Social at Bromley Beer Festival
September	MMK	7	11:00 - 19:00 East Malling Beer and Cider Festival (Provisional Date)

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