

Draught Copy



CAMPAIGN
FOR
REAL ALE

Free Magazine

By Maidstone & Mid-Kent
CAMRA

incorporating Ashford,
Folkestone and Romney Marsh,
Gravesend & Darent Valley,
Bexley, Medway & West Kent
Branches

Spring 2024

No. 208

Website: www.mmk.camra.org.uk

Twitter: www.twitter.com/mmkcama

Marden Village Club Does The Double National Club of the Year 2024

The Marden Village Club wins consecutive National Club of the Year awards,

See inside for more.



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 Ashford, Folkestone and Romney Marsh, Bexley, Gravesend & Darent Valley, Medway and West Kent branches of CAMRA. It is published quarterly, in March, June, September and December and has a circulation of 3,500 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 21st April 2024.

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*

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Our social diary changes faster than we can print it, so to keep up-to-date we suggest you use the below QR codes to access the branch meetings on our websites.



Ashford,
Folkestone
& Romney
Marsh



Bexley



Gravesend
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Medway



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Campaign
for
Real Ale



Marden Village Club



National CAMRA Club of the Year 2022 and 2023



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- A friendly social club situated in the heart of a picturesque, mid-Kent village
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Find us on   @mardenvillageclub

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MARDEN VILLAGE CLUB WINS TOP AWARD FOR SECOND YEAR

Marden Village Club in Kent has been named CAMRA's National Club of the Year for the second year in a row.

This Grade II-listed community hub boasts six real ales generally from local microbreweries and snooker and darts teams for its members. It was renovated in 2017 to produce a light, airy, and friendly atmosphere.



Club steward Simon Banfield said: "To receive this prestigious award is simply amazing, and it just highlights the outstanding performance of the whole team at **Marden Village Club**, from all the staff and committee, and the continued support from our excellent members. To have been given this award in 2022 and now to have received it again in 2023 is amazing."

Maidstone & Mid Kent branch chairman Ian Clennett said: "Congratulations to Simon and the team at Marden Village Club. We always look forward to our visits as a branch as we're assured of a warm welcome, a great range of top-notch beers at sensible prices, and a memorable time with both club regulars and local CAMRA members."

CAMRA awards director Laura Emson said: "This achievement is an incredible feat for the club, to win the award two years on the trot is testament to the hard work of the staff and the dedication of its members.

"Clubs are a vital part of UK culture and deserve to be celebrated each year alongside pubs. It is essential that people continue to visit their clubs and of course, bring a friend!"

CAMRA's National Club of the Year competition is run in conjunction with *Club Mirror* with the aim of finding those with the greatest commitment to quality real ale, a great atmosphere and welcoming surroundings. Running since 1987, the award is the Campaign's highest honour for a club, with those in the competition selected by CAMRA volunteers.

Runners-up were **Cheltenham Motor Club** in Cheltenham, **Dobcross Band Social Club** in Greater Manchester and **Parwich Royal British Legion Club** in the East Midlands.

MEET THE LANDLORD

by Tony Williams

In this issue Maidstone & Mid Kent CAMRA member and recently “retired” founder of Musket Brewery, Tony Williams, starts a new feature of meeting up with some of the landlords running pubs throughout the Branch area. Here we meet Trevor Norman of **The Bull Inn, West Malling**.

Constructed in 1426, the original building was halved in 1874 and rebuilt to make way for the new railway. Trevor believes that the ancient chimney could be original, with the old oak panelling still very much admired in this, the very first pub in the West Malling/Ryarsh area. The Hop Garden that supplied hops for the pub was a short distance away in Ryarsh Lane and is now an allotment.

Hugely experienced, Trevor has been in the trade since the age of 14 and has worked in numerous local pubs throughout that time, some of which have long gone to housing. With an extensive knowledge of real ale, Trevor has increased the selection of beers at The **Bull Inn** from one handpump to EIGHT during his 21 years in charge and regularly hosts CAMRA meetings, whilst supporting causes such as The Heart of Kent Hospice, Malling Lions and the British Heart Foundation.

“The **Bull** proudly sponsors the Vigo Rugby Club Youth Team and I admit to a degree of self-interest – I’m looking after future customers!” Trevor said. “I’ve seen huge changes throughout my 49 years in the trade, not all of them good, but I’m really chuffed at the gradual changes here at The Bull, my beer garden is very popular and the recent interior refurbishment has been well received too” He added.



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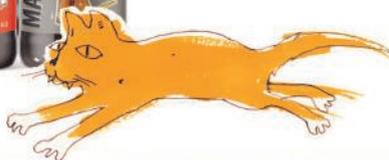
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(Award winning beer!)



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(Spring/Summer brew!)

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Farm, Linton ME17 4AG
open Wed – Sun.



A fine selection of military aircraft adorns the walls of **The Bull**, this is in acknowledgement of West Malling airfield (now the King's Hill Estate) and in memory of Trevor's grandad.



“My grandfather served in the Royal Flying Corps but was deemed too old to fly during WWII so served the RAF as ground crew and became a close friend of Arthur “Bomber” Harris, a friendship that lasted long after the war ended”. He said.

Quiz Nights, Live Music, regularly changing great beers, together with good wholesome and hearty traditional pub food, draws people to **The Bull** to be greeted by a hugely experienced and respected landlord in Trevor Norman.

Check out thebullwestmallings.com or call 01732 – 842753 for Opening Times and other information.



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ASHFORD, FOLKESTONE & ROMNEY MARSH LOCAL NEWS

<https://afirm.camra.org.uk/>

Images from CAMRA's online pub database whatpub.com

It was a bright crisp January morning when fourteen hardy CAMRA members met at Ashford International Railway Station for the annual Ashford, Folkestone & Romney Marsh mini-bus trip. The first pub visited was the **Red Lion** at Snargate (a perennial favourite) where three ciders and four ales were on offer including *Goachers Old Ale* 6.7%, which proved very popular. The **Bell Inn** at Ivychurch was next, with a number of *Greene King & Butcombe* beers to enjoy. Next



was a venture across the marsh to West Hythe and **Unit1**, which is adjacent to the Royal Military Canal. During the visit there, some group photos were taken whilst enjoying the *Docker* and *Hop Fuzz* cask & keg beers. Food had been arranged at the next stop on the trip, which was the **Dog House** at Smeeth. This pub has recently expanded into the adjacent building and now includes a stage for live music.



When all had been served drinks, including some excellent *Cellar Head Fireside* 5.2%, large platters of delightful treats were laid before the party. Once fully satisfied it was onto the **White Horse** at Bilsington where *Greene King Abbot Reserve* 6.5% was amongst the ale offerings and was most welcome. Skirting around Ashford the next stop was the **George** at Bethersden which had recently been 'Highly Commended' in the CAMRA Pub Saving Awards 2023. The group met committee members from the local community who had saved the pub and more photos were taken whilst sampling *Harvey's Sussex Best* 4.0% and *Old* 4.3% ales. The delightful market town of Tenterden was up next, although the short winter daylight hours

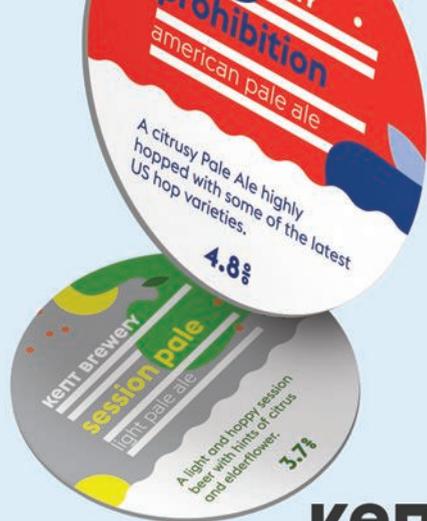


were fast fading by this point. The reigning 2023 AFRM PoTY, **This Ancient Boro'** was the next stop, where seven local ales from *Romney Marsh*, *Bexley* and *Wantsum* on gravity was the offering. Several more members joined the group at this point to enjoy the final



few destinations. A short drive to Rolvenden Layne and quickly came upon the **Ewe & Lamb**, which had reopened in March 2023 after a period of closure. This is a traditional pub with real fires and four hand pumps serving two regular beers, *Harvey's Sussex Best* 4.0% and *Long Man Long Blonde* 3.8% and two changing guest ales. The final destination was the **Black Lion** at Appledore, which had also recently reopened after changing hands. One final local ale, *Romney Marsh Best Bitter* 4.0% was sampled before re-joining the minibus back to the station and home. A grand day out was had by all and was so popular that the AFRM branch have decided to do another minibus trip in mid-summer. Check the AFRM branch webpage for further details.





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A tour around the "Village" area of Upper Belvedere, incorporating the triangle of Nuxley Road, Albert Road and Woolwich Road reveals six open pubs all very close together. We began our trek in the **Royal Standard** (DA17 5JN) with *Black Sheep Bitter* and *Greene*



King Old Speckled Hen, the place was very empty despite Charlton being on the big screen at the far end of the bar. On to the **Fox** (DA17 5JU), less than 50 yards away, which was well populated with a darts match in progress and Charlton on the TV, *Bermondsey Best* and *Adnams Ghost Ship* on the bar. The **Village Inn** (DA17 5LD) was bypassed



as no real ale. Next was the **Victoria** (DA17 5LN), a pub that features largely in the history of Bexley CAMRA as a meeting venue in the early days. Recently new landlady Lucy, was very welcoming to our band of drinkers, with *Timothy Taylor Boltmaker* as the real ale and Charlton on the big screen. Another short walk to The **Prince of Wales** (DA17 5EE) found it closed for the evening, a common event with many of our pubs opening late afternoon and closing early evening in November. The pub opposite, the **Eardley Arms** (DA17 5EN), was again missed out as it has no real ale. Some went back to the **Fox**, others to the **Victoria**. Charlton won 6-1 away to Cray Valley Paper Mills.



Twixtmas, the period between (betwixt) Christmas and New Year, also called - but not by me - "Crimbo Limbo". Once the wrapping paper has been recycled, the turkey eaten and you've tried on your new socks, why not meet up with fellow CAMRA members for a meal and drink some beer. Meeting at "High Noon" in the **Robin Hood & Little John** (DA6 8PF), fifteen like minded (bored with Christmas) Bexley, Bromley and Gravesend members

ate and drunk a selection of ales: *Adnams Bitter*, *Bexley's Own Beer*, *Fuller's London Pride* and *Harvey's Sussex*. On then to The **Volunteer** (DA7 4DQ), a community run pub with *Sharps Doom Bar* and *Greene King Old Speckled Hen*. The first group enjoyed the "Hen" but the second returned it for the *Doom Bar* without any fuss. Our first J.D. Wetherspoon pub in the Borough, the **Wrong 'Un** (DA6 8AS)



was next, with *Cairngorm IPA* along with the usual suspects. Bypassing the **Rose** (DA6 7ES) and **Kings Arms** (DA6 7DW) as it was cold and dark, us poor souls retired to the **Furze Wren** (DA6 7DY) our Wetherspoon close to all bus stops, always a great selection of up to seven guest ales, and here we stayed.

Contact: Adrian Moss (01474 363102) email: adrian.moss49@btinternet.com

It's pretty clear that by the time you read this the vegan beers from *Koomor* will be just a memory. Their tree-based names such as *Petal*, *Branch*, *Trunk*, *Bark* and *Earth*, were always noticeable on a bar. Production had been winding down and had ceased by mid-January. They didn't have a home of their own and latterly were brewing at *Iron Pier* in Northfleet.

Shortly before Christmas we discovered that the **Villager** at Vigo was without a manager, though very much open thanks to its long-term staff. They had a good range of beers with *St Austell Proper Job* and *Tonbridge Countryman* and *Traditional* on sale and *Hop Back Summer Lightning* and *Wychwood Bah Humbug* to follow. The pub's future seems secure as it's at the centre of the village and now some distance from any other pub. It just needs someone at the helm.

Roy Canning supplied a roundup of pubs in the south of our area just after the New Year. The **Rising Sun** at Twitton usually has four real ales and the range included *Three Acre Best Bitter* from East Sussex and *Bexley Burnt Oak* brown ale. At the **Bell** in Kemsing *St Austell Tribute* was available alongside *Greene King IPA*. This seems unusual for this *Greene King* tied house.



As these notes were being compiled the **Cotton Mill** at Swanley was closed for the installation of a new bar and beer store. The work was being done in-house and was not quite complete at the time. The photo shows the new bar taking shape. Plans have also been approved for an extension to the side of the pub to increase space inside again. The larger bar will still have four handpumps and now eight key keg beers.

A change has occurred at the **Red Lion** at Swanley Village where the new hosts are Lisa and Phil. Their previous pub was the **Wat Tyler** in Dartford and we wish them good luck with the change. On a recent visit beers on offer were *Fuller's London Pride*, *St Austell Proper Job* and *Theakston Old Peculier*. The last will now become the regular beer, which will come as no surprise to those who knew the **Wat Tyler** and is good news as it's hard to find in cask in the area. Banners outside the pub proclaimed the change of management and the home-cooked food served all day.

The **Chequers** at Crockenhill is giving CAMRA members a 20% discount on Thursdays on production of their membership card. *Courage Best Bitter* has been removed and *Harvey's Sussex Best Bitter* is now the regular beer along with three guests. One of the guest ales recently was *Stay Wild Opie* from the new local brewery at Shoreham. Their beer has also been seen at the **Cotton Mill**.



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The **Bridges**, almost under the railway viaduct at South Darenth, was put up for sale by auction almost a year ago. It was reported in mid-January that the sale had been completed and the pub was likely to reopen around the time this edition appears. The **Papermakers** at Hawley was one of a number of roadhouses built for Style and Winch in the 1930s in a Dutch architectural style and closed in April 2022. It was reported as for sale freehold in December for £800,000. The photo shows it as a Courage pub, with the extensive car park which would unfortunately make it an attractive option for a developer.



The **Lads of the Village** at Stone Crossing duly closed at the end of last year and is now boarded up. The **Wheatsheaf**, a street-corner pub in Swanscombe High Street which had been closed for about two years, was reported as having work in progress to convert it to flats and a café late last year. The photo shows it as a Truman's pub some years ago. The **Dartford Sports Bar** was closed for a time but only for some refurbishment and the fitting of a cocktail bar.



The **Compass Alehouse** in Gravesend has a changing range of key keg beers alongside its four regular cask beers. It has started offering an alcohol-free one and as these notes were being finished off *Cloudwater Fresh IPA* was available. The pub will be marking its tenth anniversary later this year and a stylish celebration can be expected. Nearby, the **Peacock** closed for good at the end of the year. It retained the Courage sign shown in the photo till the end but this was then rapidly removed.



Pub beer festivals become more common as summer approaches. An early one to put in your diary is scheduled for the **Iron Pier Brewery Tap** between the 3rd and 5th of May.



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Chequers, Hengist, Aylesford – Restaurant/pub closed in January and is for sale. The business owner was to concentrate on his other interests but has since died. The Chequers, his other pub in the village, has also closed.

Duke of Edinburgh, Barming – Surprisingly, this suddenly closed before the end of 2023, but has re-opened under a new licensee. The opening night was well supported.

Red Lion, Biddenden – Has been sold by Stonegate. A refit is ongoing and it is expected to re-open 1st quarter 2024,



George Hotel, Cranbrook – Apparently Sally Carter took over as the new manager in January at this large Shepherd Neame facility.

White Horse, Cranbrook – Rumours that this may re-open.

Bull, East Farleigh – This large pub with function room has been refitted and re-opened on February 3. Ollie Aubray has added this to his collection. Three pumps on the bar and were initially offering *Goacher's Fine Light Ale* and *Harvey's Sussex Best*. Meals are available for lunch and evening.



Victoria, East Farleigh – Planning for conversion of the downstairs rooms to living quarters was refused. The former licensee remains occupying the upstairs part of the premises that he owns. Meanwhile the local residents are denied any licensed facilities within a reasonable distance. Bird in Hand in Coxheath was never reinstated and the nearby Bell is now a shop.

White House, Hunton – A planning application for demolition and erection of a 4-bed house and 4x2-bed lodges with the pétanque pitches extended has now been permitted.

Old House at Home, Maidstone – James & Karen Rennie have turned over management of the pub over to their daughter Tallulah Rennie.



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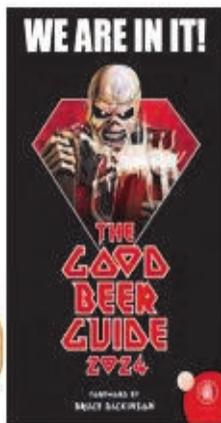
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Stag, Maidstone – Suffered a chimney fire and had to close for a while.

Marden Village Club, Marden – Has been awarded National Club of the year 2023. This the second year in succession the club has been awarded the top spot in the country. Simon was presented the Winners certificate on behalf of the team, in front of a packed club on the 27th January.

New Swan, Sandhurst – Business closed in January. The pub remains closed.



King's Head, Staplehurst – Have had a new bar and pumps installed. Reports indicate that the beer quality is improved. *Shepherd Neame Master Brew* and *Spitfire* are usually on the bar.

Queen's Head, Sutton Valence – Recent visits found the beer in very good form with two *Goacher's* beers, one from *Musket* and *Timothy Taylor Landlord*.



Harrow, Ulcombe – Planning application for 3-off 2-bed houses has been amended and is again awaiting a decision.

Images from CAMRA's online pub database whatpub.com



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The **Royal Crown** in Rochester, (previously known as The Crown) has reopened. The main bar area has a new gas fire after an unused fireplace was re-opened. The upstairs which previously was a storage area is now both a bar and restaurant area with stunning views over the River Medway. The pub's new name is a tribute to Henry VIII's visit to Rochester in 1539 to meet his fourth wife Anne of Cleves. A more recent visitor in 2014 was Nigel Farage leader at that time of UKIP. Two draught *Shepherd Neame* keg beers will be on offer, a *double stout* and *Bishops Finger*.

The **Sir John Falstaff** at Higham, owned by Punch Taverns, previously reported in this magazine as looking for a new manager, has now installed one after the job was advertised on the pub web site.



The **Three Crutches** in Rochester only sells one barrel of real ale a week which is sold at £4.20 a pint to punters of the pubs Monday night club. Any left-overs are sold afterwards at £4.80 a pint.

Images from CAMRA's online pub database whatpub.com

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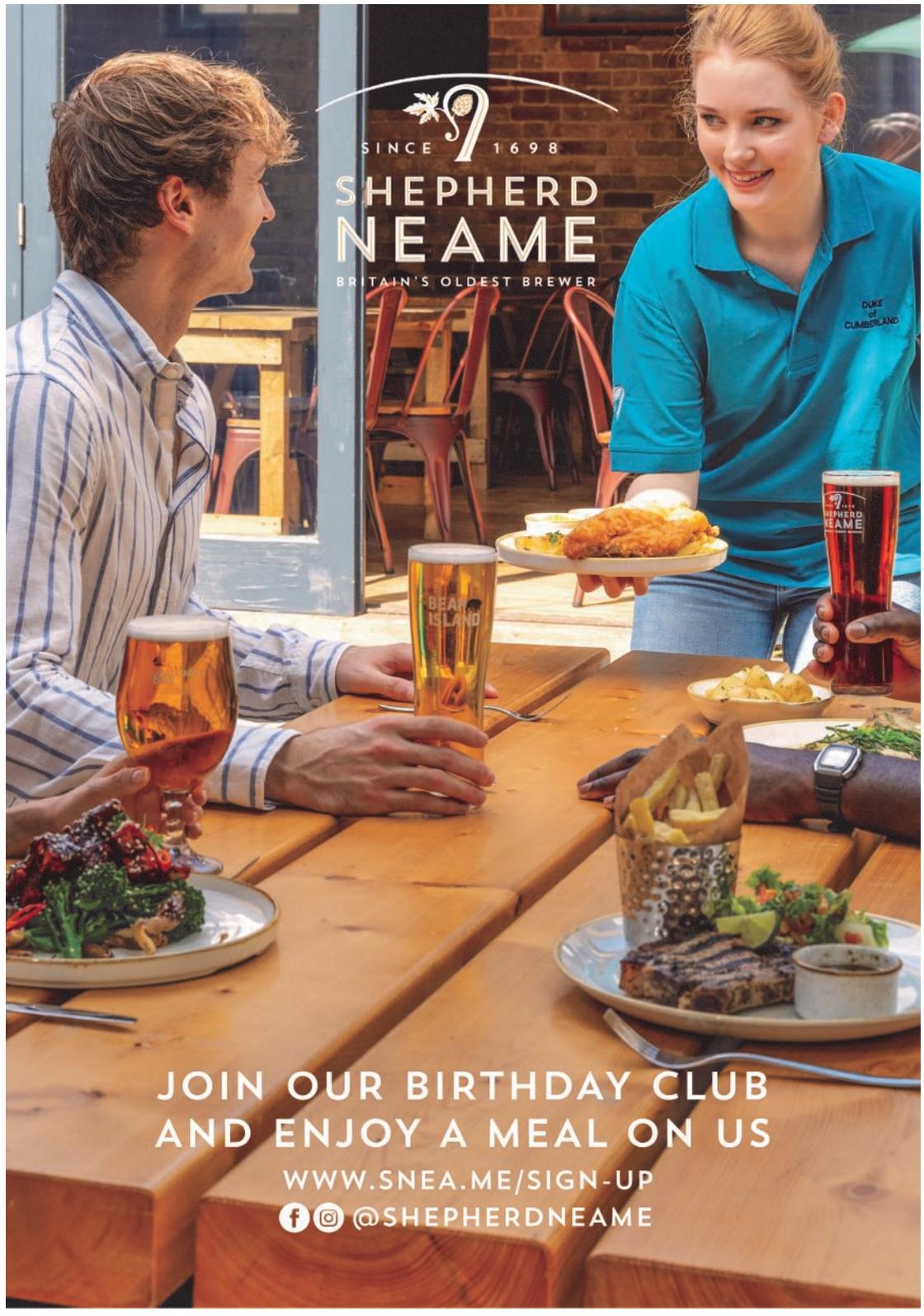
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A pre-Christmas visit to the **Forester's Arms** in Tonbridge, a *Shepherd Neame* house five minutes' walk up Quarry Hill from the railway station, revealed the pub even more strikingly-decorated than normal. Christmas lights and tinsel served to enhance the usual display of colourful wall decorations, music posters and maps from around the world. A large party of customers were enjoying the good selection of pizzas in the upstairs room, characterised by a riot of, brightly coloured, upturned umbrellas, suspended from the ceiling. *Shepherd Neame's Christmas Ale* sat alongside the regular *Whitstable Bay Pale Ale* on the bar.



Towards the end of autumn a small group of friends took a flat walk along public footpaths from the north end of Tonbridge, through Poulton Wood golf course and out on to Ashes Lane leading to the **Rose Revived**, on the edge of Hadlow. Being a fine day, we chose to forego the bar area with its comfy seating arranged around the fireplace and dine outside in the extensive garden complete with children's play area and separate marquee available for functions. The *Tonbridge-brewed Hadlow Pale ale* is proving so popular that it is now outsells the ever-reliable *Harvey's Sussex Best*. The pub benefits from having an adjacent bus stop on the frequent Arriva number 7, Maidstone to Tunbridge Wells, route which we took advantage of to return back to Tonbridge.

The Thursday before Christmas, we managed to squeeze in a visit to the **Dovecote Inn**, Capel, using the Autocar bus 205 route from Tonbridge to Paddock Wood, alighting at Five Oak Green. Surprised to find the pub fairly quiet at lunchtime, we learnt from proprietors, Simon and Lindsay, that they were actually quite grateful to be able to draw breath between a manically busy quiz night the previous evening and a busy live music and Christmas Carols night due the following day. Another good home-cooked meal was consumed with an accompanying choice of *Larkins Traditional*, *Harvey's Sussex Best*, *Larkins Porter* and *Tonbridge Capel Pale* (a welcome surprise held over from the pub's successful Green Hop beer festival held in late October). Simon informed us that he is keen to offer something darker and stronger during the winter months and *Titsey Lord Mayor Porter* was to follow the *Larkins*.

The first Sunday of the new year saw a small party of friends take a train from Tonbridge to Wadhurst station, then embark on a four mile walk, via country footpaths and quiet back lanes, to finish at Bells Yew Green and the sanctuary of the **Brecknock Arms**, a *Harvey's* tied house. This small and homely pub has a rear garden in which a beer festival is held annually, in July. Being January, we sensibly opted for indoors and were presented with the choice of *Harvey's Sussex*

Best, *IPA* and the seasonal *Old Ale*. The dark and delicious *Old* proved the perfect antidote to the cold winter conditions. With Frant railway station just a few minutes' walk down the road from the pub, and with regular hourly trains even on a Sunday, the **Brecknock** is an attractive option for a short trip out into the Sussex countryside.



The Rock at Chiddingstone Heath, which is in the 2024 GBG. This very ornate, traditional country pub has several interesting features. The comfortable chairs surrounding the wood burning stove, the extensive beams and the ring-the-bull game. No one sat in the naughty chair by the bar during my visit. Beers tend to be from the nearby *Larkins Brewery*, both *Traditional* and *Porter* were on with a guest beer about to be put on. I plumped for a *Larkins Porter*.

Fleur dis Lis, Leigh had had a change of management in recent months. This Victorian, dog friendly pub, enjoys a bar, restaurant and patio area. Disappointingly their website doesn't list cask ales but they have offered three different *Long Man* and *Dorking* beers on a monthly rotation basis. Over Christmas, *Rocking Robin* and "a return of clients favourite *Timothy Taylor Landlord*" when I visited.

Royal British Legion Club, Leigh. The West Kent Branch Club of the Year first 2022 and 2023 is found behind the Village Halls. CAMRA members are welcome as guests. The weekly Friday night meal raffle, alongside quiz nights complement cribbage, pool, darts and snooker on a full sized table. *Larkins Traditional* is a staple with a rotating guest beer, often not found in the surrounding pubs.

The Greyhound at Charcott. A post Christmas social was well attended in a busy pub that had just re-opened after some refurbishment work. There were four ales available. The almost ever present *Larkins Traditional* with *Pardoners Ale* from *Canterbury*, *Oatmeal Stout* from *Three Legs* and finishing off, *Penguin*, a spiced bitter from *Downlands*.



The John Brunt VC in Paddock Wood. A New Year visit found *Harveys Best Bitter* and *Caledonian Deuchars IPA*. We were informed that "it's usually two on, with both changing, although *Harvey's* stays on for longer".

BOUGH BEECH: The Wheatsheaf continues to offer up to five cask ales. This splendid freehouse dates from the late 14th Century. Open all day every day, good food is available, please check website for times. Drinkers are more than welcome, also four legged friends. A recent visit found two brews from *Larkin's* available, plus *Harvey's Sussex Best* and *Westerham Apricity*, this pub is well worth visiting.

CHIDDINGSTONE: The Castle Inn continues to gain in popularity; the regular *Larkin's* ales are well kept, with regularly changing guest ales too.

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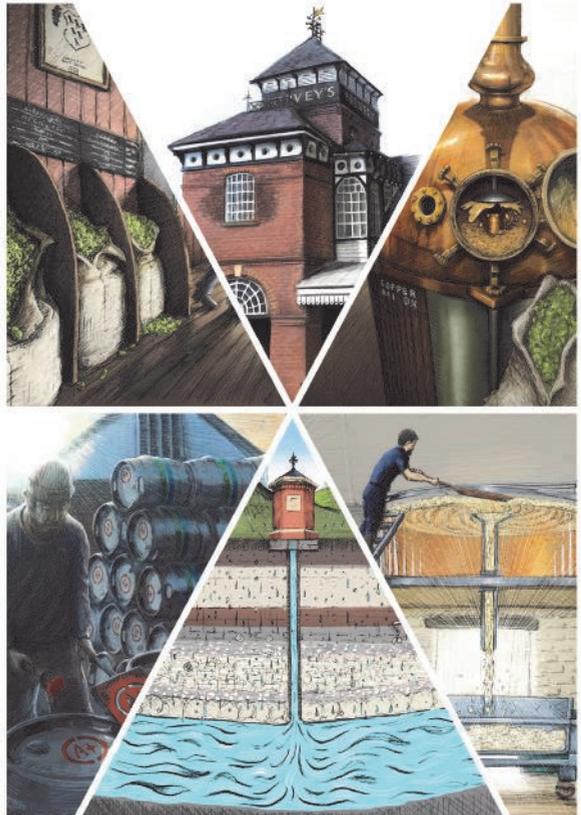
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EDENBRIDGE: **The Crown** is one of only two pubs in the town currently open, but hopefully that should increase in the near future. *Black Sheep Best Bitter* and *Timothy Taylors Landlord* were both in good nick during a visit late last year. At the top of the town, sadly the Swan remains closed.

HEVER: The last pub in the village, the **King Henry VIII**, offers two ales and quality is good. *Shepherd Neame Whitstable Bay* and *Timothy Taylors Landlord* are the regular brews. But being a freehouse, it would be nice to see one of the local breweries featuring here.

MARKBEECH: **The Kentish Horse** continues to offer three ales on the bar, the *Larkin's Porter* has been extremely good when tried. The guest ales are sometimes from a West Country brewer, *Otter Bitter* was in good condition.

A WALK AROUND THE PUBS OF DUNTON GREEN by Anthony Shea

Starting at Dunton Green Station, we took the footpath on the West side of the line for a five minutes walk towards the Recreation ground at Dunton Green on London Road. Here you will find the **Dukes Head**. This is a locals pub with a rear garden plus seating on the front terrace. Normally just one ale is served from a national brewery, however on this occasion they had *Wadworth's Horizon* and *Marston's 61 deep*. Both beers were in good condition. The **Dukes Head** also shows Premier League football and serves Caribbean food during the games.



Heading South along the London Road for 700 yards, you reach The **Miners Arms**. The front of the pub has been refurbished and old signage from its days as a Kidd and Co pub have now been revealed. Three beers are normally available, we found *Kent Pale*, *Ramsgate Gadds Number 7* and *Landlord* from *Timothy Taylor*. They were all in excellent condition. We adjourned to the spacious rear garden. There is also plenty of covered seating at the rear. Food is served at lunchtime and they have cheese and sausages on the bar on Wednesday evenings.



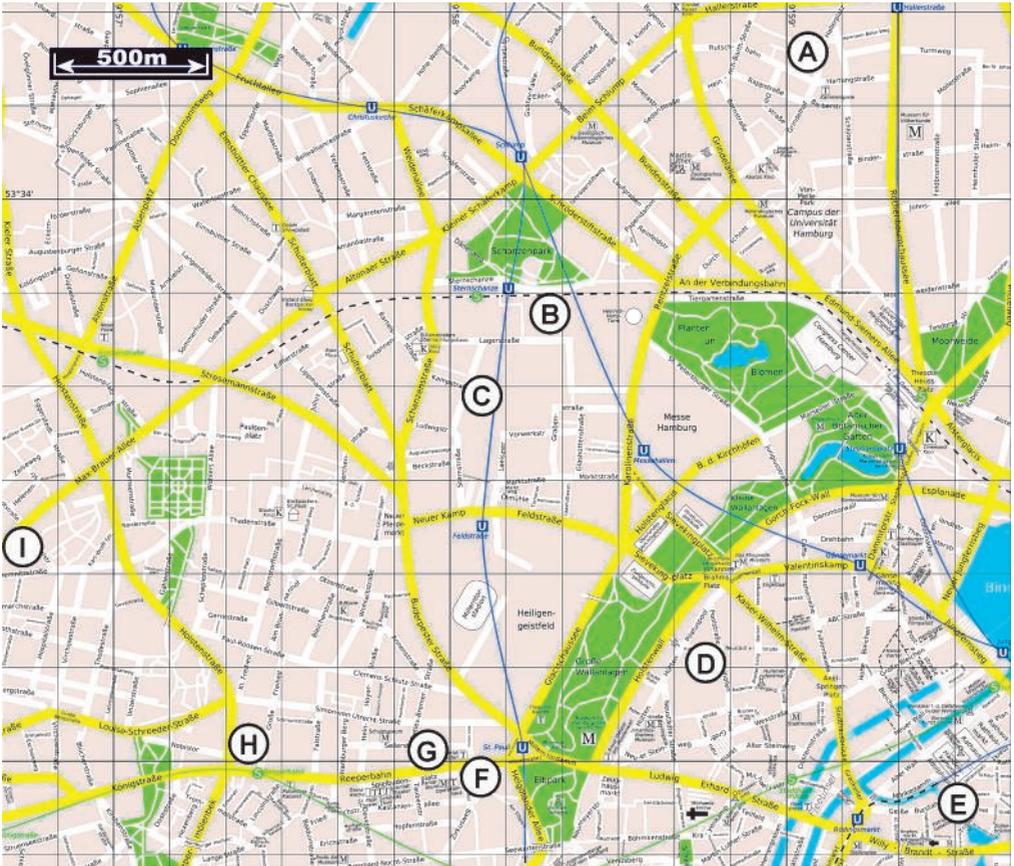
We then continued South along the London Road for 5 minutes and visited The **Bullfinch**. This is owned by *McMullen's* of Hertford and is their only pub in Kent. Food is the main focus but you are welcome to visit for just a drink. There is a large garden out the back. They had *McMullen's Country bitter* and *IPA* on draught. We tried the bitter which I scored a 4 (out of a possible 5) on What Pub.

We then headed north back towards Dunton Green Station but you could continue South towards Sevenoaks Station, which is a mile away and visit the **Halfway House** on the way.

HAMBURG FOR CHRISTMAS

by Michael J Allen

Arriving on the Thursday at a very cold Helmut Schmidt Airport in Hamburg, with snow on the ground, we were immediately met with a problem, in that Deutsche Bahn had decided to strike that weekend. So, taxi it was. Still at least the airport is much closer to the City Centre regarding the cost of a taxi, than if the journey had been made, say Gatwick to London. All of bars visited in Hamburg were walked to, but a daily ticket covering Zones 1/2 for up to five people (which includes the airport) costs €13.40. Prices ranged from £9 to £14 a pint equivalent, depending on strength, although I did spot a 15.2% beer at around £23 a pop. If you prefer a normal German beer, you'd be glad to find they're still available at London prices!



Having arrived in our accommodation later than planned, the only bar that we had time to visit this night was **The Baby Goat House (A)** (Grindelhof 85), opened in 2020, by Dutch and UK owners. Three small beers were sunk, *Looking Goat* 5.3%, *Silly Billy* 4.8%, and *Imperial Stout* 9%. We were told by the two

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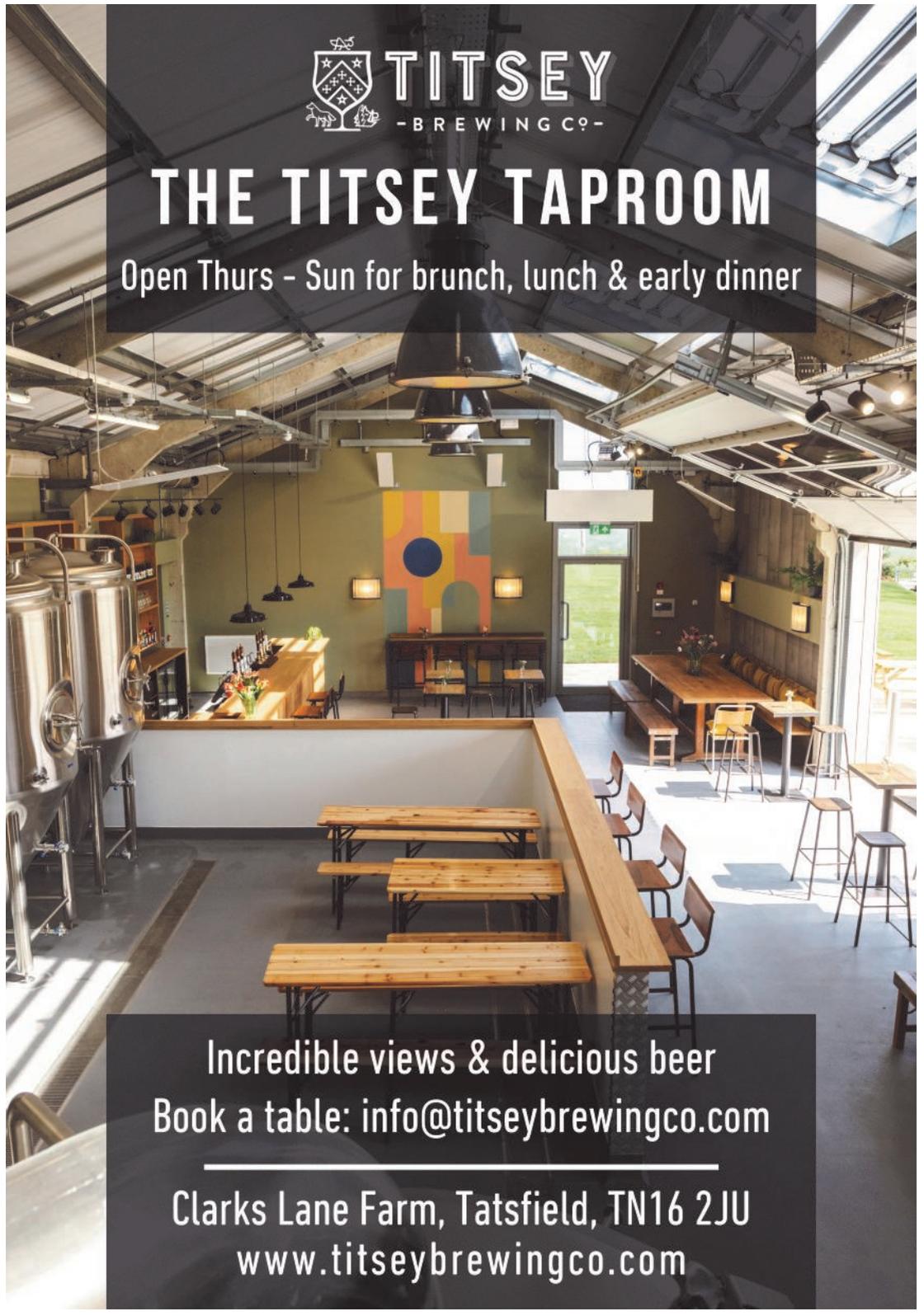
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helpful American bar ladies that the beers are cuckoo brewed in the Netherlands and at BrewDog Berlin.

The next day we set off to have a look around the City, and to view the various Christmas Markets, oh, and to wait for the first bar to open. As luck would have it, we came across the **Irish Pub in the Fleetenkicker (E)** (Börsenbrücke 10), which was open earlier than the



advertised time of 4pm (most bars here don't open until late afternoon, some are closed on Sundays - check first). This is a vaulted cellar bar with around 6 unusual beers on the fonts, and a dartboard for anyone wishing to practice their arrows. The beers of choice were a *Ratsherrn Pale* 5.6% (Hamburg) and a *Two Chefs Brewing* 5.0% (Amsterdam). Fifteen minutes' walk along to the most famous street in Hamburg, 'The Reeperbahn', bought us to **BrewDog St. Pauli (F)** (Reeperbahn 1). Being as I can get BrewDog beers in lots of other places, I



opted for a *Howling Wolf* 8.0%, again from *Two Chefs Brewing*. Coming out of here, and crossing the road, found us at **The Baby Goat Barn (G)** (Detlev-Bremer-Strasse 49), the second and latest of the two 'Goat' bars in Hamburg. Good fortune smiled upon us in here, as a works' Christmas party had over-ordered pizzas, and graciously

passed a 'freebie' over to our table. I tried a different one of their beers in here, a *Lammin Sahti Farmhouse Ale* 7.5%. I don't normally do sour beers, but this wasn't too tart for my palate. Leaving here, on the way to the next venue we had a peak inside the 'adult themed' Christmas Market. Nothing suspect purchased here, apart from a Glühwein! And so it was on to the penultimate bar of the day, **Astra St. Pauli Brauerei (H)** (Nobistor 16).



Astra seem to have had a chequered recent history, with the brewery being taken over by the City of Hamburg, then the beers being brewed by Holsten, who were then taken by Carlsberg, who subsequently built a brand new brewery and taproom on the The Reeperbahn (personal opinion - if only Carlsberg showed this sort of commitment in the UK, instead of closing breweries). A taster tray was ordered in here, comprising of *Luden Lager* 5.0%, *Hopfen Herbert* 7.0%, *Weizenbeisser* 5.7%, *Nachtschicht* 5.2%, and *Stimulator* 7.0%. Ten minutes from here was the final bar for Friday, **Malto (I)** (Max-Brauer-Allee 88). This was a cosy little bar with brewery attached, opened in 2018, run by an Italian, Francesco, who also happened to be the brewer. Two nice IPAs, *Santa Media* 5.7% and *La Venganza de Montezuma* 7.0%, from the on-site brewery were the nightcaps in here.



On the Saturday we decided on a trip out to Lübeck, just under an hour away by train. Waiting for our train to arrive, a party train pulled in to the platform. Disco on board, drink flowing, dancing etc. We found out that it was doing the Cologne - Lübeck route. Just can't imagine that sort of train running in the UK. I digress. On arrival in Lübeck, more Christmas Markets and sightseeing ensued, with a wait until 5pm for

Sudden Death Brewing Co

(Einsiedelstrasse 6) to open. This venue, opened for a couple of years, and brewing on-site since April 2023, is a fair walk out of town, and gets pretty busy. With around 20 beers on tap, we opted for *Lübecker Pilsener* 4.8%, *Rollermania* 6.3%, *Oceanman Submerged* 6.3%, *Shitter Was Full* 7.9%, and *Jungle King* 8.0%.

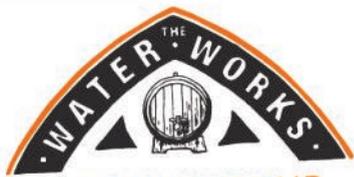


A walk back into town brought us to the only other worthwhile drinking establishment, **Brau Berger** (Alfstrasse 36), where out of the four different on-site brewed beers, I chose the *Brewship Revenge* 6.5%. It was now time to head back to Hamburg for last knockings. On arrival at Hamburg Hbf, we took the S-Bahn to Sternschanze, and a short walk found us at **Ratsherrn Braugasthaus Altes Mädchen (B)** (Lagerstrasse 28b). Home of the **Ratsherrn Brewery**, we grabbed a seat by the open wood burning fire, to sample a five beer taster tray of different **Ratsherrn** Beers, whilst devouring venison served with vegetables. From here, a brisk walk took us to **Omnipollos (C)** (Kampstrasse 36). I finished off the day with a Giant Step Verde 7.5% from CRAK Brewery near Padua, Italy.

On our fourth and final day we set off for more sightseeing and went down to the Fischmarkt - we were amazed to find the place with alcohol flowing and a rock band that had been playing since 6am! We left out having a beer in here, as they were only serving beer of the commercial variety. Apparently, the market picks up any stragglers that still have enough go left in them from a night on the nearby Reeperbahn. So we still had time to wait until our last bar to open, so had another visit to the **Irish Pub in the Fletenkieker**. After here, we headed to



Bar Oorlam (D) (Kohlhöfen 29). This is the brewery tap for *Buddelship Brewery*, that is located on a farm about 80km west of Hamburg in Beverstedt. In here I had a couple of beers from that brewery, *Schwarzbier* 5.5% and *Morgenkrieken 2023* 6.4%, bringing to an end a three day whistle stop visit to Hamburg.



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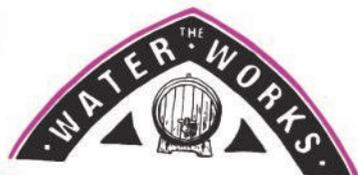


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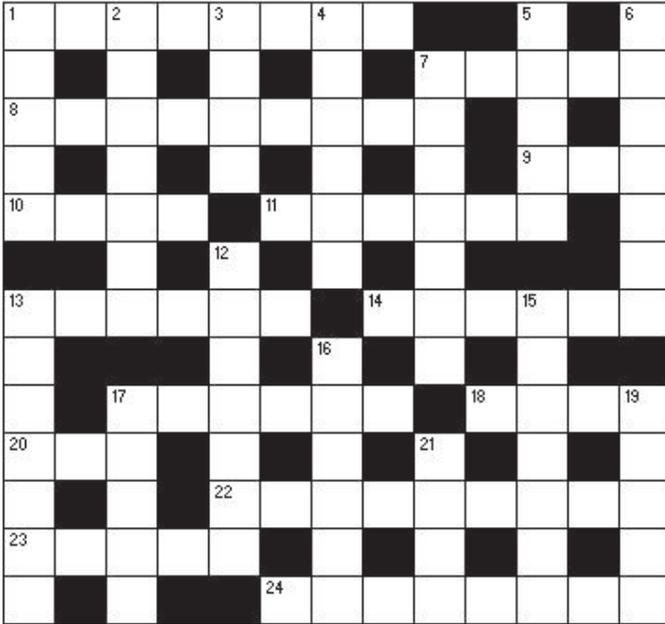
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Across

- 1,21 A better paper? (8,4)
- 7 Have a try, but only embarrass (5)
- 8 Poor Ringo held part of Wagner's Ring (9)
- 9 South African golfer decapitated fish (3)
- 10 Went in the garden (4)
- 11 Dance, perhaps, arranged for all (6)
- 13 I might be a red! (6)
- 14 Posh fur will do the job (6)
- 17 Composer about to receive invitation from taxi driver? (6)
- 18 Posh lot, really (4)
- 20 Matting I abandoned, I say (3)
- 22 Short garment for the night. Hollow and careless! (9)
- 23 Mountains rover may follow (5)
- 24 Cricketer is a children's author, we hear (9)

Down

- 1 Diminutive animal is much given to complaining (5)
- 2 Balls to the Scots uprising? Get stuffed! (7)
- 3 Part of fork in river, it is said (4)
- 4 Looned about, finding a little food (6)
- 5 To some extent crap: a television programme featuring senior Tory (5)
- 6,15 Match officials may report misconduct in public office (7,7)
- 7 A g-garment suitable for the sermon (7)
- 12 Tess, for example, taking one drug after another (7)
- 13 Bond film seen by Scrooge (7)
- 15 See 6
- 16 Chaste airline? (6)
- 17 Fly, bird! (5)
- 19 Material has disgusting stain (5)
- 21 See 1 across

Solution to Crossword No. 42

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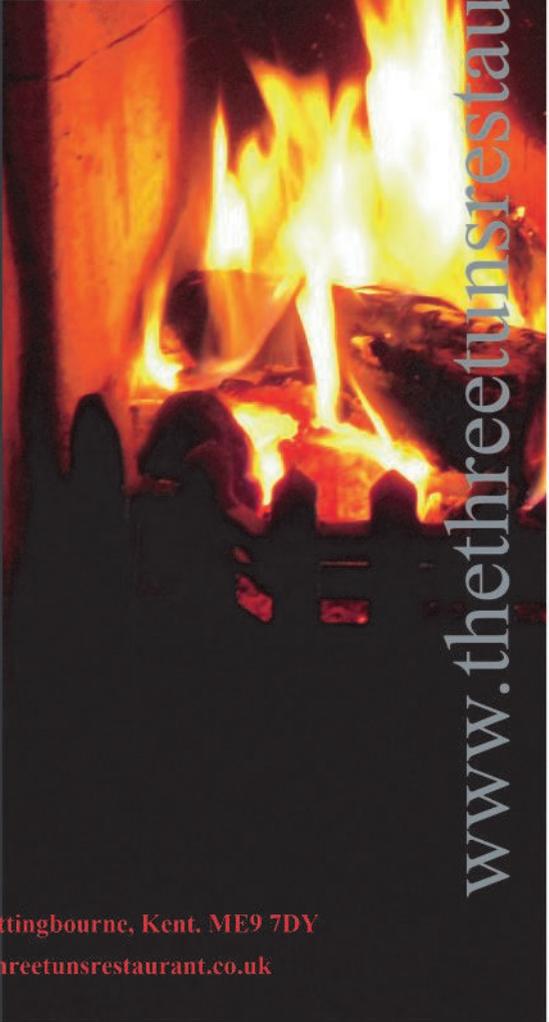
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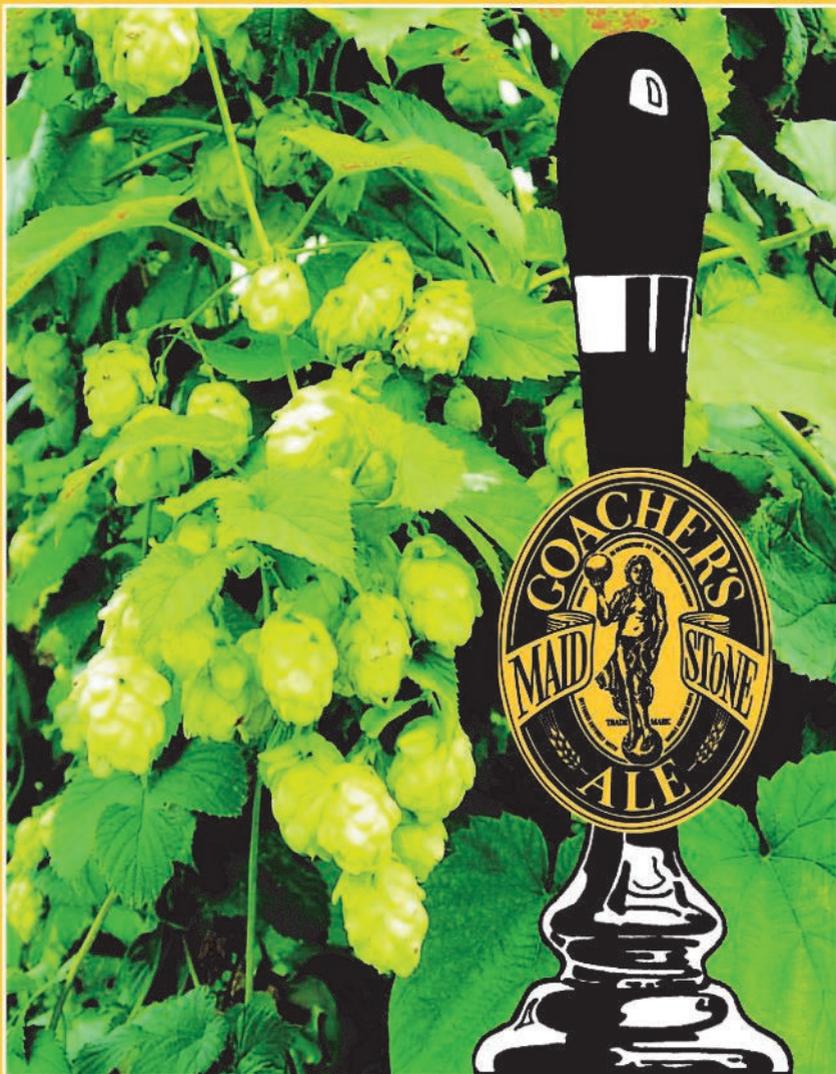
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