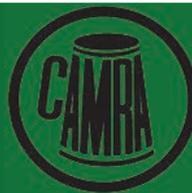


# Draught Copy



CAMPAIGN  
FOR  
REAL ALE

Free Newsletter

for the

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

Spring 2013

No. 170

## NEW HELP FOR PUB LANDLORDS

Struggling pub landlords have been promised help with the Government announcing plans for an independent Adjudicator to address unfair practices in the industry. Additionally, Business Secretary Vince Cable also wants to establish a new statutory Code to look at the relationship between large pub companies and publicans, which will be enforced by the Adjudicator. This new Code will ensure fair practices for a number of issues including rents and the prices publicans pay for beer. It would also have the power to investigate and deal with disputes between pub companies (pubcos) and publicans, and in some cases have the power to fine.

In particular, the proposed Code would prevent abuses of the beer tie, which oblige publicans to sell particular types of beer. It would enshrine the fundamental principle that 'a tied licensee should be no worse off than a free-of-tie-licensee', which will ensure a level playing field is maintained in the pub sector.

Vince Cable said: *"There is some real hardship in the pubs sector, with many pubs going to the wall as publicans struggle to survive on tiny margins. Some of this is due to pubcos exploiting and squeezing their publicans by unfair practices and a focus on short-term profits. Four Select Committee reviews since 2004 have highlighted these problems."*

*"Last year we gave the pubcos one last chance to change their behaviour but it is clear that the self-regulatory approach was not enough and in October I wrote to the industry to seek their views. A change in the law is now needed to shift behaviour."*

### Inside this issue:

Local News	16
Visiting Some Neighbours	36
Ale in Halifax	43

## DRAUGHT COPY

Draught Copy is the newsletter of the Maidstone and Mid-Kent, Bexley, and Gravesend & Darent Valley branches of CAMRA, the Campaign for Real Ale. It is published quarterly, in February, May, August and November and has a circulation of 2700 copies. Opinions expressed are those of the author of the article, and need not represent those of CAMRA or its officials. All articles are by the editor unless otherwise attributed.

### **Our advertising rates:**

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If you find a pub selling short measure, missing price lists, allowing smoking in the premises, or other illegal things in pubs, please have a quiet word with the landlord in the first instance. If you do not receive satisfaction, however, please ring the Council's Trading Standards on 08457 585497 for the K.C.C. area, or 0208 303 7777 for Bexley Borough. We should demand the very highest standards of service in our pubs.

The copy date for the next issue is 31 March 2013 for publication in May 2013.

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



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

## **CAMRA**

*[www.camra.org.uk/page.php?id=4](http://www.camra.org.uk/page.php?id=4)*

### **29TH WHITE CLIFFS FESTIVAL OF WINTER ALES**

**FEBRUARY 1—2**

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Dover

75 winter & strong ales, none less than 5% ABV

*[www.camra-dds.org.uk/diarycamrabeer.htm](http://www.camra-dds.org.uk/diarycamrabeer.htm)*

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240 real ales, plus cider and perry

*[www.sussexbeerfestival.co.uk/](http://www.sussexbeerfestival.co.uk/)*

### **8TH PLANET THANET EASTER BEER FESTIVAL**

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Winter Gardens, Fort Crescent,

Margate CT9 1HX

200 real ales, cider, perry and bottled beers

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

### **BEXLEY BEER FESTIVAL**

**APRIL 4—6**

War Memorial Clubhouse,

Bourne Road, Bexley, DA5 1LW

*[www.camrabexleybranch.org.uk/index\\_files/](http://www.camrabexleybranch.org.uk/index_files/)*

*[Beer\\_Festival.htm](http://www.camrabexleybranch.org.uk/index_files/Beer_Festival.htm)*

## *Non-CAMRA—Pubs and Clubs*

**None to report!**



# KENT BREWERIES

<b>Black Cat Brewery</b>	07948 387718	<a href="http://www.blackcat-brewery.com">www.blackcat-brewery.com</a>
<b>Canterbury Ales</b>	01227 732541	<a href="http://www.canterbury-ales.co.uk">www.canterbury-ales.co.uk</a>
<b>Canterbury Brewers</b>	01227 455899	<a href="http://www.thefoundrycanterbury.co.uk/canterbury-brewers">www.thefoundrycanterbury.co.uk/canterbury-brewers</a>
<b>Caveman Brewery</b>	07769 710665	<a href="http://www.cavemanbrewery.co.uk">www.cavemanbrewery.co.uk</a>
<b>Goacher's</b>	01622 682112	<a href="http://www.goachers.com">www.goachers.com</a>
<b>Goody Ales</b>	07790 443810	<a href="http://www.goodyales.co.uk">www.goodyales.co.uk</a>
<b>HopDaemon</b>	01795 892078	<a href="http://www.hopdaemon.com">www.hopdaemon.com</a>
<b>Hop Fuzz</b>	07850 441267	<a href="http://www.hopfuzz.co.uk">www.hopfuzz.co.uk</a>
<b>Kent Brewery</b>	01634 780037	<a href="http://www.kentbrewery.com">www.kentbrewery.com</a>
<b>Larkins</b>	01892 870328	
<b>Millis Brewing Co.</b>	01322 866233	<a href="http://www.millisbrewing.com">www.millisbrewing.com</a>
<b>Nelson Brewing Co.</b>	01634 832828	<a href="http://www.nelsonbrewery.co.uk">www.nelsonbrewery.co.uk</a>
<b>Old Dairy Brewing Co.</b>	01580 243185	<a href="http://www.olddairybrewery.com">www.olddairybrewery.com</a>
<b>Old Forge Brewery</b>	01233 720444	<a href="http://www.thefarriersarms.com">www.thefarriersarms.com</a>
<b>Ramsgate Brewery</b>	01843 868453	<a href="http://www.ramsgatebrewery.co.uk">www.ramsgatebrewery.co.uk</a>
<b>Ripple Steam Brewery</b>	07917 037611	<a href="http://www.ripplesteambrewery.co.uk">www.ripplesteambrewery.co.uk</a>
<b>Rockin' Robin Brewery</b>	07787 416110	
<b>Shepherd Neame</b>	01795 532206	<a href="http://www.shepherd-neame.co.uk">www.shepherd-neame.co.uk</a>
<b>Swan, West Peckham</b>	01622 812271	<a href="http://www.swan-on-the-green.co.uk">www.swan-on-the-green.co.uk</a>
<b>Tír Dhá Ghlas</b>	01304 211666	<a href="http://www.cullinsyard.co.uk">www.cullinsyard.co.uk</a>
<b>Tonbridge Brewery</b>	01732 366770	<a href="http://www.tonbridgebrewery.co.uk">www.tonbridgebrewery.co.uk</a>
<b>Wantsum Brewery</b>	0845 0405980	<a href="http://www.wantsumbrewery.co.uk">www.wantsumbrewery.co.uk</a>
<b>Westerham Brewery</b>	01959 565837	<a href="http://www.westerhambrewery.co.uk">www.westerhambrewery.co.uk</a>
<b>Whitstable Brewery</b>	01622 851007	<a href="http://www.whitstablebrewery.info">www.whitstablebrewery.info</a>

*It is with sadness that we note the loss of the Abigale and Royal Tunbridge Wells breweries, as both have now ceased production.*

## CAMPAIGN

### **CAMRA WELCOMES GOVERNMENT PLANS FOR NEW “FAIR DEALING” PROVISION TO END UNFAIR PRACTICES IN PUB INDUSTRY**

*Published on 8th January 2013 by Emily Ryans, CAMRA HQ*

The Government has today announced action on unfair large pub company leases to safeguard the future of many thousands of community pubs. This announcement is the culmination of years of campaigning by CAMRA, and over 7600 people have lobbied their MP in the past year alone.

Supporting CAMRA's campaign, Business Secretary Vince Cable said:

*“There is some real hardship in the pubs sector, with many pubs going to the wall as publicans struggling to survive on tiny margins. Some of this is due to pubcos exploiting and squeezing their publicans by unfair practices and a focus on short-term profits. Four Select Committee reviews since 2004 have highlighted these problems.... A change in the law is now needed to shift behaviour.”*

CAMRA Chief Executive, Mike Benner said:

*“Over 3,500 tied public houses have been lost since the start of 2009. Many of these will have been lost as a result of excessive rents and by being forced to buy beer at up to 50% above market rates. The proposal for a “fair dealing” provision will allow publicans tied to large pub companies to challenge these high prices, which means fewer valued pubs will be forced to close their doors.”*

*“CAMRA fully endorses the Government’s wish to ensure that tied publicans are no worse off than free of tie publicans. Research shows that 46% of tied publicans earn less than £15,000 per year in contrast to 22% of free of tie publicans. Guest beer and free of tie options offered by pub companies with more than 500 pubs, long advocated by CAMRA, would be a straightforward means of levelling up the playing field.”*



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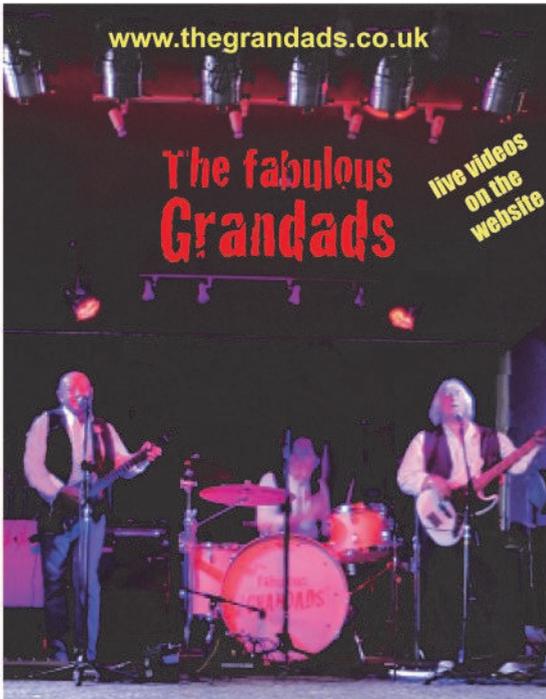
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## Brewery snippets...

**Abigale**—Abigale has now closed down. James Wraith ceased production and has put the kit up for sale.

**Black Cat**—Although Marcus has gone part time with the airline, he can still only cope with supplying 5 pubs with beer on a regular basis due to limited capacity. Another limiting factor is getting casks back quick enough to refill. He's still tempted to expand further and even looked at an industrial unit recently but it would be a big step to take with the airline job still ongoing. He's regularly supplying the Cooper's Arms, Crowborough; the Hay Waggon Inn, Hartfield; the Spotted Dog, Smarts Hill; the Nevill Crest & Gun, Eridge Green and he's recently added the Crown, Groombridge as a customer.

**Canterbury Ales**—*Knights Ale* has been tweaked slightly and now has East Kent Goldings added late in the boil.

The relationship with The Foundry brewpub continues to bear fruit; not only did the two breweries collaborate last year on a Black IPA but Martin has also created some space for The Foundry to site an 8bbl fermenting tank in his cold room. This will probably be used to produce their *Canterbury Lager* which will free up the newly refurbished Foundry kit, allowing them to produce more of their cask beer on site.

**Kent Brewery**—December was manic as expected, but despite the best laid plans, Kent Brewery found itself running out of *Pale* in the final week. A brew over the Christmas period then sold out in the first week of January. Leading up to Christmas, the brewery again added *Porter* and *Twelfth Night* to its range, and also *Brewers Reserve 2012*, which was available both dry-hopped and not. Both versions proved very popular but the dry-hopped especially so. Kent Brewery is now selling the majority of its beers into London, with considerable popularity in a number of key pubs.

Kent has been experimenting with a new hop variety grown by Wye Hops near Canterbury which it believes shows great potential as a local alternative to imported hops.

**Nelson Brewing Co.**—Nelson have started the year with a January sale, offering *Helmsman* 3.5%ABV, at a heavily discounted rate if any 3 firkins of Nelson beers are purchased in one go. Other current ales are: *Admiral IPA* 4.0%, *Powder Monkey* 4.3%, *Friggin' in the Rigg'in'* 4.5%, *Dogwatch Stout* 4.5%, *Nelson's Blood* 6.0%, *Pieces of Eight* 3.8% and *Black Jack* 5.4%. Newly designed pump clips and bottle labels are now in use.

**Royal Tunbridge Wells Brewing Company**—has now ceased trading.

**Wantsum Brewery**—A new conical fermenter and a 12 barrel copper mash tun have now been delivered and installed. The replaced kit has been sold to The Boat Inn, a GBG pub in Gloucestershire. The latest *One Hop* beer 4.5% uses Pearl hops from Germany. *Figgy Pudding* 4.5% was brewed for the Christmas period. Both beers were available in cask and bottle conditioned form.

*Dynamo* has won through to the Top 3 of the Best Kent Beer in the Taste of Kent awards alongside *Gadds No. 3* and *Chapel Down Curious Brew*.

*Turbulent Priest* is the latest of the Wantsum beers to be bottled, and potential customers very appropriately include the (Canterbury) Cathedral shop and English Heritage at Dover Castle. Bottled beer sales continue to be buoyant, and new outlets include Le Mouton Rouge in Canterbury and Country Fayre in Folkestone. The Rocksalt Restaurant in Folkestone is also selling Wantsum beers. The Ambrette Indian Restaurant in King Street, Margate has asked Wantsum to brew a special and unique house beer.

## Orpington Liberal Club

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<b>22 February</b>	<b>11am to 11pm</b>
<b>23 February</b>	<b>11am to midnight</b>
<b>24 February</b>	<b>Noon to 3pm</b>

All beers £2.60 a pint.

Entry tickets include your first 3 pints, and must be bought in advance (£7.80 over the bar or £8.25 online).

Drivers/partners entry tickets also available.

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## SAVE YOUR PINT PUBLIC MEETING

One week before the budget

**Greg Mulholland MP**

Chair, All Party Save the Pub Group

**John Cryne**

CAMRA Greater London Regional Director



**Wednesday, 13 March. 8.15pm**

**Orpington Liberal Club**

**7 Station Road, BR6 0RZ**

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

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### **MPs Must Not Forget Our 'Day To Remember'**

*Reprinted from the January edition of What's Brewing*

December's mass lobby of Parliament to protest the beer duty escalator showed CAMRA and its members at their absolute best. Speakers at the post-lobby rally praised the dedication and passion of the members attending the day – and they were right.

In some cases members had travelled hundreds of miles and rearranged life and work to attend the lobby day. Stewards spent hours on icy streets, shepherding lobbyists to and from the Commons. Volunteers manned tea and coffee tables and helped register lobbyists.

And this was no beery day out. Members waited patiently and without complaint in the hall until directed to visit the House of Commons. They queued in bitterly cold conditions outside of parliament and waited in boring committee rooms, in some cases for hours, for their MPs. And in some cases their dedication and passion was met with dismissive arrogance by MPs – one refused to walk the two minutes from his office to speak to his constituents, who had travelled many miles to see him.

But broadly MPs were supportive and went out of their way to respond to lobbyists – many talking to groups for up to an hour, others made tea or coffee for those who came to see them, some waited themselves in those empty committee rooms for members stuck for an hour in a queue to get in to the House of Commons.

The event energised members and staff. The speeches were greeted with cheers and applause from an audience with every right to feel their energy lagging after a long day of queuing and patiently waiting for things to happen. Attendees were told it was a day to remember – it was. Hopefully it's also a day MPs will remember, especially when they lobby the chancellor to abolish a tax - which as Hazel Blears told CAMRA members – is simply stupid.

# The Flower Pot

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## Kent Cider Makers

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

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

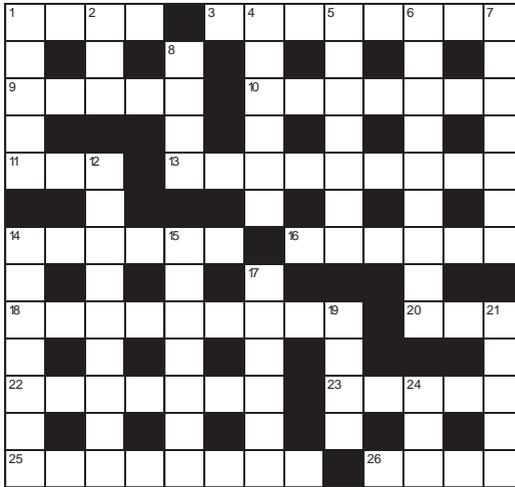


Recent issues of *Draught Copy* online can be found  
at *www.mmcamra.co.uk/Pages/DraughtCopy.aspx*

# The Draught Copy Crossword No. 10

compiled by MICK NORMAN

*Solution in next issue*



*Solution to Crossword No. 9  
in issue No. 169*



## Across

- 1 Sack consisting of treasure, mostly (4)
- 3 Johnny is very delicate (8)
- 9 Assesses for old form of Council Tax (5)
- 10 Ref involved in UN disaster - that's more humorous! (7)
- 11 It's hot, but is it a newspaper? (3)
- 13 River accommodation targeted by pubgoers (9)
- 14 Daisy, perhaps, picked in Eynsford initially, was Desperate Dan's favourite (3,3)
- 16 Unlimited hype swallowed by male chorister as a diversion (6)
- 18 Miss Gardner, 49, talented and up for grabs! (9)
- 20 I say nothing (3)
- 22 Miss Jacques attaches weapons, maybe (7)
- 23 Poor Sven, a legendary Kent stumper (5)
- 25 Impotent fruit? (8)
- 26 Hampshire river in turmoil - should be left alone (4)

## Down

- 1 Bimbo risks exposing Mayor (5)
- 2 11 could be exposed as unfashionable (3)
- 4 Classic Morris 10 found in old river crossing (6)
- 5 Yob's DNA reordered to produce a happy fellow (7)
- 6 Posh London suburb is built on beer, we hear (5,4)
- 7 Altar screen based on red rose design (7)
- 8 Employed journalist after you and me (4)
- 12 Latest grand home to provide bottled beer (9)
- 14 Punk band upset Home Counties? Strikes a discordant note (7)
- 15 Descriptive of an ailing former rugby captain - no good intent here! (7)
- 17 Mistreats article on public transport (6)
- 19 Flat meeting is cut short (4)
- 21 Present during filming at the start (5)
- 24 Tarty piece at the Tate! (3)

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drinking voucher please send your  
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Norwood Lane  
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*no later than March 15th.*

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

*Congratulations to Mark Billing  
from Dartford, who won the prize  
in the Winter issue.*

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---

**Bull, Benenden** – In Tourism South East's *The Beautiful South Awards for Excellence*, the pub received a Silver Award. The usual beers to be found are *Dark Star Hophead*, *Larkins Traditional* and *Harveys Sussex Best*. I have, however, received a report via the NBSS (National Beer Scoring System) that *Larkins Porter* had been available mid-November and in good order.

**King William VI, Benenden** – Ex-police officer Paul Minichiello has taken over here and made some changes to increase the trade. Meals are now taken in the room to the left leaving the drinkers in the main bar to the right. We found the *Shepherd Neame Late Red* to be in good form and *Master Brew* was also available.

**White Hart, Claygate** – Apparently the licensee has increased the trade here but is still unable to earn a living in this *Shepherd Neame* owned pub. They are therefore departing.

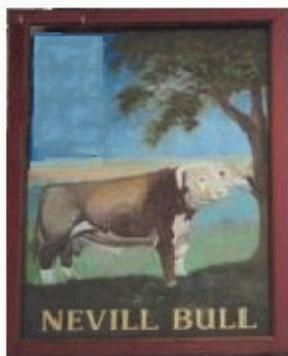
**Crown, Cranbrook** – This was found to be closed in mid-November and is still closed mid-January.

**Cock Horse, Detling** – On the return leg of a bus trip to Swale area we called in here and finally managed to get served, our access being hindered by a group of bar blockers who had clearly been enjoying the hospitality for some time. The regular *Greene King IPA* and *Old Speckled Hen* had been joined by the *Greene King* seasonals: *Hardy & Hansons Rocking Rudolf* and *Belhaven Howells Frosty Bells*.

**Horseshoes, East Farleigh** – The manager, Paul Stewart, was doing a stint behind the pumps here and welcomed us to this *open all day* pub/restaurant that has Cask Marque accreditation and a good reputation for food. The guest ale was *Skinnners Betty Stogs* with regulars *Harveys Sussex Best*, and *Adnams Lighthouse*. [www.thehorseshoeseastfarleigh.co.uk](http://www.thehorseshoeseastfarleigh.co.uk).

**Walnut Tree, East Farleigh** – Our first visit here since the change of tenants found the usual *Shepherd Neame Late Red*, *Master Brew* and *Spitfire*. That evening a musical duo, *Freeloaders*, were playing some numbers from the 60s which we found very acceptable.

# The Nevill Bull



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**King & Queen, East Malling** – David and his team offer consistently good food here all day (12-9.30). Other facilities include a function room and guest accommodation. The regular beers are *Harveys Sussex Best*, *Sharps Doom Bar* and house beer *Westerham Prince of Ales* with a guest ale as well. The website has details at [www.kingandqueeneastmalling.co.uk](http://www.kingandqueeneastmalling.co.uk).

**Rising Sun, East Malling** – Not being tied to a PubCo this is one of our least expensive pubs. *Goachers Fine Light* can always be found in fine fettle. *Theakstons Best* is also available, as well as a guest ale. There is a meat raffle held on Sunday lunchtimes.

**Red Bull, Eccles** – The beer choice has been a bit more adventurous here lately, which seems to have been well appreciated by the customers. The pub still sells *Shepherd Neame Master Brew*, but a more interesting guest is now available.

**Black Pig, Hawkhurst** – On a wet evening venture to some of our most southerly pubs, we found this well attended pub had *Turners East Sussex Ale* as the guest on the bar. *Dark Star Hophead*, *Larkins Traditional* and



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*Harveys Best* are regularly available, and the guest is from local microbrewers. Cider is also sold here.

**Eight Bells, Hawkhurst** – ‘Jack’ and Gill offer three real ales in this two bar pub at The Moor, usually *Dark Star Hophead* and *Harveys Best* with a guest. The pub has a pool table, sports TV and a large car park.

**Queens, Hawkhurst** – I am informed that real ale is no longer sold here.

**Sugar Loaves, Hollingbourne** – A visit to this free house found the new lessees had put the excellent *Long Man Old Man* on the bar as a guest ale. *Master Brew* had also been requested by the local imbibers for the third pump, to join the other regular ale, *Greene King IPA*.

**Chequers, Loose** – *Shepherd Neame Master Brew* has recently replaced *Spitfire* as a regular. It now joins *Fullers London Pride*, *Harveys Sussex Best*, *Taylor Landlord* and *St Austell Tribute*.

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12 – 10.30 Sunday

**The Bull  
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West Malling**



**Fishermans Arms, Maidstone** – Licensee Cliff Burke always has *Master Brew* and a second guest or seasonal beer from *Shepherd Neame*.

**Hare & Hounds, Maidstone** – Zoe Bredon & Wayne Elliot are now back here and supplying some good ale. Recent guests were *Bath Gem*, *Franklins Grumpy Guvnor*, *Skinners Spriggan* and *Ginger Tosser*.

**Muggleton, Maidstone** – Some good beer has been found here lately, both during and following the Beer Festival. The selection of Christmas beers has been good too; however, I often seem to want the ales that have the *Available Soon* label.

**Paper Makers, Maidstone** – Graham & Julie now have real ale on the bar. *Shepherd Neame Summer Sizzler* has been available for some time and was still there at the beginning of December. Probably time for a change of beer, given the current season! A second pump is also fitted.

**Society Rooms, Maidstone** – The beer quality has certainly improved here over the last six months and the service is always good from the busy staff. The pumps usually have a beer that is available and there is a varied selection.

**Turning Tables, Maidstone** – This new restaurant and farm shop has replaced the previous Black Rocks and Henry's. The reviews for the restaurant have been very good. Whilst there are no handpumps our correspondent found *Old Dairy Red Top* on the bar (without any cooling) but unfortunately only on his way out, the beer not being listed on the drinks menu. It later transpired that this was the remains of a cask from the Rafters nightclub on Saturday.

**Kings Arms, Offham** – Had a good attendance at their first beer festival back in November where a selection of mainly Kentish beers was available. Now has a fifth handpump installed. On Mondays all Kent Brewery ales are sold at £2.95. *Kent Pale* and *Shepherd Neame Master Brew* are usually available, along with three guest ales.

**Orchard Spot, Otham** – At this comfortable pub/restaurant with attached night spot, the beers change regularly and we found some seasonal offerings, *Oakleaf Reindeer's Delight* and *Skinners Jingle Knockers*.

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**White House, West Farleigh** – Darts, Pool and Petanque are played here and Janet Morris continues to provide an outlet for the local *Goachers* beers. The regulars are *Fine Light* and *Real Mild* but *Gold Star* and *Crown Imperial Stout* make appearances also.

**Bull, West Malling** – After two years of negotiations and waiting Jamie Newman has now taken over this pub as a free house. A good amount of updating has been completed but more changes will be coming. Trevor Norman continues to serve beers from Kent microbreweries and seasonal ales from the nationals. The take-up for food is increasing and the Monday night quiz is well supported. The *Youngs Bitter* will now be supplied in kilderkins (18gals) rather than firkins so the second *Youngs* pump may be used for another guest ale, making five in all. The beers are changing daily here.

**Lobster Pot, West Malling** – This is becoming more popular again and the selection of ales more varied. *Taylor Landlord* is a regular here and *Adnams Broadside*, *Fullers Seafarers* and *Caledonian Deuchars IPA* have appeared as guests recently.

**Swan on the Green, West Peckham** – This year the *Christmas Ale* had added spices and came at 7.5% due to the addition of port. In October the green-hopped beers all proved interesting, supplying the full aroma of the individual hops varieties used. The regular *Bewick*, *Cygnets*, *Fuggles*, and *Trumpeter Best* continue.

CAMRA members, if you are unable to get to any of our meetings then beer names and scores submitted via WhatPub ([whatpub.com](http://whatpub.com)) or NBSS ([beerscoring.org.uk](http://beerscoring.org.uk)) are greatly appreciated so that we can achieve a more comprehensive coverage of our pubs. This is particularly important in the southern part of our branch where we have few active members.

Contact: *Bob Belton* on 07583 233615 (M) / 020-7235-5213 (W) or

*Ian Wright* on 01322 550275 / 07779 319196

or email [gdvcamra@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:gdvcamra@yahoo.co.uk)

[www.gdvcamra.org.uk](http://www.gdvcamra.org.uk)

Let's begin 2013 where we finished in the last issue of 2012, at the **George & Dragon** in Swanscombe. The branch held its Christmas social here on the Friday evening of their mid-December beer festival, which offered a great variety of excellent real ales from small breweries on 12 beer pumps, plus 3 pumps devoted to ciders from the local *Magic Bus Co*, including the unusual *Caribbean Bus* flavoured with pineapple and coconut. This small corner pub was reopened just one year earlier, in December 2011, by Bob & Bron Veal, and as a testament to their efforts, the **George & Dragon** has become a destination pub for dedicated real ale drinkers from far and wide as well as establishing a welcome base for local customers. Indeed, that Christmas social attracted over 40 CAMRA members, not only from the local GDV branch, but also all the neighbouring branches of Bexley, Maidstone, Medway and West Kent. We would like to thank Bron for putting on an excellent buffet in the recently opened restaurant area. The restaurant is now fully open lunchtimes and evenings from Wednesday to Saturday, (see website [www.georgedragonswanscombe.co.uk](http://www.georgedragonswanscombe.co.uk) to confirm times), and 12.30 to 16.00 on Sundays. Bed and breakfast accommodation is now available in five refurbished letting rooms, a welcome additional facility for the area.

In the previous issue we reported that Nick Byram and James Hayward had created the *Caveman Brewery* and brewed *Citra*, and later *Chinook*, at the excellent *Kent Brewery* in Birling. We have been informed that they have purchased a 4½ barrel plant from the *Devilfish Brewery*, which is due to be installed in the basement of the **George & Dragon** in late January, so by the time you read this article, *Caveman* beers should be being brewed *in situ* in Swanscombe. Incidentally, *Devilfish Brewery*, which started in 2010, has expanded and moved to larger premises at a farm near Bath. *Devilfish Apachi* won the Bath Beer Festival 2012 "Beer of the Festival" award, according to *Pints West*, the multi-award winning magazine of the Bristol & District Branch of CAMRA.

There are now just over one thousand breweries in the UK and brand new ones are springing up all the time. The **Dartford Working Men's Club** takes ales from many new micros and their beer quality is generally extremely good. During 2012 DWMC sold over 550 different beers from more than 150 breweries, of which 26 were new enough not to appear in

the 2012 *Good Beer Guide*. The well attended **DWMC** beer festival on 7<sup>th</sup> December offered a comprehensive beer list, all priced at £2.50 a pint, including new breweries *Blackjack*, *Caveman*, *Moncada* and *Nine Standards*, not listed in the 2012 *Good Beer Guide* breweries section. *Marble Brewery* *Quantum Physics* was a brain teaser at 7% and *Brodies Breakfast Citra* was a knockout at 10.1%. The following week, more new breweries appeared at **DWMC** and I tried *Blonde Star* from *Anarchy* in Morpeth and *White Rat* from *Rat Brewery* in Huddersfield. It's marvellous to see all these new micros, which can be successful initially as novelties, but I'm wondering how many can establish themselves for a sustained period in the present economic climate.

This brings us to the ever worrying subject of pub closures. We have been informed that the **Welcome All** in Horns Cross, one of the pubs in our area retaining a separate public bar and saloon bar, was scheduled to close on New Year's Eve. By the time of publication it will probably be yet another fast food outlet. Along the main road towards Dartford, the **Welsh Tavern** in Stone has been "to let" for some time, but we understand that it should have changed ownership around Christmas and New Year. Hopefully, the new licensee will re-introduce real ale.

A recent CAMRA national survey emphasised another worrying trend that many pubs are being converted to convenience stores, which do not require the planning permission needed for change to residential use. The latest *London Drinker* CAMRA magazine confirmed that 50 London pubs had been converted in this way in the last three years, with a further 13 under threat. Tesco is the major culprit with 28, followed by Sainsbury with 11 conversions. In our branch area, the **Temple Belle** in Dartford and the **Whitehill Tavern** in Gravesend have become Tesco convenience stores and a number of currently vacant pub sites are vulnerable. The advantage to the supermarket is that it can obtain a large building with an alcohol licence, usually with a car park, and which does not require planning approval for change of use. We do not see how this can be in the public interest, particularly if there is collusion between the pub owning company and the supermarket.

On a brighter note, new young licensees Andrew and Zoe took over the **Rose & Crown**, a *Shepherd Neame* tied house, in Wrotham in the summer and we are impressed with the quality of the beers. The pub offers all *Shepherd Neame* regular and seasonal beers and guest beers from other breweries when available, which were *Milestone Loxley Ale* and *Rudgate Ruby Mild* on one visit. This pub is the long established base of the

Hartley Morris Men and was the venue of the CAMRA Mild Marketing Board meetings in the Eighties.

As noted in the opening paragraph we are pleased to see drinkers from other areas visiting pubs in our branch. Bexley Branch held a Gravesend walkabout in October and Maidstone and Mid Kent Branch arranged a trip by public transport in November around some of our prestigious real ale pubs. Their reports can be found elsewhere in this magazine. Our branch held a social in Gravesend in November visiting the **Waterloo**, Wellington Street, that sold a good drop of *Wells Bombardier*, then to the town centre to the **Grapes**, with a range of *Shepherd Neame* beers, finishing at the **Pembroke**, where we sampled *Greene King Morland Original Bitter* and *Young's Bitter*. Unfortunately we didn't have time that day to call in at the **Somerset Arms**, which now sells beers regularly from *Kent Brewery*.

My colleague Bob Marsh reported about the pubs in Wilmington. The **Foresters Arms**, by the Wilmington stores in High Road, is under new management and the new tenant, also called Bob, has been selling well kept *Millis Dartford Wobbler* for some weeks and he would be interested to find out which other local beers might also sell well. This is a large former *Courage* pub that has parking front and rear, and a small, covered smoking area. Food is served from Tuesday to Saturday and a Sunday roast from 1pm to 5pm. Down the hill towards the centre of Wilmington is the **Plough**, which only had *Courage Best* at the time, although *Shepherd Neame Spitfire* is normally available as well. At the bottom of the hill on the main road to Dartford, the **Cressy Arms** was serving its usual *Courage Best* and *Sharps Doom Bar*, and the **Orange Tree**, a *Shepherd Neame* tied house, was currently closed awaiting refurbishment.

Just a few notes regarding Dartford town centre pubs not previously reported. The **Rose** in Overy Street is currently selling two real ales with *Courage Best* the regular beer and one guest ale from various breweries, which on a recent visit was *Caledonian All American*, a very refreshing typical dry American IPA brewed, unsurprisingly, with All American hops. The **Hufflers Arms** in Hythe Street is now promoting *Fullers London Pride* and I was surprised to see lights on by the vacant **Phoenix** further down the street. On investigation, the light illuminated a notice that the premises had been closed by bailiffs on 24<sup>th</sup> October 2012 and were now under 24 hour security protection. The interior has been gutted although the bar counter is still in place. The future is unknown but this industrial site is not a suitable location for a convenience store.

The **Dart**, in Chastilian Road, Dartford re-opened on 20<sup>th</sup> July and is now selling *Doom Bar* at £3.10 a pint and *London Pride* at £3.30 a pint. The opening hours are from noon each day, closing 11pm Mon-Thu, midnight Fri-Sat and 10.30pm on Sunday. Live entertainment takes place every 2 to 3 weeks and the pub caters for quiz nights, darts and pool teams. A separate room is available for functions and the furnishings and toilets are spotlessly clean. It also has an outdoor covered smoking area and a garden with a children's play area.

The information in the above paragraph was reported by my friend, John Harris, who sadly passed away on the 26<sup>th</sup> November, after a two year battle with cancer. John was a well known character around Dartford and had extensive knowledge of the pubs in the area from his many years experience. John helped us by completing pub surveys for the *Good Beer Guide* and delivering *Draught Copy* to many local pubs. His favourite watering holes in the town centre were the **Paper Moon**, the **Stage Door** and the **Wat Tyler**, and he was a prominent customer at the **Dartford Working Men's Club**. John will be greatly by missed by all who knew him.



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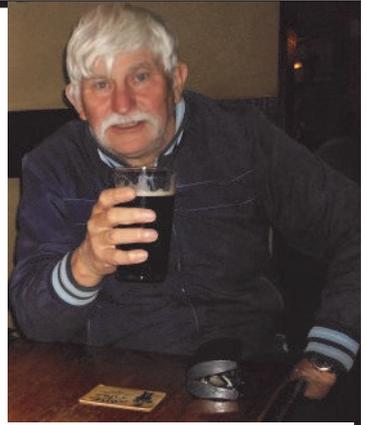
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## John 'Frank' Stanford

Maidstone and Mid-Kent branch members received the shock news early December that long-standing branch member and Committee volunteer John 'Frank' Stanford had passed away at the age of 64. Frank had lived all his life in Maidstone, and had been enjoying an active retirement in recent times, following many years working for Seeboard.



Frank acted as Branch Social Secretary for a long period, arranging weekly visits to pubs within the MMK area, the gatherings becoming a mainstay of Branch activities, also spending some time as Membership Secretary, encouraging participation in social and campaigning activities. He was a tireless worker at our Beer Festivals, most recently at the new East Malling Research venue. Maidstone and Mid-Kent Branch Chairman, Jeff Tucker said: "I will certainly miss Frank at CAMRA meetings and events. He was an individual character who never gave offence to anyone, and enjoyed joining in anything that we were doing. A thoroughly nice chap!"

Away from CAMRA, Frank – who originally received his universally-recognised nickname as a result of there being other 'Johns' at work and in his social group, and a perceived similarity with the 'Frank Spencer' TV character – was a founding member of Maidstone-based Barmy Army Film Club (BAFC), where he put his energies and enthusiasm into productions of Dad's Army-style films, initially playing hapless 'Frank Pike' roles, his latter years and penchant for facial hair more suiting him to 'Corporal Jones' parts. BAFC Chairman Colin Taylor described Frank as a "fantastic fundraiser" and a "thoroughly nice guy".

In addition to the filming and recreations at military shows, Frank and Club colleagues undertook many a fundraising exercise, being familiar sights on the streets and in the pubs of Maidstone, dressed in period uniform and raising thousands of pounds for the Royal British Legion selling poppies. Other causes supported included the RAF Benevolent Fund.

Frank was a regular at St Philip's Church in Waterloo Road, Maidstone, where one fellow churchgoer said: "The sad news of John was such a shock. John attended St Philip's for many years with his dear mum Maisie until she passed away. John was a server for over 30 years, showing such reliability and loyalty. At Christmas Fayres, John would always look after the book stall. He will be

missed by so many.”

Two of his dearest CAMRA Branch friends said: “Fond memories to the meanest Air Guitarist we knew. May he be rocking in Heaven. God Bless him.”

As well as an impressive collection of militaria in connection with his BAFC activities, Frank's other hobbies included American number plates. A liking for quizzes saw him able to combine this with campaigning activities. He proudly captained a Rifle Volunteers team of CAMRA branch colleagues to a first-ever league title.

Those wishing to honour Frank's memory are invited to make a contribution to the RAF Benevolent Fund.

*Colin Mann*

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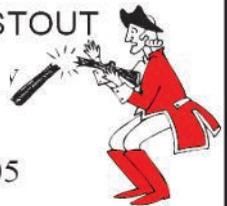
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Bexley CAMRA will once again be holding its annual Beer Festival this year, only this time at a different venue (*see our ad, opposite*). Please come along and support us, or, if you're a member, why not come and work. One of the perks of working is the trip out that our staff have afterwards. This year twenty-nine intrepid souls embarked on a visit to the *Old Dairy Brewery* at Rolvenden. Many thanks go to Chris & Mel (*Magic Bus Cider*), who had also pre-driven the route to check that it was OK for the coach to get us around safely, for organising and supplying the food for what turned out to be a very interesting day. We were greeted by Ed, the head brewer, and started on the *Red Top* (3.8) and *Blue Top* (4.8), both of which were excellent. The brewery has increased its brew length from 5 barrels to 20. Vic Beale, our oracle on things beery, then presented Ed with the certificate for Beer of the Festival (*Wild Hop*); it was also the first to run out. Despite having arranged a stop at the **Three Chimneys** at Biddenden, we were unceremoniously turned away and so we continued into Tenterden where their annual festival was in full swing, featuring lots of folk singing and Morris men. Most pubs had a large selection of real ales and so we made ourselves comfortable for an hour or so. Then it was on to Maidstone and the **Flower Pot**, which had many fine ales and ciders, and also offers a CAMRA members discount. Our final stop was the **George & Dragon** at Swanscombe, where another range of fine ales greeted us and also a large buffet, provided by Bob & Bron.

Our monthly meetings have been held at the **Royal Standard**, Upper Belvedere (August), **Yacht**, Bexleyheath (September), **Volunteer**, Bexleyheath (October), **George Staples**, Blackfen (November) and **Railway Tavern**, Bexley (December). We would like to thank the landlords and landladies for their hospitality at these venues.

Great news for us is that we are soon to have a new pub, but not any old pub, a **micro-pub**, selling real ale for the lucky people of Welling. Situated at 11 Welling High Street, beside School Lane, this as yet unnamed drinking place could be open by the time you read this article. Good luck to its proprietor, Raymond Hurley.

The **New Cross Turnpike** in Welling has teamed up with Age UK Bexley to be used as a meeting place for pensioners wanting to socialise with each other. Meanwhile, the two Wetherspoon pubs in Bexleyheath, the



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**Wrong 'Un** and the **Furze Wren**, have raised money for three defibrillator machines (one is installed in each pub) in conjunction with the British Heart Foundation. Sadly, the **Jacobean Barn** has withdrawn its drinking area and has become a restaurant only.

On the social side, October turned out to be a test of stamina for anyone contemplating our diary of events. It started on Thursday 18<sup>th</sup> when we were invited by the incumbents of the **Crayford Arms** to the re-opening of their pub following a major (although sympathetic) refit by *Shepherd Neame*. There were three *Sheps* beers plus two guests – *Rudgate Ruby Mild* and *Sunny Republic Beach Blonde*. On the Saturday, we held a crawl of Gravesend, starting at the **Ship & Lobster** (*Hobgoblin* and *Millis Gravesend Guzzler*, plus a cider), **Canal Tavern** (*Doombar* and *London Pride*), **Jolly Drayman** (*Tribute*, *Hobgoblin*, *Hophead* and *Reverend James*), **Crown & Thistle** (*Old Hooky*, *Deuchars IPA*, *Youngs Bitter*, *O'Hanlons Stormstay* and *Franklins English Garden*, as well as nine ciders), **Three Daws** (*Trelawny*, *Tribute*, *Hobgoblin* and *Old Peculier*), **Pier** (*Adnams* – sadly undrinkable) and **Rum Puncheon** (*Betty Stogs*, *Fullers Bengal Lancer*, *Adnams Ghostship*, *Cottage Battle of Britain* and *Kent Green Giant & Zingibeer*).

On the Sunday, we joined up with some Gravesend & Darent Valley members for the crawl of Ramsgate, which had been postponed from August Bank Holiday Monday. The following Wednesday, we held our usual monthly social with a crawl around Bexley Village starting at the **Old Dartfordians Rugby Club** (Branch Club of the Year and new beer festival venue) where we sampled *Tribute*, *Trelawny*, *Late Red* and *Westerham 1965*. On then to the **Black Horse** where we had *Adnams Southwold*, *Harveys Sussex* and *Tribute*. This is another pub in our branch area that **charges £3.45 a pint and £1.85 a half! BE WARNED**. Finally, to the **Railway Tavern**, which had *Franklins Stout* and *Grumpy Guvnor*, as well as *Courage Best* and a cider.

November saw our monthly social around Sidcup clash with the official *Shepherd Neame* opening of the **Crayford Arms**. Some of our members who stayed at the Arms all evening told of a very enjoyable night, including the dropping of an expensive bottle of beer as it was being presented to a long-standing customer. Those members who made it to Sidcup visited **Sidcup Place**, a *Brewers Fayre* pub with *Spitfire* available: this is a restaurant but with plenty of space for drinkers. We then moved on to the **Portrait** which was showing live football and had *Doombar*, *Moorland Original* and *Jennings Worlds Biggest Liar* plus a cider available.

Lastly, the Wetherspoons **Tailors Chalk**, where we were able to sample *Ruddles, Spitfire, Bombardier, Abbot, The American 3.5* (left over from the festival), *Batemans Rosie Nosey* and *Hepworths Pullman* plus a cider.

Our Christmas social was held at the **Crayford Arms**. 13 members attended and the evening was declared a success. With the help of members of the public, we virtually drank the pub dry of cask ale. Landlady Sharon confessed to me on the Saturday that she was worried that there was not going to be anything left for the rest of the weekend.

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## Neighbourhood Watch

by Andy Osborne

One miserable wet and windy November morning, a group of us set off to visit some of the best pubs in adjacent branches in Gravesend and the surrounding area. With no direct bus route available on that day we decided to go via Tonbridge. Boarding a 7 bus, four of us left Maidstone very promptly and the driver seemed keen to make good time, so much so that he went straight past the stop on the outskirts of town where a fifth member was waiting. We continued on in the same fashion with some people actually looking to see if there were seat belts as we continued our near “white knuckle ride”. We saw one person actually running away from a stop once she had flagged it down, with the bus stopping well past the desired spot. On arriving some 15 minutes early at Tonbridge I decided to challenge the driver and asked for his driver number. When asked what it was concerning, he went on to explain (as you may have guessed by now) that he was actually the previous bus to our intended one and had been very late leaving.

The silver lining to this particular cloud was that we now had extra time to visit the **Humphrey Bean** in the High Street, which had been a post office but is now a Wetherspoons pub in the CAMRA *Good Beer Guide* (as all but one of the day’s pubs are), and was taking part in one of their national beer festivals. Once inside and having given the pump clips a quick onceover, I was feeling brave and decided to try the *Devil’s Advocate*, a black lager, which I didn’t particularly like, so I tried a couple more and the best was *Adnams Fishermans*, which was very flavoursome. By the time we left, our missing colleague had caught us up by catching a train and walking, not realising that had he waited a little longer at the bus stop the correct 7 bus would have stopped for him and he would have arrived with enough time to have joined us at the bar.

The next move was a 222, an *Autocar* route that took us to Borough Green and in particular the **Black Horse and Hoodens**, which had very kindly agreed to open earlier than usual. Three other ale enthusiasts who had been blessed with more direct routes were already there, standing at the bar with pints in hand. *Moorhouse’s Blonde Witch*, *Adnams Ghost Ship* and *Old Dairy Red Top* gave us a tough choice to make. Two further members then came in, bringing us up to ten in number to enjoy the ale and hospitality. This pleasantly refurbished community pub is on the Maidstone Road, not far from the High Street and railway station, and has occasional live music and beer festivals, along with monthly comedy



nights. I feel I should mention that the **Black Horse** does not sell much if any food at the moment but Alison the landlady is extremely flexible about people bringing their own in and will even supply plates, knives and forks for customers ordering in takeaways from the town centre.

A short walk later and we arrived at the railway station and the bus stop for our next connection. We clambered aboard the required 308 and after a short drive we stopped right outside the **Vigo** pub, near Fairseat on the North Downs. Apparently there has been a pub here since 1471 and I believe some parts of the building are said to date from that time. First known as the

*Upper Drover*, the pub was given its present name by a sailor returning from the 1702 battle of Vigo Bay, when England and the Dutch fought Spain in the War of the Spanish Succession, who bought it with his share of the treasure captured in the English victory under Admiral Rooke. So it would seem that the relatively modern village



of Vigo is named *after* the Inn rather than the reverse.

*Kent Pale* and a house beer from *Goacher's* were in good form as some of us decided to have a game of *Dadlums*, which is an old English game of skittles that you knock down with wooden discs. It is a team game with each player's score added to get their team's total. I am sure it gets a lot more interesting with a few pints flowing and a lot of barracking from the opposing side. I understand from research that this is one of the last

remaining tables in the country and thought to be over 150 years old.

Sadly, the pub was closed for a number of years but Andy and Val took it over in December 2010 and have much revived it, having good quality ales from local breweries (in the *Good Beer Guide*) and various music sessions on different days, and those that ate here were very complimentary about the food. So we wish them every success in the future.



Leaving here, we got back on the same service that brought us to continue to the next stop, Swanscombe, where the bus stops close to the **George and Dragon**. Once inside we found an array of pumps advertising *Satan Claws* from the *Devilfish* brewery, *Charles Wells Bombardier*, two from the *Marble* brewery being *Dobber* and *Pint*, *Gadds No 5*, one from the *Caveman* brewery, plus lots of interesting bottled beers. We had hoped to have a glimpse of the newly equipped cellar underneath, which will be the new home for the *Caveman* brewery but it was not ready for a visit at this time. Their beers, *Chinook* and *Citra*, are currently being brewed at the *Kent Brewery* until such time that the onsite brewery is ready, expected early 2013. The name “Caveman” was inspired by the discovery in 1935, in Baker’s Hole Cave of “Swanscombe Man” when fragments of bones and tools were dated at 400,000 years old. We were warmly welcomed by the landlady and a few of the locals with whom we enjoyed an exchange of witty banter. I particularly liked the *Dobber* beer from the *Marble* brewery in Greater Manchester. Most of the party enjoyed their very reasonably priced meat rolls alongside the excellent beer, and the landlady mentioned that they are planning to have a fuller range of meals available in the near future. This was the only one of today’s venues not to be in the current CAMRA GBG, as the pub was re-opened by landlord and landlady Bob & Bron Veal fairly recently, but we felt that, if this visit was anything to go by, it would be only a matter of time before they were.

The **Jolly Drayman** in Gravesend was just a short bus ride and an even shorter walk away just outside the town centre. It has original low ceilings and was once part of the *Walkers* brewery, it has men’s and women’s darts teams, a bar billiard table and also a Dadlums table, which is played on alternate Sundays. There are normally four ales on offer, but

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this weekend they were holding one of their twice yearly beer festivals, this time featuring Kent ales, ciders and perry, with live music on the Friday and Saturday evenings. I believe there was a selection of 18 different ales in the festival section coming from the *Kent Brewery, Whitstable, Wantsum, Hop Fuzz, Gadds* and *Royal Tunbridge Wells*. The **Jolly Drayman** also holds the prestigious award of being the 2012 local CAMRA branch Pub of the Year, and provided a fitting end to a thoroughly enjoyable day.

## The Bell & Jorrocks

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# Crafty!

The (American) Brewers Association, a not-for-profit trade association dedicated to small and independent American craft brewers, has issued the following statement regarding the increase in production and promotion of craft-like beers by large, non-craft breweries:

*An American craft brewer is defined as small and independent. Their annual production is 6 million barrels of beer or less and no more than 25 percent of the craft brewery is owned or controlled by an industry member who is not themselves a craft brewer.*

*The community of small and independent craft brewers has grown as beer enthusiasts embrace new, diverse beers brewed by their neighbours and friends who are invested in their local communities. Beer drinkers are voting with their palates and dollars to support these entrepreneurs and their small and independent businesses.*

*In 2011, small and independent craft brewers saw their industry grow 13 percent by volume; in the first half of 2012, volume grew by an additional 12 percent. Meanwhile, the overall beer industry was down 1.3 percent by volume and domestic non-craft was down 5 million barrels in 2011.*

*Witnessing both the tremendous success and growth of craft brewers and the fact that many beer lovers are turning away from mass-produced light lagers, the large brewers have been seeking entry into the craft beer marketplace. Many started producing their own craft-imitating beers, while some purchased (or are attempting to purchase) large or full stakes in small and independent breweries.*

*While this is certainly a nod to the innovation and ingenuity of today's small and independent brewers, it's important to remember that if a large brewer has a controlling share of a smaller producing brewery, the brewer is, by definition, not craft.*

*However, many "crafty" beers found in the marketplace today are not labelled as products of large breweries. So when someone is drinking a Blue Moon Belgian Wheat Beer, they often believe that it's from a craft brewer, since there is no clear indication that it's made by SABMiller. The same goes for Shock Top, a brand that is 100 percent owned by Anheuser-Busch InBev, and several others that are owned by a multinational brewing and beverage company.*

*The large, multinational brewers appear to be deliberately attempting to blur the lines between their crafty, craft-like beers and true craft beers from today's small and independent brewers. We call for transparency in brand ownership and for information to be clearly presented in a way that allows beer drinkers to make an informed choice about who brewed the beer they are drinking.*

*And for those passionate beer lovers out there, we ask that you take the time to familiarise yourself with who is brewing the beer you are drinking. Is it a product of a small and independent brewer? Or is it from a crafty large brewer, seeking to capitalise on the mounting success of small and independent craft brewers?*

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At the end of October I took a train to Halifax in West Yorkshire to attend an iconic bus rally and visit a few pubs along the way. As luck would have it, I could do both at the same time!

I had booked two nights at the Mozart House Hotel, a B&B five minutes from the station, which was pretty good, apart from the slightly dated Regency-style decor.

I arranged to arrive at 1.30, but the proprietor wasn't going to be around, so he left the key under a brick for me to let myself in. I had bought a Plusbus ticket as an add-on, which gives access to all buses in West Yorkshire at a cost of £3.00 instead of the usual price of £5.20.

So I jumped on a bus for the short journey to the bus station, where I caught the hourly 504 up to Denholme, which involved a five minute walk from the terminus to the **New Inn**, which overlooks an impressive railway viaduct from a long-closed line.

The pub is an excellent example of a northern pub, a bit musty and with dated furnishings, but with a good range of beers. Like nearly all Yorkshire pubs, many of the beers are from Yorkshire. If only Kent could be the same.

I chose the 3.8% *Wincle Waller Pale Ale* from across the Pennines in Cheshire, which was very enjoyable, as was the price, £2.30 a pint. Welcome to Yorkshire! The 697 bus then took me into Keighley, where a short walk from the bus station brought me to the **Boltmakers Arms**.

This small, traditional pub was quite busy and some of the customers were employees from the nearby *Timothy Taylor* brewery. The pub was responsible for the naming of TT's new beer, the 4.5% *Boltmakers*, which I sampled at £2.66. This is a worthy addition to the range and I hope we can get some in Kent.

My next journey was by bus 664 to the touristy town of Haworth, where I found another Timmy Taylor pub halfway up a cobbled street. I ordered a pint of *Golden Best*, the delicious light mild, and was asked for £3.20, my most expensive pint of the weekend by far. The name of the pub? The **Fleece**. Apt, I thought!

Back on the bus, the number 500 this time, to Oxenhope, where it climbed out of the town to the **Waggon and Horses**, a remote pub with a good choice of beers. I had rung beforehand to enquire whether food would be

available on a Saturday afternoon, and was informed in a broad Yorkshire accent that they sold food '12 while 9'.

I tried the *Acorn Tangerine Dream* from Barnsley at £2.65, and it was excellent. However, I didn't enjoy the Radio 1-style music; an odd choice given that there was nobody under 50 in the place.

On leaving, I saw a notice tied to the bus stop about a special evening bus service to serve the beer festival in Oxenhope so, instead of catching the last bus to Hebden Bridge, I popped back into the pub for another pint then caught the bus back into Oxenhope.

The festival was at the Keighley & Worth Valley station, and turned out to be a beer and music festival, and admission was £10. I wasn't going to pay that for just a couple of pints, so I caught the free bus, an elderly Leyland National, to Hebden Bridge.

No pubs in Hebden Bridge appealed to me, so I caught the 590 Halifax bus to a place called Friendly, where the **White Horse** offered *Wharfebank Best Bitter*, from Pool in Wharfedale, at £2.70. A nice little locals' pub, but the music was no better. I sometimes think pubs play music to suit the staff, and never mind the customers!

I walked from here to Sowerby Bridge, having to ask directions twice, but the two GBG pubs there were extremely busy, with no prospect of getting to the bar in the near future, so I caught the next bus back to Halifax.

Sunday dawned wet, which persisted all day, as it turned out. The bus rally was based at the Piece Hall, a magnificent stone building in the town centre. Nothing much was happening by 11 o'clock, so I found the local Wetherspoons, the **Old Barum Top**, which was in the middle of one of their national beer festivals. What should be on the bar but *Red Sails* from *Shepherd Neame*! I hadn't tried it before, so I ordered a pint, which was served using the usual northern sparkler, which didn't help the flavour, but it tasted better than most Sheps beers.

From the Piece Hall, historic buses were running about every 10 minutes out of town to the **Sportsman** pub, which happens to be in the *Good Beer Guide*. They also had a small display of buses in part of the car park. The pub had eight beers on, and was doing Sunday lunches, so I started with the *Green Mill Gold* at £2.70, which washed down lunch a treat.

I travelled on various buses to and from the town, where I found the GBG-listed **Dirty Dick's**, an alehouse with nine beers on. *Wentworth Hoppy Days* (4.5%) was £2.40, and *Rooster's Londinium Porter* (5.5%) £2.60, both of these Yorkshire beers being in excellent condition.

Back on the bus to the **Sportsman** again, for a pint of *Salamander Last Straw*, a delicious pale beer from Bradford, which had been put on since my earlier visit. The buses were running after dark up until 7pm, which was quite atmospheric.

I paid another visit to the **Old Barum Top** to try the Dutch beer *Ijbok*. This was a 6% dark beer, but didn't seem to have much flavour for a strong beer.

All in all, I enjoyed my trip to Halifax. These days, with the Internet, it's so easy to plan trips like this, both for accommodation and transport. It's a very nice part of the country, but I would avoid drinking in Haworth!

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# CAMRA BRANCH MEETINGS

CAMRA branches arrange socials and trips throughout the year. Non-members are welcome to come along to our meetings. If you would like more information, or would like a lift (if possible), please ring the local branch contact—see **Local News** sections.

Meetings are at 8.30pm unless otherwise noted.

**BEX** = Bexley, **GDV** = Gravesend and Darent Valley, and  
**MMK** = Maidstone & Mid-Kent (*OBM* = Open Business Meeting)

## FEBRUARY

- 2 **MMK** Bus Trip to **Chequers**, Laddingford, for Winter Warmers
- 6 **GDV** **Black Horse, Borough Green then Bull**, Wrotham, then **Rose & Crown**
- 7 **MMK** **Cock Horse**, Detling, then **Black Horse**, Thurnham
- 9 **MMK** Post-Xmas meal, **Nevill Bull**
- 13 **BEX** **Old Dartfordians Rugby Club (OBM)**
- 14 **MMK** **Kings Head**, Grafty Green, then **Who'd A Thought It**
- 14 **GDV** Gravesend GBG pubs walkabout starting at **Rum Puncheon**
- 20 **BEX** 8pm Social in Blackfen, start **Jolly Fenman**
- 20 **GDV** **Dartford Working Men's Club (OBM & GBG14 selection)**
- 21 **MMK** **Duke of Wellington**, Ryarsh, then **Angel, Addington**
- 27 **BEX** Social, **Furze Wren**, Bexleyheath and GBG selection
- 28 **MMK** **Albion**, Boughton Monchelsea, then **Cock**

## MARCH

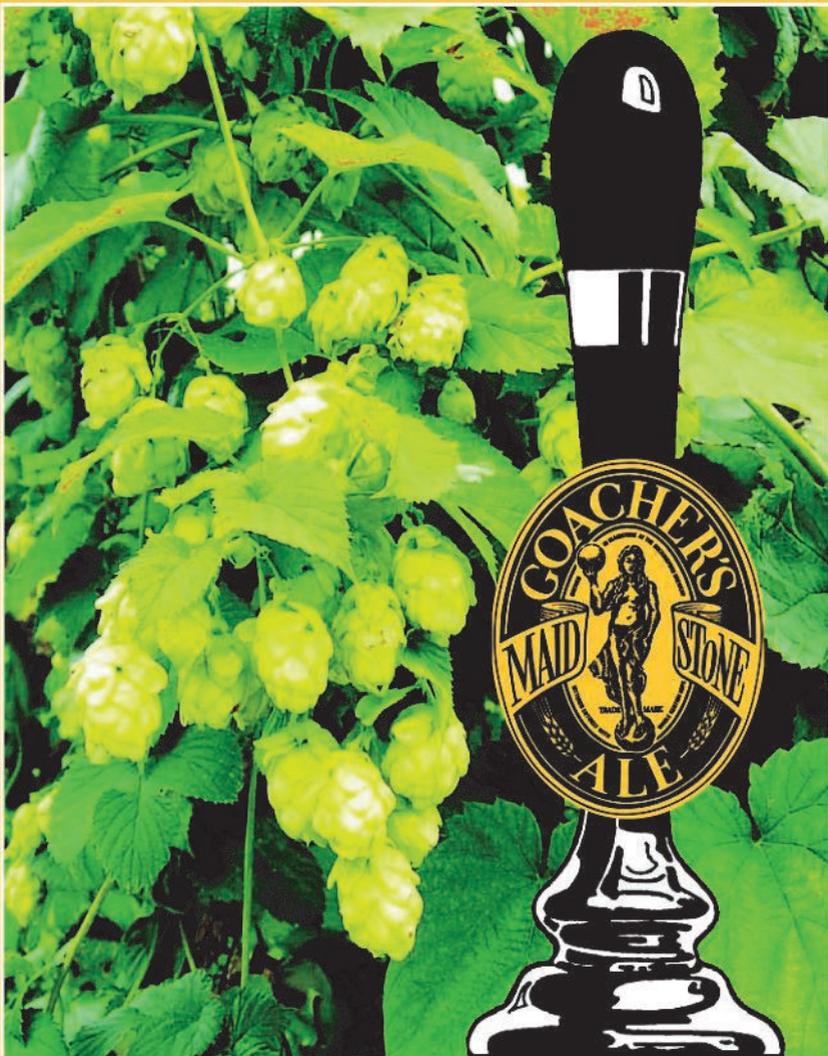
- 7 **MMK** **Society Rooms**, Maidstone, then **Hare & Hounds and Flower Pot**
- 13 **BEX** **Prince of Wales, Belvedere (OBM)**
- 14 **MMK** **Woolpack**, Benover, then **Walnut Tree**, Yalding
- 16 **MMK** Bus Trip to East Hoathly/Uckfield/Isfield
- 20 **BEX** 8pm, Social in Crayford, start **Duke's Head**
- 21 **MMK** **Red Lion**, Lenham (*OBM*)
- 28 **MMK** **Rising Sun**, East Malling, then **King & Queen**
- 29 **MMK** Good Friday Ramble, Watlingbury Stn to **White House**

## APRIL

- 4 **MMK** **George**, Trottiscliffe, then **Plough**
- 4-6 **BEX** Bexley Beer Festival, Old Dartfordians, Bexley  
(*See Beer Festival tab on website for further details*)
- 10 **BEX** **Ye Olde Black Horse, Sidcup (OBM)**
- 11 **MMK** **Bell**, Smarden, then **White Horse**, Headcorn
- 18 **MMK** **Druids**, Maidstone, then **Swan**
- 23 **BEX** 8pm, St Georges Day Social, **Robin Hood & Little John**
- 24 **BEX** 8pm, Social in Northumberland Heath, start **Royal Oak**
- 25 **MMK** **Harrow Hill Hotel**, Lenham, then **White Horse**, Sandway
- 27 **MMK** Bus Trip to **Chequers**, Laddingford for beer festival

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