

East Kent Drinker



North East Kent CAMRA branch news

SUMMER 2023 FREE ISSUE 1



Campaign
for
Real Ale

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Welcome

Welcome to this first edition of North East Kent Drinker, produced by the CAMRA branches in Thanet, Canterbury, Herne Bay, Whitstable and Swale.

These are both exciting and challenging times for the pub and brewing industries. Exciting, as in this area we have a thriving and growing range of traditional and new breweries providing a wide range of beers for all tastes. Challenging, as traditional outlets continue to come under financial pressure leading to far too many losses of established and popular pubs.

In these pages we aim to reflect the local scene and keep you informed about new pubs and beers, suggest some interesting trips locally and further afield, and give you a glimpse of some of the fun activities that CAMRA members get up to.

Please contact us, (details below) if you have some snippets of news that you would like us to share. And do let us know if there are any features that you would like to see us cover in these pages.



Events diary

CANTERBURY, HERNE BAY, AND WHITSTABLE BRANCH

Saturday 27th July: Tour of Wingham, Ash and Sandwich pubs by bus. Meet Canterbury bus station at 12.00 for 12.16 No 43 bus to Wingham

Tuesday 15th August: Branch AGM, Victoria Hotel, 59 London Rd, Canterbury 20.00

Saturday 19th August: Minibus tour of village pubs 12.00 to 19.00

22nd to 24th September: Green Hop beer bar at Canterbury Food & Drink Festival. Dane John Gardens, Canterbury gillanderrykey@btinternet.com for more details

SWALE BRANCH

2nd to 3rd September: CAMRA Real Ale & Cider bar at Faversham Hop Festival. contact@johnsissons@sky.com for more detail

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THANET BRANCH

contact@thanet.camra.org.uk for more detail

ASHFORD, FOLKESTONE & ROMNEY MARSH BRANCH

Saturday 9th September: Tour of Folkestone, Dymchurch and Sandgate pubs by bus. Meet at The Firkin, Aldehouse, Cheriton Place, Folkestone at 12.00.

KENT CAMRA BRANCHES

18th to 19th August: Mini beer festival at Time & Tide Brewing, Felderland Lane, Deal

Saturday 23 September: 12.00–22.00. Kent branches annual social at Hukins Hops & McCanns brewery. See news section for more information. Contact your local CAMRA branch for travel arrangements.

NATIONAL

1st to 5th August: Great British Beer Festival, Olympia London. gbbf.org.uk for full details and tickets.

Contact

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Pub news

Canterbury, Herne Bay, and Whitstable

The Red Lion, Stodmarsh Road, Stodmarsh closed unexpectedly in September 2022. A local group applied for, and obtained, asset of community value (ACV) protection for the pub. After a community refurbishment effort, the Red Lion reopened in April and started serving meals shortly after.

The Ship Inn, 17 Central Parade, Herne Bay has reopened and is serving food.

ACV status has been applied for, and granted to, the **Kings Head**, 204 Wincheap, Canterbury. The Kings Head has been closed since June 2022. It is hoped that it will open again shortly.

Planning permission to convert the **Chapter Arms**, New Town Street, Chartham Hatch to residential use has been denied on appeal.

The Two Doves, 25 Nunnery Fields, Canterbury has been closed since 2019. Planning permission to turn the pub into two dwellings has been denied but is being appealed. ACV status has been applied for but sadly refused. The pub is up for sale.

The Plough and Harrow, 86 High Street, Bridge is still up for sale having been closed since December 2022.

Limes, 13 Rosemary Lane, Canterbury has undergone refurbishment and is available to let. Limes closed under something of a cloud in October 2022. It may be reverting to its former name, the Cardinal's Cap.

Good news – the **Tyler's Kiln** at Tyler Hill, a couple of miles outside Canterbury, has reopened. It's open every day from 11 to 11 (Sundays 11-8) and is "passionate about bringing a sense of community to the village, combining good food, good drink and good company". They have a lovely garden with innovative touches to enjoy this summer. See www.tylerskiln.co.uk. The pub is on the 5 bus route from Canterbury and is walking distance from the University of Kent.

Petham Village Hall in the beautiful countryside four miles south of Canterbury is running social evenings with beer and food on the first Friday of each month from 6 to 10pm. Free entry. Contact scott@settlehouse.com if you want to book food. Could this be an inspiration for villages which have lost their pubs? See the website www.pethamvillage/ www.pethamvillagehall.co.uk or their Facebook page. They had a beer and craft festival on July 8th.

The Rising Sun at Beltinge, near Herne Bay, is under new management and is open every day. It's hoped to run a cider festival soon, and a beer festival is also planned. See www.risingsunbeltinge.co.uk for information. It's on the 6 bus route. The pub opens at 8am on some days!

Canterbury Branch Pub of the Year Awards

Gold: The Bouncing Barrel, Bank Street, Herne Bay.

Silver: The Haywain, Bramling.

Bronze: The New Inn, Havelock Street, Canterbury.

A special award has been made to the Monument, St Dunstan's Street, Canterbury in recognition of 'The best addition to the branch pub scene in 2023.'



Kevin Costello of the Haywain receives award from Canterbury Branch Chairman Gerry Keay



Sam Holden of The Monument, Canterbury with his award

Thanet

Ravensgate Arms, 56/58 King St, Ramsgate, latterly run by the Ramsgate Brewery, closed at the end of April. This pub will be mourned by many.

South Eastern Tavern, 11 Margate Rd, Ramsgate closed in mid-May. The lease is being marketed.

Wheatsheaf, 17 High Street, St Lawrence, Ramsgate closed in May 2021. Planning permission was granted in May this year for the premises to be converted to residential use.

Quart in a Pint Pot, 28 Charlotte Sq, Margate – closed during the Summer of 2022. Permission was granted in May this year to be converted to a dance studio and other uses. **CONT.**

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Themagnetbroadstairs



themagnetbroadstairs

The Elephant Pub...

The Mall, Faversham



Ale House in the Middle of our Street, is the newest micropub in Thanet and its doors opened in June, taking over from what was NauticAles. It is the sister pub of the Artillery Arms though more on the outskirts of Ramsgate. It sells local real ales, also those from further afield. It has a garden to the rear plus outside seating to front – perfect for some summer refreshment. www.whatpub.com/pubs/THA/200/ale-house-in-the-middle-of-our-street-ramsgate

Hopefully also some good news, when the **Sportsman** pub In Cliffsend (last tenanted through Shepherd Neame) was demolished the replacement buildings included a space for a micropub or cafe. The interior is currently set up as one would expect a bar to look and there is a licensing application from Bayview Bar Ltd, trading as Njord. www.whatpub.com/pubs/THA/092/sportsman-cliffsend

Planning applications

There have been a couple of recent planning applications that if approved would result in the permanent loss of two traditional public houses in Thanet.

The Brown Jug in Dumpton, planning reference F/TH/23/0756, is an application on behalf of Tracey Emin Studios to turn this grade II listed pub into a house. This change of use application is essentially for a loss of a semi-public space and amenity that once lost is not coming back. It is the loss of the village pub. Thanet CAMRA's objection to this states "Although we note that the Brown Jug last traded more than four years ago it is important to remember that this is no indication that the site is finished as a public house." Also, "The Brown Jug is a listed building of tremendous character in an area where there are few other listed buildings and losing the public access and enjoyment of it would be to the detriment of all, not least there are plenty of people who don't have gardens and it has a wonderful one for friends and families to meet in over a drink." www.whatpub.com/pubs/THA/017/brown-jug-broadstairs

The Chilton Tavern in Pegwell, planning reference F/TH/23/0702, was formerly owned by Enterprise Inns and was seemingly sold to a property developer. It had a planned re-opening in 2019 but this never happened, and the pub remained unoccupied. In 2022 it was subject to a fire which may have damaged it beyond economic repair.

It was a fine pub, and when it was open it provided an informal and community atmosphere. Thanet CAMRA have submitted an objection to this plan for four houses stating, "If the site is to be re-developed it really should include space for a pub/micropub, or at the very least any undertaking that is community focussed." Indeed, perhaps its undamaged and beautifully built stable building need not be demolished and could have a new purpose. www.whatpub.com/pubs/THA/022/chilton-tavern-ramsgate

Thanet Branch Pub of the Year Awards

Winner: Royston, The Broadway, Broadstairs.
2nd Place: The Magnet, Albion St, Broadstairs.
Highly commended: The Hovelling Boat, York St, Ramsgate and the Two Halves, Marine Drive, Margate.

If you have any news about pubs opening or closing, please email us. We would also like to hear about any pubs hosting special events such as beer festivals, charity events, tap takeovers etc.

Brewery News

Chislet Brewery

A new brewery based at Chislet near Canterbury. Their website www.chisletbrewery.co.uk tells us:

"Chislet Brewery was setup by John and Lewis who after a number of years of home brewing decided to take the plunge and setup a commercial microbrewery at Chislet Business Park!

We are still in the early stages but have been through a six month journey of setting up a unit to work as a brewery, getting and modifying some brewing equipment and gaining the various licences and permissions to be able to brew and sell beer. We hope you enjoy following our journey and more importantly drinking our beer!"

Floc Brewery

John and Lewis have started their first brew. Floc Brewery moved from Margate to a larger premises in Canterbury in February 2022. They specialise in New World IPA styles and have recent collaborations with the likes of Verdant and Northern Monk brewery. They do not produce any cask conditioned real ale.

The Floc Brewery & Taproom in Canterbury is just a ten minute or so stroll from the city centre at Unit 7A Wincheap Industrial Estate, Cotton Road, **cont.**

Canterbury, CT1 3RB (next to Howdens). The taproom is open on Thursday evenings 5-10pm, Friday & Saturday afternoon and evenings 1-10pm, and afternoons on Sunday, 2-6pm. See www.flocbrewing.com for more detail.

Hukins Hops

Hukins Hops have turned their old hop shed, at Haffenden Farm, Tenterden, into a 35-barrel brewery and a brasserie. The impressive brewery is steam powered, has 17 fermenters, and has 120000L monthly capacity. Two brands of beers are brewed, the McCanns range of traditional ales, and the Angels & Demons craft keg. Fifth generation grower Ross Hukins and brewer Ross Gandon have invited CAMRA branches to visit them on Saturday 23rd September. Visitors will be shown around the hop gardens and equipment, the brewery, and of course will taste their beer including a green hop. The visit starts at midday until late. Food will be available, Contact your local CAMRA branch for more detail.

Wantsum Brewery

"We have been extremely busy at Wantsum Brewery recently, releasing brand new special beers this year such as Sir John Fogge, a 3.4% hoppy pale ale, which we have brewed with our classic malt bill for our hoppy beers with adjuncts to give this beer tons of body and mouthfeel, a healthy dose of Citra & Ekuano hops give you are beautiful citrusy fruit flavour & aroma. Cantium – 4.8% – Strong Dark Mild, we used our award winning Black Prince recipe as a starting point and then ramped the ABV, it went down a storm. As well as brewing some amazing new beers we have also won SIBA Awards, South East Gold for our Hurricane – 4.5% – New World IPA & South East Bronze for our More's Head, a 3.7% modern chestnut bitter. Black Pig won Beer of the Festival at the Clitheroe CAMRA Beer Festival.

We have been busy making more improvements to our Taproom located at the brewery, installing a brand new chiller in our stillage room ensuring our beers are kept at the right temperature and in tip top condition. We have pop up food every Friday for people to come and enjoy. We have started to crop and reuse yeast in the brewery for the last 6 months with huge success, which is making a better more well-rounded beer. We are looking to expand some of our range into kegs in the coming months, such as Golgotha & Hurricane, to help us branch out into new markets."

CAMRA Beer Tasting Panels

One of CAMRA's objectives is to improve the level of knowledge about beer and cider through its Learn & Discover programme including Discovery Zones at beer festivals and an extensive range of educational materials at www.camra.org.uk/learn-discover/

CAMRA Tasting Panels are regionally organised groups of members who have been trained in the tasting and assessment of beers. Kent CAMRA held a recent training session for new tasters. Chris Doree reports: 'It was lovely to see such a good turnout from Kent at the Marden Club on Saturday. It was a great venue and it appears that everyone enjoyed themselves. It is gratifying to see so much engagement from so many trainees since the training. One star pupil has submitted 8 Kent beer tasting cards.

Meli has crunched the numbers and created a list of the beers that we need a few more tasting cards for. There is something for everyone, so take a look at this list and then go taste them:



The tasting panel at work

Brewery

Goachers
Hop Fuzz
Iron Pier
Kent
Kent
Kent
Mad Cat
Ramsgate (Gadds)
Tonbridge
Tonbridge

Beer

Fine Light Ale
English
Cast Iron Stout
Session Pale
Prohibition
Kashmir
Educated Guess
HPA (Hoppy Pale)
American Pale
Coppernob

CAMRA provide an online video by Jane Peyton, author and beer writer, on how to taste beer: www.camra.org.uk/learn-discover/the-basics/introduction-to-tasting-beer/



LocAle

LocAle promotes pubs stocking locally brewed real ale in order to reduce the number of 'beer miles' from brewery to pub cellar.

Learn more at camra.org.uk/locale



CAMRA cricket tents are back!

Yes, after a three-year gap due to Covid, we ran our popular CAMRA real ale tent at Kent's Spitfire Cricket Ground, Old Dover Road, Canterbury. It was during cricket festival week, and Kent was playing Surrey in the County Championship match from Sunday June 11 to Wednesday June 14.

Our tent was on the bank overlooking the pitch under Floodlight 3, our favourite location because it gives a great view. The CAMRA tent is for CAMRA members and their guests only. It's not open to the general public, but we signed up some new members at the door.

We run the cricket tents in aid of charity – this year's charities are Cancer Research UK and Alzheimer's Research UK. We were thrilled to get donations of cask beer and cider from sixteen Kent producers. In all, we had 30 different beers and one cider, but we only put 4 beers on at any one time to maintain quality. Usually we have a bitter, a best bitter, a golden ale and a dark ale. As one beer runs out, a new one is put on. This can happen very quickly! We also do wine, tea, coffee and soft drinks.

We opened on our first day in blazing hot weather, which continued through all four days. It's imperative to keep the beer cool – we don't like warm beer – so we keep packs of ice cubes on the casks. Usually, one pack a day is enough, but the weather was so hot we had to use two packs per cask per day.

The first day, Sunday, was very busy with CAMRA cricket fans from Kent, Surrey, London and further afield. Kent spirits fell when Kent lost 5 early wickets, but then they managed to build up a great score of 301. Kent spirits were even higher

on the second day when Surrey were bowled out for only 145.

The second day was our busiest. The cricket report in the Times mentions the "overflowing" CAMRA tent! We were frantically tapping more and more beer casks. The start of the day was postponed by a short but heavy rain shower, which meant that overs had to be added to the end of the day. We had our famous curry night at close of play, provided by Ted from Saucy Flo's.

During the next few days, Kent's chances fluctuated. They built up a marvellous score of 344 in their second innings, setting Surrey to get 501 to win. And Surrey did it, the County Championship's highest scoring run chase for 98 years.

In our tent, we were pleased that the game lasted four days – we don't always get that long. The beer and cider also lasted too – but only just! Our very last cask was at low ebb when the game was over.



Many thanks to our volunteer staff, to Kent CCC, to our customers and to all the wonderful Kent producers who donated beer and cider: Broken Drum, Canterbury Ales, Canterbury Brewers & Distillers, Goody Ales, Hop Fuzz, Kent Brewery, Kentish Pip Cider, Koomor, Musket, Northdown, Pig & Porter, Ramsgate, Time & Tide, Tonbridge, Wantsum and Westerham. Also, thanks to the Simmons family for donating two firkins in memory of Dan.

Gill Keay



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for
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Swale Branch Pub of the Year 2023

As is the custom, Swale Branch Pub of the Year awards have just been announced (March 2023). Members were able to vote from January until March 1st.

This year, to try and encourage more branch members to join in, we created a survey monkey report for the eight categories members vote for in choosing their top six in order from the short list. The top six pubs in the borough based on the NBSS scoring system via What Pub were: the 2022 winner and reigning POTY, The Three Tuns in Lower Halstow, near Sittingbourne; previous winners, The Admirals Arm in Queenborough, Isle of Sheppey; The Paper Mill, Charlotte Street, Sittingbourne; The Elephant, The Mall, Faversham; Shipwrights Arms at Hollowshore, just outside of Faversham, and finally, but by no means least, Furlongs Alehouse, Preston Street, Faversham.



Furlongs Alehouse, Preston Street, Faversham



The Three Tuns, Lower Halstow

For those who have not been to all of these fine establishments, The Paper Mill, Furlongs and The Admirals Arm are micropubs, (although the Admirals has grown in size since inception) with the other three being well established and long running traditional pubs, each with its own charm and character.

Our competition closed }on March 1st and the results were tabulated and revealed at the branch business meeting on March 8th, at the Chequers Inn at Doddington, in the lovely Kentish countryside. After careful scrutiny, the top **CONT.**



The Elephant, Faversham

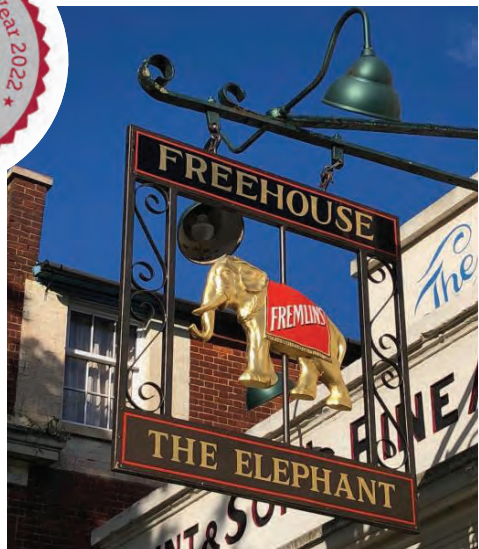
three were announced and so in reverse order, these are the pubs that will proudly be receiving and displaying the 2023 Swale Pub of the Year certificates.

In third place, the HIGHLY COMMENDED award goes to last year's winner, The Three Tuns in Lower Halstow.

In second place and this year's runner up is Furlongs Alehouse in Faversham.

In first place and the new Pub of the Year (although they have won many times before).

Our congratulations to all that took part and it is a shame there cannot be more winners. The Elephant now moves on to the next round of voting, between East and West Kent, to determine the East Kent Pub of the Year.



Is your local pub under threat?

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Drink
GREENER

Canterbury Pub Trail

Canterbury has many excellent pubs offering a range of beers from Kent and all over the UK. Check their opening hours before your visit.

The first pub on this trail, the **Monument**, is a delightful pub established in 1803, five minutes from Canterbury West Station and with a bus stop outside. It offers three regularly changed Kent and London beers. You will usually find a dark beer, a best bitter and an IPA. The name of The Monument comes from a large wooden crucifix which stood on the junction outside, sadly no longer there. This is a dog-friendly pub, has a garden and serves food.

A short walk towards the city and you will see **The Unicorn**. This pub dates from 1604 and has three changing beers, often from Kent. It has a garden, is dog-friendly and serves food.

Walk into the city centre, "The King's Mile", to find the **Bell and Crown**, a typical city centre pub. With Long Man Best Bitter from Sussex,



The Monument

and three Kent or Sussex changing beers, it offers a good choice. Sit outside eating the locally sourced food and you have a view of the cathedral.

A stroll past the newly restored Christchurch Gate of the Cathedral and you find **The Old Buttermarket**, which takes its name from the historic square in which it is located. There has been a pub or inn on this site for over five hundred years. The four cask beers change regularly and as the manager is a fan of dark ales, there is generally one available. There is outside seating and food.

Walk to Stour Street and **The Foundry Brew Pub** is next on the trail. They brew their ales and distil spirits on site. Go through to the restaurant area where you can see the brewery through a window, and there are charts explaining the brewing process. Tours can be booked. The beers range from a porter to an IPA and come straight from the brewery to the bar.

Our final pub is a ten-minute walk to Havelock Street and **The New Inn**, a dog-friendly Victorian terraced house. This has been our branch Pub of the Year several times. The landlady serves seven cask beers from all over the country, changing all of them regularly. Beer festivals are run twice a year in the garden.



The Unicorn



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- Knock John Amber Ale 3.8%
- Warden Black IPA 5.2%



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How low can you go?

Introduction by Obadiah's son, Lambic Spillage

Hello lovely drinkers. Yes really, my name is Lambic! Dad had just returned from a trip to Belgium. I think he named me after his own characteristics – a sour taste with a fruity aroma that mellows with age!

For those who have not encountered Obadiah Spillage before here is a brief introduction. Father has haunted the pages of CAMRA's Swale Ale magazine for many years with articles illuminating the wonders of the odd corners of the beer world. So let me introduce to you this 'Legend in his own Lunchtime'. There is nothing that Obadiah likes more than settling down in a wood panelled bar with a pint or two of Futtocks Old Horizontal (his favourite ale). The fire would blaze with the pub dog stretched out snoozing and toasting its paws and you would often find Obadiah in a similar state (stretched out and snoozing but not necessarily toasting his paws!). Now ever since Spillage was a young stripling up to his current vintage years he has delighted in the pleasures of real ale. Often resulting in a slight wobble on the way home and a bit of a thick head in the morning.

Sadly, things have had to change as alas Old Obadiah suffered a condition where the blood supply to part of his brain was cut off paralysing his entire right-hand side otherwise known as a Cerebrovascular Accident, that's a stroke to you and me. Now some of you might think that the blood supply did terrifically well to actually find his brain to be able to cut off its supply (and you would probably be right – Obadiah) however the NHS were marvellous and managed to restore his ambulatory functions and, more importantly, the mechanics of the drinking right arm were restored to full function and, with time, most of his cranial faculties. (Bloody

well pay them what they deserve – all of them, ambulance people, nurses, doctors, surgeons the whole damn lot of them – Obadiah) As you can tell, feistiness has returned to the old goat! One of the consequences of the aftermath has been the necessity to drastically reduce the amount of Old Horizontal consumed. Now this does not come easy to a fellow who has enjoyed the fruits of the malt, yeast and hops for so many years so the surge (is that a word? The sort of precursor of resurgence) of low, or even zero, alcohol beers which have abounded the market recently has come at an opportune time to those who still like the flavour of a good beer but need to reduce the alcohol levels.

So with that in mind I now hand you over to the old fellow himself who's latest piece extols the virtue of "Lo 'n No" beers.

Greetings Gentle Readers. Thanks to Lambic or as I like to refer to him 'The Trainee'. (I prefer 'Heir Apparent' – LS) It is with profound relief that I am able to continue writing these short pieces on the odd corners of the beery world. (Whether it is a profound relief to the readers is a matter of much debate! – LS) and a massive thank-you to the NHS and the Fire Service for all their care. (buy me a pint and I'll tell you why the fire service were involved!)

Now, whether you are undergoing, or suffering, Dry January, Parched March, Abstemious August, Sober October or even Dehydrated December there is much to be said about the new rage of less alcoholic beers.

Now when Obadiah was a young lad and ended up in a pub but couldn't drink as he **CONT.**

0%

had a car to drive, the few alternatives to a Coke were such revolting brews as Barbican or Kaliber which let's face it tasted like washing up water without the flavour or charm. (now, now Dad, they were doing their best – LS) Today, however, things are a bit different as brewers are looking to produce low alcohol beers that have the flavour of their alcoholic relatives. There are undoubted benefits to your health including not waking up with a crashing hangover the next day! The trick is to make your brain think it's having a beer when it's not. Example; you are sitting down to watch the footie and would normally reach for a beer to, in my case anyway, drown out the misery of another loss. The trick is easy. Take your favourite glass, pour into it a drink that looks like a beer, smells like a beer and tastes like a beer and your brain will think it is having a beer. The reason for this is because it is having a beer, just one that isn't alcoholic.

So, let's have a look at three examples of the many of the options that are available. These are all beers that Obadiah has sampled so hopefully I can give you some to try based on experience. I have picked out a pale, a stout and a European.

Adnams, Ghost Ship is a 0.5% pale ale. According to Adnams' website the beer is brewed to its usual strength and then the alcohol is removed. The taste is citrusy due to the Citra hops and the malts Rye Crystal and Cara add depth of flavour. In my opinion this



is not a bad drop at all. I prefer it at room temperature but many pubs serve from the fridge which I think flattens the taste.

Big Drop, Galactic Milk Stout 0.5%. The taste is chocolaty and rich which is probably due to the addition of cocoa nibs. The hops are Bramling Cross. I really like this one. It really is good to see that brewers are looking at differing styles of low alcohol beers rather than the gold styles.

Erdinger Alkoholfrei This beer is brewed to the Bavarian Purity Laws and is labelled as an isotonic drink. Presumably this can't be called a beer as it has low alcohol, perhaps someone can advise. Their website says the flavours are rich malt, slightly sweet, stimulating bitterness, malty and spicy with a hint of fruity acidity. I like this one on a hot summer evening when a bit of continental taste is the order of the day.

There you have three examples of the many that are available. If you can't find stocks in your local supermarket order direct from the breweries.

Now I am not advocating a total abstinence of regular beers, heaven forbid Futtocks would go out of business, but every now and again give a low alcohol a go, you might even like some of these.

Toodle Pip,
Obadiah



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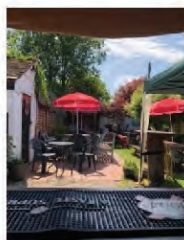
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Online beer tasting

The COVID lockdown in 2020 brought about many changes for most people and drinkers, not being an exception, were stuck at home like everyone else.

The Canterbury, Herne Bay, and Whitstable branch tried meeting at CAMRA's attempt at an online pub, The Red-on-lion, but I think that was a bit of a washout. This led eight or so of us to meet up online with a few beers in April. We progressed to organizing bottled beer tasting sessions with a selection of six beers concluding in a vote on the best tasting beer of each session.

A big list of beers sampled was made as we progressed through 2020 and 2021 and at the end of each year we chose six beers from the winners of that year to vote on a "winner of winners" in the following January.

For 2020 Theakston's Old Peculiar, originally tasted in September, was voted the best beer. For 2021 the Tonbridge Brewery's Velvet Raven Stout, originally tasted in July, was voted the best beer. If you think there's a pattern forming then yes – all but two winning beers throughout the months were dark beers. Admittedly all the beers tried were in bottles or cans, though a few were bottled conditioned.

In the beginning the beers came from supermarkets, but as we exhausted the ranges available there, we used other suppliers such as breweries and specialist beer shops. Once restrictions were removed the pubs reopened and became popular (and safe) venues once again.

In June 2022 we had the final tasting – in person at The Monument, Canterbury. Over the 34 sessions there were about 20 of us and we tried 185 beers in all. I think that getting together bond has been lost now as not everybody can travel to pub rambles and we don't vote on best beers. Perhaps something to pick up again for our big social events of the future...

Brian R Simpson

Mystery Pub Tours (Canterbury, Herne Bay and Whitstable Branch)

A mystery tour of pubs, organised in 1980's I can't recall who came up with the idea but we continued in earnest yearly until lockdown 2020. A nominated person chose a route around Kent selecting five pubs for a secretive minibus trip. The rest of us tried to guess as we approached known houses and drove past the less likely ones. The organisers' advantage was to do the pubs twice: a recce and the visit on tour!

A pubs list created in 2001 shows that we got more creative as years moved on and ventured out to the Maidstone area and beyond. The plan for mystery tours was making a 30 minute dash out from our Canterbury base and work back ending nearer to Canterbury. Steve, our driver for most of the trips got used to the wonderful mapped back roads we chose. Satnav took over encouraging peering eyes trying to read Steve's screen for the next pub?

In 2001 Gill & Gerry organised a trip around the outer Dover area. By 2005 we had ventured west to the Sugar Loaves at Hollingbourne and south in 2013 to The Ferry Inn/Stone in Oxney. Rory and Shakey took us back west to Ightham Common in 2016. There were even couple of trips north to the Isle of Sheppey from Jen and me, that didn't go down too well in 2006 but Tracy pulled that one back in 2019 with the new Sheppey micropubs, the Flying Sheep in Sheerness and Admiral's Arm in Queenborough.

We aimed to go somewhere different most times, from my list we covered 191 pubs but that's a bit of a cheat because during lockdown we created four different virtual mystery trips on Zoom: the last cancelled mystery to Dover, then Whitstable, Canterbury and even a trip to pubs in Bruges. We are full of hope to restart mystery tours as arrangements can be set up but it is a little unfortunate that some of these somewhat remoter pubs are no longer with us.

Brina Snipson

CAMRA's Summer of Pub 2023



*Join us down the pub
this summer*

WhatPub – the beer drinkers travelling companion

So, you find yourself in the village of Little Snoring (pop. 619); you fancy a decent drop of beer and a nice lunch in a friendly pub that will welcome your kids and/or dogs. That's where WhatPub comes to your aid.

WhatPub is the CAMRA online guide to over 55000 of Britain's pubs, including 96% of those serving real ale. It takes the guess work out of finding a good local pub, and, more importantly, it's free and available for anyone to use.

WhatPub gives information on beers – listing the full range for many real ale outlets; facilities, including food service, access, parking and, essentially, address, telephone and opening hours. As a comprehensive service it doesn't aim to recommend individual pubs. For that you need a copy of the Good Beer Guide, available at all good book shops.

You can access WhatPub through any internet enabled device, including smart phones. Ideal when you're out and about. Simply go to whatpub.com and start having a look around. You'll wonder why nobody has ever told you about it before.

Oh, and if you do end up in Little Snoring, The Green Man on Holt Road will meet all your needs – including a nice pint of Woodforde's Wherry. Enjoy.

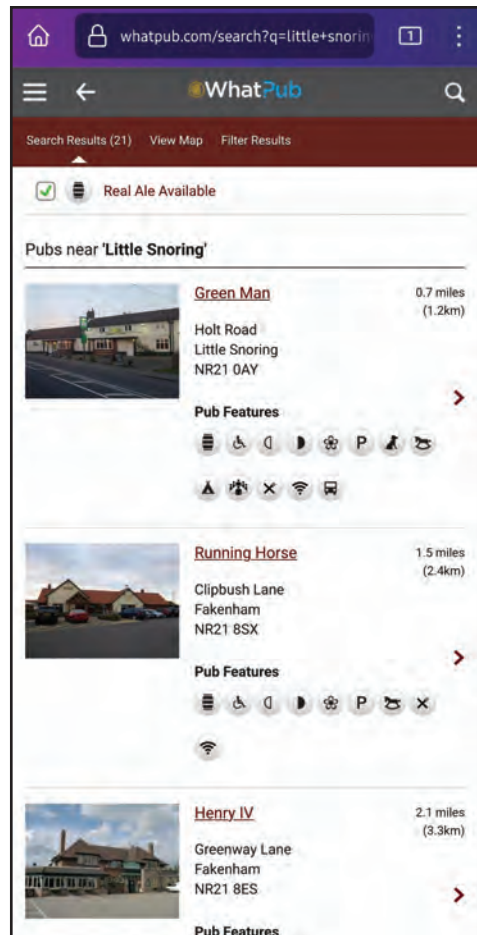
WhatPub – All the questions you always wanted to ask.

Q. Why can't I find a particular pub?

Try entering some location details such as postcode or town in the search field. If the pub you're looking for still cannot be found then try unchecking the

"Real Ale Available" filter in the search results, in case the pub is flagged as not selling real ale in our records. If the pub you're looking for still cannot be found then the chances are its missing, perhaps because it is a new pub.

All entries in whatpub.com come from local branches and the work of volunteers, many who are still surveying details of their pubs. **CONT.**





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Q. Why can't I find clubs or places that don't serve real ale?

When viewing search results, toggle the options down the site for "Pubs Only" and/or for "Real Ale Available".

Q. The details of the pub are wrong

If you are a CAMRA member, please pass the details of the updates on to the local CAMRA branch for the pub, which is very easy to do – just click on Submit Updates, complete the update form, and your updates will be sent by email to a local CAMRA branch officer. It would also be great if you would volunteer to help survey it for us.

Q. What are the beer scores used for and how do I enter one?

Beer scores are entered by CAMRA members and are used by CAMRA branches in order to help select the best pubs for the CAMRA Good Beer Guide. To submit a beer score, simply join CAMRA and as a member you will be given a login that you can use to access additional features on whatpub.com.

Q. How do I find pubs that serve the best beer?

whatpub.com is a comprehensive pub guide and not an online version of the Good Beer Guide. To find the pubs that serve the best real ale, get the Good Beer Guide book or mobile application.

Q. Why doesn't the site have a comments section so that I can view details such as beer quality? whatpub.com is under continual development and additional features will be rolled out in due course – so watch this space!

Q. Why isn't there a whatpub.com app for my smartphone?

whatpub.com already uses a mobile friendly website that works great on most smartphones and tablets. CAMRA's Good Beer Guide app is free to download and contains information published in whatpub.com

Q. Where can I find the terms and conditions for scoring beers?

Terms and conditions for submitting NBSS scores can be found on the WhatPub webpage www.whatpub.com

Desert Island Beers

Just for fun, Swale branch membership secretary Mary Cross came up with the idea of becoming the branch's Lauren Laverne and asking some of our 'older members' to imagine being marooned on a desert island- all alone except for your eight favourite beers and probably a cooling system (for the beer not you!) Let's not try and get too technical here though, just suspend disbelief and go with us on this one please.

We asked John Sissons, Swale Branch chair, about the eight beers he would take to his desert island and why? Finally, if the waves were lapping washing away his stash of beer, which one- his favourite- would he save from the surf? Maybe one of those beers you have loved and lost, may be here.

King and Barnes Old

A 4.1% brown ale full of flavour and eminently drinkable. Great for those autumnal evenings. Sadly King & Barnes was acquired by Hall & Woodhouse in 2000 with the production being moved, from memory to Blandford, and the brewery demolished to make way for housing.



Theakston Old Peculier

Don't let me confuse anyone here, this is the original version we are talking about and not the one available post Scottish and Newcastle takeover. It has never tasted as good again, **CONT.**



even though Theakstons have retaken ownership in Masham where this is brewed. My first pint of this fine ale was in The Little Gem at Aylesford. A pleasant evening from what I can remember.

Pictish Brewers Gold

Introduced to me by two stalwarts of English beer, Peter Moynihan and Chris Pearce, one Saturday whilst we were travelling down Sheffield's Valley of Beer. I can't

remember the free house in which we drank it but I certainly can remember it not lasting long. A refreshing thirst quenching pale golden session beer at just 3.8% with plenty of flavour.

Thornbridge Jaipur

Don't be fooled, this one does not drink its weight and is likely to sneak up on you if you are not careful. Still one of the best beers around. A citrus-dominated India Pale Ale, its immediate impression is soft and smooth yet builds to a crescendo of massive hoppiness accentuated by honey. An enduring, bitter finish with an ABV of 5.9%



Bradfield Farmers Blonde

Now here is something that is perfect for a summer's day. A well-kept pint of Blonde is a thing of immense joy. Very pale, citrus and summer fruit notes this is, in my opinion, the perfect way to spend a sunny afternoon with friends. If you can find this Sheffield beer 'down south' then make sure you don't miss it.

Fremilins Tusker

In the mid- late seventies when I was just about old enough to drink, my dad (god rest his soul) told me that if was to be a proper man I needed to drink beer, not lager! He took me proudly to his local and promptly treated me to a pint of Courage Best. Politely, I then suggested we move on to The Ship on Shore just outside Sheerness where a pint of landlord Joe Park's Tusker was one of the best things I had tasted in the short time I had been drinking decent beer. After a large mouthful my dad looked at me and quoted in his thick Yorkshire accent 'there's nowt wrong wi yer taste buds'. How I miss a pint of Tusker.

Cains Formidable

Three intrepid explorers in the 1990's went off to Liverpool seeking culture. Guess where there ended up! Yes finding it in the shape of Cains brewery. Exciting news to me is that Cains is looking to be re-opened shortly as part of a Brewery Village area that includes a craft brewery. The Cains brewery tap in Stanhope Street has already reopened and is run by a couple of former Cains licensees. If they restart brewing Formidable, then I think a trip to Liverpool is on the cards.

Gales HSB

Finally, in my top eight, down to the mid-South of England, to Horndean in Hampshire for a brewery delight. Horndean Special Bitter or HSB, was from memory, a nutty brown beer with a distinct pleasant aftertaste. When Fullers closed the brewery in 2006 all production moved to Chiswick and another of England's finest was lost to progress. HSB is still brewed and marketed by Fullers today but for those of you that know – it's just not the same!

If I had to choose one from the pack above, then it would have to be the Tusker. If nothing else, I could hop on the elephant's back for a ride!





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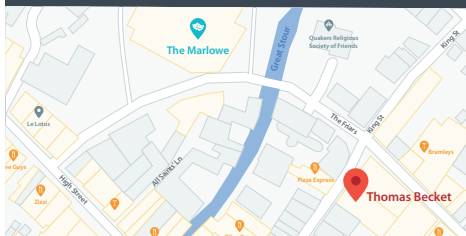
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GADD'S comes of age

It's 21 years since the first casks of GADD'S' Number 3 Premium Kentish Pale Ale (Number 3, for short) were tapped and drunk in the Ramsgate Royal Harbour Brewhouse and Bakers (The Belgian Bar, for short). 21 years of ups and downs and changes and no changes, and perhaps it's time to reflect and recount on all things GADD'S', Kent, brewing, and beer.

Those first casks of #3 were delicious, and in our naivety we thought we were poised to take over the Kent beer scene very quickly (whatever that meant). But the casks we sent out to local pubs were sent back a week later, not having dropped bright. And the replacement casks were also sent back, for the same reason. This was a very early lesson in quality control – we had been filling the casks in the beer cellar, a place where beer gets spilt and wild yeasts thrive. Also a place with a big fan blowing cold air around the casks, and blowing the wild yeast into the beer as the beer went into the casks. And although we figured out our mistake fairly early on, at least one of those early pub customers didn't trust us again for a few years (looking at you Artillery Arms!). No grudges held, to be honest I'm surprised the other two pubs did trust us again so quickly. Following that, and to this day, we don't send any batches of beer out until we've checked how they'll behave in the cellar (and we're not fussed about taking over the Kent beer scene, either).

Whilst building the brewery, one Saturday evening a certain local pub magnate (on his way to the casino opposite) found his way into the building site and enquired politely what kind of beer the brewery under construction was going to produce. 'Real ale', I replied, 'No one drinks that around here' were the kind words of encouragement (curse) I received in return. He was right of course, the number of pubs in Thanet with active hand-pumps could be counted on one hand. That didn't change for a few years until the Thanet branch of CAMRA

held that first, game changing beer festival at the Monkey House in 2006. The rip-roaring success showed that not only was drinking beer on a bank holiday Friday popular round here, but that the local population really were looking for the good stuff, and would enjoy it in great quantity given the opportunity. At last, the curse was broken, and the success of the festival catalysed a Thanet revolution, transforming the beer and pub desert landscape into the oasis it is today.

Of course, timing is everything and the worldwide craft beer movement (taking encouragement from Thanet CAMRA, no doubt) got underway. New breweries were springing up all over the place and the number in Kent began to rise from the 9 it had been stuck on for a few years (OK, name all 9?). Change was afoot for GADD'S' too, as we moved operations from the Belgian Bar to our new home up at Hornet Close, and fo-cused on producing cask ale for the pubs and people of East Kent. But whilst the number of Kent breweries was rising, the number of handpumps available wasn't (yet) and sales were flat, at that just-about-enough level. In the 'old days' we'd always get a decent mid-summer boost from the Canterbury branch of CAMRA, and their Kent Beer Festival, who could be relied upon to buy up to 10 kilderkins from each of the Kent breweries, equating to a 25% uplift in sales in a week for us at GADD'S'. As the number of new brewery openings accelerated, this much appreciated bonus diminished, and we went off to music festivals, where cool, local cask ale **CONT.**



found favour in an otherwise sea of short poured Heineken.

A couple of years after the big move to Hornet Close, a combination of a localism movement, the ongoing annual success of the Planet Thanet Easter Beer Festival, an emerging craft beer revolution, and a rise in the number of Kent breweries, produced a growing interest in (and demand for) local beer that finally began to take effect, and our phone started to ring. Local publicans were at last open to the idea that cask ale might just work for them. Sales rose strongly and we rebuilt the brewery, purchasing Dark Star's old kit and tripling capacity. By this time we had long had our core beer range of Numbers 3, 5 and 7, alongside Seaside and Dogbolter, and we organised our specials into an annual seasonal range, adding such beers as She Sells Seashells, Rye Pale Ale and Summer's Day.

Licensing laws had changed in 2005 and a certain off-licence owner not too far from Thanet took advantage, adding an on-licence to his modest, beer only establishment, hailing it as a micro-pub and evangelising the concept. Eventually, in 2010, Colin Aris from Ramsgate answered the calls and opened Thanet's very own micro-pub, The Conqueror, on the westside of town. The Bake and Ale House and the Four Candles followed, and the flood gates opened. Today there are around 14 or 15 micro-pubs in Thanet, adding to the many existing pubs now serving cask ale and helping to create the beer oasis of today.

It was in September 2009 that, taking inspiration from a visiting brewer from Falling Rock in California, we tentatively brewed our first batch of Green Hop Ale, not really knowing what we were doing, how it would turn out or what might happen next. The brewing gods smiled upon our efforts and the rest is history. The popularity of Green Hop Ale far exceeded anything anyone expected and continues to grow year by year, so much so that today we brew nothing else during harvest. Sadly in 2020, following a global collapse in demand for hops due to a big fall in beer consumption during lockdowns (I know, the headlines would have you believe we were all pickling ourselves in booze, but the truth is that the drop in hospitality drinking far exceeded the rise in home tippling), our much loved local farmer, Humphrey Hulme, was forced to quit



his lifelong love of growing East Kent Goldings hops, and focus on his core fruit business. We'd used Humphrey's EKGs in most of our beers for 18 years, and they had become the very lifeblood running through the brewery. These kind of blows can knock a business sideways, but this one turned out to be not so bad after all – we moved our hop contracts over to the fab-ulous growers on Syndale Farm, John Clinch and his daughter Anna, who have produced, in the last two years, the most amazingly good EKGs this author has seen in 30 years.

GADD'S, of course, is really about the people that make it and the people that drink it, and no potted his-tory of it is complete without remembering absent friends. We lost our Chairman, Dave, in 2020, and our Grahame in 2022. I'm sure that the cosy back street pub in the sky stocks GADD'S: Number 7 on cask, and Number 3 in the bottle (served in a Fosters glass).

Today, in 2023, in a post-pandemic world, with certain parts of the country (principally London) reporting plummeting cask ale sales, and brewers all over the UK moving into keg, you'd be forgiven for thinking that the future looks bleak for both GADD'S and for CAMRA. Quite the opposite, in my mind – cask ale is the fastest, freshest way of producing beer, with the very least amount of processing, and, delivered to (and drunk in) a local pub it has the smallest carbon footprint of all the beers. It's also extremely delicious, and these attributes will ensure cask ale will survive, and flourish, long into the future. And where there is cask, there is a local CAMRA branch.

THE **TWO** HALVES

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Chairman's Chow

A tale from Swale

As we enter spring after what can only be described as a mild winter I have a warm glow about Swale and its vibrant ale and cider scene. Looking around the branch at the group of pubs in the 2023 pub of the year competition it is hard to separate the candidates. It's a far cry from twenty or so years ago when we were entering a new millennium not even knowing if our computer systems were going to work the next day!

Beer has changed immensely in the same period, I'll leave it to you how you feel about this, but for me, we have seen the rise of new breweries, new styles and other innovations. Whether you have joined CAMRA because you believe in what it stands for, or go to the odd beer festival where you can enjoy some of the benefits of CAMRA membership, there is a distinct camaraderie with members wherever you go. On a recent branch trip to Sheffield, we saw this in the many full pubs where conversation and a shared passion for ale were abundant.

There is, however, much more to membership and through the branch there are so many opportunities to explore and enjoy the world of pubs and real ale or cider.

Pubs offer more than just being drinking holes and it is good to take yourself out of your little bubble and experience the broad range of establishments in our branch area. We work hard to try and keep everyone informed through various mediums of what is going on. We work even harder through our socials to give members great opportunities to try new venues, beers and ciders along with other people.

Whether it be a back street boozer, town

or elegant country venue, we have pubs of all shapes and sizes and even some with breweries just a short distance from them. If you look hard enough you will find pubs with quizzes, pubs with music of many genres, pubs with good old fashioned conversation, meet the brewer nights, food and beer pairing taster sessions, but all with something for everyone. A chance to make new friends.

Why not go and find a pub that is unknown to you. Do some research by reading the Good Beer Guide, look into WhatPub or Untapped where pretty much all of the pubs in our area can be found. Look at the branch's Facebook page, website or indeed, have a read through the pages of this magazine to find out what is going on in our area.

Have an enjoyable spring and we hopefully will see you around.

John Sissons, Swale

REAL ALE

CAMRA defines real ale as live beer: 'beer that, when first put into its final container, contains at least 0.1 million cells of live yeast per millilitre, plus enough fermentable sugar to produce a measurable reduction in its gravity while in that container, whatever it may be'. Within this definition comes cask-conditioned beer which is defined as 'live beer that continues to mature and condition in its cask, any excess of carbon dioxide being vented such that it is served at atmospheric pressure'. It should be left to settle and condition in the cellar, for up to ten days if necessary and served at cellar temperature, which is 11 to 14°C.



A tour of Sheffield

If you have never done this, heartily recommended is a tour of Sheffield & the Valley of Beer

The Valley of Beer runs along the River Don from Sheffield centre through the old industrial heart of the city which is being rapidly revitalised and restored from its derelict state. A small yet eager party from Swale Branch travelled up on Friday 24th February 2023 for a weekend jaunt around the steel city. The list below shows details of the various venues visited and how to get to them. We can confirm that at no point in time did we encounter a bad pint. 'Southern' was generally understood by the locals so no translation issues.

1. **The Station Tap** (turn left out of station and turn back in again). A great bar in the old refreshment rooms with original tiles. Brewery in the back room, snacks only for food but a good range of beer though a little pricey
2. **The Rutland Arms**, Paternoster Row/ Furnival St. Cross the road from the station towards the Howard PH & Showroom cinema, turn left behind the cinema for 2 minutes. Great range of beer and food,



The Dorothy Pax Bar



The Station Tap

friendly staff. Not exactly on the Valley, but a good pub, minutes from the station

3. **The Dorothy Pax Bar**, Arch 18, Wharf Street, North Quay Canal Basin. Quirky bar set in the canal basin with seats outside on the quay. An oasis of calm in the middle of a city. Enter at corner of Furnival Road and Blonk Street through arch. Great place to have a pint when the sun is shining. No food served.
4. **The Harlequin**, Nursery Street. Big old pub, great range of beer and ciders. Tap for Exit 33 Brewery. Good value food served but may be a bit quiet some days.
5. **The Riverside**, on roundabout next to river with terrace overlooking the Don. Used to be good and still is.
6. **The Kelham Island Tavern**, 62 Russell Street (THE KIT). Has won loads of national awards for being a super pub. Huge range of well-kept beer, friendly staff, great prices and lovely sheltered garden. Tap for Blue Bee Brewery- try their Ginger if it's on. Pork pies and rolls. Simply a super pub!
7. **The Fat Cat**, Alma Street (THE CAT, hence the 2 pubs are KIT-CAT). Another award winning pub with a unique central servery **CONT.**



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The Fat Cat

in the main bar, full range of excellent food and beer garden. Tap for the Kelham Island Brewery next door. Was also serving Mad Cat Platinum Blonde which seemed to be selling well.

8. **Shakespeare's**, Gibraltar Street. Simply cross the ring road at the end of Russell Street. Large old coaching inn with yet another good range of beer (and malt whisky), pies/rolls only and great walled garden. Opposite is the Bar Stewards, a micro pub/bar- which seems to be concentrating more on keykeg these days.
9. **The Gardener's Rest**, 108 Neepsend Lane. From the KIT-CAT, walk up Green Lane to the Milepost restaurant, turn right and cross the magnificent Ball Street Bridge past renovated works, taking a minute to admire the views. Turn left up a walkway alongside the Don and come out at the traffic lights at the junction of Neepsend Lane and Rutland Road. The Gardener's is 100 yards past the lights on Neepsend Lane. Great community pub, Tap for the Sheffield Brewery with river views from the garden. Snacks only. See also the food list for next door
10. **The Wellington** by Shalesmoor tram stop. Another old pub festooned with Brewerania. Several rooms and Tap for the Neepsend

Brewery. Great beer. To get to this from the Gardener's, go back to the traffic lights, go right down Rutland Road, turn left and cross the ring road. Snacks only

11. **The Crow Inn**, Scotland Street. 2 minutes from Shakespeare's. A 2019 addition to the circuit. Real ale and a relaxed atmosphere in a newly restored old pub. Run by the same team as the Rutland.
12. **The Millowners Arms**. Situated in the Kelham Industrial Museum behind the Fat Cat, a "new bar" opened in December 2019 set in an 'old' Victorian pub. Café next door.
13. **The Red Deer**, Pitt Street, is a great back street pub with a good range of ale and excellent food.
14. **The Bath Hotel**, Victoria Street. A tiny 2-room traditional boozer now run by Thornbridge. Great period interior. Closed Sundays

Returning Sunday 26th February, we took a ride out for lunchtime opening to (15) The Three Stags Heads, Wardlow Mire, Derbyshire. Owned and run for the past 32 years by Geoff and Pat Fuller, this is a totally unspoilt pair of terraced cottages with flagstone floors and four beer engines all serving Abbeydale beers, including a superb 7.4% Black Lurcher. Quirky décor includes a stuffed hare with a gun in the front window plus a lovely, welcoming open fire.



The Bath Hotel

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TAPROOM OPENING TIMES

Friday & Saturday: 2pm - 8pm
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RECIPE

Black Sheep Steak and Riggwelter Ale pie

Ingredients

4oz butter
rapeseed oil
seasoned flour
1kg braising, stewing, or chuck steak, diced
170g carrot, diced
170g swede, diced
170g celery, diced
½ onion, diced
1 bottle Black Sheep Riggwelter Ale
550ml beef stock
2 bay leaves
2 tsp thyme, fresh or dried
1 tbsp garlic purée (optional)
3 tbsp tomato paste
250g approx shortcrust pastry (enough to cover your pie dish(es))

Method

1. Pre-heat the oven to 180C/Gas 4.
2. In an ovenproof casserole dish, melt the butter with a drop of rapeseed oil.
3. While this is melting coat the meat in seasoned flour.
4. Brown the meat in the butter/oil, then remove and set aside on a plate.
5. Add the diced carrot, swede, celery, and onion, sweat off, remove from the pan and set aside.
6. Now, pour the ale into the pan and reduce by half.
7. When the ale has reduced, return the meat to the pan and add the beef stock, bay leaves, thyme, garlic purée (optional) and tomato paste.
8. Add the vegetables you sweated off earlier, then put the lid on the casserole and put it in the oven for 1½-2 hrs, by which time the meat should be tender and still holding together and the gravy reduced.
9. You can add 1 tbsp of cornflour mixed with a little water or beer at this point if you need to thicken the gravy further.
10. Transfer the mixture into a large pie dish or several small pie dishes and top with shortcrust pastry.
11. Egg wash and bake for a further 15-20 mins until golden brown.



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GADDS' 
TAPROOM

CAMRA Kent & East Sussex Railway Beer Festival

Tenterden 17th June 2023

Nineteen of us from CAMRA Canterbury Branch headed out by minibus to the thirteenth KESR Beer Festival organised by CAMRA Ashford, Folkestone and Romney Marsh Branch at the Kent & East Sussex Railway at their charming Tenterden railway station. This, our second annual organised trip to the festival brought excellent weather, although it rained on the journey there. Many of us took the opportunity to take a steam train or diesel hauled journey down to Bodiam.

On offer at this popular beer and cider festival were 20 ciders from 10 makers from Kent and East Sussex plus 3 from London. On the beer front there were 50 beers listed from Kent and East Sussex and much further afield, which ranged from low strength light and hoppy ales through milds, porter, traditional and best bitters, up to a dark and fruity red IPA at 6.4% alcohol. If you want to know more detail of the breweries and the selection, you should have gone! If you want to know what the best tasting smooth stout was... you definitely should have gone.

We had a grand day out, an excellent range of beer and cider priced really competitively with a printed glass of the occasion to keep for £3.

There was seating mostly at tables for about 200 and a children's play area. A trip on the scheduled train ride cost about £25 but I didn't go. If you did, you didn't have to go without beer as two were racked and available on board, better than the old BR and network services! There was food available at the station and ice cream. A short walk into town brings you to a range of eating houses and some good drinking establishments. Or you could have brought a picnic or sandwiches.

Back on site alongside the beer tent we had entertainment by Morris Dancers and a music line-up on the stage throughout the day, four bands commencing at 12.30, as we arrived and finishing after 8 in the evening long after we had left. Chatting around, I'm sure every one of us had a good time, met many old friends and new people to chat with. An ideal opportunity to talk with other branch members and begin to work together making Kent a better place to drink beer.

Roll on the next trips, a Summer of the Pub tour around some local pubs, and a train trip to Rye. Our thanks to Louise for organising "a Grand Day Out".



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