



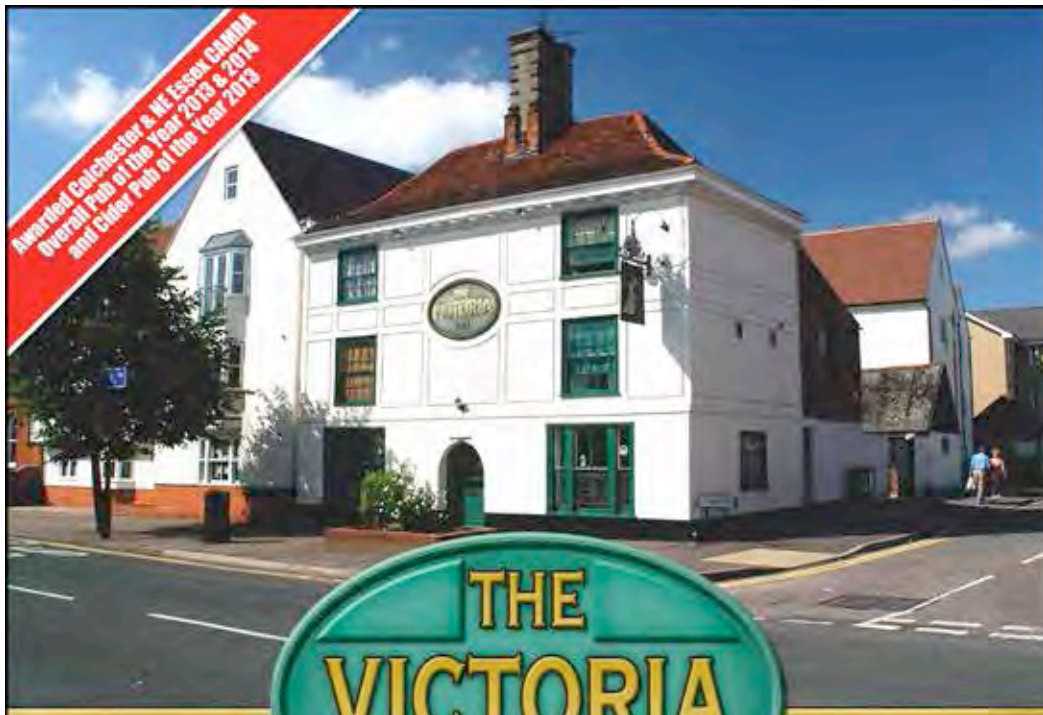
CAMPAIGN
FOR
REAL ALE

THIRSTY TIMES

Chelmsford & mid-Essex Branch of CAMRA



Summer Beer & Cider Festival
See inside for full details



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CAMRA TOASTS GEORGE OSBORNE: BEER DUTY CUT FOR SECOND YEAR RUNNING

CAMRA branches across the country celebrated in March as Chancellor George Osborne announced a cut in beer duty for the second year running.

CAMRA's Chief Executive Mike Benner commented:

"CAMRA is delighted to see the Chancellor implementing an unprecedented second consecutive cut of a penny in beer duty. This is not only about keeping the price of a pint affordable in British pubs but helping an industry which has been in overall decline continue on its long road to recovery.

"CAMRA cares greatly about the future of the Great British pub and it is clear from this Budget announcement that the Government do too.

"Keeping the price of a pint affordable is vital for the long-term health of the pub sector



and CAMRA would hope this latest vote of confidence in British pubs will go some way to slowing the rate of closures, by encouraging more people to make use of their local this summer".

Beer supports nearly 1 million jobs and contributes £22 billion to the UK economy, and another cut in beer duty in 2014 will help maintain a healthier pubs sector.

ROLL UP! ROLL UP! TO BRITAIN'S BIGGEST PUB



The Great British Beer Festival,
Olympia, London, 12-16
August 2014

with over 350 different breweries offering 900 real ales, ciders, perries and international beers to over 50,000 thirsty beer lovers throughout the week-long event.

CAMRA's Great British Beer Festival is nearly here again and this year will be bringing a carnival atmosphere to London's Olympia exhibition centre with an extravagant circus theme complete with live-action circus performers.

The festival will feature 29 bars including 11 brewery bars run by the Nation's biggest and best brewers of real ale, plus food and merchandise stalls as well as a full schedule of entertainment on the GBBF music stage.

The event is set to be one the biggest and best Great British Beer Festivals ever, so don't miss out on your place at the festival and buy a ticket now via www.gbbf.org.uk/tickets

Beer will remain the star of the show though,

PUB NEWS

Let's start this issue with news of some Greene King pubs.

You may have read that GK have sold 275 of their tenanted pubs to a new pub company called Hawthorn Leisure. Promising the potential for greater flexibility for tenants, Hawthorn have signed a three-year supply deal for Greene King products. Tenants are being advised of the sale by letter. **The Walnut Tree, Broads Green, the Chequers, Felsted, the Wheatsheaf, Hatfield Peveler & the Beehive, Great Waltham** are four of the pubs in our area – there may be others.

Greene King have submitted a revised planning application for land at the **Rifleman, Braintree**. The original application to demolish the pub was refused with the Council citing a loss of community facilities. The new proposal is for 4 terraced houses on the pub garden, while the pub, its patio area and parking for 6 cars is retained.

The Design and Access statement reads: "It is not felt that the loss of the garden would have a detrimental impact on the viability of the pub" and adds: "When proposing a part site development it is crucial to ensure that the development does not impact on the viability of the public house". "This scheme has been designed so that the pub business can still provide for the local community." Sounds a lot more promising.

And now an ex GK pub, the **Butcher's Arms, North End**. This very popular pub has been closed for a year but now a planning application has been submitted to construct new rear extensions to create improved toilet facilities and kitchen preparation and storage areas, and to resurface the existing overspill car park. The garden serving the Pub would be unaffected. Again, the Design and Access Statement is encouraging (I summarise): "As a Public House

it is the centre-piece community facility to a distinct settlement cluster. The concept behind the proposed development is to allow the Butcher's Arms to re-open as a public house/ restaurant business and community facility with a viable future."

Pub of the Year

In the last issue we reported that this branch's pub of the year is the **Orange Tree, Chelmsford**. See elsewhere in this issue a picture of our chairman Doug Irons presenting the certificate to landlord Silent Mike.

Unfortunately it was beaten to Essex pub of the year by the **Victoria Inn, Colchester**. The Victoria is now the Essex candidate for the next round of voting to select the East Anglian pub of the Year. It will be joined by the **Engineers Arms, Henlow** (Bedfordshire), the **King of the Belgians, Hartford** (Cambridgeshire), the **Woodman, Wildhill** (Hertfordshire), the **Coach & Horses, Dersingham** (Norfolk), & the **Stanford Arms, Lowestoft** (Suffolk).

CAMRA members can vote in this round but you must visit all the pubs and submit your scores on the official form by 3rd August. The branch will run a minibus trip so watch for details if you're interested.

We said goodbye to two of our best and most supportive tenants in May, both couples taking well-earned retirement. First Dave and Maggie Gentry at the **Woolpack, Chelmsford** bowed out after yet another successful beer festival at Easter. Taking up the reins are Will & Donna, who have lived in Chelmsford for 14 years. Will's previous pub was the Britannia at Euston station. Nice to see that Will has already fixed the dates for his first beer festival – 4th to 7th September.

PUB NEWS

And Tony and Barbara O'Boyle have left the **Wheatsheaf, Writtle**, having been there since 1998. They are succeeded by Terry & Ursula Roberts who ran the Coach & Horses, Billericay for a number of years and will be well known to some customers as they have occasionally stood in for Tony and Barbara.

Continuing the long service theme, in August Lynne & Peter Smeeton will celebrate 25 years at **The Rodney, Little Baddow**, and in September their 35th wedding anniversary. Double congratulations to them. The Rodney has morris dancing on 3rd July and ladies clog dancing on 30th July. And if that's not enough to tempt you to Little Baddow their beer festival runs from 8th to 10th August. Do you look like a Hollywood star? Why not dress up for their Fancy Dress Do on 20th September, or perhaps just take your camera!

www.therodneyinn.co.uk

News from **Witham** that the **Spread Eagle** is returning. Renamed Elements in 2007, then Legends in 2011, Peter and Louise McKinlay intend to revert to the original name of the 700 year old pub and add an alehouse area. We await reports but it sounds like good news for us real ale enthusiasts and nice to see a traditional pub name revived.

Dave at the **White Hart Hotel**, also in **Witham**, at last has his new cask bar and there will be an official grand opening on the 12th June! "The new cask bar looks stunning if I may say so myself and we can't wait to start using it!" says Dave. He will now be stocking 8 gravity fed and 6 hand pumped ales all the time as well as ciders. At least 2 of the gravity fed casks will always be from local breweries, in fact Simon at Round Tower will be one of the first with Summer 2014

his popular City Gold. All CAMRA members are entitled to a 10% discount from the 12th to the 30th June on cask ale (unless the beer is already on a special offer). Also the beer garden has been doubled in size so everyone can catch a bit of sun this summer (hopefully!).

www.whitehartinwitham.co.uk



Pub News of course doesn't limit itself to traditional public houses. It embraces any establishment selling real ale. **The Boutique Café Bar** has opened in Tindal Street, where Judge Tindal's used to be, under the slogan "Burgers, Booze & Beats". Traditional it ain't but it does offer 2 real ales, half a dozen craft ales on tap and a food menu majoring on top-quality burgers. The beats are provided by evening DJs. Chelmsford is moving with the times!

www.boutiquecafebar.com

With the World Cup upon us Steve at the **Oddfellows Arms** reminds us that they are now showing Sky Sports & BT Sport. If you want to watch the first England match, kick off 11pm on Saturday 14th June, you'll need a ticket. The good news is that tickets are free over the bar (but you'll have to move fast). During England matches they will be serving their "Street Food Menu" including Gourmet Aberdeen Angus Burgers.

Looking farther ahead they have a Beer Festival

PUB NEWS

from 25th to 28th September serving Real Ales (naturally), Craft Beers, Ciders & Street Food. Live Music with Break for Cover playing on Friday 26th and Toucan Jam on Saturday 27th, followed by a Quiz Night on Sunday 28th from 8pm. www.theoddfellowsarms.com

Another Chelmsford pub showing the World Cup (with sound for the England games) is the **Thomas Mildmay**. They will naturally be featuring world cup themed real ales such as (and this was my first although I'm sure there'll be many more by the time you read this) Full Brazilian, from Wychwood Brewery. The Thomas Mildmay is a Wetherspoon pub with Doom Bar, London Pride & Broadside as regular beers plus 2 guests. There is a "posh pub quiz" on Monday evenings and Wednesday is a student night with Monkey Business. If you want to know more you'll have to go along.



The next beer festival at the **Golden Fleece, Chelmsford** runs 11th – 15th June with 20 ales including craft ales from Shepherd Neame & Brains plus 8 ciders. Entry is free with a 20% discount to all CAMRA members (remember your card). The pub is also hosting a CAMRA night on the 11th June which will include a free buffet. www.thegoldenfleece-chelmsford.co.uk

Liz at the **White Hart, Margaretting Tye** announces her 13th Summer Beer Festival from 24th to 27th July. It's a week later this year due to the branch pinching her normal weekend – blame the World Cup! www.whitehartmargarettingtye.com



There is a beer festival at the **Wheatsheaf, Hatfield Peverel** over the bank holiday weekend, Friday 22nd – Monday 25th August. Held in the barn behind the pub there will be 16-20 real ales available with a generous 30p per pint donated to the Helen Rollason Cancer Charity, and a family fun day on the Sunday. www.thewheatsheaf-pub.com

And Cayley at the **Bakers Arms, Danbury** has her second beer festival of the year from Friday 5th to Sunday the 7th of September. As usual, complementing the real ale and ciders will be live music, fish & chips, chillis and curries with a marquee to shelter from the sun. www.bakersarmsdanbury.co.uk



PUB NEWS

The **White Hart, Little Waltham** is scheduled to open on 13th June This is now owned by Marjoram Inns who have a good reputation for real ale (and good food) – their other pubs are the Angel & Harp in Great Dunmow and the Axe & Compasses at Aythorpe Roding. A peer through the window revealed a bank of 5 handpumps! Should be well worth a visit.

The **Angel at Broomfield** will be undergoing a refurb from 13th July, re-opening on 17th July.

The **Swan Inn, Felsted** has a beer festival from Saturday 5th to Monday 7th July with a hog roast, barbeque and New Orleans jazz. www.theswaninn-felsted.co.uk

That Monday, 7th July, is a virtual bank holiday locally with the Tour de France sweeping through our branch area. **The Swan** is one of 7 of our pubs where you can view the race live.

The riders enter Felsted from the north and the first pub they pass is the **Chequers**, Felsted before turning sharp left at the **Swan** to go downhill past the old Riddleys brewery. Then on to Great Waltham and the **Beehive** before going across country to the **Pig and Whistle** at Chignal Smealey. Just touching the outskirts of Chelmsford along the Chignal Road they next pass the **Horse & Groom** and on to the **Hare** at Roxwell. Left here and into Roxwell village, past the **Chequers** before disappearing towards Willingale.

It's going to be a great day – why not celebrate it at a pub!

The Ale House

Each week there is 12 real ales, 12 real ciders, a selection of German lagers on tap and a range of bottled beers from around the world.

No matter what you drink, The Ale House is the place for you.

Mini Beer festivals every two months with Meet the Brewers and Live Music.

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 alehouse.chelmsford.7 @Alehouse_Cford

Opening Hours: Mon-Thur: 11am-11pm, Fri-Sat: 11am-midnight, Sun: noon-10.30pm

BREWERY NEWS

ROUND TOWER



Hannah Tippler reports:

This summer looks great for Round Tower Brewery. We're delighted to have our City Gold 3.6% on as a regular in Chelmsford and mid Essex CAMRA pub of the year The Orange Tree on Lower Anchor Street. City Gold is a light, crisp and citrusy summer beer and is being greatly enjoyed by Silent Mike's customers. At the moment, we are supplying City Gold exclusively to The Orange Tree but will have it available for sale more widely over the summer. City Gold will also feature on our brewery bar at the CAMRA summer beer festival in Admirals Park where we plan to have the full range of our beer on offer including our special edition 7% Stout and our Slipstream 6% Black IPA. July is a busy month for us as we will also be at The Essex Festival of Food and Drink on 19th and 20th July at Cressing Temple Barns where our range of bottles will be available to the public.

length, a new copper, mash tun, liquor tanks and fermenting vessels are either in or just about to be fitted, and squeezing all that new equipment into our Victorian Goods Shed has been a complicated and interesting jigsaw. It'll be a relief for our brewers to get going on the new plant – currently we are brewing 6 days a week and everyone here is beginning to look a little frazzled! Once we are up and running on the new kit, it will give us an opportunity to expand the dray to such far flung places as Surrey and West London, Norfolk, Buckinghamshire, Bedfordshire and Berkshire; these are all now very much in our sights – remember to ask your landlord for Mighty Oak!

BILLERICAY BREWING CO



Trevor Jeffery, Director of Billericay Brewing Company informs us that their new 4.5 barrel plant has been up and running in the middle of Billericay since the end of January. They currently have 3 session ales made for cask and bottle – Billericay Zeppelin (3.8% pale amber, slight smoky notes), Billericay Blonde (4.0% hoppy golden ale) and Billericay Dickie (4.2% hoppy, biscuity amber ale). These are starting to appear in local pubs e.g. the Coach & Horses and Railway in Billericay, the Hoop in Stock and the White Hart, Margaretting Tye. They also have stronger premium ales mainly for bottles but also some appearing in cask at beer festivals – A Mild With No Name (5.5%) Chapel Street Porter (5.9%) and their first brew Mayflower Gold (6.5%) with beers appearing at Thurrock, Braintree, Gibberd Garden, Billericay Lions and Chelmsford beer festivals.

All beers are available on draught or in bottle at their own Essex Beer Shop in Billericay and there are monthly brewery open weekends with bar and tasting evenings.



MIGHTY OAK

Gill our correspondent on the inside reports:

It's Spookily Delicious! How wonderful, as a brewer, to be approached by a local distillery for some of our wort – the Oscar Wilde wort specifically. We sent a small amount away for those clever distillers to work their magic and turn it into a fabulous and deeply delicious malt spirit, which we named WILDE SPIRIT. We were thrilled with the results, and feedback from publicans and their customers has been excellent (hic!).

The Mighty Oak expansion is moving along nicely, although we did have to halt work for an unforeseen little hitch (we now have an effluent plant, but hey, the Mighty Oak is now far more ecologically sound). We are doubling the brew

BREWERY NEWS



BISHOP NICK

Libby Ridley reports:

Exterior signage is up. And we've fitted out a shop/tasting room for our bottles and merchandise so we're geared up for structured brewery tours and always welcome drop-in trade. Now there's no excuse. We're properly on the map in Braintree thanks to our REVELRY DAY on 15th June (Father's Day!). So come in and buy your bottle-conditioned ale at source.

Festival time is upon us. We've just enjoyed a presence at Colchester CAMRA's, Angel & Harp Dunmow and King William IV Braintree Spring Beer Festivals and Braintree's 10th Anniversary Beer Festival at Bocking Arts Theatre, and of course we'll have a bar at Chelmsford in July.

We supplied 800 bottles of a custom-labelled brew 'H/20' for the runners in Halstead & Essex's 20th Anniversary marathon earlier

in May. Congratulations everyone – it was a fantastic event. Ridelys are proud to be part of Felsted's history and we were delighted to supply beer along with Felstar Brewery for the 450th celebrations in the village.

New permanent stockists of our draught ale include The Cross Keys, White Notley and The Lion Inn, Boreham and new accounts include The Bell, Great Bardfield, The Lion, Leavenheath, The Horse & Groom, Cornish Hall End, The Green Man Toppesfield and The Eight Bells, Bures. More and more stockists for our bottles including Lathcoats Farm Shop in Chelmsford – see www.bishopnick.com for our outlets map.

Our Spring Ale Hop Cross sold out quickly in cask (we've a few 500ml bottles left) as did our Limited Edition for CAMRA's Mild Month of May - a Dark Mild (3.7%). Next up we're planning to revisit a popular brew from last summer – an American Style IPA – look out for it...

HURDLEMAKERS ARMS

Maldon & Dengie CAMRA Real Ale Pub of the Year 2014
CAMRA recommended Real Ales & Homecooked Food
Traditional Sunday Lunches available

10th Annual BEER FESTIVAL

Over 25 Real Ales & more than 6 Ciders available
Last Weekend in June
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Large Beer Garden - Bring the Family!
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BRANCH DIARY

Saturday 14th June:

Visit to Turners Brewery & National Collection of Cider & Perry, Lewes.
Our annual visit to Lewes & the cider centre, this time preceded by a free visit to Turners Brewery (beer will be £11/pint) in Ringmer.

Depart Chelmsford opposite Railway Station 10.15am, fare £23 members/£25 non-members. We should arrive back in Chelmsford (Lower Anchor Street) via 2 or 3 pubs in the evening before 11pm.

ADVANCE BOOKING RECOMMENDED.

Wednesday 18th June:

Branch Meeting at the Square & Compasses, Fuller St.
Bus fare £5 members, £6 non-members. Depart from opposite Railway Station at 8pm, with the meeting starting at 8.30pm.

Tuesday 1st July:

Real Ale Runabout to Kent - Eynsford, Stansted & Fairseat.
Bus departs opposite Railway Station at 7.30pm, fare £6 members / OAPS, £7 non-members.

ADVANCE BOOKING RECOMMENDED.

Tuesday 8th July:

Branch Meeting at the Thomas Mildmay, Chelmsford.
No bus to this meeting which starts at 8.30pm.

Saturday 2nd August:
London Pub Crawl.

A Saturday afternoon one for a change. Meet at Chelmsford Station at 12.25pm to arrange Travelcards for the 1240 departure.

Tuesday 5th August:

Real Ale Runabout to Bishops Stortford.
A walk around Bishops Stortford - a list of suggested pubs and a map will be provided. Bus departs opposite Railway Station at 7.30pm, fare £6 members/OAPS, £7 non-members.

Wednesday 13th August:

Branch Meeting at the Rising Sun, Brentwood.
Bus fare £5 members, £6 non-members. Depart from opposite Railway Station at 8pm, with the meeting starting at 8.30pm.

Saturday 30th August:

Rail Day Trip to Cambridge.
It's usually considerably cheaper to pre-book but as I type this bookings are only available up to the 16th August. Therefore please let me know if you are interested as soon as possible and I'll investigate the current price and, after confirming you're happy with the price, book the tickets. Obviously I can book for others later but the price may be higher and the reserved seats on the Intercity part of the journey will be separate to the rest.

Tuesday 9th September:

Real Ale Runabout to Chappel Beer Festival.
Bus departs opposite Railway Station at 7.30pm, fare £6 members/OAPS, £7 non-members.

ADVANCE BOOKING RECOMMENDED.

Wednesday 17th September:

Branch Meeting at the Compasses, Littley Green.
Bus fare £5 members, £6 non-members. Depart from opposite Railway Station at 8pm, with the meeting starting at 8.30pm.

Instruction to your Bank or Building Society to pay by Direct Debit

Please fill in the whole form using a ball point pen and send to:
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• This Guarantee is offered by all banks and building societies that accept instructions to pay by Direct Debit.
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• If an error is made in the payment of your Direct Debit by The Campaign for Real Ale Ltd or your bank or building society you are entitled to a full and immediate refund of the amount paid from your bank or building society. If you receive a refund you are not entitled to, you must pay it back when The Campaign for Real Ale Ltd asks you to.
• You can cancel a Direct Debit at any time by simply contacting your bank or building society. Written confirmation may be required. Please also notify us.

Join CAMRA today - www.camra.org.uk/joinus

CHELMSFORD SUMMER BEER & CIDER FESTIVAL

TUESDAY 15TH – SATURDAY 19TH JULY



As you sit down to watch the World Cup final a band of volunteers will be putting the finishing touches to this year's festival, as always now in Admiral's Park. It takes place a week later this year because of the football in Brazil so the weather should be even hotter and sunnier than usual, and of course all English people will be celebrating!

What better place to do it than in one of our gigantic marquees or sitting outside in the park. You'll have a massive range of real ales and ciders to choose from, as well as the usual selection of foreign beers, especially Belgian, and local wine. The same as usual then, except that each year the festival gets a little bigger and, we like to think, even better.

We'll have over 300 real ales from all over the UK including a wide selection from the West Country and Wales. We should have some ales brewed especially for the festival from both local and other brewers.

All styles of beer will be available - as well as the golden ales so popular at this time of year we'll also have plenty of bitters, milds, stouts & porters, fruit beers, IPAs and real cask lagers.

We welcome back six of the brewery bars who are now "regulars" - **Brentwood** with their Gold and Chockwork Orange, **Bishop Nick** run by Nelion Ridley the 7th generation of the Ridley family, **Black Sheep** from Masham, North Yorkshire and run by the latest generation of the Theakston family, **Felstar** with Franco's extraordinary range of ales, **Wibblers** with their renowned Apprentice, and **Woodfordes** with Wherry of course.

They are joined this year by **Camerons** famous for their Strongarm bitter, **Oakhams Ales** with JHB and other special ales and **Round Tower**

Brewery Chelmsford's own micro-Brewery whose ales have met with immediate success. As for cider, we plan to have over 100 ciders, perries and pyders including all the Gold Silver and Bronze winners from the National Cider and Perry Championships 2014. A special feature this year will be Scottish and Irish Cider but of course we shall have favourites from throughout the UK including new Essex Cider from Bertie's Cider Co. and the full range from Millwhites Cider who we are very pleased to have sponsor us again along with the Essex Cider Shop in Chelmsford who are one of our main suppliers.

The Belgian Beer Bar offers the usual great range of beers including Trappists, Lambics and a full selection of the ever-popular fruit beers. This year there will also be the best of international beers from United States, Germany, Czech Republic and Holland including the rare, proper draught Budweiser Budvar yeast beer.

Feeling thirsty already, or maybe hungry. Choose from burgers, hot dogs and curries at Hopleaf, German and vegetarian Sausages, also Pizzas this year, from Bratwurst, a hog roast, pasties, olives (& things) and by popular demand Fish and Chips.

Inside the Marquee we will have Pipers Crisps and Merry Berry Chocolates.

We know many of you like to listen to some music and once again we have a very varied programme.

On **Tuesday** at 8 pm **TRULY ACOUSTIC**. Bringing a fresh new twist to the songs people know and love.

Wednesday at 7 pm **JAMIE WILLIAMS & THE ROOTS COLLECTIVE**. A rare

stripped down acoustic trio show from the feel-good maestros Jamie Williams & the Roots Collective.

Followed at 9 pm by **D'UKES**. The finest ukulele band in the universe.

Thursday at 8 pm **ONION BAND**. Folk music for people who don't like folk music.

Friday at 4 pm **JUNK FOXX** A sassy, energetic, three-piece rock band from Essex. If you haven't heard them, it's time to check out **THE FOXX THAT ROCKS**.

Followed at 8pm by **THE DAGGERS**. The most smoking, energetic, and rocking unit to come off the South Coast in years...look out... The Daggars are coming

Saturday at 1 pm **THE HUGH RAINEY JAZZ BAND**. A long established, versatile, 6 piece Trad Jazz Band providing quintessential music for your entertainment.

At 4 pm **FOX & THE TROTS**. An 8 piece soul band with an extra seasoning of funk.

And at 7 pm **LOADED DICE**. A 7 piece rock & soul band who play rockin' soul, dancin' rhythm and blues and rock covers.

As always Saturday until 6pm is Family Fun Day including a Fun Fair with children's rides (a £5 wrist band gives unlimited rides), Face Painting and an Ice Cream Van. So, mums and dads, if all other excuses have failed, what are you waiting for?

I hope we've whetted your appetite. Regulars will "know the ropes" but you'll find lots more information on our website regarding opening times, admission costs, how to get there, etc.

www.chelmsfordbeerandciderfestivals.org.uk, or if you're "smart" you'll scan the QR code

Cheers

Summer 2014



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PRESENTATIONS

RETIREMENT: WOOLPACK, CHELMSFORD



Branch Chairman, Doug Irons presented Dave and Mags Gentry with a special award for their commitment to Real Ale and CAMRA to mark their retirement as Landlords from The Woolpack in Chelmsford which was the Branch Pub of the Year in 2010 and 2011. As is customary for all their festivals they held a preview evening for CAMRA members to enjoy the fantastic choice on offer at a discounted rate the night before it opened to the public. On receiving the award and reading the engraving on the vase "Chelmsford and Mid-Essex CAMRA Wish You a Happy Retirement Now You Have Time to Call Your Own" Dave announced that he plans to brew real ale in Puerta Ventura provided he can get enough fresh water as the spring is only accessible once a week.

RETIREMENT: WHEATSHEAF, WRITTLE



Similarly it was a great party atmosphere again at The Wheatsheaf in Writtle for the retirement

presentation to Tony and Barbara O'Boyle on 20th May. Having been publicans for 29 years they have been landlords of pubs in the Good Beer Guide for 27 of them. However their most amazing achievement is to have been voted the Branch Pub of the Year, Essex Pub of the Year and East Anglian Pub of the Year in 2009. This tiny two-roomed pub has 8 Real Ales on normally but had the Bishop Nick Dark Mild on for May, being Mild Month, in addition to the ever popular Mighty Oak Oscar Wilde. As a celebration of their "Happy Retirement Now They Have Time To Call Their Own" Tony and Barbara have volunteered to help at the Chelmsford Summer Beer and Cider Festival, pleased not to have to rush back to the pub but to join in the party in the park at their leisure.

CHELMSFORD AND MID-ESSEX BRANCH PUB OF THE YEAR 2014: THE ORANGE TREE, CHELMSFORD



Doug Irons presenting Mike Collins Landlord of The Orange Tree in Chelmsford with the Award for Branch Pub of the Year for which the Orange Tree had been runner up in 2012 and 2013.

Silent Mike is the first landlord in the Chelmsford and mid-Essex Branch to win this award in different pubs having won it several times at his previous pub, The Queens Head, also in Lower Anchor Street in Chelmsford.

PRESENTATIONS

CHELMSFORD AND MID-ESSEX BRANCH CIDER PUB OF THE YEAR 2014: THE ALE HOUSE



Cider Rep, Claire Irons Presenting Branch Cider Pub of the Year Award to Alex Maclean, manager of The Ale House accompanied by JJ Robson, who enjoy selling a changing range of 12 ciders/perries.

THE SWAN INN FELSTED

GREAT NIGHTS AT THE VILLAGE PUB
Four Real Ales, Great Selection of Wine & Home-Cooked Food

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HOPS & POPS

You may have seen an ad on TV about a certain beer which features a famous French footballer and a town where the local hop farmers are treated like superstars.

That hop town may well be Poperinge just over the border in Belgium. The region around Poperinge or 'Pops' as it was known to First World War British soldiers in 1914 is famous for its hops. The region provides over 80% of Belgium's hops; it is the last area of Flanders where the crop thrives, and there is a culture based on the plant.

Take any road into the city and you are bound to see fields furnished with hop poles and the year can be measured by the height of the bines. Naturally the town gears its calendar around the plant.

The first harvest of hop shoots in the third week of March kicks off a month-long season where you will find restaurants all over the area being self indulgent with a sparing use of these delicate, rare and expensive shoots in various gourmet dishes. Amongst them, if not the best of these venues, is beer cuisine chef Stefaan Couttenye's **Hommelhof** restaurant on the square in the village of Watou just west of Pops, a must-visit at any time of the year if you are in the area.

Across the square is the historic family run **Van Eecke Brewery**. Although they have an extensive portfolio of beers they are best known for the cloudy citrus-laden Watou's Wit Bier and the heavily hopped beer Hommelbier, Hommel being Flemish for hop.

On the edge of the village you can also find another well established family brewer **Sint Bernardus**. They have just planted a new hopfield next to the brewery and are famous

for their perfectly executed range of Abbey style beers.

By September the hopfields come alive with activity, building up to the harvest. **Hoppecruyt** is a hop farm just north of Poperinge in the village of Proven, where the Desmyter family are the fourth generation of hop farmers who have run the place since 1893. Throughout the season they conduct tours of the bines and tastings of the beers brewed with them. The family are great to talk to as their lives have deep roots in the local terroir and their lives are driven by hop culture.

De Plukker to the north-east of the town have organic hopfields and have recently started brewing organic beers using their own hops. They brew two core beers. Keikoppenbier, a blond, top-fermented ale in which three varieties of hops from their fields are used giving the beer a distinctive aroma and providing a good balance with the malt bill. Although it is "only" 6.1% abv the beer has a rich, full taste and a fresh character.

Rookop is their brown, top-fermented 6.5% abv offering in which two varieties of their hops are used with darker malts to give notes of chocolate and fruit with a little sweetness. Rookop used to be brewed in the St-Joris brewery in Reningelst just to the south of the town until 1963 when the brewing activities stopped. In 2012 this brewery was restored back to its original condition and now it functions as a meeting centre for families with children.

De Plukker also brew a special beer for the annual **Poperinge Beer Festival** that takes place in the centre of the town at the end of October. There are usually around 100 beers from 20 breweries and there are launches of a

number of new beers and a few one offs.

Every third year the town plays host to the three day **Beer & Hop Festival**. This is a special cultural extravaganza that takes in the annual Lekker Westhoek festival of local produce which covers the main market square. The historic Beer & Hop Festival's agenda is to put the town's two major assets into the spotlight and have a civic party. Expect lots of music, beer, parades, hops and more beer.

Year round at the heart of the town is Poperinge's **National Hop Museum** in the old "Stadsschaal" or Municipal weigh house. There is a great audio tour that takes you through four floors of history and culture, all the way from the impressive loft to the

concluding ground floor. On your way down, local characters like "The Bagger" and "The Nose" guide you along the four seasons of the hop, historic documents, photographs, scale models and audiovisuals illustrate both the story of the unique building and that of local hop growing, its past and present.

By the way Heineken UK has been banned by the ad watchdog from emphasising the connection between its Kronenbourg 1664 brand and France, as the beer is not only brewed in the UK but apparently with the majority of the hops in the recipe grown outside France.

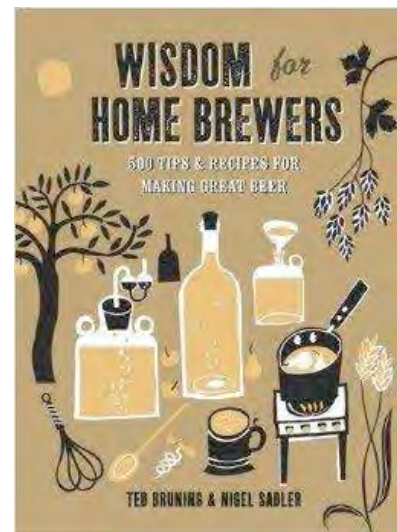
After saying that the brand is bereft of any decent hops anyway although Eric Cantona remains a star.

NEW BOOK ON HOME BREWING

Chelmsford-based craft brewer and beer expert, Nigel Sadler, has teamed up with fellow author and journalist Ted Bruning, of St. Neots, Cambs., to write a book entitled "Wisdom for Home Brewers: 500 tips and recipes for making great beer" which will be published first in the USA in September with the UK to follow shortly after.

Nigel who previously self-published "Notes on Craft Ale Brewing" in 2013, which has sold across the world from Australia to the USA said "I was absolutely delighted to be asked to co-author this work and so pleased to get a work published in the USA where home brewing

is hugely popular with some 1 million people enjoying the hobby. There's talk of the book going to Australia too which would be a real bonus."



He added "It was a good 5 or 6 month's hard work involving two people and a lot of emails. We have very different styles of writing: I'm the techie one and Ted does the nice prose and jokes! I am very active in many areas in the beer and brewing world; from my day job as Commercial Manager at Wibblers Brewery to being Beer Festival Organiser for this year's Chelmsford Beer Festival

so fitting this in was a real challenge towards the end."

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WE HAVE TO TALK ABOUT CRAFT BEER...

This is the first of four articles by prize-winning beer writer Tim Webb, author of *The World Atlas of Beer*, *Pocket Beer Book*, *Good Beer Guide Belgium*, *LambicLand* and others, in which he traces the progress of beer in the last 40 years; debunks some myths about British brewing; picks out those parts of beer-making that create flavour; and challenges CAMRA to retake its vow to improve beer in Britain.

Part 1: Have you seen what the neighbours are doing?

In November 1999, with an eye to its Millennium edition, I sent an article to CAMRA's national newspaper, *What's Brewing*, about the new tendency of small breweries in North America and across Europe, to make strikingly good ales in old British styles and call them "craft beers".

I saw the dawn of the new century as a good time for CAMRA to rethink its stance on what the word "good" should mean in the name *Good Beer Guide*, given how many cask-conditioned ales had become like dull keg beers from the 70s with a dash of yeast, and how many 'unreal' ones were gaining character. A book from a consumer group should be what its cover says it is, I suggested.

My piece was spiked and fifteen years on, the group that started the global beer revival still refuses to discuss how it should deal with its greatest success.

Foreign affairs

By 2011, I had written six editions of CAMRA's *Good Beer Guide Belgium* and was adjusting to having been picked to write the beer equivalent of Hugh Johnson & Jancis Robinson's highly regarded *World Atlas of Wine*, for Mitchell

Beazley, the publisher behind Michael Jackson's original 1977 *World Guide to Beer*.

For the last four years my co-author and friend, Canadian beer writer Stephen Beaumont, and I have spent an unhealthy amount of time getting and keeping up to speed with the magnificent fortunes enjoyed by beer around the world in the subsequent four decades.

The position in Britain is roughly like this: led the original consumer revolt but got caught up in the technicalities and fell behind – now reliant on foreign brewers to revive its unique and unparalleled beer heritage.

In the early days we in CAMRA limited our ambitions to steering cask-conditioned ale away from its carefully prepared grave. Had some time traveller warned us that we would live to see dozens of countries making competent interpretations of old-style British ales like pale ale and IPA, porter and stout, wee heavy and barley wine, we might have raised our sights.

The state of play

Since the mid 1970s and more noticeably since the late 1990s, the state of beer in the world has improved incomparably.

Stark divisions have emerged between mass-production industrial brands and hands-on craft beers, as public tastes have moved gradually but inexorably in the direction of the latter. In no country is the craft segment shrinking, as in every established beer-drinking economy industrial beer is steadily giving ground.

The prediction that craft beer will go out of fashion has not happened and there is no reason why it would. Tastes may mature but once converted, drinkers stay with it because it

is better. And as politicians spot that it is craft brewers that will grow exports and create jobs, a different form of support will grow.

The numbers game

Credit for this monstrous jack-knife in drinking trends should be shared by early CAMRA for articulating consumer objection; obstinate family brewers in Belgium for sticking with traditions well outside industry-imposed norms; Michael Jackson for telling the world about its heritage of beer styles; and those, mostly American, entrepreneurs who took the risk to make businesses out of importing or respectfully imitating the best.

In 1977, the first *World Guide to Beer* featured mostly four countries in which "artisanal" beers still enjoyed public support – the UK, Belgium, West Germany and Czechoslovakia. The rest was about a few survivors clinging perilously to an inhospitable cliff, a couple of optimistic new arrivals and the story of what had been.

When Steve and I turned over 2011 to researching our first *World Atlas* we found 45 countries with an active beer culture and a dozen or so that showed promise. For *Pocket Beer Book 2015* the numbers have risen to 67 and 74. The point at which a fashionable idea became a global movement is long passed.

Fear of the future

For beer drinkers everywhere this must be good news. Yet in Jackson's original big four beer countries, growing pains are apparent, not least when older beer drinkers are challenged to accept a new world order in which what was once exceptional has become relatively ordinary.

Belgium ducks the issue by relishing its position as the world no. 1 exporter – over 60% of beer made there goes abroad and if it maintains its

standards and originality the future remains bright.

In Germany and the Czech Republic, success is stunted by a global mistrust of lager brewing since it became the focus of industrial standardisation in the mid 20th century, while older beer drinkers struggle to come to terms with the next generation taking to pale ales and stout.

In the UK, the problem is different. While we may be the nation that created a majority of the beer styles that are currently wowing the world, we make precious little of them, because British beer drinkers prefer to deny any beer heritage beyond the sort of cask-conditioned light ales found in pubs.

This is a problem. Not just because it clips the wings of Britain's best brewers but because, as I will try to show in the second of these pieces, our most popular 'real ale' styles are about as traditional as plastic furniture and neon light.

Tim Webb served on CAMRA's National Executive for seven years, running the Great British Beer Festival for the first two, then heading up publicity and publications. He has since written numerous best-selling beer books, thus far translated into nine languages. In his spare time he runs a small publishing company and booksellers (www.booksaboutbeer.com).



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CIDER PRESS

Branch Cider Pub of the Year



With the competition being perry close indeed for the judges to de-cider the Winner was The Ale House in Chelmsford with the Runner Up being the Three Elms in Chignal St James.

Essex Cider Pub of the Year

The Ale House is our branch Cider Pub of the Year and was pipped at the post to the accolade of the Essex Cider Pub of the Year by the very worthy Odd One Out in Colchester, affectionately known as The Oddie, which has 4 barrels of cider on the bar at bargain prices.

Summer Beer and Cider Festival

As usual we plan to have all the winners of the National Cider and Perry Championships which were judged at the Reading Festival over the early May Bank Holiday.



Odd One Out

CIDER

- Gold** Sheppy's Medium (Somerset)
- Silver** Dove Skye, Ribble Valley Gold (Lancashire)
- Bronze** Wilce's (Herefordshire)

PERRY

- Gold** Oliver's (Herefordshire)
- Silver** Kent Cider Company (Kent)
- Bronze** Raglan Cider Mill, Snowy Owl (Monmouthshire)

This will be the biggest cider bar in East Anglia with an increase in serving area from 5 1/2 bars last year to 10 bars to minimise queuing and make serving more efficient for our thirsty customers.

To prove that there is more to cider than Magners we plan to showcase Cider from Armagh in Northern Ireland from Toby's Cider (Dry, Festival Medium Scrumpy and Katy, Single Variety 5% Sweet) and also Maclvors and aptly named Armagh Cider. Having featured many Welsh ciders over recent years this will be the first time we have had Scottish Cider supplied by Thistly Cross namely Original 7.2%, Traditional 4.4%, Jaggy Thistle Vintage East Lothian Scrumpy 5% and Whisky Cask 6.9%.

With the invasion of the CELTS, the Local Essex Cider Top Shelf (LECTS) will break ranks and mingle with the masses lead by Bertie's Cider which is made in Braintree. However the Perry Independent Shelf Society (PISS) will take over 2 bays with their sister group the PISS2 (Pyder Independent Shelf Society 2 having their own shelf again. Watch out for the single variety perries: Butts; Sweet Fanny Adams and Comely Norma Perry made from Comy Norman pears. With about 30 perries and 7 pyders you will be spoiled for choice.

In addition to the Top 20 Core Standards back by popular demand we have many scintillating surprises on the Cider front planned. These include Ashover Poets Pippins from Derbyshire;

HurstView Jibber Jabber from Staffordshire and Bottle Kicking Scrambler from Leicestershire.

Special thanks to Cliff and Sue from the Essex Cider Shop in Chelmsford for chasing around England and Wales supplying much of our stock and sponsoring us.

Please see the festival website for details of the full list which is subject to availability.

CAMRA Approve Frozen Cider

CAMRA has welcomed the Government's decision in the Budget to freeze cider duty.

Making the announcement, the Chancellor highlighted that some cider producers in the West Country had been hit hard by recent weather conditions so needed additional support.

This duty freeze will apply to cider with a juice

content of 35% or higher, and will not apply to sparkling cider between 5.5% and 8.5% abv. This is a welcome move that will support Britain's real cider and perry producers – a vital traditional British industry. Andrea Briers, Chair of CAMRA's Apple Committee commented:

"Cider is a traditional British product and I welcome the Chancellor's decision to freeze cider duty to help those who keep this tradition alive. I would encourage you to help real cider or perry makers thrive by visiting a pub and trying some."

CAMRA has cautioned that small cider producers (making below 70 hectolitres each year) already pay no duty, so the benefit of this duty freeze will primarily be felt by slightly larger producers.

CAMRA is continuing to campaign for a new cider duty system to support real cider with a considerably higher juice content. Real Cider and Perry are made with at least 90% fruit juice.

Claire Irons

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The Fat Cat

If you are starting your crawl at Ipswich Station, jump on a no. 66 bus and get off at the former Golden Key on Woodbridge Road, now sadly a Sainsbury's. It is only a short walk to the **Fat Cat** on Spring Road.

The Fat Cat has won numerous awards over the years and has a great atmosphere, free of background music and gaming machines. Most importantly there are usually 15 beers on draught including some on gravity from out the back, all in perfect nick and lots of European offerings.

There are many small rooms and drinking spaces covered in old brewery enamels. The conservatory with its scrubbed tables and an excellent garden for when the sun shines are superb. Food highlights are Scotch Eggs, Beef & Guinness Pasties and Cornish Pasties home made on the premises and Pork Pies from the local butcher.



The Dove Street Inn

Turning left out of the pub and a 15 minute downhill walk brings you to the **Dove Street Inn**.

This is another pub that has won many accolades and is all things to all people. There are usually 12 beers on handpump and another half dozen in the tap room including at least one mild; usually two. They hold 3 beer festivals annually each with at least 60 beers, there is a 2.5 barrel house brewery, a home brew shop and there is also accommodation. Not only that but this multi roomed pub has a nice relaxed ambiance, it is hard to fault.



Mulberry Tree

From here you can take a slight diversion with an 8 minute stroll down Grimwade Street to the unique **Briarbank Brewing Company**. Entering the bar is a performance in itself and there is lots of gleaming stainless steel on display. More of this in Thirsty Times II, where we will run a special article on this place.

Also 8 minutes from Dove Street Tavern down St Helens Street is the **Mulberry Tree**. After a period of closure this striking pub reopened in 2012 with a major refurbishment. There are now eight hand pumps with beers mainly from Suffolk breweries. For many years this pub has been noted for its live music and there are performances every Friday, Saturday and Sunday and the occasional Wednesday.



The Woolpack

From here turn right then right again up Bolton Lane to the picturesque **Woolpack**, set in the fork of the Tuddenham and Westerfield roads. The outside drinking area in front of the pub is a delight. Inside comprises a tiny snug at the front, flanked by a large lounge, a small public bar with a television and a larger room at the back; all are pristine.

There are 6 beers on draught coming mainly from regional family brewers such as Black Sheep, Tim Taylor and Fullers. Their home-made sausage rolls are perfect.

Just in front of the pub is one of the entrances to Christchurch Park. Walk uphill through the park and then follow Fonnereau Road until you hit Henley Road where you will find the **Greyhound**. This is an attractive Adnams tied house with a cosy but basic quarry-flagged front bar and a large, comfortable lounge bar to the side. There is an outside drinking area for the summer months. There are 6 excellent Adnams



The Greyhound

beers on handpump plus one changing guest and the new craft-brewed Adnams Jack Brand Dry Hopped Lager too. Top quality food.

If you turn left into Anglesea Road then left again down Berners Street to the roundabout you will find **St. Judes Tavern** on St Matthew's Street. The name comes from a local brewery venture that waxed and waned and will hopefully rise again. This cave of a place has a huge amount of gothic ephemera and a dark tavern feel. But people are not here for the décor, they are here for the beer. Behind the bar is a stillage of a wall of beer equipped to dispense over 20 beers. There is a good sprinkling of beers from Suffolk breweries but there are others from much further afield. The pub is the Ipswich & East Suffolk CAMRA branch pub of the year for 2014.

From here it is a 10 minute walk down the famous Portman Road back to Ipswich Station.

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PUB CRAWL FROM GREAT BADDOW & DOWN THE BADDOW ROAD

It's Easter and I'm going to have a quiet Easter Weekend at home doing the odd jobs and just catching up on household things. OK, the Woolpack Beer Festival is on and we can pop down in the evening. This was the plan until we had a Branch meeting at the Woolpack on the 9th April and one of our members sent an email to highlight that the future of all four Great Baddow pubs was currently under question - this being that the White Horse was to become a restaurant, the King's Head was to close, the Blue Lion was up for sale and the Beehive had a planning application to be turned into a restaurant. So before you know it's suggested that we do a fact-finding pub crawl on Good Friday starting at the White Horse in Great Baddow, do the pubs in Great Baddow and then walk down Baddow Road surveying all the pubs for WHATPUB finishing at the Woolpack Beer Festival.

Buses still run on Good Friday to my surprise - however it's a Sunday service. So Good Friday we're down at the bus station catching the No 36 to Great Baddow. Thinking to myself that Claire and I will be the only ones going on this, after stepping on the bus I find we have four of our members on board, and as the bus goes round the Army and Navy roundabout I spot another one of our members walking in the direction of Great Baddow. Arriving at the **White Horse** I find another seven of our members already drinking and a few new faces so we say our hellos and start to order the drinks. I'm also approached by one of our members who suggests that we could also do the British Legion in Baddow Road as he is a member and we would be very welcome so it was agreed that we would.

The White Horse is a 17th Century coaching inn with exposed beams. It has two large rooms on two levels with seating for 230 people. The

pub has disabled toilets and several car parking spaces. The ales on at the White Horse were Greene King IPA, Adams Broadside, Fullers London Pride, which are the regular beers, and the guest beers were Acorn Dead Good, Peerless Down Under, and Inveralmond Ossian. Speaking to the Landlady we find out that the pub is not changing to just a restaurant, however pub food is cooked all day to 10pm and it is business as usual as a thriving pub. We also find out that card-carrying CAMRA members can get 20p off a pint and on Mondays real ale is £2.49 a pint. Weston's Old Rosie is the usual real cider on in the summer. Every season the pub has a mini Beer Festival called the Love of Ale which consists of five different Ales for a week at a time. On Wednesday and Sunday there is a Quiz night and they also have occasional special events. We decide it would be a good venue for a branch meeting on a Monday rather than a Wednesday and a visit on our way on a Real Ale Runabout. Many comments were made regarding the unfounded rumours that the pub is changing to a restaurant.



The King's Head

We spend a good hour in the White Horse, having had such a good welcome and then move onto the **King's Head**. This is a pub I have never been to before. The real ales on are Greene King IPA and Sharp's Doom Bar. The

pub has a medium-sized bar with low beamed ceilings and sloping wooden floor; it is split into three sections, a games area with darts and pool table at one end, a restaurant at the other end, and seating in the middle with an open fireplace. The pub also has a large garden with swings for the children. Chatting to the manageress serving behind the bar about our quest she is pleased to find out about WhatPub and reassures us that the pub is not closing - it is definitely ongoing as a pub complete with two football teams. The confusion may be that it was launching on the day we visited (19th April) as a Thai restaurant including takeaways, much to the delight of some of our fellow crawlers. I would say this is different from standard pub grub - the only other pubs that I know do Thai food are the Oakham Tap and Charters in Peterborough. Both of these pubs have great success with the Real Ale and Thai combination so we wished them Good Luck with the new venture. On Saturdays the pub has live music and jazz is played on a Sunday. We also find out the pub was also built in the 17th Century and apparently is haunted by a ghost of a little boy and the pub was once called The Naked Boy. Interestingly there was once a tunnel running from the pub to the Church in Great Baddow.

By the time we have done the What Pub survey at the King's Head I noticed that the lads and lasses on the crawl have left and have moved onto the **Blue Lion**. Again this is a pub I have never been to before. The real ale on during the crawl was Greene King IPA, Adnams Southwold Bitter, Crouch Vale Brewer's Gold and Sharps Doom Bar. This pub I would call traditional as it has separate bars: the Public and Saloon. This type of pub always reminds of the Fox at Rivenhall when I was a child as this had a separate public and saloon bar and in my childhood days children were never allowed in pubs, but I can always remember standing at the door of the public bar waiting for a pack of crisps and a bottle of coke with a straw and then sitting on the wall to watch and count the



The Blue Lion

Routemaster London buses going down the A12 back to London coming from the Essex seaside resorts. No computer games in my day! Getting back to the Blue Lion we are told by the bar staff that, yes, the pub is up for sale as a pub not for development. Part of the pub was built in the 16th century and has a beamed ceiling but most of it dates from the Georgian era. There is plenty of car parking and a large garden is at the back with seating and tables. Pub food



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is served from Tuesday to Saturday between 12 to 3 pm. The public bar has darts, pool and crib. Sky Sports is in the Saloon bar. Quiz nights are held occasionally and live bands play quarterly. In August the pub has a beer festival and a Hog roast event.

From the Blue Lion we headed for the **British Legion Club**, another place that is new to me; mind it's not on the Baddow Road but down a side street and hard to find unless someone is in the know. To go to this club you need to be a member or know someone who is a member. Membership costs £14 a year. Individual branches may also charge an administration fee according to the British Legion website. There was only one beer on and this was Flying Scotsman from the Caledonian Brewery. The club made us very welcome and the beer was very good.

After the British Legion we headed across the road to the **Beehive**. This pub does not have real ale on at the moment and does not serve any food. At the time of our crawl the present Landlady is moving out as there are plans to turn this pub into a restaurant. The pub has a central bar with a public bar at one end and a lounge at the other end. The pub does some charity events during the year. Due to the pub not having any real ale we moved on to the Star.

Arriving at the **Star** I noticed the stable door as you enter this pub; I don't think I've seen a stable door at a pub before. The lads and lasses of the crawl had already made a nest. The real ale on was Adnams Southwold Bitter and Mighty Oak Maldon Gold. Seems the Adnams is the regular beer and the Mighty Oak was the guest beer, the guest beer is put on for six months and then is changed to a different beer once the six months are up. This is a very small traditional pub with a central fireplace and a flagstone floor. The pub is dog-friendly and the locals are also very friendly. Darts are played in this pub which has a darts team and a television in both areas. Although it does not serve food



The Star

there is a Monday Club where locals take turns to cook a meal for members of the club. A Meat Raffle also takes place so it is definitely out of the ordinary and quirky.

Whilst drinking in the Star it is suddenly mentioned that if we are doing the Baddow Road pubs we should also be doing the Nag's Head, something I had not considered. It was all agreed, so our next pub was **The Nag's Head** which had the following beers on: Adnams Ghost Ship, Fullers London Pride, Greene King IPA and their changing seasonal guest was Woodforde's Wherry. The pub is a small bar with one room and a small patio at the rear. The pub does not do food. Once a month the pub has entertainment such as a singer or a disco.

Finishing at the Nag's Head the crawl made its way to the Beer Festival at the **Woolpack** where we managed to get something to eat and were able to try some of the different beers that were still on.

All 16 crawlers enjoyed themselves and agreed it had been interesting and worthwhile. Let's be truthful: a pub crawl and finishing up at a beer festival versus doing household things? I don't think that's a hard one to answer. Getting round to putting our beer scores on WhatPub is the next challenge.

Doug Irons

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THE ALL NEW CENTRAL LINE CRAWL

One of the best things about the explosion of new pubs and bars in London over recent years is the endless opportunity to devise new crawls. Here is one particularly fine example of a crawl which didn't exist just six months ago: amazingly, all of the venues featured are new since the end of November 2013, with the exception of Redchurch Brewery Tap, which itself has only been open for a little over a year.

Requiring just one tube line, this Central Line crawl offers five venues with a staggering total of over 120 draft beers - plus around 300 bottled beers - between them, including one of the best bottled lists in London.

It's perfect if starting out from Chelmsford, from where you should get off at Stratford. Here you'll need to hop onto the Central Line westbound from Stratford and get off at Bethnal Green, where you'll find two excellent stops within a few minutes' walk of the tube station. The first is:



Mother Kelly's

Stop 1: Mother Kelly's, 251 Paradise Row, E2 9LE: (link to Guide entry - www.beerguidelondon.co.uk/pubs.162) This is yet another fine beer venue in a railway arch, but instead of being a brewery, this one is a bottle shop and tap room which opened in April 2014. 23 draft beers are served for onsite drinking in the spacious and airy - and very cool - one roomed arch, along with your choice of the ca.

75 bottled beers in the fridges. The owners - the same people who run the Queen's Head just south of Kings Cross - have done a fine job here and created a truly excellent and very different venue.

Stop 2: Redchurch Brewery Tap, 276 Poyser Street, E2 9RF: (link to Guide entry - www.beerguidelondon.co.uk/pubs.138). On the other side of the railway tracks you'll find the brewery tap for the excellent Redchurch Brewery. Note that the opening hours are severely restricted, but if you can plan your trip for any Thursday evening from 6.30pm - or the last Saturday of the month from 4pm - you'll be rewarded with a selection of 6 or more of the brewery's beers on draft. It's another cool space, though perhaps a bit more minimalist than Mother Kelly's. From Redchurch, return to Bethnal Green and hop back on the Central Line, continuing your journey west, getting off at St Paul's.

Stop 3: Harrild and Sons, 26 Farringdon Street, EC4A 4AB: (link to Guide entry - www.beerguidelondon.co.uk/pubs.154) 5-10 minutes' walk from St Paul's tube, this is another Barworks group (Exmouth Arms, Well & Bucket, etc.) venue offering more quirky interior design, including stunning huge mirrors, exposed brick and other characterful touches. More importantly, the bar - while offering a good range of cask and keg beers - has one of the standout bottled lists in London with around 100 choices, most of which are of the highest quality. In common with other Barworks venues this one can get extremely busy with the 'after work' crowd, so if you enjoy peace and quiet, best to plan your visit for an afternoon. Afterwards, return to St Paul's and continue your Central Line journey west, to Tottenham Court Road.



Craft Beer Co.

Stop 4: Craft Beer Co, 168 High Holborn, WC1V 7AA: (link to Guide entry - www.beerguidelondon.co.uk/pubs.167) 5 minutes' walk from Tottenham Court Road, Craft Beer Co's 5th London location opened in early May 2014, offering the largest draft selection in London, with a staggering 45 drafts (15 cask, 30 high quality keg). Slightly smaller than Craft Leather Lane, this one is nevertheless very comfortable and includes a lovely downstairs 'lounge' which has plenty of tables. If you can bear to leave, return to Tottenham Court Road and continue west to Shepherd's Bush.



Brewdog

Stop 5: Brewdog Shepherd's Bush, 15 - 19 Goldhawk Road, W12 8QQ: (link to Guide entry - www.beerguidelondon.co.uk/pubs.112) Across the far side of the Green but less than 5 minutes' walk from the station, Brewdog's 3rd London bar opened at the end of November 2013 offering a then record 40 draft beers. Spacious and comfortable, the bar is much more comfortable than other Brewdog bars

in London. It's also much bigger, and of course there's an incredible choice of beers. About half of the beers at any one time are usually Brewdog beers, with serious guests from far and wide making up the other half. A good bottled range completes the offer - all of which is served by some of the best bar staff in London.

Finish the day by taking the Central Line directly back to Stratford (or Liverpool Street) for your return journey to Chelmsford. Though of course if you're still thirsty you could always pop into Tap East in Westfield Stratford before getting your train back home!

Written by Jezza, SW London. Jezza is the founder of, and chief researcher for, Beer Guide London (www.beerguidelondon.co.uk) which contains full details of all the bars featured in this article. You can follow Jezza on Twitter: @beerguidelondon or @bonsvoeux!



BOOK REVIEW



GOOD BEER GUIDE BELGIUM

Tim Webb & Joe Stange

Seventh edition (2014),
368-page paperback (CAMRA Books)
£14.99

A great browse, an amusing read and an absolutely vital item on the beer traveller's packing list – that's how I've described previous editions of this absorbing guidebook. It'll come as no surprise that this seventh edition comes just as highly recommended.

The format remains much as before, but with tighter sections this time devoted to Contexts (background history, geography, travel tips and food advice); Beers and Brewing (including an A–Z of breweries, complete with star-rated beers); Bars and Stores (where to drink and buy beers); and Beer Tourism (must-see places and festivals not to miss).

Some 900 beers are covered, along with 500 places in which to drink them.

What also remains is the guide's suffer-no-fools approach to the breweries who don't play ball with the drinker, often acerbically articulated in a pithy aside or a little throw-away sarcasm.

That's good to see, especially as the guide's founder and sole author to date,

Tim Webb, has brought in another writer to shoulder the burden this time around.

But it's not as if he's just plucked someone from the street. American Joe Stange knows Belgium intimately, having lived here for four years and having co-authored *Around Brussels in 80 Beers* a few years back.

So what is new? Well, the sheer number of breweries for a start. Belgium is not immune to the rise of the microbrewery and, to squeeze them all in, some background info has been cut across the brewery entries. Brewpubs now have their own (short) section, as do gueuze blenders.

Global Influences

The section on Belgian beer in Britain has been expanded to cover the world as its influence continues, but the authors recognize this is not a one-way street. The nature of beer in Belgium has itself begun to change, in line with global trends. Via editorial, the authors bring you, for instance, their thoughts on the increased use of hops in beers.

Neither has it passed their notice that First World War centenary commemorations are beginning to take place. Belgium, of course, suffered more than most from the brutal conflict, which raged across its fields and through its towns. The book reflects on the ravages it brought not just on the people and the land but on its brewing industry, too.

That's a sombre note with which to round off a review, but regular readers of this top book should fear not: as ever, there is plenty to entertain within its colourful pages – from sound practical advice to the effortless way in which the joy of beer hunting in Belgium is celebrated.

This review was written by Jeff Evans and published on his website – www.insidebeer.com.

Our thanks to Jeff for his permission to reproduce it here.

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Summer 2014

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