



CAMPAIGN
FOR
REAL ALE

Thirsty Times



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**Chelmsford and Mid-Essex Branch of
CAMRA, the Campaign for Real Ale**

**Issue 002
Summer 2012**



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Pub News

Reports in Pub News are provided by local CAMRA members, licensees and Thirsty Times readers. Further news of changes at local pubs is very welcome. Please send news to news@chelmsfordcamra.org.uk.

Although it may be more accurately described as a bar, and it receives a full write-up elsewhere, this column cannot let the opening of a new venue for real ale and cider pass without a brief comment. Good luck to the Ale House which further enhances the thriving real ale scene in Chelmsford's West End.

Congratulations to the St Anne's Castle (www.stannescastle.co.uk) which was voted Best Venue in the 2012 Panic Awards, a title they also won in 2008. Well-deserved I'm sure. Dave & Pat host live



music events every week, with these monthly regulars: first Tuesday is Jane's Open Mic, first Friday Modern Jazz Quintet "Interplay" with supporting acts, first Saturday Rock the Castle with live bands, last Sunday The Acoustic Soul Club with 4 unsigned acoustic-style acts.

As if that wasn't enough the Castle also scooped Best One-off Event at those same awards for their Annual Charity Garden Party. This year's will be held on Sunday 26th August with all proceeds going as usual to Essex Air Ambulance. For the past 6 years this event has raised an av-

erage of £4,500 each year for the Charity. The fun starts at midday and goes on outside till dark with all the fun of the fair and live music (naturally). Then it's inside for a rockin' comedy show with around 8 rock bands and 10 or so comedians. Oh, by the way, there's a mini Beer Festival with 8 real ales. Worth hopping on the 352 bus from Chelmsford or Braintree.

The same bus (though no.70 on weekdays) will take you to the Windmill at Chatham Green. Hosts Peter & Elaine were the first to draw my attention to Fathers' Day on Sunday 17th June. Dads (and those treating them!) can choose from a special meat feast menu, 3 roasts or the specials boards. 2 sittings, booking advised for this. Then, on Friday 29th June, there's live music from Snakeoil – "a great local band who play great toe tapping good time country & skiffle". The music starts at 8.30pm with food served till 9. Regular food "events" here include Home-made Pie Night on Wednesdays, and 2 courses for £10 Monday to Thursday lunchtimes. www.windmillmotorinn.co.uk

Time to slip in an apology to the Leather Bottle at Blackmore, whose events were mysteriously credited to the wrong pub in the last issue. I hope we didn't mislead too many of you. In fact these events have proved so popular that the Leather Bottle is having another Folk night on Monday 18th June and another Jazz night, with the Hot Mustard Jazz quartet, on Monday 2nd July. www.theleatherbottle.net

Well done to Kate & Paul at the Green Man, Howe Street whose recent beer and music festival with 12 ales raised over £500 for Breast Cancer Campaign even though the weather was rubbish. Hopefully the weather will be better on Satur-

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Pub News

day 23rd June for their next Charity event - the annual Green Man Gallon Walk It's a 10 mile walk through the Essex countryside visiting 8 pubs - starting and finishing at The Green Man and collecting stamps along the way from the other pubs. Those completing the walk will receive fish and chips for free and there will be live music from about 8.30pm. The walk starts at 12 noon and entry is £10 with all proceeds this year going to Farleigh Hospice. There will be a varied selection of cask ales to choose from as all the pubs on the route are good ale houses. You don't have to drink a gallon but you must get a stamp from each pub to get your free fish and chips.

Before that, on Friday 8th June, Springfield Striders' 5 mile road race finishes at the pub and there will be a range of ales on offer for the 250 runners, not to mention their friends, families and spectators.

And in July, from 20th - 22nd, there is a

Folk Festival- a whole weekend of local Essex folk talent playing music and drinking real ale. Camping in the meadow will be available (as it is throughout the summer) and there will also be 2 teams (should that be sides?) of Morris dancers for the whole weekend

You might gather that they like a bit of music at the Green Man. There is an open mic night every first Thursday of the month hosted by the Blues band 15 Watts, and on the third Tuesday of every month there is a Songwriters Night, an acoustic showcase hosted by Amy Westney. More details from Kate or Paul on 01245 360203.

Two pubs which we reported as closed in our last issue are open again. The Three Horseshoes at Bannister Green is still looking for a buyer but has Greene King IPA alternating with a beer from the nearby Felstar brewery. Food is available.

Similarly, the Willows at Cressing is open and offering Greene King IPA & Adnams Bitter plus a guest ale. They hope to add a second guest beer handpump soon, and again food is available.

The Cross Keys at White Notley, owned by Greene King, has gone through a period of closure but the rumour is that it may have been sold on to a new owner. Let's hope this pub which used to be the heartbeat of the village, is rescued. If so, please give it your full support.

And the Jack & Jenny at Witham remains closed while Brakspear continue to advertise for a new tenant.

Now to Beer Festivals. The Whitehorse Bar and Lounge in Townfield Street has its summer beer festival from Wednesday 27th June till Sunday 1st July. Local ales



Pub News

from Crouch Vale, Mighty Oak & Nethergate will be complemented with beers from Whitstable, Fat Cat, Redemption,



Moorhouse's, Ilkley, Windsor & Eton, and ciders from Suffolk and the West Country. 16 ales and 5 ciders will be on sale over the weekend, with a barbeque on the Saturday (weather permitting!). www.whbl.co.uk

The Royal Oak in East Street, Braintree holds its 1st Summer Beer Festival from 12th-15th July, promising 40 Beers over the 4 days with a Hogroast and Barbeque. Details from Tony on 01376 618033.

The Annual Summer Beer Festival at the White Hart, Margaretting Tye is from 19th-22nd July. www.whitehartmargarettingtye.com

The Oddfellows Arms beer festival runs from 1st to 5th August. www.theoddfellowsarms.com

Pete & Gill's 2nd Beer & Cider Festival at the Three Elms, Chignal St James runs from 10th-12th August. Expect around 12 each of ales and ciders plus music, food and fun. www.the-three-elms.com

More news from the Compasses, Little Green. The Compasses, last editions cover star, has just won Pub of the Year

for Essex. We wish them well in the next round of judging – for East Anglian Pub of the Year. Their big summer festival is scheduled for 17th-19th August and has been rebranded as "Hopstock". It is still a charity event with money going to Farleigh Hospice (last year they raised about £4,000). They plan to have over 60 real ales (one from every county in England again plus some old favourites), real cider, live music, vintage tractor ploughing, stalls, huffer BBQ and children's entertain-



ment. They are also hoping to have a "special" real ale from Bishop Nick – probably a hoppy American style IPA. www.compasseslitlegreen.co.uk

The Original Plough next to Chelmsford Railway Station are offering the new Nicholson's Pale Ale alongside their 6 permanent and ever rotating guest beer portfolio. The beer is brewed by St Austell's chief brewer and is a 4% abv classic amber English Pale Ale, with a fruity well balanced aroma of malt and hops. Also keep an eye out for the winner of the Nicholson's best home brewed beer in the UK competition which is Paul Carruthers' "Frank As Apollo" 4.6%abv Premium Bitter, brewed at Thornbridge. www.nicholsonspubs.co.uk/theploughchelmsford/.

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The Square and Compasses



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A warm welcome awaits you

The
Square
AND
Compasses
Meet • Eat • Drink

Brewery News

Felstar Brewery

There is a lot of brewing going on in Felsted these days. Between Franco and Bishop Nick the brewery is brewing around 3 times a week. During the summer Franco anticipates producing a few new bottled beers, all bottle conditioned of course, so look out for these at the brewery shop.

Mighty Oak Brewery

Monthly specials are:

June - Snake in the Glass 3.5% A golden, refreshing light ale, brewed with top quality East Kent Golding and Pilgrim hops that impart a traditional, grassy floral character and a hint of lemon.



July - Aspiration Ale 4.2% A blonde summer wheat beer, with a pronounced berry fruitiness in the aroma, with hints of blackcurrant working well with the wheat flavour.



August - Sand Adder 5.0% Brewed with 100% finest Maris Otter pale malt, and plenty of fruity Apollo and Citra hops make this a pale golden American Pale Ale the Americans would be proud of. The aftertaste is long and bittersweet, with hints of summer fruit and nectarine.



September - Bee'r Constrictor 4.0% Honey Beer - A rich amber harvest-time thirst quencher brewed with locally sourced honey that doesn't mask a good malt character, and a crisp hop finish.



In other news, look out for Oscar Wilde in bottles, soon to be appearing in off licences, bars and hotels around Essex and London.

Bishop Nick Brewery

Bishop Nick has successfully revived the sacred Ridley's brewing tradition throughout Essex with three almighty brews being imbibed in over 50 pubs from Southend to Saffron Walden.



They are now operating to capacity at Felstar Brewery to meet demand. George Cullen has joined the Bishop Nick team. George, recently retired from the Army, is now involved in all aspects of the brewing process. Often in camouflage, he can be heard but not seen. As mentioned elsewhere Bishop Nick will be setting up their stall next to Felstar at the Chelmsford Summer Beer Festival with their first ever brewery bar. Along side Ridley's Rite, Heresy and 1555, they will be crafting a one-off ceremonial ale just for the festivities. If you want to be part of Bishop Nick's history you need to pay them a visit.

Joss Ridley regularly has Bishop Nick beers on the board at The Compasses, Little Green and don't forget - take-home polypins and minipins are available for Christenings, Weddings, Bah Mitzvahs and Olympics pool parties!

Highwood Brewery

Highwood Brewery looks to be adding a new beer to its portfolio. The beer will be a 3.8%abv real ale with oriental ginseng. It is said to be straw-coloured with a distinctive and unique aroma and a taste designed to compliment oriental foods.

8 Seek out LocAles in your local pubs. Support your local breweries.



**Kate, Paul and their team would like to welcome
you to The Green Man in Howe Street,
The Oldest Pub in Essex**

EVENTS

23 June The Green Man Gallon Walk for Farleigh
Hospice – 10 miles, 8 pubs, £10 entry

20 – 22 July Folk Weekend plus Guest Ales

28 July The Green Man Family Fun Day

25 – 27 August Beer Festival

For a full list of events please check out our website

www.specialofferspubchelmsford.co.uk

Great Food, Real Ales, Live Music, Fabulous venue for Parties,
Rallies, Camping, Secure Garden, Children's play area, 3 Acre
Meadow, Fishing on the River Chelmer

Daily Specials, Local Produce, Homemade Traditional Menus
and Famous Sunday Carvery

**The Green Man. Main Road, Howe Street
Great Waltham, Chelmsford, Essex, CM3 1BG
01245 360203**

Road To Bruges

If you are thinking of nipping over the channel this summer from Essex to sample Belgian Beer and you have not visited for a while or not been there before, you could be in for a pleasant surprise. Most Brits don't get much further than West Flanders because of the ease of getting there & back and you can be drinking a Bruges Zot on Zand Square in Bruges with your early lunch. Bruges is the destination of choice for many beer tourists but there are lots of new Cafes, Restaurants and Breweries giving a fresh slant on Flemish Beer on the way out and on your return journey.

After crossing the Belgian border, you come almost immediately upon historic Veurne but rather than drive into the town centre for the neat selection of cafes, head for the little village of Steenkerke, a couple of kilometres away.

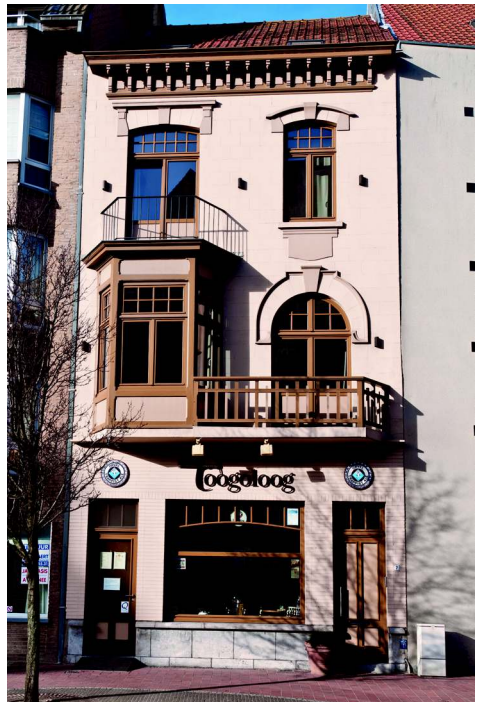


Here you will find the Kunstmaecker right next to the bridge. Although the café occupies a building dating back a century or so, the present occupants have been here for just over a year. The food is simple and locally sourced from artisanal producers but the star of the show is their beer menu. When asked why they started up their beer café in this little village, Frederik and Marijke explain that this is because they are surrounded by some of the best

brewers in Belgium, if not the world, and they wanted to share their fantastic brews with locals and visitors alike.

True they feature beers from top local brewers such as Dolle Brouwers, Struise Brouwers, and Sint-Bernardus which are all brewed within a few kilometres of the café but they also drive out to some of the lesser known breweries to pick up beers you would never usually find in the area. Their list is ever-changing but expect to see beers from 3 Fonteinen, Tilquin, Vapeur, Wolf, De La Senne, De Ranke, 3 Fourquets and Valier. Oh! and they just happen to have a draught Lambic from Girardin too.

In 20 minutes you can be down the road and in Toogoloog at Middelkerke. Set in a 1920's Butchers shop this new venture from Karin & Dirk started around three



Road To Bruges

years ago and has developed into one of the best cafes on the coast. Toogoloog shares a similar beer policy to Kunstmaecker in that it only stocks the very best of Belgian Beer with no fillers from the big brewers making up the numbers, likewise they display a great knowledge of the current beer scene. There is a wide selection from new, radical and challenging breweries including Alvinne, Struise, Tournay, Plukker, De Ranke, Cazeau, Scheldebrouwerij plus all the Trappists and a great list of quality Geuzes and Krieks. Food is more extensive than at the Kunstmaecker but is of similar high quality and simplicity. Highly recommended.

If you follow the coast road for less than 15 minutes you find yourself at the heart of Ostend with a view of the marina from the window of De Bistrionoom.



De Bistrionoom

Although they only opened in 2009 the restaurant has acquired a reputation that has spread across the world, winning numerous accolades.

They do not pretend to be a beer café; this is a temple to Bier Cuisine; you will find that the matching of beer and food gets no better than this. Stefanie creates some fantastic beer infused dishes while



De Bistrionoom

Christophe has a complete understanding of what beers work with each course.

All this and you have not even reached Bruges yet. Don't forget to reward your driver with a beer or two once you do and feel free to head for the famous Bruges Beertje in the city centre. Here you can mix with fellow beer tourists and regulars



Daisy at Bruges Beertje

alike choosing from a vast array of beers from their cellar.

Say Hello to Daisy from me when you call.

CHEERS! Podge

Author of "Around Bruges in 80 Beers" and "LambicLand" and organiser of Chelmsford based "Podge's Belgian Beer Tours".

Chelmsford Summer



Opening Times: Tuesday 10th July - Saturday 14th July, 12 noon-11pm.

Location: Admiral's Park, Rainsford Road, CM1 2PL.

How To Get There The festival is only a 10 minutes walk from the town centre. The No 51 bus passes the site generally every 30 minutes until 7.30pm.

Entrance: FREE to CAMRA members. Non members free until 5.30pm. After 5.30pm, £4 Tuesday to Thursday, £5 Friday and Saturday. Join CAMRA at the event and get your entrance fee refunded. Refundable £3 deposit on Festival Glass if returned by 11.15pm.

Volunteers The festival is organised and run by members of CAMRA who are all unpaid volunteers. We always need more helpers, so if you can help at any session please contact Derek Beaumont, beauat62@tesco.net, 01245 264128.

Real Ales This year we are planning to have over 300 real ales with strengths from a bit over 3% up to 11% covering all beer types. A LocAle bar will feature beers

from many Essex breweries.

Real Cider and Perry We plan to have over 100 ciders and perries available.

Belgian Beer Podge's popular Belgian Beer Bar will as always offer a wide selection of distinctive Belgian beers.

Wine For wine lovers we have local Essex wine from Felstar.

Food The food selection is very wide and very good ranging from burgers, sausages, vegetarian dishes, a hog roast, thai food, olives, bratwurst, and pies.

Families On Saturday we have our Family Fun Day (until 6pm) with plenty of things for children to do.

Entertainment There will be live music every night at 8pm and on Saturday afternoon.

More Details Please contact Derek Beaumont, beauat62@tesco.net, 01245 264128. Also visit our web site for updates www.chelmsfordbeerfestival.org.uk.

Chelmsford — The Birthplace of Radio in 1912

Admiral's Park,
Rainsford Road, CMI 2PL

Tue 10th - Sat 14th July

- Over 300 Real Ales
- Over 100 Real Ciders & Perries
- A wide selection of Belgian Beers
- Local Wines
- Food served all day

www.chelmsfordbeerfestival.org.uk

12 Updates to beer festival details - www.chelmsfordcamra.org.uk

Beer and Cider Festival

Beer & Cider Tastings

This year's festival features a number of tutored tastings; all take place at 19.30 and last around 90 minutes.

Tuesday 10th July. LocAle beers tasting with Roger Protz.. Real ales from the new generation of Essex brewers led by one of the world's leading beer writers and editor of the Good Beer Guide.

Wednesday 11th July. British Cider with Chris Rouse, CAMRA's Regional Cider Co-ordinator.

Thursday 12th July. World Atlas of Beer with Tim Webb. Quality beers chosen from around the world presented by Author of LambicLand, Good Beer Guide to Belgium and the forthcoming World Atlas of Beer. A wide range of International Beers will be available throughout the festival from the BelgaFest Bar.

Friday 13th July. Outstanding Essex Bottled Beers. Double act, Franco from Felstar Brewery and Nigel Sadler from Wibblers take you on a Tour of outstanding Bottled Beers from round the County. Both Felstar and Wibblers will have Brewery Bars at the Festival.

Tickets priced at £7.50 can be booked in advance by mailing Tastings@chelmsfordbeerfestival.org.uk or ringing Kev on 01245 443423. First come, first served.

Brewery Bars

As mentioned elsewhere Chelmsford Summer Beer Festival started running bars in conjunction with the brewers themselves when it first went outdoors in 2006. That year we worked with the award-winning Woodforde's Brewery from Woodbastwick which is nestled in the heart of

the Norfolk Broads.

Woodforde's ales are all made with whole flower hops and some of the finest malted barley grown by farmers in Norfolk. The brewery even has its own bore hole on site, so uses its own water in the brewing process. Woodforde's was founded in 1981 by two members of the Homebrewers Society and was named after the famous Norfolk-born Parson Woodforde who had a penchant for good food and real ale.

This year at the Festival they will feature the following beers:



Wherry Bitter (ABV 3.8%)

Style: Bitter. Fresh and Zesty with crisp floral flavours. A background of sweet malt and a hoppy 'grapefruit' bitter finish characterises this champion

bitter.



Nelson's Revenge (ABV 4.5%)

Style: Special Bitter. Rich and floral aromas, sweet Norfolk malts and a burst of 'citrus' hops embody this mouth-watering premium beer.



Sundew (ABV 4.1%)

Style: Golden. A subtle golden beer, pale in colour and light on the palate with the distinctive Woodforde's finish. Deliciously golden

and refreshing.



Admiral's Reserve (ABV 5%)

Style: Strong ale. Solid and generous sweet fruit flavour create a complex and satisfying dark

Chelmsford Summer

chestnut-coloured beer. Wonderfully, and dangerously, drinkable.



Once Bittern (ABV 4.0%)

Style: Bitter.

A copper-coloured ale with a distinctive aroma of rich spice and citrus fruit. Hints of sweet malt and fruit with a dry finish. For every pint of Once Bittern sold, a donation is made to the Norfolk Wildlife Trust.



Norfolk Nog (ABV 4.6%)

Style: Old Ale.

Smooth, rich and rounded 'Old Ale' with a velvety texture and hints of chocolate, treacle and liquorice.

Also at the festival we are very proud to feature Bars from Bartrams Brewery, Bishop Nick, Brentwood Brewery, Felstar Brewery, Pin Up, Sharp's Brewery and Wibblers Brewery. Be sure to give them all a visit at some time during the festival.

Volunteers Needed

If you have no volunteers you have no beer festival. The volunteers do this in their own time with some giving up holiday to work at the festival. We have about 200 volunteers throughout the festival including set-up and take-down. The only compensation for all their hard work and time is free beer (when there is time to drink it!), food, a polo shirt and they can camp if they choose to save the hassle of travelling home late at night.

Last year the set-up was amazing as we had bad weather on the Thursday and Friday and yet staff still turned up to help on these days. However, the marquees did not turn up on time with the result that on the Saturday morning only one small

part of the main beer marquee was up, and nothing else. Despite this, on the Saturday morning at 7.00 am the Stillage Team started to erect the stillaging and 12 hours later the beer team had all the barrels in place and most of the cooling was also set up. An excellent achievement!

During the time at Admiral's Park we started doing cooked breakfast for the volunteers who camped and for the volunteers who turn up early. Although this was started by myself, last year we had three guys cooking the breakfasts using their own cooking equipment giving the volunteers a better breakfast. This allowed the volunteers to stay on site instead of them having to go into Chelmsford to buy breakfast.

At Chelmsford the volunteers are very friendly and helpful and if you ask them to help do something there is always someone who will come forward. All I can say is they are excellent. I know because I have been the Staffing Manager for the last four years, however this year we have a new Staffing Manager, Sarah Hart and I wish her all the best with her new responsibilities. Doug Irons (AKA Dog)

Brief History of CAMRA Beer Festivals held in Chelmsford

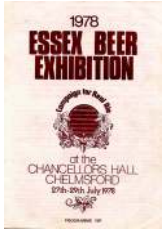
At 12 noon on the 10th July 2012, the Chelmsford & Mid-Essex Branch (CME) will open its 34th Summer Beer (Real Ales) and Cider Festival in Admiral's Park, Chelmsford.

Since July 1977 when the branch held its first real ale festival we have now held 33 Summer and 13 Winter Beer Festivals.

The first festival was held in the function room behind the Lion and Lamb ('the Animals') later to become Dukes.

Beer and Cider Festival

The following year, for one year only, it



was held at the Chancellor Hall and was known as the CAMRA Essex Beer Exhibition when 34



beers from 16 breweries were on sale. In 1979 it returned to the Lion and Lamb for the last time.

There was no festival in 1980 when we were unable to find a suitable venue, so the next festival was in 1981 in the Students Union Bar at the Anglia Polytechnic College (later to become the APU). Again in 1982 there was no festival as we were unable to obtain a licence because the police and a few antagonist landlords objected. Fortunately these objections were overcome so that we were able to again hold a festival the following year, 1983, when 55 beers from 26 breweries, but no ciders, were on sale. Since then the festival has taken place on an annual basis and remained at the APU up to and including 2005.

Although some snacks including locally made real ale sausages were available in the Student Union Bar, it was when we moved the festival to the larger sports hall on the ground floor that the burger and hot dog concession which also sold home made curries was introduced. This was accompanied by the now famous Podge's pickled eggs and even a cheese stall.

It was at that time that cider and foreign beers were first sold at the festival. It was when the Summer Festival outgrew the Students Union Bar in 2000 that the Branch held its first Winter Beer Festival

in that venue.

Both festivals continued to gain in popularity to such an extent that for one year the Branch experimented by making the winter beer festival ticket only, which, perhaps due to a lack of publicity, was not a success. We were fortunate that with the summer festival there was ample space for people to stand or sit on the grass outside, and we were even more fortunate that for the latter years when the festival was in the sports hall, the weather, especially on the Friday night, was good as there would have been little chance of accommodating all the customers in the sports hall in the event of a thunderstorm.

With rumours of the imminent closure of the APU in the town centre on it being relocated to the Bishops Hall Lane area (the old Hoffman's factory site), in 2004/5 the branch looked for other suitable venues in Chelmsford town centre. However as no such venue was considered suitable, bearing in mind how popular the festival had become, as in the case of Peterborough and Cambridge, the Branch decide to take a quantum leap and organise an outdoor festival in a marquee within easy proximity of Chelmsford town centre.

In this respect, as it was not being used in the summer, we were fortunate in managing to hire the football ground adjacent to Moulsham Mill, by the Army & Navy roundabout. So in 2006 a dedicated team of volunteers set about the daunting task of planning our first outdoor festival. We were very fortunate in having members who had been closely involved in the organisation, set up and operation of Chelmsford's Cathedral Festival as well as a number of large scouting events including the European Scout Jamboree in

Chelmsford Summer

Hyland's Park and they were more than willing to volunteer and organise this aspect of the festival. Also as we now had more space, we could stock beer from more breweries and for the first time sold more than 300 different brands of beer. We also had a dedicated cider bar and for the first time we asked a brewery (Woodforde's) if they would like to run a bar at the festival as well as a local vineyard (Felstar) for the sale of some locally produced wines.

However, our biggest success, apart from getting the festival up and running, was the idea of the family fun day on the Saturday afternoon, when we had a bouncy castle, an inflatable slide, face painting and an ice cream van for the children. We were also extremely fortunate that that year the sun shone for the entire festival and it was a delight to see whole groups of families having picnics and enjoying the wide selection of beverages on offer whilst their children ate ice creams or drank the free soft drinks. Although it was very hard work for the volunteers with long hours, the festival was a resounding success, and as a result of this all our subsequent summer festivals have been outdoor events in a marquee.

As a result of the possible redevelopment of the area surrounding the Army & Navy, and because we felt the festival could again run out of space, after unsuccessful negotiations with the local authority to relocate the festival to Central Park in Chelmsford, in 2008 we relocated to its present location in Admiral's Park. With the gift of hind-sight we now feel this is a better location than would have been the case had the festival been held in Central Park.

Cider Press



Although CAMRA is the Campaign For Real Ale it supports the promotion of Real draught and Real bottled cider, perry and pyder. For the uninitiated that means that it's fermented from non-pasteurised juice: apple for cider; pear for perry and pyder uses juice from apples and pears. They are made in the traditional way and are neither carbonated nor pasteurised.

As part of my role as Cider Representative for the Chelmsford and Mid-Essex branch of CAMRA I have increased the profile for Cider supported by the Social Secretary, Brian Debenham, who organises trips to include pubs which sell real cider in addition to cider producers and breweries. More details to come in subsequent editions of Thirsty Times.

Ian Reynolds, my fellow Cider Bar Manager, and I research new stock for the Cider Bar throughout the year and endeavour to make it interesting for connoisseurs and novices alike. We plan to have the winners of the CAMRA National Cider



Beer and Cider Festival

and Perry Championships subject to availability over the course of the festival. Cider: Gold - Cornish Orchards, Farmhouse Medium 4.8% (Cornwall); Silver - Perry Brothers, Sweet Vintage 6% (Somerset) and Bronze - Burrow Hill, Medium 6 % (Somerset).Perry: Gold - Gwatin, Blakeney Red Medium 7.5% (Herefordshire); Silver - Butford Organics, Medium 5.2% (Herefordshire) and Bronze - Minchew, Stinking Bishop Medium 7.5% (Gloucestershire).

For Connoisseurs we also plan to have more made from a single variety of apple or pear. This includes Chisel Jersey Cider made by Millwhites in Hertfordshire which we sampled on our Branch trip to Millwhites near Hemel Hempstead where we were the first CAMRA branch to visit them on Saturday 14th April 2012. There will be more Pyder and an extended range of perries as well as ciders which will feature at Chelmsford for the first time. Continuing with the Eastern Region focus having championed Essex Ciders last year, East Norfolk Trading Company have four ciders which have not been for sale in Chelmsford before including Oak Aged 7.3%,Discovery Cider 7.3% and the sweet Norfolk Hawker 6.5% and Norfolk Haymaker 6.5%. From the newest cidery in Essex started in 2011 will be Sir Carter's Scrumpy Medium 6% made from dessert apples from an orchard in Stock.

You can't get much more Local than that!

With well over 100 different ciders, perries and pyders from Wales and all over England across the whole spectrum from Sweet to Dry there will plenty for all tastes and palates to enjoy with votes for Cider of the Festival, Perry of the Festival and Pyder of the Festival welcomed. As well

as the Dry, Medium and Sweet Little Red Rooster range of pyders (all 8.4%) there will be several new ones including Lilleys Crazy Goat Medium Sweet 6.8% and Pigswill Medium Dry 7.5%.

The provisional Cider Bar list will be on the website however additions and substitutions are likely depending on availability.

Having used cooling for the first time at dispense last year we have had special stainless steel probes made which can be used for barrels as well as the bag in box products. This worked well at the festival in February at the Triangle Club and should make the appreciation of the delights of the Cider Bar at the Chelmsford Summer Beer and Cider Festival 2012 even better so please come and indulge!!

Claire Irons

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Spotlight on Grays

This is the first in a series of articles featuring Grays pubs in our area.

The Railway Tavern, Chelmsford



F a c i n g Chelmsford station in Duke Street stands the Railway Tavern. Your first impression

may be of a small pub but looks can be deceiving. In summer it wears a splash of colour provided by hanging baskets to the front and side, but the beer-drinker's eye will be drawn to the blackboard listing today's 7 real ales. Indeed the blackboard sometimes proudly proclaims "Permanent Beer Festival"

Step inside, as early as 10.00 on a weekday, and it's not hard to imagine yourself in a railway carriage. You enter an area of small alcoves with



benches, chairs and tables leading to a bar which bulges out in the style of a buffet car although this one has room for stools on which to sit and drink. Continue past the bar to several bench seats with tables between. Only the luggage racks are missing from this replica of a passenger carriage. At its end are the toilets, of course, but beyond them you step out of the "train" into the unexpected pleasure of an enclosed garden. Here, when the weather is kind, you can relax with a drink until the very moment your train is an-

nounced and still be on the platform in time (well, almost).

The Railway Tavern was always a favourite in the branch, appearing in the first Good Beer Guide in 1974 but when John and Joy Green arrived in 2010 they quickly moved the pub on to a higher level. Back into the current GBG and scooping the branch's Most Improved Pub award in 2011.



John was in New Zealand when the Railway became available and had a telephone interview. Not that he was unknown to Grays having previously run the Swan at Maldon.

The whole interior has now been refurbished with new upholstery, shiny wood paneling, etched windows and Tiffany lampshades catch-



ing the eye.

There are 8 handpumps, all in use, with Mighty Oak IPA (at £2.60 a pint), Sharp's Doom Bar & Greene King Abbot the permanent ales. Expect to find 4 guests drawn from local breweries or the monthly Grays list.

There are 2 draught ciders with the slightly unusual Addlestone's Cloudy on handpump. Note also the genuine German Pils on draught – Meister Pils from Schwaben Brau of Stuttgart.

Spotlight on Grays



Home-made meals are served at lunchtime only and range from a full English breakfast to daily specials including salads and a children's menu. Interestingly these appear, as if by magic, from a "dumb waiter" behind the bar.

The Railway opened in the 1860s. In 1870 Thomas Lawrence became the landlord and ran the pub until his death in 1908, when his widow Maria took over for a further 11 years. So nearly 40 years in the same family, but this record was to be broken by the Woolards who arrived in 1919. A Francis Frith photograph hanging

in the bar shows the pub in 1919 with A W WOOLARD emblazoned across the front. Arthur ran the place until his death in 1939, then his widow Ann until 1953 when their son Leslie took over. Some of our readers will remember Les because he was behind the bar until 1997! 78 years in the same family. Even for a Grays pub, whose tenants tend to stick around, that's a remarkable record.



Back to today. The Railway is a traditional pub, it is a well-kept pub, and it is a welcoming pub with friendly and knowledgeable staff. Anyone arriving early for the Summer Beer Festival, or still thirsty after the walk back, should definitely call in. If you live in Chelmsford, go now!

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Where are they now?

In 1974, the Campaign for Real Ale (CAMRA) published the first proper Good Beer Guide (GBG) highlighting where good beer could be drunk across the country. Unfortunately, I do not possess a copy of that guide as they are very rare indeed, however I have the GBG from the following year and thought it may be interesting to see what has happened to the local pub and beer scene since then. In the 1975 guide, the following pubs from Chelmsford and Mid-Essex area were identified.

Chelmsford, Oddfellows.

Was selling Greene King IPA and Abbot on gravity and described as 'A down to earth pub'.

Now serving a range of quality beers from



all over the country by hand pump picked from the excellent Gray's guest list. You can always find

five beers including; Mighty Oak Maldon Gold; Sharp's Doom Bar, an Adnams beer of some sort, a changing IPA plus a fifth beer from the Gray's list available to their tenants. The pub has recently been completely refurbished and is in the current GBG.

Felsted, Yew Tree.

Was selling Ridley's Bitter and Mild on electric pump. 'A clean and pleasant pub with a club room'.

Now delicensed and converted into a house in 1997.

Galleywood, Horse and Groom.

Was selling Greene King IPA and Abbot on gravity.

Now still selling Greene King IPA but now has Doom Bar and three guests from Gray's list too.

Great Baddow, White Horse.

Was selling Charrington Crown and IPA on handpump. 'A 500 year old pub with a billiards room'.

Now have Greene King IPA, Fuller's London Pride, Adnams Broadside and two more beers chosen from the excellent Ember Inn's 'Ember Cask Club' guest list.

Great Waltham, Walnut Tree, Broads Green.

Was selling Ridley's Bitter on gravity. 'Victorian village pub'.

Now still selling beer on gravity however



now all their beers are from Greene King including IPA, Morland Bitter, Ruddles Best and a guest. A regular in the

GBG and again in the 2012 edition.

Hatfield Peverel, Cross Keys,

Was selling Greene King IPA on gravity. 'A 19th century local'.

Now still selling Greene King IPA but now with one or two guests picked from Gray's list.

Springfield, Tulip.

Was selling Greene King IPA and Abbot on gravity. 'A popular pub'.

Now Adnams Southwold Bitter, Red Fox

Where are they now?

IPA, Sharp's Doom Bar and Wibblers Apprentice all on handpump.

Stisted, Dolphin, on A120.

Was selling Ridley's Bitter and Mild on gravity. 'An old pub with a busy lunchtime trade'.

Now the Greene King beers, IPA, Morland Original and Ruddles Best still served on gravity from behind the bar.

White Notley, Cross Keys.

Was selling Ridley's Bitter on handpump. '200 years old'.

Now see Pub News page 5.

Witham, Victoria.

Was selling Ridley's Bitter and Mild on gravity. 'Modernised interior; clean and comfortable'.

Now selling Greene King IPA from a single handpump

Writtle, Wheatsheaf.

Was selling Greene King IPA and Abbot on gravity.

Now selling Adnams Southwold Bitter,



Farmer's Ales Drop of Nelson's Blood, Wibblers Apprentice, Sharp's Doom Bar, Mighty Oak Oscar Wilde and Maldon Gold plus two ever

changing guest beers. Still a regular in the GBG and voted Essex Pub of the year in 2009.

CHEERS! Podge

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Real Cider – Pubs Saviour?!

CAMRA at its recent AGM in Torquay debated at some length the issue of definitions of the contents of real cider and indeed the terminology and acceptance of real and craft ales. The outcomes were not wholly conclusive nor would many say representative of the mass of ordinary CAMRA members or regular pub goers. However they are a reflection that times do not stand still and that we must always be mindful of the adage that tradition can only be appreciated if it has a place to exist in our modern world.

On that philosophical note, it leads me into the topic that underpins all the current discussions namely that if we don't have good thriving pubs and retail establishments then we will not have outlets for the 1000's of cider producers and breweries in our country alone. It is fair to say that with the growth of SIBA (with its training and distribution system support in particular) and the introduction of graded beer duties the last 15 years have been a boon for micro-breweries. This together with an open ability to produce unusual flavours, diversity of production and new ingredients and recipes – not to mention the ap-

pearance of some major “craft” style beers inspired from the US – has seen a selection available to the public like at no other time over the past 50 years or more.

For many reasons real cider has been a poor cousin to this growth and has failed to make the sort of penetration into pubs that we have seen with real ale – although the last 3 years has seen doubling or trebling of cider volumes shown and drunk at beer festivals. It is estimated that less than single digit percentage of pubs in this country actually serve a draft real cider. This is in direct contrast to the massive increase in sales over the past 5 years of industrial bottled and keg ‘cider’ underpinned by the multi-million advertising campaigns. When a well stored real cider can last at least a month in bag-in-box with minimal or no waste (in sharp contrast to the 3-5 day for cask real ale once opened) why do we have such low representation?

The reasons are complex but, as a modern artisan real cider producer I will put forward my scenario for readers to debate...you be the judge! As mentioned tradition plays a big part in cider but does create an anchor to progress. The image of us all travelling with jug in hand to a rural Cidery to collect and be surprised by this years taste (and strength!) works for some but isn't practical or desirable for 99% of us. Pubs and festivals who come and collect from us are welcomed with open arms but that doesn't provide a sustainable, regular or practical logistical supply route on both sides. The poly-pin



Simon Reed, Rough Old Wife Cider

Real Cider – Pubs Saviour?!

'traditional' plastic barrel requires return and pick up or an honour circulation system, very limited in its appeal particularly for attracting new pubs, not to mention the ingress of air to the barrel over time and the prospect of 'slow death' or gradual vinegarisation of the fresh product. CAMRA's internal committee are delighted to suggest production processes and campaign for the yearly October cider promotion (which by the way should be in June when we all have cider and have the greatest variety rather than in October when we are also at the busiest picking and pressing time!) but they do little to champion new delivery and storage methods (such as non-returnable bag-in-box connection to existing potentially un-used draft pumps).

The Welsh Cider makers (as an example)

have taken certain steps to act together to help with both common distribution, campaigning and marketing direct to pubs and establishments – perhaps it is time for us in Kent (the home of the apple) to follow suit – I for one am standing up for this. Also to accept that we have to make our products fit to the pub and its way of working rather than the other way round. We have to show them the advantages of some fantastic local ciders not only in taste but the commercial aspects and provide consistent delivery, quality and taste – we can be a saviour in difficult times!

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This article first appeared in Kent CAMRA Magazine 'Channel Draft'.



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Has CAMRA stunted

In September 2009, UK beer writer Tim Webb, whose *World Atlas of Beer* (written with Canadian beer writer Stephen Beaumont) will appear at the end of August, penned his 7th monthly column for the American beer magazine *Beer Advocate* (www.beeradvocate.com). Attendees at the 2011 CAMRA AGM applauded loudly as its message was condemned, though only a handful of people in the audience had ever read it.

For the first time in the UK, we are publishing the offending item, by kind permission of its entirely unrepentant author. You decide.

Has CAMRA stunted the growth of British Beer?

One of the regulars at my favourite local pub shies away from the Pale Ale because it is too strong. This bear of a man is frightened by the prospect of drinking a soft, faintly hopped 'real ale' because it contains 4.5% alcohol.

We British are an island people. We may know more of the world beyond our shores than our Americans counterparts but then we live in a smaller place. Like goldfish in a bowl, we have little sense of proportion. We know what we like and don't like and we don't like change.

The Campaign for Real Ale (CAMRA) was a singularly British idea, dreamt up in 1971 by four young journalists holidaying in Ireland. Fantasizing as young men do about making the world a better place, they decided to start with beer.

The '60s had seen mass movements to counter war, poverty, famine and injustice. The '70s would be about changing the day-to-day. Dull 1970s beer was about to be squeezed back to the future.

There had been consumerism in food and drink before CAMRA. Cookery writer Elizabeth David had urged British households to improve mealtimes and political activist Raymond Postgate had challenged restaurants to do likewise, creating the pugnacious *Good Food Guide* in 1951.

But CAMRA was a single-issue campaign. Its simple message was, "Old beer good – new beer bad".

In this context 'old' meant cask-fermented ales served with no added CO₂, served usually straight from the barrel or hand-pulled to the bar counter. Such ales became 'real', while the rest acquired less wholesome names, including 'foreign'.

This began a patchwork global uprising that saw Charlie Papazian and others home-brew great beer back into the US mainstream and spawned a dozen national beer consumer groups across Europe. The global brewpub and microbrewery revolution had begun.

But then the awkward question. Has CAMRA fallen victim to the law of unintended consequences? By deifying a limited range of virtually unexportable ale styles, did CAMRA fossilise British beer culture in a spoof version of the 1950s?

What stops us admitting this is so? Sentimentality?

Everyone should waste a substantial part of their youth on a hopeless cause. Mine was beer. Though we did kind of win.

Or maybe it is because the proposition is only half true.

CAMRA's double standard of tolerating abhorrent grain and hop substitutions while maintaining an autistic stance on

the growth of British Beer?

fermentation offends all logic.

I get deeply embarrassed when the Great British Beer Festival refuses to use CO2 on any beer because it might offend campaigners, regardless of whether the beer is designed to be recarbonated.

The failure to challenge the narrow British obsession with beers drunk in measures of 20 fl. oz. Imperial is galling too.

On the other hand find any quality website about beer and CAMRA-inspired Brits will be there, enthusing away. And even the smallest CAMRA-run festival nowadays sells 'foreign beers'.

The last three decades have seen consumers generally kicking against the standardisation of food and drink by global corporations. CAMRA started beer's contribution to that, so maybe we should for-

give its occasional spats of xenophobic myopia? Maybe.

Recent surveys report a massive increase in the proportion of British drinkers who have given 'real ale' a try – 38 years after it was first suggested. Over half now take the plunge. With the alternatives reduced to a shallow range of piss poor grain sodas, who knows, uncarbonated draft may yet become the UK's favourite style.

Maybe a bunch of young British journalists holidaying in Belgium, Germany or the US could start a group to campaign for more foreign influence on UK craft brewing?

What a splendid idea. I might even join.

Tim Webb will be giving a tutored beer tasting of a range of International Beers on Thursday 12th July at Chelmsford Summer Beer and Cider Festival.



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Going Dutch at the Olympics

Going Dutch at Olympics: Heineken has sole rights and Cardiff is a no Brainer. By Roger Protz

The 2012 Olympics, a showcase for London and the rest of Britain, will be dominated by one beer brand – Heineken lager brewed in the Netherlands. Heineken's domination extends beyond the Olympic Stadium in Stratford, east London, to all the venues for the games, including Lord's, the home of English cricket.

Heineken has “sole pouring rights” at Olympic events. The London 2012 Organising Committee has three tiers of sponsorship deals for the games. The committee won't reveal the sums of money involved but it's understood that Heineken is a “tier three” sponsor, costing the Dutch firm £10m.

The package gives Heineken the rights to also sell two other brands in its portfolio, John Smith's Smoothflow and Strongbow cider – but neither of the brands can be named. John Smith's will be labelled “British Bitter” and Strongbow will be called “Cider”.

At Lord's where Marston's has the beer concession to sell Pedigree Bitter and is the official sponsor of the England cricket team, handpumps will be removed while the archery competition takes place during the Olympics. Portraits of cricketer Matthew Hoggard, Marston's “beer ambassador”, will be covered up.

Visitors to the world-famous cricket ground, with its long tradition of ale drinking, will be offered Dutch lager and anonymous keg bitter and cider. But cask Pedigree will be available in the Lord's Tavern, the bar and restaurant complex alongside the main entrance to the ground.

At such key Olympics events as Greenwich Park in London and Weymouth in Dorset, the Heineken portfolio will again be the sole lager, bitter and cider on sale at bars. Meantime Brewery in Greenwich said it would be unaffected as it currently has no bars in the park. Pubs in Weymouth will be free to sell such local beers as Ringwood and Dorset.

A spokesman for the London 2012 Organising Committee, said: “Getting sponsorship for the games is a tough job and exclusive rights have to be offered.”

He added that sponsors' rights had to be protected. The name “Olympics” cannot be used by other companies or organisations and he said that if pubs or the Campaign for Real Ale attempted to stage “Olympic beer festivals” they would be prevented from using the name.

One major British brewer of cask beer – who did not wish to be named – said it was disappointing that home-grown real ale would not be available at Olympics events but the cost of sponsorship was prohibitive.

A spokesman for Heineken, which owns the former Scottish & Newcastle breweries and brands, said the arrangement with the Organising Committee meant that the only brand name that could be used was Heineken.

“But we wanted to offer something else from the portfolio, which is why John Smith's – Britain's biggest-selling keg beer by far – and Strongbow will be available,” he added. But there will be no point of sale material allowed for the bitter or cider.

The Heineken spokesman pointed out that many venues are not suitable for cask

Going Dutch at the Olympics

beer as they are either temporary bars or lack the necessary cellar facilities.

Mike Benner, chief executive of the Campaign for Real Ale, said: "Britain's brewing industry is revered the world over, not least at a time when there are now more small breweries in operation than at any time since World War Two.

"As a grand spectacle showcasing everything that is great about Great Britain, it is hugely disappointing that attendees inside Olympic venues won't have access to a range of British real ale. Such a move represents a major missed opportunity to show off one of Britain's historic industries."

But CAMRA's annual Great British Beer Festival will go ahead as usual during the first week in August – but as the regular venue, Earl's Court, will be used for the Olympics, the beer festival will move a short distance this year to...London Olympia.

The Pub is the Hub, the organisation set up by the Prince of Wales to support and save the British pub, is working with Tourism South East to promote pubs close to London during the Olympics. The two bodies have set up a special website: www.greatcountrypubs.com.

During the Olympics, Alexandra Palace in North London will be coloured orange and will be run by the Dutch Olympics Committee as "Holland Heineken House" for the Dutch team and guests, with Heineken on tap. A spokesman for the committee said the house -- the first home of BBC Television -- would "celebrate Dutch achievements and culture".

Brains Brewery in Cardiff will have to remove its beer from the Millennium Sta-

dium while the women's Olympics football tournament is staged there. Brains sponsors the Wales Rugby team, the Football Association of Wales and Glamorgan County Cricket Club but it will have to bow out in favour of Heineken at the Millennium Stadium. An "exclusion zone" will operate around the stadium, which will effectively cover most of the city centre and neither Brains nor pubs will be permitted to promote beer with banners or pavement signs. Brains beer, however, will still be available at Glamorgan cricket ground in Sophia Gardens as the ground -- which now enjoys Test Match status -- is outside the exclusion zone.

Other great insights into beer culture and brewing from Roger can be seen at protonbeer.co.uk/ or by coming to see him lead a Beer Tasting of LocAle beer at Chelmsford Beer Festival on Tuesday 10th July.



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Branch Diary

Tuesday 12th June Real Ale Runabout to Newney Green, Fyfield & Aythorpe Roding Bus departs opp. Railway Stn at 7.30pm, fare £9 members/OAPS, £10 non-members.

Thursday 21st June Visit to Colchester Brewery, Wakes Colne. A visit to this new brewery founded by Tom Knox & Roger Clark, ex-Nethergate Brewery. The visit will cost £10 including beer and a barbeque. Bus departs opp. Railway Stn at 7.30pm, fare £9 members, £10 non-members. We can travel to Wakes Colne via the A130/Braintree if any members on that route wish to come. Contact Brian Debenham to arrange pickup details.

Wednesday 27th June Branch Meeting at The Chequers, Roxwell. Bus fare £5 members, £6 non-members. Depart from opposite Railway Station at around 8pm. **To reduce bus subsidies we will travel to this meeting by taxibus - please arrive opposite the station by 7.50pm so that we can phone for enough seats to cover us. There will therefore be no drop off circuit.**

Tuesday 3rd July Real Ale Runabout to Kent - Romney Street, Wrotham & Ryarsh Bus departs opp. Railway Stn at 7.30pm, fare £9 members/OAPS, £10 non-members.

Tuesday 10th-Saturday 14th July Chelmsford Summer Beer and Cider Festival 2012, Admirals Park. See page 12 for more details.

Wednesday 18th July Branch Meeting at The Wagon & Horses, Braintree Bus fare £5 members, £6 non-members. Depart from opposite Railway Station at 8pm.

Tuesday 31st July Real Ale Runabout to Hazeleigh, Southminster & Burnham-on-

Crouch Bus departs opposite Railway Station at 7.30pm, fare £9 members/OAPS, £10 non-members.

Wednesday 15th August Branch Meeting at The Woolpack, Chelmsford. No bus to this meeting which starts at 8.30pm.

Saturday 18th August Rail Trip to Brighton A visit to this great drinking town. Meet at Chelmsford Railway Station at 9.25am to arrange Groupsave tickets - we'll get the 09.40 departure and arrive in Brighton at 11.55.

Saturday 1st September (provisional) Trip to Faversham Hop Festival We're considering a trip to this big annual event - please let me know if you would be interested in going. The fare would probably be £22 members, £24 non-members, with a departure around 10am.

Tuesday 4th September Real Ale Runabout to Chappel Beer Festival Bus departs opposite Railway Station at 7.30pm, fare £9 members/OAPS, £10 non-members.

An up to date listing of social events can be found on the web site: www.chelmsfordcamra.org.uk, or contact the Social Secretary, Brian Debenham, brian@bdebenham.co.uk.



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Thirsty Times

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Please pay Campaign For Real Ale Limited Direct Debits from the account detailed on this instruction subject to the safeguards required by the Direct Debit Guarantee. I understand that this instruction may remain with Campaign For Real Ale Limited and it will be passed electronically to my Bank/Building Society.

(Signature) _____ Date _____

Banks and Building Societies may not accept Direct Debit instructions for some types of account. This Guarantee should be detached and retained by the payer.

The Direct Debit Guarantee

DIRECT DEBIT

• The Guarantee is offered by all banks and building societies that accept instructions to pay by Direct Debit.
• If there are any changes to the amount, date or frequency of your Direct Debit the Campaign for Real Ale Ltd will notify you 10 working days in advance of your account being debited or as otherwise agreed if you request.
• The Campaign for Real Ale Ltd will collect a payment, and confirmation of the amount and date will be given to you at the time of the request.
• 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 check locally.

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