



CAMPAIGN  
FOR  
REAL ALE

# THIRSTY TIMES

FREE

Chelmsford & mid-Essex, Maldon & Dengie  
and North West Essex CAMRA Branches



**Locals turn The Norton  
into community asset**

See page 34

# FROM THE EDITOR

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**W**elcome to the 19<sup>th</sup> issue of Chelmsford & Mid-Essex CAMRA's branch magazine! Many thanks to Claire Irons (and Doug too) of C&ME for looking after and growing Thirsty Times to where it is today.

I hope to be able to carry on the task of compiling, editing and producing a readable and informative magazine that will complement our branch activities. Ordinarily I would introduce the articles but instead I shall use this editorial to highlight a key topic in the life of our organisation: the Revitalisation Project.

The story goes that Albert Einstein, while on a lecture tour of the USA, one evening allowed his driver to deliver the lecture. "I've sat at the back and listened so many times," said the driver, "that I'm sure I'll be able to pull it off."

Sure enough, come the night the driver delivered a flawless discourse on relativity and space-time while Albert himself donned the chauffeur's outfit and took his seat at the rear of the auditorium. The bubble burst, however, when a member of the audience asked a particularly awkward question. After a moment's thought he replied "Why the answer to that is so easy that even my driver, at the back of this hall, could answer it..."

CAMRA is in a not too dissimilar situation; the people who spearhead the campaign at HQ in St Albans are just that, in general they are campaigners and administrators.

They do an admirable job in promoting the cause of responsible, enjoyable beer drinking largely following the guiding principles and 'prepared script' of the campaign.

Now, however, society and circumstance are asking them questions to which they can't possibly know the answers and need your help to respond. We, the members, are in the back of the room but we are the experts and the 'drinkers on the ground'.

Earlier this year all 180,000 CAMRA members received the booklet, Shaping the Future. The intention was to start a conversation between members and the committee charged with the Revitalisation Project headed by one of our founder members, Michael Hardman MBE.

If you're like me you filed this somewhere for 'future reading' at a time you were less busy,

and quietly forgot about it. In the intervening months society continued to change around our organisation, pubs continued to close and young drinkers continued to shun good beer for dodgy, fluorescent beverages in shot glasses.

**WE, THE MEMBERS, ARE  
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'DRINKERS ON THE GROUND'**

Fortunately 20,000 hale and hearty volunteers completed the Shaping our Future questionnaire and more than 1,000 attended in-person sessions, giving HQ sufficient encouragement to continue the consultation process into a second stage.

The original list of questions has been crystallised into three key topics: should we continue to advance the cause of real perry and cider, or is it time for these to have their own campaigning umbrella?

Do we continue to focus on traditionally-consumed real ale drunk in pubs and clubs or do we widen our remit to take into account the changes in the time and place that beer is delivered and drunk? Lastly and fundamentally, who is CAMRA for – just the "beer beardies" or all who drink and responsibly enjoy alcoholic beverages?

Our campaign started out life in the early 1970s as a movement that good beer shouldn't simply fade away and be replaced by bland, mass-produced nitrokeg imitations of what had gone before; to that end, it has been 100% successful, the statistics tell of over a thousand UK breweries nowadays where before there were less than 200.

But they also show total beer consumption declining, as the average age of drinkers increases and millenials and twenty-somethings, who should be carrying the real ale baton, gulp down alcopops and vodka.

It's true that any organisation that is sufficiently large eventually comes to believe its own publicity.

# FROM THE EDITOR

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In CAMRA's case, however, the stats show that the first battle has been won, and the front line is now the preservation of our pubs, breweries new and old, and drinking traditions for the next generation.

Being a mere (late) forty-something, I'm far too young to have participated in the early decades of the campaign, so can't speak for that. However, I've been around long enough to see the cider bar at our summer festival grow from a few feet at the end of the south bar to a 30m bar in its own right, in a separate marquee rivalling the size of either beer bar.

I know that many members are reluctant to acknowledge cider's position and status within our branch but a glance at how rammed the cider/perry bar is at busy times during the festival will testify that the punters are voting with their feet and glasses.

The modern popularity of well-made, real cider and perry cannot be ignored. So if the decision is that it is now time for these to be the central focus of a sister organisation, I have no doubt that this will be just as successful as the original campaign and its volunteers equally passionate and committed.

Before closing, I want to reflect on the second of HQ's questions. That concerns the way that beer and cider are delivered and consumed, traditionally in pubs and clubs.

To digress for a second, I remember working in early 1996 in New Jersey, USA and trying to convince a sceptical fellow radio engineer how important the Internet was about to become in the lives of every human being on the planet.

We now take for granted the convenience and instant-access nature of online resources, in a way that only a very few could have dreamed in the mid-nineties.

The same is now true for goods transportation in the mid-10s, to be more precise the autonomous planes and driverless vehicles that are being trialled today as couriers. Advances in artificial intelligence and battery technology, the latter courtesy of the nanomaterial revolution, are about to change our lives in ways we couldn't begin to see today. By the mid-30s, the act of making a physical trip to what used to be the supermarket will be viewed as oddly as someone not being on Facebook today.

Correctly anticipated, CAMRA has the chance to be in right at the start of this revolution; the beer we enjoy is precisely the low-volume, high-value, short shelf-life product that will fit perfectly with autonomous delivery methods. Will trips to the pub die out? I hope not. But correctly anticipated, this revolution could see pub-going as the social complement to trying and enjoying a wide variety of beer styles at home. So I see a large part of the future decade growth of our organisation in promoting enjoyment in groups of two, three or maybe single drinkers at home – CAMRA catalogue, anyone?

However the future actually turns out, our campaign will be much better prepared if you, the members, tell the revitalisation committee what is most important to you.

The best way to do this is online, via <https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/CAMRARPS2>

Unfortunately, despite having more than 180,000 members it seems that none is able to help HQ integrate a feedback function actually on our own website, but that's a gripe for another day...

That's nearly all from me, except for a very short introduction. Many of you will know me from the summer and winter festivals, where I've helped out over the last few years.

Although I live in the Hebrides (where this is being written), I frequently travel to Essex where my three kids are based, the legacy of a Great Baddow marriage in 1990 and the following 20 years spent in and around Chelmsford. So the city of Chelmsford is as much home to me as is my village of Daliburgh, up here in South Uist.

I'm very much looking forward to serving as your editor over the coming years but at the risk of pointing out the obvious, this magazine is only as good as you want it to be.

So please, keep the articles coming and, if you haven't contributed so far but feel you have something to say, please get in touch with me and I'll assist you however I can to get into print. Long or short, with pictures or without, all contributions will be welcome.

*Ad multas cerevias,*

**Tony Vernon**

[editor@chelmsford.camra.org.uk](mailto:editor@chelmsford.camra.org.uk)

# PUB NEWS

## Chelmsford & Mid-Essex

The **Thomas Mildmay** (Wetherspoons In Chelmsford) closed at the end of August having been sold off to an Australian company called Walk About – an Australian bar! It is not known when they plan to open or whether they will have real ale/craft beer.

The **Butchers Arms at North End** is currently closed. However, there is a notice outside saying 'Opening Soon', although a date has not been fixed. Fingers crossed.

The future of the **Eagle, Galleywood** is still very uncertain. Hawthorn Leisure, the current owner, has submitted a notice of disposal to the local council. Galleywood Parish Council have submitted an intention to bid on the pub and with the help of local people and funding from various groups, perhaps run it as a community pub, if a sale can be agreed.

There is also a proposal for a Co-op store on the existing garden and car park. Local residents are very much against any such development on the site and the local heritage group have stated that any such development would be detrimental to the pub and also the 19th century cottages located in Stock Road, as well as a historic well on the site.

The **Cross Keys at White Notley** has reopened – welcome to Lois and Gary. Don't be misled by the scaffolding and plastic while the external decoration is completed. Inside you will find two handpumps with mainly local beers – Bishop Nick, Mighty Oak and Wibblers have featured in the first few weeks – and there is a selection of bottled beers too. There are no meals yet but that will change as soon as the kitchen is finished and the restaurant opens. The intention then is to open at 10am each day for tea and coffee.

We like to acknowledge long-serving landlords and landladies and so congratulations and good wishes go to Shaun and Karen Dedman who are leaving the **Bull in Braintree** after 26 years.

In Chelmsford, Mel and Sheila Dodd have left the **United Brethren**. Soon after taking over the pub in 2006 they won the branch Most Improved Pub award. Again, we wish them well and welcome a new team headed by Andy and Scott, who opened on 22nd August. They plan to have 8-10 ales on handpump plus real cider and will be offering good quality home-cooked food – Andy's wife Beverly is a chef.

A few other landlord changes to mention. Roy Thomas has recently taken over the **Angel in Bocking** and Kevin Mead is now in charge at the **Beehive, Great Waltham**. Time perhaps to revisit all these pubs and see the changes!

The closure of the **Thomas Mildmay** in Chelmsford leaves the **Ivory Peg** as the only Wetherspoons in the city. Their new menu was launched this month offering new food and drinks deals. There is a Real Ale Festival running from 14th-30th October with a selection of 50 real ales, including several international ones. Look out also for a local breweries festival featuring real ales from Adnams, Nelsons, Brentwood, Nethergate, Shalford, Saffron and Bishop Nick. The range of real ciders is increasing and they aim to have four available at all times. Wetherspoon support CLIC Sargent nationally but the Ivory Peg also raises money for local charity The J's Hospice.

On the subject of fundraising here's a good idea. The **Bakers Arms at Danbury** lent their garden out recently to a group of youngsters who did a barbecue, face painting, and various activities for the charity Kids Inspire. Well done to them – no doubt the four real ales and the famous fish and chips in the pub helped bring in the punters as well.



The **Woolpack in Chelmsford** has two beer festivals coming up. The Late Summer Beer Festival begins one day after our publication date, running from 8th-10th September, and the Halloween Beer Festival from 28th-31st October. Will and Donna have signed up to SIBA BeerFlex – a scheme which helps smaller breweries get their beers into pub companies and now offers more than 3,500 beers, so expect some different ales to be appearing on the bar. The garden is being extended and upgraded to give 'a fabulous outside drinking space'. Let's hope for some warm autumn nights.

The annual end of summer beer festival at the **White Hart, Witham** runs from 15th-18th September. The Witham International Puppet Festival is on Saturday 17th, with shows all day until 4pm. Four bands will be playing live from 4pm till midnight

# PUB NEWS

on the outside stage. A hog roast and barbecue will be served from 11am-7pm outside and their full menu is available all day until 10pm. There will be 30 beers (including some from local breweries) and 10 ciders.

A special mention to landlord Dave for being first to mention the C word: "Our Christmas menu is now available online and at the hotel and our 12 days of Christmas beer festival starts from the 13th December with a fantastic range of Christmas ales and ciders."

In summary, pub beer festivals that we know about:

**September:** 8th-10th – Woolpack, Chelmsford; 15th-18th – White Hart, Witham

**October:** 14th-30th – Ivory Peg, Chelmsford, Battesford Court, Witham, Picture Palace, Braintree

**December:** 13th onwards White Hart, Witham

Look out for more Christmas and New Year festivals in our November issue.

## Maldon & Dengie

In what is often a quiet time of year for pub news, the main story from our area is the excellent news that the **Swan Hotel in Maldon High Street** will soon be reopening its doors following a major refurbishment by Gray's.

Gary and Jackie Whitworth, who are also the licensees for the **Queen Victoria in Woodham Walter**, have taken over at the Swan. They will be opening at the end of September; Gary has said that the pub will cater for diners and drinkers as well as providing good quality overnight accommodation, with seven bedrooms. The hotel also has a large function room with its own bar (the Bewick Suite), which will be available for hire.

The official title of the pub is now the 'Swan Hotel and Grill' and there will be a strong accent on steaks in the restaurant. They intend to serve four real ales on handpump, which will be Adnams Southwold Bitter, Maldon Brewing Company's Puck's Folly and Wibblers Dengie IPA plus one guest beer.

Gary and Nettie Pilcher, (pictured above) licensees of the **Hurdlemakers Arms in Woodham Mortimer**, were recently awarded the Maldon & Dengie CAMRA Community Pub of the Year Award for their achievement in raising £7,500 in a single night towards the cost of a defibrillator, which has since been purchased and installed outside the pub.

The pub held a charity night and auction earlier this year to raise funds for three-year old Rosie Day,



who lives in the village. She was born with restrictive cardiomyopathy, a life-threatening heart condition, so the pub organised this event to secure the finance needed to purchase the defibrillator.

The current news is that Rosie recently received a heart transplant and she is recovering well from this operation at Great Ormond Street hospital.

The Hurdlemakers Arms is in the heart of the Essex countryside a few miles from Maldon and boasts a big garden and children's play area, serving excellent beer and cider and good food. It is popular with locals and walkers, and has a barn suitable for meetings and private functions as well as a marquee during summer months. It also won the Maldon & Dengie CAMRA Pub of the Year Award in 2014.

## North West Essex

The **Fleur De Lys, Widdington** (near the M11 north of Stansted Airport), was the first pub to be saved from 'extinction' after the formation of the North West Essex branch of CAMRA. This was way back in 1977.

Phil Tripp, who celebrated his 90th last November, was instrumental in the campaign, along with Tom Bogie, who is still involved with branch activities as our branch secretary. Now, nearly 40 years on the pub is flourishing. Chris Rossetto, landlord of the Fleur De Lys, said: "Without Phil's efforts I wouldn't be happily running this wonderful village pub."



**Pictured are Sheila and Phil Trip taken on Phil's 70<sup>th</sup> birthday with Chris Rossetto (centre)**

# CME BRANCH TRIP TO YORK

by David Siedlaczek

pubcampaigns@chelmsford.camra.org.uk

**A**fter picking up each member from their home address the minibus driven by the Branch Chairman (thanks Doug from all on board) set off for York at just before 11am. A comfort stop was made at A1 Services at Grantham before reaching York at 4pm. Most members were staying at one of the two Premier Inns on Blossom Street and it was agreed that we would all meet up at the Punch Bowl (Wetherspoons) opposite the hotel, next to Mickelgate Bar.



After a quick half-pint there and an opportunity to all meet in a relaxing environment we set off in a number of groups to experience some of the great pubs in York, before agreeing in principle to meet up for an evening meal later on.

The next three pubs visited were the very impressive York Tap inside York Railway Station (pint – Windsor & Eton Guardsman) followed by the Maltings (half – Moorhouses Black Cat) before Yorkshire Terrier (two halves of Yorkshire Terrier) which is one of the York Brewery owned pubs in the city.

At 7.30pm, everyone on the trip met up at the Bombay Spice Indian Restaurant on Stonegate where a member of our group had reserved a table. A good meal was had by all over the next three hours and it was interesting how the higher consumption drinkers of the group were seated at one end of the table. It was commented that the 'specific gravity' had gravitated to this end of the table, which was by no accident next to the bar.

After we left the restaurant some of the group returned to their hotel while others visited the Blue Bell on Fossgate (half pint Timothy Taylor Landlord) which is recognised by CAMRA as having a nationally important pub interior. After this pub, the rest of us returned to our hotel.



On Saturday there were plans to walk the York Walls after lunch. Before this a group of us visited the National Railway Museum adjacent to York Railway Station where we viewed a number of the 'unmissable engines' including Mallard, Class 31 and The 'Chinese Engine'. Highlights of the visit were an expert showing us inside and describing the operation of the cab of a Class 31 and then seeing the actual Flying Scotsman that saw service on the Rail Network later in the month.

After leaving the National Railway Museum, we revisited the York Tap for a pint. One of the group had an interesting pint of Dark Star – Wheat Purple, made with blackberries. It must have been good as they had the same beer the previous evening. The next pub, again, was the Maltings (half – Moorhouses



Black Cat) where most of us met up and could see the reclaimed doors covering the ceiling and a reclaimed toilet acting as a seat in one of the corners.

As we left the Maltings we crossed the River Ouse to enter Museum Gardens to start our walk of York Walls which during most of the afternoon some of us completed the whole walls. Pubs visited during this walk included: Golden Slipper (half Timothy Taylor Golden Best); Rook & Gaskill (half Great Heck Voodoo Mild): the name of this pub is related to hanging and inside there are details of this punishment for those found guilty of stealing 30 sheep; Phoenix (half Timothy Taylor Landlord) and

Brigantes back in Mickelgate (half Timothy Taylor Boltmaker).

Another pub which some of the group found a good visit, some less so, was the House of Trembling Madness on Stonegate. It has a medieval drinking hall situated above a bottled beer shop.

By this time, it was early evening and time for some food so a group of us went to the Everest Gurkha Nepalese Restaurant on Fossgate for some very good Nepalese food.



**Image: Wayne Smith, Brew York**

After our meal, we went to what was a real find earlier in the day, namely Brew York located further down Fossgate on Walmgate set back from the road. Brew York is a new microbrewery with a taproom, which had only been open five weeks. Its opening was delayed by problems caused by the floods in York last Christmas. We experienced a friendly welcome including tastings of their good beers and details from Lee advising the 10 barrel, four fermenters capacity/configuration. Beer range was a minimum of six including Maris the Otter (English Bitter) and Viking DNA (Smoked Porter). Lee also showed us the back of the brewery backing onto the River Foss and described how the floodwater affected work to commission the brewery. During our stay in the city, the York Dungeon and Yorvik Viking Centre tourist attractions were still closed because of damage incurred by the Christmas floods.

On Sunday morning most of the group entered The York Minster Treasure Trail, which requires solving clues on existing buildings on some of York's narrow roads. I also was able to visit the Golden Ball (community owned pub) and have a refreshing half pint on a very warm May day. After the Treasure Trail, most of us met up at another of the York Brewery pubs namely the Three Legged Mare (pint York Brewery Centurion's Ghost Ale). This is another of York's pubs with a hanging related name.

All 13 on our branch trip then went to the other Punch Bowl pub in the city owned by Nicholsons for lunch before the drive back to Chelmsford with thoughts of a great weekend in York and a return there before too long.

**Images: Dave Siedlaczek**

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# MARIS OTTER ANNIVERSARY

Last year saw very jolly 50<sup>th</sup> birthday celebrations for a grain variety. An unusual subject for festivities but the breed in question, Maris Otter, has been bringing satisfaction to beer lovers' taste buds since 1965.



**Maris Otter in the Field**

This specialist variety has been an ingredient in 10 of the 16 most-recent 'Champion Beers of Britain' and its remarkable resilience gives further reason to celebrate this harvest-time. The weather has not been kind to this year's winter barley crop, and mainstream varieties have all taken something of a bashing. North Norfolk's Maris Otter crop has, however, distinguished itself with what Tom Rivett of H Banham described as "its champion qualities".

Despite the rain, the lack of sunshine and challenging growing conditions, most of the Otter grains have reached optimum size and are perfect for malting and craft brewing.

"Looking at the state of the other crops, this is some achievement," says Rivett, "and another proof – if proof were needed – of Maris Otter's trustworthy resilience."

According to Rivett, what it lacks in yield Otter more than makes up for in quality



**Tom Rivett of H Banham in a field of Maris Otter**

and reliability and this is the main reason it has survived an unprecedented 51 years. With most other varieties lasting just four or five years before being superseded by new strains Maris Otter, an ingredient in hundreds of award-winning ales as well as many Champion Beers of Britain, has endured for half a century.



**Bob King of Crisp Malting Group**

"It behaves well in the malting process, as the traditional floor maltings at Crisp Malting Group can testify. It is then sought after by an ever-increasing number of craft brewers. They swear by it – for its consistent performance in the mash tun and the depth of flavour it delivers to the beer. Even in years with disappointing harvests, Maris Otter manages to hold on to its champion qualities."

Expansion of the craft beer market, alongside increasing interest in food, drink and natural ingredients has heralded a renaissance in the fortunes of Maris Otter. Still a specialist variety, it makes up a relatively small proportion of all the barley grown in Britain – just 2.6% in 2014 and 3.4% in 2015.

Of barley that is malted and used for brewing, Maris Otter is a higher proportion, but still less than 10%. "Maris Otter hardly features in the world of large brewers," says Rivett, "but it certainly punches above its weight in the craft sector. There may still be some way to go before this fantastic variety becomes a household name after the fashion of grape varieties such as Merlot, Shiraz and Chardonnay, but awareness is growing."

The variety is a cross, created from Pioneer and Proctor back in 1965, and its history is well



worth exploring. It rose, declined, then nearly died out in the early 1990s. Around that time two grain merchants H Banham and Robin Appel, who now jointly own the rights, rescued and revived Otter starting afresh with just a few grains.

The purest, most true-to-type seeds were picked out and used for propagation and onward breeding.

To this day, there is still a 'secret plot' where H Banham continues to carry out what must be



**Mark and Tony Banham of H Banham with their Maris Otter grower (for 50 years!)**

one of the most regular and rigorous "re-selection" processes in the farming industry.

Rivett says more brewers are talking about ingredients in their marketing and publicity materials, and those who use Maris Otter are proud to talk about it.

"Last year's 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebrations put it in the spotlight, firing interest among drinkers as well as brewers. Conditions in North Norfolk are ideal for growing the grain, and we work with some of the best growers in the country to maintain the purity of the breed and produce excellent quality crops.

"This year's harvest is a testament to their work, as well as to the variety itself. Malt from the overall 2016 crop will be used to create around 450 million pints of Maris Otter beer, a miniscule proportion of which I look forward to sampling in the months to come. Champion prospect!"

**Images courtesy of Frances Brace**

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# 10 MEMBERS SET

By Charlie Smith

Just after 10 am on Saturday 23rd July, 10 members of the branch set off in a minibus on the annual mad dash around six counties to take part in judging for the 2016 East Anglian Pub of The Year. Martin Joy drove for the first half of the day and Doug Irons for the second. Many thanks to both of them for doing this (and foregoing the chance to sample some great beers in some great pubs).

First stop was in **Hitchin** at **The Half Moon** and we arrived a bit before opening time – the staff earned bonus points for their welcome to us by opening the car park and allowing us access to the pub before they started serving. The pub seems to be an old coaching inn with a beer garden at the far end of the car park.

They were serving eight different real ales from a range of breweries the beers covering the full range from golden to black. Linda and I sampled Wolf in Sheep's Clothing from Wolf Brewery and an old favourite – Mauldons Black Adder. Prices ranged from £3.40 to £3.80 a pint and their mainly tapas-based menu looked very interesting and good value – desserts included ice cream at £1 a scoop.

Next stop was **Leighton Buzzard** to visit **The Black Lion** on the High Street. Like all the pubs we went to it is well worth another visit but one word of caution – it is not easy to park a minibus near to the pub!

Another centuries-old pub with exposed beams, this one has a U-shaped bar and a large, paved beer garden parts of which are a real sun-trap on hot days. Bar snacks are on offer and customers are welcome to bring their own cold food.

There were seven real ales on offer at around £3.60 a pint but they also sell paddles of six thirds of a pint enabling you to sample six different beers for just £6 – bargain!

Again, the full range of beer styles were on offer – Linda and I passed on the draught Bass and shared a paddle of the other six ales on offer – Hydes brewery's Lowry, Lacon's Legacy, Oakham's Bishops Farewell and three from Nethergate CAMRA's Revenge (my beer of the day), Umbel Magna and Suffolk County.

We next moved on to **Huntingdon** to **The Falcon**. Our lunch order had been phoned ahead so we were accommodated, even though we arrived after they would normally have finished serving cooked food. The menu was simple but adequate and the ploughman's lunch looked exceptional containing two large chunks of cheese, ham and a mini pork pie.

This was the penultimate day of the Falcon's beer

# OFF ON REGIONAL POTY TRIP

festival, during which they expected to showcase more than 100 beers in 10 days. There were 30 – yes thirty – on offer when we were there; 12 outside and 18 inside. Normally they have ‘only’ 18 available at one time – Huntingdon drinkers are spoilt for choice.

Needless to say the full range of beer types were there. Our choices were Towcester Mill Black Fire and Potbelly Beijing Black. This pub has to be seen to be believed. You enter a very narrow frontage through the old gates of Huntingdon prison and discover a pub full of history that contains one of the longest, narrowest bars I have ever seen.

## SIX EXCEPTIONAL PUBS SERVING FANTASTIC SELECTIONS OF GREAT BEERS AND CIDERS

The **Brewery Tap at Fat Cat Brewery** in Norwich was our next watering hole – Norwich drinkers are also spoilt for choice as this pub has 20 real ales on sale. Usually they include a number of their own beers and others from a wide range of breweries. They had a ‘Meet the Brewer’ visit from Castle Rock brewery just before our visit, so many of the ‘guest’ beers on offer were from that brewery.

The limited food menu is, unusually, bolstered by cheese boards that are available in varying sizes at 24 hour notice. The pub had very high ceilings and beams resembling a large barn with waist-high booths for seating. If they are intending it to look like a barn then it is far too clean and airy! Walls and ceilings are covered with old pub signs and enamel adverts.

Beers here ranged from £2.70 to £3.70 a pint apart from a 10% ABV one selling at £5 a pint. Our choices were Imperial Stout and Baptism of Fire both from Castle Rock. There were a number of second-hand books on sale and it will be well worth watching for some different experiences on our future social calendars – Kate bought one called The Orgy Planner!

**Lowestoft’s Stanford Arms** provided a contrast to the historical buildings we had visited at the start of the trip. It is a typical, decades-old corner pub and the layout and interior would not have looked out of

place when I was a mere lad. Don’t think this implies a dingy, dusty pub; on the contrary it is very light and cheerful.

Many old beer trays line the walls, depicting bygone favourites long since lost to the big brewers (and at least one for a beer not loved by CAMRA – Watney’s Red!)

This pub serves plated food on Wednesdays only, with what seems to be a differently-themed spicy menu each week, and pizzas on Fridays. Prices are again around £3.50 a pint with a choice of 10 from the Three Blind Mice, Colchester, Wolf and Shortts Farm quartet of brewers. I tried Wolf’s Grandma’s Rich Porter while Linda had Shortts Farm Two Tone.

Finally back to Essex, where **The Compasses at Great Totham** was our last port of call. Many of us were tired by the time we got there and as a result these notes probably don’t do the pub justice.

It is a typically old-style, two-roomed village pub with a couple of old sofas complementing the bar seating. We had hardly arrived when Linda was accosted by two young lads; many years ago, one had been a Beaver Scout in the Colony she ran and she had worked with the other, his cousin!

Five ‘standard’ real ales were available, or six if you included the £6 Wibblers Wobbly Croc at over 12% ABV. The others were a good selection, selling at £3.35 to £3.60 a pint including Brentwood’s Marvellous Maple Mild and Colchester Double Brown. We were given tasters of Wobbly Croc and a cheese board – most of us had completed our scoring for the pub by the time these were offered so we weren’t bribed.

You will probably have noticed there has been no mention of the infernal fermented apple juice! This is due to my disinterest rather than its unavailability.

All of the pubs provided a wide (some very wide) range of ciders – so many that even our Cider Rep decided she couldn’t try them all. More than 40 on offer at the Falcon for instance.

We were all then dropped off at home in the early hours of Sunday morning – thanks again to our wonderful drivers.

To summarise, six exceptional pubs serving fantastic selections of great beers and ciders – a long but worthwhile day. Only 364 more drinking days (approx) to the next one.

• **The views in this article are those of the author and others on the trip may not agree with all of them.**

# EAST ANGLIA PUB OF THE YEAR 2016

## Be-Cider Myself

**By Claire Irons, Cider Representative  
Chelmsford & Mid-Essex Branch**

I was very pleased to find that all six pubs in the final round for the East Anglia region Pub of the Year (POTY) competition, have many real ciders on offer ordinarily and not just because they know they are being judged. It could be said I was be-cider myself at the sheer range of interesting and often local examples of real cider and perry to drink which is proof that the popularity of real cider is increasing in pubs as well as at beer and cider festivals.



At the **Half Moon in Hitchin**, Hertfordshire I had Millwhites' Rooksbridge Reserve and Cromwell's Cavalier Perry. Millwhites now is branded as Somerset cider, where the orchards are at Ditcheat but used to be listed as from Hertfordshire. The juice is transported to their cider barn near Hemel Hempsted for maturation in wooden casks.

Millwhites' Rum Cask has been one of my favourites but had just run out when we visited, which was a shame. However the Rooksbridge Reserve,



made with apples from the village of Rooksbridge, was flavoursome and although I have had it at the cider barn and on the Chelmsford Beer and Cider Festival cider bar I had not seen it in a pub before.

This made up for my disappointment and was complimented well by the medium Cromwell's Cavalier Perry which was refreshing as usual. With a choice of eight ciders and eight ales, the locals are invited to score the beer they drink with a QR code linking to the CAMRA What Pub? website which I think is excellent campaigning.

**The Black Lion at Leighton Buzzard** offered six ales or ciders on a tray in third glasses so I was able to try all six available sharing with others on the trip while we enjoyed the sunny patio garden. A new dry one for me was One Eyed Vince from Radnage, listed as from Oxfordshire (actually from Buckinghamshire) which was unusual and an acquired taste but not so much as the killer Sharp-Sour 5.8% from Hogan's in Warwickshire, which was as described and very different from their easy drinking Poacher's Perry, also 5.8%.

The writer of the blackboard may have had one too many of the Furze Cutter's Distraction at only 4%, which was listed as being by Rogers of Dorest, which I took to mean Dorset (Let s/he who is without sin cast the first stone – Ed). They also had Side-R Blackcurrant from Glebe Farm down as from Lincolnshire when it is actually from King's Ripton, Huntingdon and Cambridgeshire.

Never mind the poor geography, the Black Lion is an excellent pub with plenty of CAMRA literature, a collection of seals from British Breweries 1880s–1940s, lots of local community events including a knitting club and the opportunity to bring your own cold food and supporting small businesses. The fact that there was not an option of three third measures was frowned upon by some who did not wish to share a six third tray or consume two pints. However having halves and overfilled lined pint glasses allayed their disappointment!

With it being a long day getting round all six counties of East Anglia, we moved on from Bedfordshire to Cambridgeshire where we had pre-ordered our lunch at the **Falcon, Huntingdon**. Although they usually have 15 to 18 ales on handpump and five ciders at this coaching inn near the market they had a beer festival on our visit featuring more than 40 ciders. With a severe lack of CAMRA information and no local cider I was pleased to advise the landlady about the Cromwell Cider Company, Hemingford Grey, St Neots which would be local to them and tie in nicely

# JUDGING: THE CIDER SIDE

with the fact that this pub is said to be the site of Oliver Cromwell's recruiting station. Going local would increase potential scores for alignment with CAMRA principles.



Moving round the region we had to clarify that we went to the correct Fat Cat in Norwich, as there are three in this city. The **Fat Cat Tap, Norwich** is the brewery tap and was previously the Cider Shack owned by Ryan Burnard, so it was fitting for me to have some of his cider from Norfolk. Bernard's Monty's Double with its distinctive pink hue was fantastic and I bought a two-pint carryout of his Red



Rosie which I had not had before but plan to order for our next festival as it was gorgeous both in apple flavour and with a bright red colour.

With 20 traditional ciders advertised it was a pity that neither the Fat Cat Scrumpy nor Perry were available. Never mind, I hope to try them on a subsequent branch trip of the three Cat pubs in Norwich. This one had 20 cask beers, six of them from the Fat Cat Brewery and 18 keg beers, so there was plenty to choose from. With various items of breweriana, a bookshop and lots of CAMRA literature, many would be happy to have spent all day here.

Autumn 2016

However we journeyed on to **The Stanford Arms, Lowestoft**, for our penultimate pub, which had changed considerably since our visit last year when it was the Green Jack Brewery Tap. With 10 beers and no Green Jack but six ciders, of which four were from the East Norfolk Cider company there was a good range to suit various palates.

Counting our way around the counties we headed back to Essex to finish our Regional POTY trip at the **Compasses, Great Totham**. A varied range of cider and Galanthus perry from Bertie's Cider Company, Braintree complimented the excellent range of LocAles on offer. Enjoying a personal favourite, Hecks Blakeney Red perry in this traditional beamed, village pub complete with evidence in the dining room of where the stable door used to be, it was lovely to see what a thriving hub of the community it is.

Youngsters were sipping cider flavoured with rhubarb and also raspberry, i.e. two different ciders from several available and people of all ages were imbibing beer from golden ale to stout. Everyone was relaxed and happy with our team of judges reflecting what a close competition it is this year. Our hosts, Alex, Hayley and their staff were friendly, accommodating and cheerful despite having had an exceptionally busy day.

The pubs are judged by members of CAMRA branches throughout the region and apparently there had been a full coach of about 50 people going round on the same day we had our minibus, plus many go out by car.

**NB:** The results for this competition will not be known for publication in this edition of Thirsty Times but keep an eye out for the next issue or check [www.chelmsford.camra.org.uk](http://www.chelmsford.camra.org.uk) from the second week of September.

## CAMRA PUB OF THE YEAR JUDGING CRITERIA

**CATEGORY 1:** Quality of Beer/Cider /Perry

**CATEGORY 2:** Style, Décor, Furnishing and Cleanliness

**CATEGORY 3:** Service, Welcome and Offering

**CATEGORY 4:** Community Focus and Atmosphere

**CATEGORY 5:** Alignment with CAMRA Principles

**CATEGORY 6:** Overall Impression

Scores are whole marks out of 10 with the score for the quality of the beer/cider/perry doubled.

Judges must score all the pubs on all categories but they may be done on different days.

# BREWERY NEWS

## BISHOP NICK *Libby Ridley tells us:*

At Bishop Nick we refuse to talk about autumn drawing in so let's reflect on the summer. Our new limited edition 'Devout', a 5.3% smooth English stout has sold out in cask.



We launched it at the Chelmsford Summer Beer Festival and it has gone down really well. Still available in 500ml bottles online and in our brewery shop and selected stores.

Our ever popular American-style IPA, Martyr, 5%, was back out again in cask this summer and has sold out, bottles available now all year round. Our award-winning Embers makes a return in September. Brewed with British hop Bramling Cross, this amber ale is as earthy as a golden harvest.

We had Martyr IPA at the Great British Beer Festival at Olympia in August and it sold fantastically well. Chelmsford Beer Festival was also great fun again and we sold out, re-stocked and sold out again so we were happy.

As ever, the Hop Stock Beer Festival at The Compasses, Little Green was a brilliant family affair in mid-August and we've had beers at countless other pub beer festivals across the county.

We also set up stall at the Crossing Temple Barns for the Essex Festival of Food and Drink. We were in good company in the 'Only Way is Local' tent sponsored by Chelmsford Star Co-op which stocks our bottled range in their stores.

New stockists for our cask ale include: The Elms, Leigh on Sea; Peldon Rose, Peldon; Earls Colne Social Club; The Norton, Cold Norton; The Case Is Altered, Bentley; Anchor Riverside Pub, Hullbridge, see [www.bishopnick.com](http://www.bishopnick.com) for more. Next up is Chappel Beer Festival from 6-10 September. See you there!

Our Brewery Shop is open on site to the public. Mondays to Fridays 9am-4.30pm. We stock our range of bottle conditioned ales and gifts including t-shirts, branded glasses and bottle presentation packs and a range of 8pt minicasks. Ample free parking and easy access to Braintree Freeport and the town centre. Come see us and buy your beer at source.

For a full product list see [www.bishopnick.com](http://www.bishopnick.com) Reach us on 01376 349 605 and follow us on Facebook – BishopNickAle and Twitter – @BishopNick or sign up for our newsletter at [info@bishopnick.com](mailto:info@bishopnick.com)

## CROUCH VALE BREWERY *Colin says:*



FINE ESSEX ALES

brewed in 2009) and featuring Simcoe hops.

We have built an external decked drinking area at our tap room (Tap Room 19) and the Queens Head has undergone an extensive external refurbishment.

Other projects are afoot but it's difficult to find time when we are so busy. One general

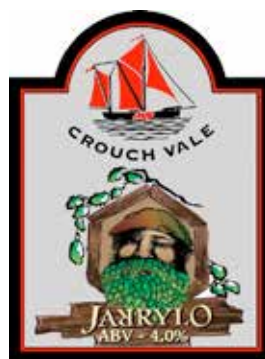
Crouch Vale Brewery has had a busy summer and our monthly beers have been flying out – The Golden Duck and Jarrylo have sold out and we are now sending out the first casks of Posh (last

concern that we have is the acute shortage of West Coast US hops caused by drought and escalating worldwide demand.

We always contract ahead to ensure supplies but even so, have been able to secure only barely adequate amounts of Amarillo and at much higher prices than we have had to pay in the past.

And of course, the collapse of the pound compared to the dollar following the EU referendum has added a further 10/15% to the costs.

My advice to those who are partial to US-hopped beers is to drink them now while you still can – and (perhaps just as importantly) while they are still affordable!



# BREWERY NEWS

## BRENTWOOD BREWING COMPANY *Wendy Pike reports:*

The autumn season again promises to be a busy one at Brentwood Brewery. The calendar shows we'll be at eclectic mix of events, among them a charity Firewalk, a school festival and a beer tasting in a library.

Keep Saturday 8th October free for The Elephant Invasion Beer Festival at Brentwood Brewery. All beers, £2 a pint, will be from the Elephant School Brewing range.

The brewery's rebellious offspring, Elephant School Brewing, will be debuting the final beer in its 'good for you' trilogy in September in time for Elephant Invasion. It's Dubbel & Squeak, 8% ABV, a Fig and Rosemary Dubbel. The series was invented and brewed by head brewer Ethan Kannor.

A new beer to watch out for from Brentwood is Firestarter, a bright red, chilli beer, which is being brewed especially for Brentwood Charity Firewalk. The event will be raising money for local children's charity SNAP (Special Needs and Parents). To support Richard Anderson from Brentwood in



his 100km charity walk along The Western Front in October, raising money for ABF The Soldiers' Charity, we have brewed Front Line, 3.7% ABV, pledging 10p from every pint to charity.

There's great news for anyone wishing to enjoy Elephant School beers at home. The three 'good for you' beers are not only available in keg and cask but will soon be available in 330ml bottles. They are: Porter in a Storm, 4.9% ABV a Cranberry and Chocolate Porter, Sombrero 4.5% ABV, Chia and Passion Fruit Saison and Dubbel & Squeak 8% ABV.

Seasonal favourite Spooky Moon 3.8% ABV will reappear (cask only) in September. It is a dark brown bitter with a sweet, fruity finish, balanced with just the right level of bitterness, making it a popular session pint.

Regular Brewery Open Days continue on the first Saturday of each month from 10.30am to 3.30pm with tours for £10 (including free gift and a pint) at 11am. For the latest news and a full list of upcoming events visit: [www.brentwoodbrewing.co.uk](http://www.brentwoodbrewing.co.uk)

September and October events include:

7 Sept: Beer Tasting, Upminster Library

1 Oct: St Peter's School Festival, South Weald (find a selection of beers, food and entertainment.)

8 Oct: Elephant Invasion Beer Festival, Brentwood Brewery, £2 a pint. 5 Oct Richard Anderson walks The Western Front raising money for ABF The Soldiers' Charity.

29 Oct: Brentwood Charity Firewalk, Old Brentwoods Club in aid of SNAP.

## MALDON BREWING COMPANY *Chris tells us:*

Maldon Brewing Company's famous Maldon Oyster Stout is always launched on the first of September. Three dozen Blackwater oysters from the Maldon Oyster Company go into the boil which add a slight saltiness to the rich soft flavour. This stout revives a beer style from around 1900 when a local brewery made Oyster Feast Stout to celebrate the annual oyster harvest.

(W)Essex IPA, originally a one-off special, has been so successful that we have brewed it again. This 5.5% Pale Ale is another result of the brewing collaboration between the Beardsmen of Wessex and Essex. Choice English malt and American hops are blended together

to make a tasty well-hopped beer. Guaranteed to put hairs on your chin! We will be serving this at The Farmer's Yard micro-pub for as long as it lasts, but please ring to check 01621 854202.

We can hardly believe that the Farmer's Yard has been up and running for a year. Its first birthday was

1st September. Oysters were served with the Oyster Stout, and when they ran out there was cheese and sausage to enjoy with that pint; and if you don't drink beer we always have an interesting range of ciders, wines and soft drinks.

Visit [www.maldonmicropub.co.uk](http://www.maldonmicropub.co.uk) for more.



# BREWERY NEWS

## WIBBLERS *Abby writes:*



Wibblers reached our crowd funding target and we are looking to order additional fermentation vessels in the coming weeks to enable an increase in production by 20bbl. This should cope with the increased demand on the back of their National Champion Beer of Britain, Stout Class for our Crafty Stoat. Beers planned for the coming months are Hoptimistic, 4.1%, a traditional ale with wonderful blackcurrant notes from the hops; Hop Harvest, 4.1%, made with Wibblers' home-grown green hops for a zesty brew;

Dengie Red, 4.0%, brewed with Challenger hops – a red ale with subtle spicy notes; Dengie Devil for Halloween, 4.0%, a naughty refreshing ale with New Zealand hops.



## BILLERICAY BREWERY *Trevor writes:*



Billericay Brewing micropub is celebrating its first CAMRA award – South East Essex CAMRA Summer pub of the year. This is based on customer ratings on the WhatPub website –

so a big thank you to all our customers. The award will be presented sometime this autumn, so watch out on social media for what should be a very special occasion. Seven day opening is proving very popular as are regular brewery tours & tastings plus 'Brewer for the Day' experiences.

The next beer festival is now confirmed for 15th to 18th September, featuring at least a dozen of our ales plus a selection of other local beers and ciders.

Our beers will also feature at the popular Chappel Beer Festival 7th to 10th September. New beers brewed include Sex & Drugs & Rock & Roll, a 5.0% IPA brewed as a special for Chelmsford Summer Beer Festival and Billericay Red (hoppy rye ale), a 'staff' beer chosen and brewed by all of the team.

Popular dark beers Chapel Street Porter, Woody's Wag and Chilli Porter will also reappear soon. September is also a special historical month for the town of Billericay, as it marks the 100th anniversary of the shooting down over Billericay of a Zeppelin during the First World War. We will join in the commemorations, which we hope will include a visit of the son of the airman who shot down the Zeppelin, who is very keen to drink some of our Billericay Zeppelin. In addition we plan a couple of commemorative ales to mark the occasion.

## ROUND TOWER *Simon says:*



It was fantastic to see so many people enjoying our beer at the Summer Beer Festival this year, and it has inspired us to have some more fun making great beer for you to all enjoy.

After the success of the experimental stouts, you can expect to see one or two of them released in bottles for Christmas. Also the 'yeast experiment' gave us some brilliant feedback and we have started to use the Belgium yeast a bit more as it gave the beer some amazing flavours that (almost) everyone enjoyed.

Here at Round Tower we are pleased to welcome Sam, our new brewer, on board. He has some exciting ideas, so expect to see more experimental beers popping up around Chelmsford on cask, in bottles (and also key keg very soon).

We were really pleased to have some beer at GBBF this year. With so many breweries in the country, and so few beers available at GBBF, it was great to be asked. I hate to mention it so soon, but once again we will be opening the brewery on Saturday afternoons in December for sales of bottles and gift packs.



# BREWERY NEWS

## MIGHTY OAK *Gill says:*



Big smiles all round at the Mighty Oak Brewery! What a fab day we had in London back in August at The Great British Beer Festival. Winning the Silver award in the Mild category for our beloved 'Oscar Wilde' was the pinnacle of our year – the photo shows John Boyce receiving our award from CAMRA chairman Colin Valentine. A huge thank you to all the mild drinkers out there, and to all the pubs who have our Oscar on the bar – but for those of you who are



yet to try our deep, dark, delicious mild, go on... give it a go! Beers from Mighty Oak this coming autumn include a blast from the past; English Oak 4.8% amber traditional ale, we've brought this one back from the past to celebrate our 20th anniversary. I am looking forward to trying Redwing, being brewed as I write this, a 3.8% ruby ale brewed with the amazingly tasty Bravo hop. All the specials and most of our permanent range can be supped at our Tap Room at 10 High Street, Maldon.

## BREWERY NEWS FROM NORTH WEST ESSEX BRANCH

### NETHERGATE BREWERY

A very well established, multi-award winning brewery in Pentlow, on the border of Suffolk has a core range of beers of Suffolk County, Umbel Ale, IPA, Priory Mild, Stour Valley Gold, Growler, Old Growler, Umbel Magna and Augustinian. Local CAMRA branch members were made very welcome when they visited for a branch meeting in March 2016. The brewery shop remains open Monday to Friday 9am to 5pm throughout the year.

### SILKS BREWERY

A new micro brewery in Sible Hedingham which opened in late 2015. The following beers are currently available: Old Man Shirv 4.5% – copper coloured best bitter, Wacker Payne 3.8% – golden ale and Veteran Campaigner 3.8% – session bitter. The brewery shop sells 'beer in a box' (3 to 20 litres) Monday to Friday 9am to 3pm at present.

### PUMPHOUSE COMMUNITY BREWERY

Having officially launched in October 2015 they are very busy brewing Pumphouse Bitter, Gold, and Black on a regular basis. Plough Dog, a best bitter, is going well, and they are also experimenting with a Mild and a Summer Ale. With increasing voluntary help from the locals, more beer is being bottled, and pins filled for private sales direct from the brewery at The Green

Man in Toppesfield. They have recently purchased two slim line fermenting vessels from the Moody Goose Brewery in Braintree so hope to put one to good use very soon to meet demand.

### SAFFRON BREWERY

It has been a busy year for the brewery to date, implementing many expansion plans. The brewery is now a team of six people, with everyone working hard to bring Saffron Ales to both existing and new customers alike. The brewery has just finished a complete re-brand of the website and pump clip/label designs. They have also initiated a bespoke range, with several businesses/events opting to create their own-label beer.

Much of the team's time has been devoted to the restoration and opening of a 17th Century coaching inn, The Bluebell at Hempstead which re-opened in April after many months of closure. They are currently negotiating a deal on their fourth public house and are actively seeking further opportunities. Beers can be found in a variety of pubs, clubs and restaurants throughout the East Anglia region, but would recommend popping into one of their pubs!!

Saffron Brewery also bottle all their ales (suitable for vegetarians/vegans), which can be found in local branches of Waitrose, and numerous farm shops, delis etc.. If you have not already sampled the delights of Saffron Ales, it is recommended to start with 3 core beers – Saffron Porter, Citra and Blonde.

## The resurgence of Scottish cider

by Bill Wilkinson

This article is taken from CAMRA national publicity for October Cider Month



**T**he term 'craft' has crept into the drinks sector vocabulary as a cover-all description of products brought about by the massive growth in the field of new, small scale brewers. Over the past decade an explosion in the number of 'craft' brewery start-ups has captured the imagination of a new generation of drinkers looking for something exciting and different.

Something similar is happening in the world of cider, albeit on a smaller scale and more scattered geographically. While the number of new cider makers is only a fraction of those setting up a new brewery, they are more likely to be producing cider first and foremost for the love of it. The term 'craft' hardly does them justice. I prefer to think of them as 'artisans'.

Traditional cider areas such as Herefordshire, Somerset and Devon, even the more diverse areas famed for using eating and cooking apples to produce cider such as Kent, East Anglia and Scotland are all benefiting from this resurgence in local cider, usually made by keen individuals with more than a passing interest in the heritage of the drink. Much of this new wave are producing very small quantities only for local consumption, the sort of thing you'd purchase at the local farmers' market rather than find in your local pub.

By now you've probably caught up with me and are wondering how Scotland has crept into the list? What a lot of people aren't aware of is Scotland's rich cider past; historically, there are several areas of the country that once were home to apple and pear orchards. Eight hundred years ago large orchards were

abundant in the estates and monasteries of the Scottish border region. These stretched as far as Glasgow and the Clyde valley and some parts of modern day Glasgow, such as the Gorbals, Govan and the Merchant City, which is in the city centre, were once home to vast orchards. In fact Merchant City is largely built on the site of a huge, old pear orchard.

Present-day cider makers are turning to these ancient estates for their apple crops. Some old orchards have been abandoned to nature and the apples simply fall to the ground and rot. Not any more, as enterprising cider makers are busily seeking out these old orchards and their rare fruit trees and either buying up the surplus or taking on the maintenance of the trees.

Probably the longest-established (founded 2008) and certainly the largest of the new wave of Scottish cider makers is Thistly Cross Cider, now based at their new cider barn in West Barns near Dunbar in East Lothian. They source local apples for their Jaggy Thistle, the only real cider they produce. Their output of fruit added ciders is so large, even exporting to the USA, that they can't source enough home-grown apples and resort to imported apple juice concentrate for most of their range.

Waulkmill Cider is another borders cider maker, based near Langholm in Dumfries and Galloway. Owner Chris Harrison also scours the region for his supplies of apples and pears and in 2013 he produced the first Scottish perry in over a century. He is also planting new trees with an eye to the future.

Meanwhile in Glasgow, John Hancox set up Clyde Cider in 2015 and has produced the first urban west of Scotland cider since medieval times. One of John's main interests is the promotion of fruit tree planting ([www.scottishfruittrees.com](http://www.scottishfruittrees.com)). Again, John seeks out windfall crops of apples for his cider making. He casts his net some distance, as he has been able to obtain enough apples from the Edinburgh area to produce



# CIDER MONTH



a special-edition Morning Cider, named after the capital city suburb of Morningside.

Cider making in Scotland doesn't stop at Glasgow either. The Carse of Gowrie area of

Perthshire was famous in Victorian times for its apples, pears and plums. These days it is one of the UK's largest soft-fruit growing regions. The village of Errol sits not too far from the banks of the River Tay and has been home to the Cairn o' Mohr Winery since 1987. Cider has been a recent addition to their range of fruit juices and wines. They don't have far to go for their apples although one of their special, single varietal ciders (King Jimmy's) involves using a rowing boat to gather the apples from a clutch of trees on an island, in the middle of a loch within the local golf course!

Finally, we head north. Mention Loch Ness and the first thing that enters most people's minds is

the monster. However Loch Ness Cider, founded in 2014 in the village of Drumnadrochit, uses a blend of Highland apples from the Black Isle, even further north than Loch Ness.

Proprietress Karen Wotherspoon, a keen cider drinker who grew up in Devon, has plans to plant new cider apple trees using varieties that are known to produce fruit in the Highland climate. You might have to search high and low to find her produce (try out Scottish Aldi stores) but this just goes to show that cider making is alive and well in the most unlikely places.

There are half a dozen other Scottish cider makers I could have mentioned; all share an enthusiasm to reinstate Scotland on the cider map in however small a way. A light on the horizon comes from the Scottish Government's own statistics. In 2014 Scottish National Heritage commissioned a National Orchard Inventory. This found that there were orchards in all but one of Scotland's 32 local authority areas with the greatest concentration in the Clyde Valley and Kingdom of Fife areas.

**Non-CAMRA images: John Hancox**



## *The Wheatsheaf*

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Call us on 01245 420672

Email us at [thewheatsheafpub@btconnect.com](mailto:thewheatsheafpub@btconnect.com)

Visit us at 70 The Green, Writtle, Chelmsford CM1 3DU

# SOCIAL CALENDAR

## CHELMSFORD & MID-ESSEX BRANCH

All members are encouraged support and attend this event.

### SEPTEMBER

**Wednesday 21<sup>st</sup> September.**

**Branch Meeting at the Tulip Pub**

Church Lane, Springfield Chelmsford CM17SF. 8pm for 8.30pm start. No minibus to this event, members are encouraged to make own way to this venue. Bus 54 and 56 from Chelmsford Station..

**Saturday 24<sup>th</sup> September. Visit to Canterbury and the Food and Drink Festival**

(Please note – Change to details previously published) By coach from opposite Chelmsford Station, departing at 10am. Cost £25 for members, £28 for non members.

Visit to this historic city, and its annual food and drinks festival. Literally 100s of food and drinks stalls of all types, a CAMRA bar, plus local Cider Farms and local Breweries bars plus music and entertainment and if that's not enough for you Canterbury has loads of history, pubs and a microbrewery, boat trips and a fantastic Cathedral.

There is also a planned visit to the award-winning Dartford working man's club with its 15 hand pumps serving a fine selection of ales on the way home. ETA for arrival back to Chelmsford is 9.45pm.

### OCTOBER

**Saturday 1<sup>st</sup> October.**

**Full Day LocAle Trail Runabout**

Minibus from opposite Chelmsford Station departing 11am. Cost £10 per person. Another chance to visit some of the more rural pubs on our LocAle Trail. We plan to visit six pubs during the day in Writtle, Blackmore, Mill Green, Ingatestone, Margaretting Tye and West Hanningfield. Usual drop off afterwards.

**Thursday 6<sup>th</sup> to Saturday 8<sup>th</sup> October.**

**South Woodham Ferrers Beer Festival**

Village hall, South Woodham Ferrers, 3 mins walk from SWF Rail Station.

Organised by Maldon and Dengie Branch of CAMRA and featuring "Beers from Britain's Coast" throughout the festival. Live music from Andy Capp Band on Saturday evening.

**Saturday 15<sup>th</sup> October.**

**Visit to Wibblers Brewery**

Chance to visit Wibblers new brewery in the converted 17<sup>th</sup> century tithe barn at Southminster and sample some of their fine ales and ciders.

Meet at Chelmsford Bus Station at noon, as there is a regular bus service from Chelmsford to Southminster (takes approx 1 hour) day pass ticket is currently £8. (There is also train service available, which takes around the same time with two changes and is currently £9.68 per person for a return ticket). Once at brewery we will do a tour and then sample drinks in the Taproom.

Cost of brewery tour/visit is £10, which includes four pints, and some nibbles. After our visit, we plan to visit the Station Arms in Southminster before returning to Chelmsford in the evening, optional stop off in Maldon for those who would like to visit some of their great pubs. Please book your place for brewery trip so that we can gauge numbers.

**Wednesday 19<sup>th</sup> October.**

**Branch meeting at the Eagle Pub Braintree**

8pm for 8.30pm start. Minibus from opposite Chelmsford Station departing 7.30pm. Cost £7.50 for members only. Usual drop off home afterwards.

**Saturday 22<sup>nd</sup> October. Visit to 6<sup>th</sup> Annual CAMRA Real Ale & Cider Festival & Autumn Diesel Gala. In association with West Kent CAMRA**

Provisionally by minibus but may be small coach departing opposite Chelmsford Station at 11am. Cost is £15 per person, members only.

We have been invited to visit the Spa Valley Railway in Tunbridge Wells by West Kent CAMRA.

One hundred real ales, green hopped beers and Kentish ciders. The main festival takes place at Tunbridge Wells West Station and is free to enter, with most of the ales and ciders on sale in the main engine shed, but there are three other stations on the route which will also be holding events during the day and you can purchase tickets for trains to these as required. Check out their website for further details: [www.spavalleyrailway.co.uk](http://www.spavalleyrailway.co.uk)

# SOCIAL CALENDAR

## NOVEMBER

**Tuesday 1<sup>st</sup> November.**

### **Community Pubs Real Ale Runabout**

By minibus opposite Chelmsford Station departing 7pm. Visiting pubs in Pleshey, Felsted, Fuller Street and Little Green. Cost £7.50 per person. Usual drop off home afterwards.

**Wednesday 16th November – Branch AGM**

8pm for 8.30pm start at The Galleywood Social Club, The Street, Galleywood. CM2

No minibus to this event so please make your own arrangements to attend. 51, 42, 41, 100, 13a bus from Chelmsford to Eagle Pub, Galleywood. Social club is located behind pub.

**Saturday 19th November**

### **Full Day Trip to Norwich**

By minibus from Chelmsford at 10am, also pick up in Braintree and Witham available. Price £15 per person, which includes drop home afterwards. The plan is to Visit all three of Fat Cat Pubs in Norwich and other recommended pubs time permitting.

**Tuesday 22nd to Saturday 26th November  
Rochford Beer Festival**

The Freight House, Rochford, Essex. SS4 1BU  
Members encouraged to make own way to this festival and give their support.

**Monday 28th November  
8pm, Beer Cuisine Night**

At the Willows, Cressing, nr Braintree,  
Essex CM77 8DQ

See article under 'Community Pubs' feature. Cost for three course meal will be £25 per person.

Minibus will be running from opposite Chelmsford Station at 7.30pm, with pick up in Witham available – cost £8 per person includes drop off afterwards. Please book with Martin on 07878 624 443 at least a fortnight before to gauge numbers and catering requirements.

## DECEMBER

**Tuesday 6th December**

### **Branch meeting 8pm for 8.30pm start**

The White Hart, Witham. Minibus from opposite Chelmsford Station departing at 7.45pm, cost £7.50. Includes drop off afterwards.

**Sunday 11th December – 1pm. Christmas Dinner at the Woolpack, Mildmay Road, Chelmsford.**

Proposed cost for three course Christmas Dinner just £9.95 (two courses at £7.95). Full menu to follow. Please book your place as soon as possible.

**Tuesday 13th December**

### **The Famous Mystery Runabout**

Mystery runabout. Minibus from opposite Chelmsford Station at 7pm, cost £8. Also pick up from Braintree and Witham if there is a demand.

**Wednesday 28th December – Christmas Social – Pub and Micropub Crawl of Maldon**

Possible Joint Social with MAD Branch.  
By Bus from Chelmsford and Witham so please make your own way to Maldon. Meet at Carpenters Arms, Maldon at noon, then on to the various recommended establishments in the town.

**Wednesday 18th January, 2017**

### **Branch Meeting – Barista Chelmsford.**

8pm for 8.30pm start. Members encouraged to make own arrangements to attend.

**Saturday 21st January**

### **All day trip to Sawbridgeworth**

Hoping to be a joint social with HEB branch, visiting the best pubs in this town as well as a visit to the award winning Queens Head at Allens Green nearby. Minibus opposite Chelmsford Station, 11am. Cost £10 per person, includes drop off afterwards.

**Wednesday 25th to Saturday 28th January  
Colchester Winter Beer Festival**

At the Arts Centre, Colchester. Members encouraged to attend and support his festival.

## MALDON & DENGIE BRANCH

**Thursday 8th September**

### **Trip to Chappel Beer Festivals**

Meeting time TBC, 16-seat minibus to be arranged by JB

**Tuesday 13th September**

### **Branch Meeting – Cock Clarks**

7.30pm for 8pm, members encouraged to make own arrangements to attend.

# SOCIAL CALENDAR

## Thursday 15th September Beer Festival at Coggeshall Barn

Arrive at your discretion, please make your own arrangements to attend.

## Monday 19th September Committee Meeting – Red Lion, Latchingdon

7.30pm for 8pm, please make your own arrangements to attend.

## Thursday 22nd September Minibus Tour of Woodham Walter area

Meet 7pm, cost TBA. Arranged by JB/MC

## Thursday 6th-Saturday 8th October South Woodham Ferrers Beer Festival

Members are encouraged to attend and support this event.

## Tuesday 11th October Committee Meeting – TapRoom 19

6.30pm for 7pm, please make your own arrangements to attend.

## Monday 17th October Branch Meeting – Swan, Maldon

7.30pm for 8pm, travel arrangements TBC

## Saturday 22nd October Apple Day at the Hurdlemakers

Meeting time TBC, please make your own arrangements to attend.

## Thursday 10th November Bar Billiards at Chequers, GH

7.30pm for 8pm, please make your own arrangements to attend

## Thursday 17th November (tentative) Food Tasting at Carps, Maldon

7.30pm for 8pm, please make your own arrangements to attend

## Saturday 26th November – London Walk

All-day event, travel arrangements TBC.  
Arranger – CH

## Saturday 10th December Christmas Meal – Compasses, Great Totham

Time TBC, arranger RA

**Forthcoming events:** Adnams tour, Windsor & Eton twinning

## NORTH WEST ESSEX BRANCH

**Branch Meeting:** Monday 5th September, 8pm, Farmhouse Inn, Monk Street, Dunmow, Essex, CM6 2NR.

**Branch Meeting:** Monday 3rd October, 8pm, Three Horseshoes, Hazel End, Farnham, Essex, CM23 1HB.

**Branch Meeting:** Monday 7th November, 8pm, Red Lion, Fowes Lane, Belchamp Otten, Essex, CO10 7BQ.

**Branch Meeting:** Monday 5th or Tuesday 6th December, Venue TBD, see <http://www.northwestessex.camra.org.uk>

**South Woodham Ferrers Beer & Cider Festival 2016**  
Thu 6th to Sat 8th October  
**35+ Real Ales and 8 Ciders**  
Featuring Beers from around the British Coast  
*All beers and ciders will be available from the start of the Festival*  
**Food Available All Sessions**

<b>Opening Times:</b>		<b>S W F Village Hall,</b>
Thu, 6th Oct	4 - 11 pm	<b>25 Hullbridge</b>
Fri, 7th Oct	noon - 11 pm	<b>Road,</b>
Sat, 8th Oct	noon - 11 pm	<b>CM3 5PL</b>

**Admission £1, Free to CAMRA Members**  
Special Souvenir Tankard or Refundable Glass Deposit - £3

**Live Music from "Andy Capp" - Sat evening**  
Look out for the beer and cider list at [www.maldonanoldengiecamra.org.uk](http://www.maldonanoldengiecamra.org.uk)

# MALDON & DENGIE CAMRA

## Drink beer and take in the sea air at the South Woodham Ferrers Beer and Cider Festival

Chris Harvey previews the annual SWF shindig

How can you feel the sea air in South Woodham Ferrers, I hear you ask? Admittedly, the town is quite a few miles away from the coast, but this year's theme might just make you feel that you are by the seaside.

Maldon & Dengie CAMRA will be featuring a selection of 'Beers from Britain's Coast' throughout this popular festival, which this year takes place from Thursday 6th to Saturday 8th October. There will be more than 35 beers available from the start of the festival; as well as the wide-ranging choice of coastal real ales from around the country, we will also showcase some of the best beers from our local breweries. There will also be eight ciders on offer.

This is the fifth CAMRA beer festival to be held in South Woodham Ferrers and the second in

a row at the village hall, situated less than three minutes' walk away from South Woodham Ferrers railway station. The hall sports a relaxing bar with comfortable seating, where a range of Wibblers beers will be available on handpump. There is also plenty of seating available in the main hall, where the festival beers and ciders will be served.

Following his successful catering debut at the Maldon Beer Festival earlier this year, the 'Essex Hog King', James Pierce will be serving an excellent choice of hot and cold food during every session.

Live music will feature on Saturday evening, with a blend of jazz and happy blues provided by the Andy Capp Band. Why not come along this year and visit our friendly beer festival? You could even combine it with a trip to Crouch Vale's Tap Room 19, which is only a short walk away. Hope to see you there!

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## OCTOBER IS A CAMRA CIDER MONTH

By Claire Irons

CAMRA has held a National promotion of cider and perry in October since 2003 with increasing support for this over the years. October is the traditional harvest and pressing time to make cider. However May is now also designated a cider month with the blossom in the orchards and when the new season cider from the previous autumn's pressing should be ready to drink.

We campaign in line with the National CAMRA Key Campaign 3 (Encourage more people to try a range of real ales, ciders and perries) and Key Campaign 4 (Raise the profile of pub-going and increase the number of people using pubs regularly).

The Chelmsford & Mid-Essex branch LocAle Trail was launched at our summer festival and is incorporated in the new Recommended Pub Guide 2016 which gives the details of the pubs, their offerings for real ale, cider and perry as well as times for opening, meals, festivals and public transport. Those selling real cider are marked on the LocAle

Trail entry form with a green letter C and prizes are available for cider drinkers as well as ale drinkers which are to be collected at our Winter Beer & Cider festival. This campaign runs from 5th July until 30th November therefore incorporating November as Community Pubs month too.

Pick up your copy of the Chelmsford & Mid-Essex Recommended pub guide incorporating the Locale Trail (24 of them selling real cider) at participating pubs in the branch area. Further details are on the entry form and [www.chelmsford.camra.org.uk](http://www.chelmsford.camra.org.uk)

See the Social and Campaigning Calendars (centre pages) for various opportunities to drink real cider, perry and of course real ale. Please book with Martin Joy, CME Social Secretary: 07878 624443 / [socialsecretary@chelmsford.camra.org.uk](mailto:socialsecretary@chelmsford.camra.org.uk)

### Highlights for October:

- Saturday 1st October LocAle Runabout some rural pubs on the trail including the Leather Bottle at Blackmore and the Viper at Mill Green which sell real cider.



Railway Arms at Downham Market is the East Anglia Regional Cider Pub of the Year



# CIDER PRESS

- Thursday 6th-Saturday 8th South Woodham Beer & Cider Festival organised by Maldon & Dengie CAMRA including some new ciders and perry for this festival. Make You Own Way.
- Saturday 15th Visit to Wibblers Brewery with the range of Dengie Cider to try.
- Saturday 22nd Visit to the Real Ale & Cider Festival and Diesel Gala at the Spa Valley in Railway, Tunbridge Wells.

## Apple Day, 21st October

Apple Day was launched by Common Ground in 1990 along with community orchards as ways of promoting social activity, celebrating and demonstrating that variety matters to a locality. Visit [www.commonground.org.uk](http://www.commonground.org.uk)

Look out for Apple Day events such as Saturday 22nd October at Lathcoats Farm, Great Baddow, Chelmsford, CM2 8LX for various apple related activities and fun for all the family. Visit: [info@eapples.co.uk](mailto:info@eapples.co.uk) or call 01245 353021

## EAST ANGLIAN REGION CIDER PUB OF THE YEAR

Following their success in winning the accolade of CAMRA's Norfolk Cider Pub of the Year, the Railway Arms at Downham Market has been awarded the East Anglia Regional Cider Pub of the Year 2016 title. Being judged to be one of the best 16 cider pubs in the country means it goes through to the next round for the title of National Cider Pub of the Year, which it won in 2013.

Andrea Briers, chair of CAMRA's Cider and Perry Committee and East Anglia Regional Director presented the award on Friday 15th July and said: "The Railway Arms is an excellent example of a micro pub, where you can enjoy a range of ciders and it is well worth a visit. Well done to Ian and Callum on their continued success."

Ian and Callum Pinches, who run the Railway Arms, said: "We are much humbled by the support we continue to receive from our friends far and wide, particularly as we look to promote new local cider producers. Of note this year is the extended range on offer from the talented and increasingly knowledgeable Downham Cider Company."



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# ALL ABOUT ALE

Once again Wibblers hosted the UK Homebrew/Craft Brewing Association members weekend for this year's 'Flocculation'. A team of 25 home brewers and Wibblers Beer & Cider Club members started early Saturday to produce this year's brews of our Crafty and Wobbly ales.

This is the 17th Annual 'Flocculation' and the 10th hosted by Wibblers. Each year a parti-gyle brew is produced with the first runnings from the 600kg of malt going to our Pilot Plant to produce a Barley Wine while the second runnings go to our main plant to produce this year's 'Crafty'.

As the day progressed other friends and fans joined the day whilst others fell by the wayside having started drinking at 8am – we ended up with 30 people all helping/drinking/talking about beer and brewing on the Saturday.

As is custom the full name of the Wobbly & Crafty is decided by the 'Floccers' usually around 1am Sunday. This year the animal of choice was 'Turtle' for no reason other than it seemed a good idea at the time!

This year's Crafty is a superb American Brown ale at a robust 5.6% ABV. Made with East Anglian Heritage Maris Otter malt along with brown, crystal and de-dusked chocolate malt it's a stunning mahogany brown colour. North American Apollo and Vanguard hops give a balanced bitterness and hop flavour.

Apart from some sneaky testing in the brewhouse as per tradition we won't get to try the Wobbly Turtle until next summer where it'll be launched at the Chelmsford Summer Beer Festival.

If you missed this year's festival and the launch of the 2015 Wobbly Otter then you'll have another chance at the Chappel Beer Festival in September.



**Doug Irons of CME CAMRA and Chris Harvey of M&D CAMRA congratulate Phil Wilcox of Wibblers Brewery on their GBBF silver award for Crafty Stoat stout.**

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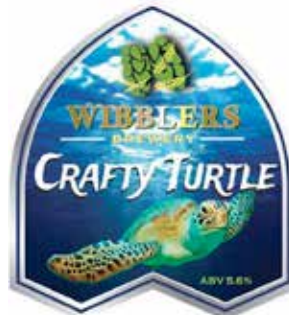
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# LOCALE TRAIL

## CHELMSFORD & MID-ESSEX LOCALE TRAIL UPDATE

By Claire Irons on behalf of the  
CME Pub Campaigns Team



we shall have to wait and see.

**Good News:** Tickets for the Great British Beer Festival 2017 are to be prizes for extra draws.

This finishes on 30th November marking the end of Community Pubs Month so pick up your Trail Entry Form, which is a pullout in the Chelmsford & Mid-Essex Recommended Pub Guide available from various CAMRA Beer festivals and the 47 featured pubs in the branch area with a particular emphasis on LocAle.

For more details, see [www.chelmsford.camra.org.uk](http://www.chelmsford.camra.org.uk).

**Bad News:** Unfortunately, the Thomas Mildmay Wetherspoons pub in Chelmsford will close during the LocAle Trail campaign despite reassurances that the pub had been relieved from closure. Therefore, all entries with stickers for all the available pubs will be valid for the draws as per the rules on the form, i.e. the top prizes for 47 pubs will be available for those who do all the pubs except the Thomas Mildmay. Apparently, it is due to reopen as a Walkabout Australian bar. Whether it will sell real ale,

These include: all those who enter the competition by submitting their completed forms;

All those who were quick off the mark and got their sticker for drinking a half or pint of real ale/cider in the Thomas Mildmay pub before it closed on 29th August; and also for all the people who submit their vote for Pub of the Year (PoTY).

There is a POTY voting form with the judging criteria on the LocAle Trail form but votes can also be submitted by email to [puboftheyear@chelmsford.camra.org.uk](mailto:puboftheyear@chelmsford.camra.org.uk) or given to the chairman at a branch meeting until 31st January 2017.

All the trail pubs were given specific stickers for their pub for this trail. Although the pub campaigns team have distributed spares to the pubs which have mislaid their original stock, we will accept initials from the pubs we have been informed of during the course of the trail only.

## THE COMPASSES

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# THE ESSEX WAY – A MAD(!)

by Chris Harvey

Chairman Maldon & Dengie CAMRA

**T**his trip started out as these things often do – during a chat over a few pints of beer, when we started to compare our 'bucket lists'. Ross and I discovered that we had one quite achievable ambition in common, which was to walk the Essex Way. Mind you, I'd never thought about trying to do it in four days (it is 81 miles long, after all), which was Ross's rather madcap idea.



Outside the Theydon Oak at Coopersale

I suspect it was the effects of the excellent beer I was drinking in the Queen's Head in Burnham that night, but I readily accepted the challenge of taking it on! We were very lucky to enlist the services of Mike, a fellow Maldon & Dengie CAMRA member, who very generously offered to drive us throughout the week. This meant he could take us to our overnight stops, some of which were a little way away from the trail itself.

Three months on, and here we were at the start of the long-distance footpath, just by Epping Underground station. It was already warm, and it was only eight o'clock in the morning; a heatwave was predicted for most of the week – not what we really needed. The first morning took us through some lovely areas of woodland, which once formed part of the vast Epping Forest. We stopped for a photo or two outside the **Theydon Oak** at Coopersale to promote Parkinson's UK, the charity we were supporting on the walk.

It's a lovely 17th-century inn with what looked like a very good beer and cider list. Unfortunately, it was far too early to pay a visit. Another tempting pub we passed early on was the **Green Man** at Toot Hill, which offers three real ales at all times.



At the Leather Bottle in Pleshey



The Square and Compasses at Fuller Street

There is a good choice of pubs in Ongar but again, it was too early for us to stop. The rest of the day's walking took us through a succession of villages that sadly have lost their pubs, such as Willingale and Good Easter.

A short detour to Fyfield would have taken us to the **Queen's Head** but, as we had to tackle 22 miles on the first day, we decided to press on. Eventually we arrived at our finishing point, the lovely village of Pleshey. We both downed pints of Mighty Oak's Captain Bob in no time at the **Leather Bottle!** 'Sherpa' Mike then took us to our overnight accommodation, the nearby **Compasses** at Littley Green that most of you will know well.

The bedrooms are beautifully appointed, and a great evening was spent supping fine ales and eating good food in the beautiful garden.

# CAMRA EXPEDITION

Day two dawned – hot and sunny! We resumed the walk in Pleshey, which took us through beautiful countryside around Great Waltham, Little and Great Leighs. In the morning we passed only one pub, the **Windmill** at Chatham Green, which also offers bed and breakfast. Our lunchtime stop was the renowned **Square and Compasses** at Fuller Street; it was so hot that we drank plenty of iced water instead of having a beer, although there was a very good selection available as expected! The afternoon took us through White Notley and Cressing and we finally reached Coggeshall, our destination for the day, very hot and tired having walked 20 miles in total. The Green King-owned **White Hart Hotel** in the village was our overnight billet, where the Timothy Taylor's Landlord was very good!

The weather forecast for the Wednesday (Day three) was even hotter, so the decision was to make this a shorter day than originally planned. We walked through the gently rolling countryside, passing through Little and Great Tey and reaching the village on Fordham on the scenic River Colne at lunchtime. We met up with Mike at the **Shoulder of Mutton**, a free house offering three real ales and very good food.

Suitably recharged after that stop we continued westward through West Bergholt, which has three pubs, and Great Horkesley which has a couple, passing the picturesque Dedham Vale vineyard before finishing for the day in Boxted. Mike drove us from there to Colchester town centre, where our overnight accommodation was the **Red Lion Hotel**. We managed to drag ourselves out to sample a varied range of beers in the **Playhouse**, **Queen Street Brewhouse** and **Three Wise Monkeys**.

Our final day was mercifully cooler which, as we had over 23 miles still to walk, was a good thing. This was arguably the most interesting day scenically as our route took us through the Stour Valley to Dedham, which has a good selection of pubs, Lawford, Manningtree and Mistley. Given more time we would like to have visited the **Red Lion** in Manningtree (a Good Beer Guide entry) and the **Thorn Hotel** in Mistley.

Pressing on however, through some ancient woodlands and along the Stour Estuary, it was quite late in the day when we eventually reached the seawall leading into Harwich. Both of us were extremely tired by this stage, but kept going somehow! Mike met us on the promenade leading



At the Red Lion in Manningtree

into the town, giving us the encouragement we needed. After taking some photos at the official 'Finish' point of the Essex Way, we made our way to our overnight stop, the **Alma Inn**. What a superb way to finish off the trip – great bedrooms, a very well-kept range of beers and superb food.

So we made it! The Essex Way is a wonderful long-distance trail – I'd recommend it to anyone who loves walking and would like to know more about the county we live in. There are some great pubs on or not far from the trail, too. We were also delighted with the response to our request for sponsorship, which raised nearly £1,500 for Parkinson's UK. Now, I wonder where next year's challenging hike will take us?



The finish in Harwich

# BEER BEAR'S FESTIVAL DIARY

## My Summer Festival, 5th to 9th July 2016

The first of a series of occasional articles, by Beer Bear, an unofficial member of the Chelmsford and Mid Essex Branch of CAMRA

By Beer Bear, Kate -, and Jane

With photographs by Jane Monaghan

Hello, my name is Beer Bear. I'm known to members of the Chelmsford and Mid Essex Branch of CAMRA who go out on social trips, and I've 'volunteered' at a couple of beer festivals now.



This is me in the cabin where my friend Kate works in the team that she joined at Winter 2015. Before that she worked on bars but there are so many other things to do at a beer festival. I live with Kate, since she took me in a few years ago.



After the volunteers' briefing I was able to sleep in one of the tents but for the rest of the festival I slept in the cabin in my hand-knitted sleeping bag (I'm sitting on it in the next photo). I rarely got to sleep until after midnight but, luckily for me, the days didn't start until 10am.



As a regular festival volunteer, I am entitled to food tokens. There's other food around as well, including cake, biscuits and sweets; some of it is thoughtfully delivered to us (our thanks to Chris) because it disappears quite quickly into the volunteers' rest area.



The team that Kate works in do just one of the essential non-serving festival roles, one that would certainly be missed if it wasn't done.

The end of the festival ... and what comes next?

There are many things to do on Sunday morning after the festival has finished but I'm too small to help with them, so I was left hanging around while the stalwarts carried on, and we had to give up the chairs and tables, which are hired.



Where's a spare bear to sit after that happens?

This is lunchtime on Take-down Sunday, just 14 hours, or thereabouts, since the last of the customers left. Beer team in the background.



It's impressive to watch the festival growing up out of the football field and later emptying down to nothing. The real marvel is the volunteer team that makes it happen; then add our supporters, suppliers, sponsors and, naturally, our customers.

A mere 13 days later and we're out on the East Anglian round of the Pub Of The Year process. This is me at the windscreen of the minibus. You may notice that I have my own glass and a unique branch shirt.



Six pubs in six counties, and 14 hours to get around them ... someone has to do it! 10 (11!) of us did.

... how's that for a cat flap!

This was an early evening stop at the Fat Cat (Brewery) Tap in Norwich, well worth a visit.



Trainable and busable from Chelmsford (trainable may not be in the OED but it should be; it works).

There are, of course, other pubs, breweries and brews available, and many that we'd recommend.

Would you like to know more about Beer Bear? Do feel free to send your questions to the editor.



# CAMRA FM



## Banter from the Summer Festival Walkie-Talkies

At the recent 2016 branch summer festival held in July, we have about 50 volunteers who have walkie-talkies so that all areas of the festival can keep in contact with each other.

From time to time various messages are sent across the airwaves without the person realising what they are saying at the time.

Below are some of the unintentional humorous messages which went across the airwaves;

(Anon) "\*\*\*\* has lost the keys to the Landrover. Does anyone know where they are?"

(Owner) "If she comes to my tent I will give her the Landrover key..."

(Anon, but we know who you were...) "Someone in the toilet, do they want a hand?"

(Entrance) "Has Charlie got any blue ones?"  
(Charlie's wife) "He'll be lucky..."

(Staffing) "\*\*\*\* won't be here on time as he

has got diarrhoea."  
(Anon radio user) "To save him from embarrassment, we will not tell anyone."

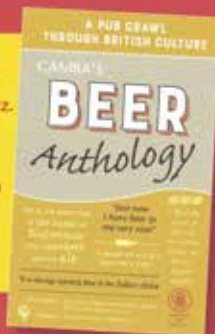
(Female volunteer, who had just filled up the bar tills, to Finance) "I have never made so many men happy in one minute..."

(Anon, concerned about something in the conveniences) "Could someone wander down to the toilets please?"

(Josh) "Do you need it right away?"  
(Anon, in reply) "Nah, fit it in as you please"

New for August  
from CAMRA Books!

An irresistible collection of quotes about beer, pubs and drinking, edited by Roger Protz. Enjoy the words of classic writers – such as William Blake, AE Housman and Thomas Hardy – together with contemporary beer commentators, including Melissa Cole and Brendan Kearney.



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## CHELMSFORD & MID-ESSEX BRANCH AGM

Wednesday 16th November  
8pm for 8.30pm start  
at The Galleywood Social Club,  
The Street, Galleywood CM2



No minibus to this event so  
please make your own  
arrangements to attend.



51, 42, 41, 100, 13a bus from  
Chelmsford to Eagle Pub,  
Galleywood.



Social club is located behind pub.

# COMMUNITY PUBS

## NOVEMBER IS COMMUNITY PUBS MONTH

By Claire Irons, Publicity Officer CME CAMRA

### What is a community pub?

CAMRA considers that "all pubs are community pubs to some degree but some pubs serve communities better than others".

The Pub Campaigns Group defines a community pub as "a licensed hub which encourages social interactions and puts something back into the communities it serves". A good community pub is inclusive, aims to appeal to all sectors of society, and provides an environment where everyone should feel welcome and comfortable.

A community is a group of individuals with something in common which might include neighbourhood of residence, workplace, hobbies and mutual interest. Communities have a capacity for mutual care and support in distress or when problems arise, and the community spirit is demonstrated by the way communities respond to the threatened loss of their pub.

Some people may define a community pub as one that is owned by a community of like-minded people whether that is because they live locally to the pub or members of CAMRA from around the country who have bought shares in a pub in order to save it from sale for development for instance.

### The Norton (formerly The Barge) at Cold Norton

Pictured on the front cover of this autumn edition of Thirsty Times is The Norton at Cold Norton, which is in the Maldon and Dengie branch area and was featured in the Save Our Boozer television documentary.

Paul Guppy who was chairman of the parish council at the time told me about how the committee of local people saved the pub as a community asset, being the only pub in the village. The TV company negotiated the terms and conditions of the lease with the pub owner who had wanted to demolish it and build several properties on the land.

A compromise was made to demolish part of the dilapidated building on the side so five new houses could be built but also to extend the pub with a modern kitchen, restaurant area and toilets at the back. In return for the pub community group supporting the owner's planning application, he agreed to offer them a long term lease or to sell them the pub.

Members of the parish council and local residents

raised £125,000 via a community share issue with a minimum of £500 per share and some investors putting in a five-figure sum. They also had a loan from Unity Trust Bank, a specialist bank that supports social economy organisations that have a positive impact on their local communities.

Following 18 months of refurbishment, its community shareholders bought the Norton Community Pub in October 2014, with Unity Trust Bank having a legal charge over the property because of their financing. Many local villagers helped with painting and decorating and formed a co-operative to run the pub as a free house on a voluntary basis. Some trained to get a personal licence to be a Designated Premises Supervisor in order to open, and run the pub with local volunteers.

## THE COMMITTEE OF LOCAL PEOPLE SAVED THE PUB AS A COMMUNITY ASSET

The group had to be re-registered as an Industrial Providence Society that subsequently became known as an Industrial Society. They have various activities for the community such as pub walks, music nights, quizzes, traditional pub games, and the Women's Institute meet there. Of course, they have held successful beer festivals featuring LocAles from Essex Brewers such as Farmers, Mighty Oak and Wibblers and beer from further afield.

Since March 2016 new long-term tenants Boris and Nora have relaunched the bar and restaurant as Wine & Kitchen at the Norton which is still owned by the community. When I visited with my husband Doug, Boris took great delight in explaining their ethos of having local wine (from Castle Hedingham), an ever-changing selection of real ales with many from Essex breweries and a varied selection of artisan ciders.

Many locals had written their favourite beers for him to select from so keep an eye on the pumps for your choice. Nora told us how they had used various reclaimed items to decorate the dining room, including having a special table commissioned to seat about 20 people which is ideal for meetings and social gatherings. The mirrors using printing frames were certainly unusual...

All the food is homemade using local ingredients from local businesses. As well as the

# COMMUNITY PUBS



traditional pub grub such as burgers and her legendary bread and butter pudding, they have out of the ordinary items on the menu. The dentist-friendly pork scratchings were light and airy having a similar texture to prawn crackers with the recipe being a closely guarded secret.

Having previously been [www.savethenorton.org](http://www.savethenorton.org), their new website is [www.wineandkitchen.co.uk](http://www.wineandkitchen.co.uk).

## The Green Man at Toppesfield

It is important to note that a community pub, strictly speaking, does not have to sell real ale.

However, they are more likely to get support from CAMRA members if they do sell good quality real ale and, in accordance with CAMRA principles of supporting local producers, having a LocAle is appreciated. CAMRA LocAle is an accreditation scheme to promote pubs that sell locally-brewed real ale. You cannot get any more local than brewing your beer on the premises!

The Green Man at Toppesfield in North West Essex is another village pub owned by the community, purchased by 156 investors and run by locals. It was bought from Admiral Taverns, is now free of tie with the same landlord as before.

When Chelmsford & Mid-Essex branch visited in January 2016, we had an impromptu tour of the Pump House Brewery, which had officially opened in October 2015. This micro-brewery has a great beer selection including Pumhouse Bitter/Toppesfield Tap 3.6% ABV which is an easy-drinking session ale brewed from English Maris Otter malted Barley, UK-grown Pioneer and Pilgrim hops and is available on draught only from the brewery tap at the Green Man in Toppesfield. The Pumhouse range of Bitter, Gold, Black, Jenny, Plough Dog and VIPA (Village IPA) brewed by Phil Snowdon, is now available in bottles for sale directly from the brewery.

## The Eagle at Galleywood

After many months of strife, this pub has now been awarded the status of being an Asset of Community Value (ACV). However, following the sale of the garden and car park the Eagle to Phoenix group of passionate, dedicated villagers of Galleywood plan to re-nominate them to be registered as Assets of Community Value too after the Chelmsford City Council Planning Committee make their decision in October. This is intended to increase the viability of the pub, which is a popular venue for the villagers for various events, quizzes and a motorcycle club.

On 7th August, Galleywood Parish Council put in an intention to bid for the pub but not the garden and car park. To date the community has collected 350 signatures for the proposed plan to have a convenience store on the site, believed to be a Co-op as the village already has a Co-op. The Eagle to Phoenix group appreciates all the help and support they have had from CAMRA both from local members and from headquarters.

## What can you do to support community pubs?

The simple answer is to visit them and buy what you like from them in the way of food and drink. Join in pub games such as darts, pool, and crib: even better play in a local league with other pubs. Enjoy music nights, quizzes, pub charity events and beer festivals. Read and engage in local events and services displayed on pub notice boards. Most of all go out and have fun! Engage in conversation if you wish but this is not compulsory. Who knows where it will lead?

See the Social and Campaigning calendars for local CAMRA branch trips to join in or visit any pub you like independently. Please book your place with the relevant branch social secretary to avoid disappointment.

## Beer cuisine at The Willows in Cressing

CME Branch Most Improved Pub 2015 will be hosting a Beer Cuisine evening on Monday 28th November where the starter, main course and dessert will be made with beer. Cider drinkers will also be catered for and if you have any special dietary requirements contact Daryn on 01376 741436.

There are 25 places available at £25 for three courses of interesting innovative food incorporating beer/cider. See CME Branch diary for travel arrangements or make your own way there. Places must be booked with Martin Joy 07878 624 443 at least two weeks in advance.

# The Ale House

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# ACCOLADES FOR ESSEX BREWERS

## Gong Ho!



Congratulations to Essex' own Mighty Oak brewery for their accolade at this year's Great British Beer Festival 'Champion Beer of Britain' awards. Their Oscar Wilde won Silver Rosette in the Mild Category.

A very honourable mention goes to Colchester Brewery's Colchester No.1, which scooped Joint Bronze in the Best Bitter Category.

Both these join Wibblers who earlier this year were awarded gold in the Stout Category for Crafty Stoat at the Champion Winter Beer of Britain 2016 competition judged at the Manchester Beer Festival.

Well done, Essex champions one and all!



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# A Campaign of Two Halves

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Alternatively you can send a cheque payable to CAMRA Ltd with your completed form, visit [www.camra.org.uk/joinus](http://www.camra.org.uk/joinus) or call 01727 867201. All forms should be addressed to the: Membership Department, CAMRA, 230 Hatfield Road, St Albans, AL1 4LW.

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 \_\_\_\_\_  
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Direct Debit Non DD

Single Membership £24  £26   
 (UK & EU)  
 Joint Membership £29.50  £31.50   
 (Partner at the same address)

For Young Member and other concessionary rates please visit [www.camra.org.uk](http://www.camra.org.uk) or call 01727 867201.

I wish to join the Campaign for Real Ale, and agree to abide by the Memorandum and Articles of Association

I enclose a cheque for \_\_\_\_\_

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Applications will be processed within 21 days

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 Forename(s) \_\_\_\_\_  
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01/15

**Campaigning for Pub Goers & Beer Drinkers**

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Autumn 2016

# THIRSTY TIMES

Thirsty Times is published by the Chelmsford & Mid-Essex, Maldon & Dengie and North West Essex Branches of CAMRA, the Campaign for Real Ale. It is brought to you quarterly by unpaid volunteers with 6,000 copies distributed free to pubs and festivals across Essex. It is also available to read online at :  
[www.chelmsford.camra.org.uk](http://www.chelmsford.camra.org.uk)

Please email letters, news, views and articles for possible publication to Tony Vernon, editor of Thirsty Times and to Claire Irons, Publicity Officer Chelmsford & Mid-Essex CAMRA. Thank you to all contributors and Mansion House Publishing. The editor reserves the right to edit articles if required with the full article appearing on the CME branch website.

Views or comments expressed in Thirsty Times are not necessarily those of the Editor, CAMRA Ltd or the Chelmsford & Mid-Essex (CME), Maldon & Dengie (MAD) or Northwest Essex (NWE) branches of the Campaign for Real Ale.

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**WEDNESDAY**

**16TH NOVEMBER**

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