



CAMPAIGN
FOR
REAL ALE

THIRSTY TIMES

FREE

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

CHELMSFORD & MID ESSEX BEER & CIDER FESTIVAL

WINTER
2017



Issue 20

Winter 2016

FROM THE EDITOR

It's common knowledge that regular drinkers only suffer two side-effects: poor short-term memory and poor short-term memory...

Thus hoping that I can make it to the end of this editorial and still remember where I am, it's my pleasure again to bring you a round-up of articles from the three branches of Maldon and Dengie, North West Essex and Chelmsford and Mid-Essex.

This edition ranges far and wide, in all senses of the phrase; for far, take Barry Plumridge's report on the delights of the Isle of Skye brewery, or Mick Allen's insightful summary of the beer and brewery situation in Malta, or even the round-the-coast Thames barge trip summarised for us by Richard Atkinson of MAD.

For wide I give you the stories gleaned on the latest LocAle runabout, including tales of a spectral pub cat, haunting the bar-top at the Three Compasses, West Hanningfield...

At some point, I'll also be updating you via a dedicated piece on the controversy over beer provenance, currently tying CAMRA in knots as it tries to revitalise for the next 50 years of campaigning.

But before doing that I'd like your opinions, sent into the editor's email address at the end

of this piece. Only a 'vox pop' of MAD, NWE and CME footsoldiers is going to do justice to the cask vs. craft keg, cider vs. beer, pub vs. home barneys currently happening locally and nationally.

Please do read your *What's Brewing* and *Beer* magazines, and update yourselves on the state of play with the revitalisation project, which has just closed its third consultation.

On a lighter note, congratulations to the Stanford Arms, Lowestoft, winner of East Anglia Regional Pub of the Year. David and Samantha Burd received their award in mid-October from Andrea Briers, CAMRA East Anglia Regional Director, and now join the 15 other finalists for National Pub of the Year. Offering 12 real ales and five real ciders normally from local producers, Andrea commended the "good range that would suit most tastes". Good luck in the final, from all us down here!

Finally, if the answer is "The Royal Steamer", what's the question? Read on to find out...

Ad multas cerevisias

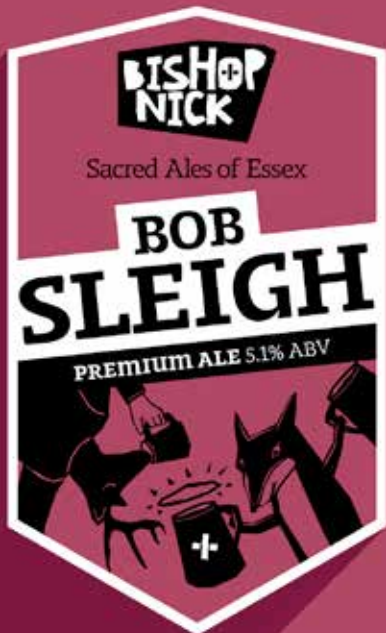
Tony Vernon

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**CONGRATULATIONS
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WINTER BEER & CIDER FESTIVAL

Paul Murrell previews the annual half-term Chelmsford festival, 15th–18th February 2017

Where? King Edward VI Grammar School (KEGS), Broomfield Road, Chelmsford CM1 3SX (Five minutes from station)

Our very popular Winter Beer and Cider Festival is coming round shortly, with more than 170 real ales to choose from. Although we will have many of the stronger, darker winter brews there will also be golden, milds, bitters and fruit beers among the other types so hopefully there will be something to suit everyone. We will also have ciders and perries including some special winter ciders.

There will be a selection of local Essex wines from Felsted Wines. Soft drinks will also be available for designated drivers, those under 18 or anyone just wanting a break from the alcohol.

Please note that there is no parking available on the school premises and that parking is very limited in the surrounding streets although there is a car park nearby. Fortunately, the school is served by a number of local buses which stop outside close to the school entrance.

There will hot and cold food available at all sessions. Hopleaf will be providing their winter range including curries and burgers with a selection of vegetarian options as well. There will also be an interesting selection of cold food from Pipers Crisps and Oddfellows Chocolates (formerly Merry Berry Chocolates).

The festival is manned by CAMRA members who are all volunteers and who give up their time to build, run and take down the festival – for fun! Our opening times on all four days are from noon to 11pm, with last orders at 10.45pm. Admission is free to valid



card-presenting CAMRA Members at all times, and to everyone until 6pm on all festival days. After 6pm Wednesday to Saturday there will be an entrance fee of £3.

Our website will be updated regularly, please visit for the latest information using the QR code or web address at the end of this article. Due to the publishing cycle of Thirsty Times, the winter festival will be about two months away, so please



put the dates in your diaries now. Also, don't forget to come and claim your prizes if you participated in our 2016 LocAle Real Ale and Cider Trails.

We look forward to seeing you there!

www.chelmsfordbeerandciderfestivals.org.uk



• Chelmsford and Mid-Essex CAMRA are grateful for the support of Home Partnership, who have also generously sponsored our 2017 souvenir glasses



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CHOOSING A CHAMPION

How the Champion Beer of Britain and Champion

By Nick Boley, CAMRA national director responsible for CBOB

All cask conditioned beers available for three months, during a calendar year, can be entered into the Champion Beer of Britain selection process, that starts during September and October when members can vote for their favourite beers in each of CAMRA's style categories.

Voting is usually by region (not all the same as CAMRA's regions, as some are amalgamated), but in some bigger regions members can only vote for beers in their county or group of counties.

For example in East Anglia, if you live in Essex you can vote only for Essex beers, and if you live in Suffolk you can only vote for Suffolk beers and so on.

These nominations go forward to the CAMRA Area CBOB coordinators (Paul Moorhouse does this in East Anglia), responsible for co-ordinating area competitions.

These nominations are then ranked and the top selections go forward to the area competitions, where area category winners are selected and forwarded into the final CBOB and CWBOB competitions. This ensures that there is an even spread of beer styles from all regions of the UK.

Our overwhelming preference is that these beers which go forward should be judged at regional beer festivals. This adds some objectivity and integrity to the process as the majority of the judges will be CAMRA trained, and the tastings are blind.

All coordinators are urged to get as many beers judged at festivals as possible – preferably all of them, including the bottled beer category.

This takes place over the year following the votes (so for the current voting round it will be done from about March 2017 to February 2018).

The winners go forward to the three national competitions – NWF for the winter beers (CWBOB), GBBF for the rest of the beers and the BBC Good Food Show Winter, in November, for the bottled beers.

So, at NWF in Norwich next February, the beers being judged will be the regional winners from the voting from September/October 2015. This long timescale is frustrating, and can lead to issues with

beer availability/continuity, but if we are to judge at festivals then there is no way round it for now.

Some suggestions include using taste panels to help judge to cut down the time taken overall, but many parts of the country do not have active taste panels at the moment.

You may have seen a memo from me to recruit more taste panellists recently; this is to try and get all areas covered by active panels to give us the option of moving CBOB in this direction if all involved agree to it.

At the Great British Beer Festival, the final CBOB category judging of the area winners takes place, with one winning beer from the Golden Ale, Speciality Beer, Mild and Strong Bitter categories, coupled with two each from the Bitter and Best Bitter categories proceeding into the final round in order to judge the Supreme Champion, which is crowned the best beer in Britain.

The reason for two beers each from the Bitter and Best Bitter categories is to accommodate for the proportionate share of the commercial beer market these beer styles command.

Four beers that are fast tracked to the final round are the winners of each category of the Champion Winter Beer of Britain competition, held at the National Winter Ales Festival in January/February each year. As these beers were judged to be the Champion Beers of their style earlier in the year, they are entered automatically into the final round of CBOB.

The CWBOB competition is similar in its structure to CBOB, as the final round of judging is made up of beers having reached this stage via the process of CAMRA local branch and tasting panel nominations, followed by area competition success.

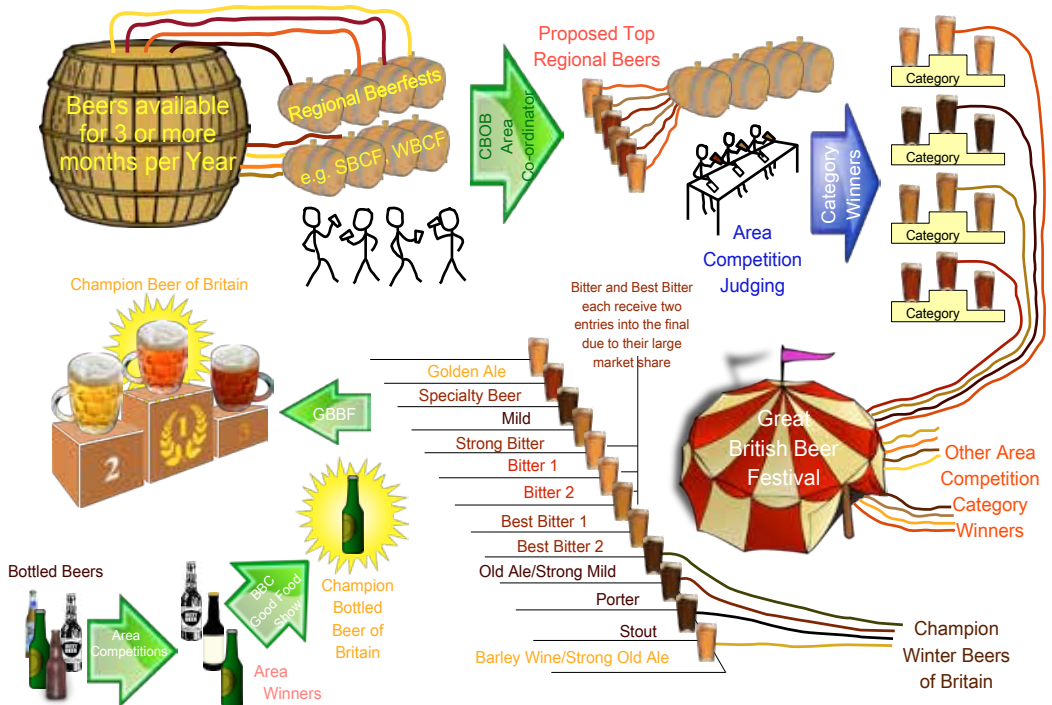
The categories in this competition are Old Ale/Strong Mild, Porter, Stout and Barley Wine/Strong Old Ale. There is a separate competition for the Champion Bottled Beer of Britain (Real Ale in Bottle).

Like CBOB and CWBOB, the structure of the competition relies upon CAMRA local branch and tasting panel nominations, followed by the area competitions, with the final held at the BBC Good Food Show in November.

What can breweries do to get their beer submitted for consideration? Aside from ensuring their beers are of a consistently excellent standard throughout the

CHOOSING A CHAMPION

Winter Beer of Britain competitions work



year, brewers can consult their respective CAMRA Brewery Liaison Officer (BLO) to gain clarification on whether their beer fits the criteria defined by the categories in CAMRA's Beer Styles Guidelines.

When a list of eligible beers has been established, it is the role of the BLO to supply this list for reference to the respective CAMRA Area Competition Organiser.

If brewers have any questions whatsoever regarding their beer's eligibility, they are asked to consult their BLO for clarification; if the BLO is unable to help then brewers should contact their Area Competition Organiser, details of whom are available from CAMRA HQ.

To help breweries ensure they have the maximum opportunity to progress in the competition there are several other things they need to know.

Firstly beers are categorised according to their

ABV, as it now is considered this is more reflective of style, and easier for most beer drinkers to understand.

To be eligible for CBOB, a cask conditioned bitter, best bitter, strong bitter or golden ale must be available for seven or more months of the year, and a cask conditioned mild or speciality beer must be available for three or more months of the year, or else the cask conditioned beer must be one of the beer styles associated with the winter season (old ales, strong milds, barley wine, strong old ale, porter or stout). The BIS has five categories for availability: 12 months of the year; 7-11 months; 3-6 months; 1-2 months; and On Demand.

Also excluded are beers with misleadingly promoted geographical origin or brands with non-cask versions misleadingly promoted using CAMRA awards.

LOCALE TRAIL RUNABOUT



By Martin Joy

As part of the local pub trail that the branch is currently running, we organised a day trip by minibus to some of the more rural and not so easy-to-get-to pubs in the trail.

Each pub had been given special stickers which were to be handed out after the purchase of a pint or a half of ale or cider (with emphasis on LocAle ales) and these would be then pasted to each participant's individual ale trail booklet, which were available inside the latest recommended pub guide, issued by the branch.

With the promise of some great prizes for those people who manage to complete at least 30 of the 47 pubs listed, the eager bunch of campaigners were on a mission to collect as many stickers as possible, score their beers and indeed find out if any of the pubs we visited were a worthy consideration for the prestigious Pub of the Year award. The aim was to visit six pubs, however we ended up drinking in eight:

Pub No.1: The Wheatsheaf, Writtle

A cracking little village pub serving LocAle ales gravity-fed from the cask and also some others on handpump at the bar, plus a full menu at very reasonable prices. Beers on offer from Mighty Oak, Maldon Brewing Company, Wibblers, Adnams and Dark Star on our visit. At around £3 and £3.20 a pint, by far the cheapest pub we visited, to boot.

Pub No.2: The Leather Bottle, Blackmore

Located in the picturesque village of Blackmore and fully refurbished recently, a very clean and smart interior has now been knocked through to make one large bar space with plush restaurant area to the side. We were advised that the new menu to complement the renovations will be released very soon. A good

selection of six hand pumps on the main bar, with LocAles from Bishop Nick and Crouch Vale on offer as well as other beers from Adnams, Greene King and St Austell Brewery.

Pub No. 3: The Star, Ingatestone

Right in the middle of the High Street in the linear village of Ingatestone, The Star is the sister pub to one of our stops later in the day, The White Hart at Margaretting Tye. The very smart and cosy interior offers good quality food and two real ales, at the time of our visit Adnams Southwold Bitter and Maldon Gold from Mighty Oak.

Pub No.4: The Viper, Mill Green

The Viper is a secluded, unspoilt country pub with lounge bar, public bar and wood-panelled snug plus a small tap/games room with service via a hatch/door and an excellent beer garden. Regular house beers commissioned from Nethergate and Mighty Oak are Viper Ales VIPA & Jake the Snake, with more on offer from the Mighty Oak stable in the form of Silver Eagle and Oscar Wilde.

Adding in a very tasty Yakima Gold from Crouch Vale makes for a super LocAle ale pub! Good home-cooked food with vegetarian options were on offer as the group decided to take on some food before we continued on our trail. [The Viper is also notable for being one of two pubs in our CAMRA area that shares its name with no other pub in Britain – do you know which is the other? – Ed.]

Pub No.5: The White Hart, Margaretting Tye

This is a really classy and traditional pub, smartly decorated and renowned for its great food and good selection of real ales, all gravity fed from casks located in the tap room at the back of the main bar. It was commented that the car park was full of



some very nice looking cars, which really showed the affluence of the area and the type of people who had come to eat and drink on this particular afternoon.

Four ales were on offer from Adnams and Mighty Oak plus a guest which had just run out. Barry Black, specially named after a local from the pub and brewed by Mighty Oak, was excellent (tasted a little bit like Oscar Wilde). They offer three third pint paddles, great idea if you are not sure what to taste.

would easily find it. The Horse and Groom is aptly situated directly on the common, close to the original Galleywood Pony Races track; the latter is still pretty much intact, but nowadays used more sedately by dog walkers and joggers. When we arrived the young lady who was 'holding the fort' must have been pleased to see us as we were the only people she had to serve. She told us that it had been very quiet but the previous weekend had been very busy. The two regular ales on offer were GK IPA and Doom Bar, plus three guests and one Locale ale from Wibblers.

Pub No.6: The Three Compasses, West Hanningfield

This delightful small country free-house dates from 1425. Former landlords from 1758 are listed on a board situated on the main fireplace. A Grade II listed building with many low beams, two bars and bench seats in front of the windows, it is ideally situated for country walkers and cyclists. Home-cooked food and Sunday roasts are available.

Landlady since 1971 Rose Cotton was a wealth of knowledge; we could tell that she enjoyed telling us about the past exploits of the pub as well as a ghost cat that walks along the bar!

It is apparently her long-departed Siamese cat, that still comes back to visit now and then... Two LocAle beers were on offer from Rose and her joint-licensee son – Ridley's Rite from Bishop Nick and Captain Bob from Mighty Oak, both in superb condition it must be said.

Pub No.7: The Horse and Groom, Galleywood Common

If you didn't know where this pub was, I doubt you

No.8 and last pub on the trail: Sir Evelyn Wood, Widford

This is a real 'back street' pub and old fashioned 'locals' pub', with a separate games room and two more separate bars. The food was home-made and very reasonably priced. Three real ales were on offer, regulars from Adnams and Mighty Oak IPA plus Betty Stoggs from Skinners.

Overall a most enjoyable day was had by everyone on the trail. Visiting some very good and different types of pubs, from real village locals to plush gastropubs, it was a really good chance to sample some of the great establishments we have close by. I am glad to report that all the pubs had managed **not** to lose their stickers so everyone was able to obtain theirs for the booklets.

Few comments were made with regards to the lack of diversity with Adnams, Greene King and Sharps being the main providers of real ale, but still very good to see some LocAle available in every pub we visited.

CAMRA THAMES BARGE CRUISE

By Richard Atkinson,
MAD Social Secretary

"It was the Thames Barge Pudge
That sailed the cold North Sea
And the skipper had taken a CAMRA crew
To bear him company.

The cider and beer were flowing free
They drank all night and day,
And a merry time was had by all
As the barge got under way!

The skipper he stood beside the helm
His glass was to his mouth
And he watched how the veering flaw did blow
The froth now West now South.

Then up and spake an old Sailor
Had drunk the Spanish Main
"I pray thee put into yonder port
For we need a pub again."

Apologies to Longfellow and The Wreck of the Hesperus for the above and no we didn't get wrecked just merry! Wednesday 17th August saw the CAMRA crew assemble on Ipswich dock, board and stow our gear on Pudge and take stock of our home for the next few days.

Despite the excellent provision of beer, cider and victuals on board it was all ashore for a walk up to the **Dove Street Inn** to sample their excellent ales and to tuck into the evening meal. The pies in the Dove proved to be so good that one of our number had to sample two! I won't let on who that was but his name begins with 'S'.

From there it was down towards the docks again to the **Briarbank**, a modern bar above the Briarbank Brewery. Our next stop was the **Brewery Tap** adjacent to the old Cliff Quay Brewery and as the evening was quite balmy, we sat in the garden admiring the architecture of the old Tolly Cobbold



Brewery and drinking our beer. Back to the boat for a nightcap. "Hmm what to have?" Golden Boar, Oscar Wilde, Captain Bob, Crafty Stoat, Yakima Gold or some Majors cider? Told you – we were well provisioned.

Bright and early the next morning our skipper Nick and the two Jonathans, mate and third hand, got us under way and we were soon through the lock and onto the river. Cruising under the Orwell Bridge was spectacular and then soon past Pin Mill. Pity we couldn't have tried the **Butt and Oyster**.

With Shotley and HMS Ganges to starboard and the huge container vessels at Felixstowe to port we were soon into the river Stour where we anchored up for lunch and of course make inroads into the liquid provisions. After a quick doze on deck or in our bunks it was time to up-anchor and set sail for Harwich. We moored at the pier and while the more hygienic-minded took advantage of the showers, several of us tried the **Pier Hotel** – but at £4.50 a pint we limited the intake to one. After our meal onboard it was out again to sample the beers in the **New Bell** and then onto the **Alma Inn** for the rest of the evening.

Friday's weather forecast did not look good, with gale force winds and rain on the cards; so we left Harwich and headed south to find shelter closer to Pudge's home port, Maldon. The wind and tide were both against us and soon the sails had to come down and we were barely making two knots through the swell. The original plan had been to explore the river Colne up to Rowhedge but due to the conditions



Nick decided it best to run for the River Blackwater and anchor in a sheltered spot close to Bradwell power station.

The rain had arrived as promised and several trickles of water in the saloon indicated that Pudge is in need of a new deck. Hopefully lottery funding will be forthcoming. The evening was spent happily imbibing our on board provisions and trying a few sea shanties, including the obligatory 'Stormy Weather Boys'! Someone must have been quite merry as he kept on singing the wrong chorus to Stormy Weather. Having had a goodly intake the midnight visits to the heads caused a few 'friendly' clinches in the darkness. [Ye Gods – Ed.]

Saturday morning dawned bright with a brisk but not unpleasant breeze. However Nick considered it best to ride out the wind where we were and motor up to Maldon the following morning. Breakfast proved to be an interesting event, with some rather overcooked bacon leading to the smoke detector not being very happy. I must admit I like crispy bacon. The day was spent ensuring that none of the beer or cider was wasted, battening down the hatches against the rain and again someone mixing up the choruses of the shanties. A pleasant day soon passed and it was soon time to turn in for our last night on board and fall asleep to the sound of waves breaking against the hull and the snoring of a certain person in the bunk above me!

Our last day was still breezy as we motored up the Blackwater and anchored off Osea Island for lunch. Several people were out windsurfing in what must have been very tricky conditions. Indeed we sadly learned later that there had been a fatal accident during the day. Lunch over and more liquid consumed it was now time to weigh anchor, put into Maldon, tidy the barge and head for home.

Everyone on board had had a great time and a big thank you must go to the Thames Sailing Barge Trust and our crew for the trip, Nick and the two Jonathans. Put my name down for 2017's cruise!



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VISITING ISLE OF SKYE BREWERY

By Barry Plumridge

Underwhelmed by the wall to wall coverage of the Rio jamboree and the inane chatter of the commentators, Jean and I decided to 'get away from it all' and find somewhere to visit where there is no TV, no phone and no internet. The choices were central Wales or Scotland. Knowing that Scotland not only tolerates but positively encourages wild camping we settled for the Isle of Skye.

Skye has many spectacular scenic drives; the road through Glen Arroch to Kylerhea is a must if only to see the tiny Kylerhea to Glenelg ferry boat which has a deck which turns through 180°, also the road to Waternish to visit the Stein Inn; excellent and reasonably priced food, very good beer and well patronised even though it is well off the beaten track – it was Highlands and Islands CAMRA pub of the year 2015 and deservedly so.

However, the best drive on Skye is to head north from Portree on the A855, past The Old Man of Storr, and just past Brogaig turn left on an unclassified road signposted to Uig; this is a single track road with passing places which leads to the picturesque port of Uig and the best view on the Island: The Isle of Skye Brewery!

I introduced myself as a member of Chelmsford and Mid Essex CAMRA and asked if I could have a tour of the brewery with a view to writing an article for *Thirsty Times*. My request was enthusiastically

received and I was soon being guided round by brewer Mark Abraham.

Skye Brewery was founded in 1995 and the current head brewer is Margaret McDonald. It is currently a 20 barrel plant but is in the process of expanding to 50 barrels. Brewing takes place four days a week and Mark told me his favourite task is shovelling out and cleaning the mash tun! There are currently 14 employees.

Water is sourced from the Faerie Glen; filtering through granite this gives the beer a clean taste with just a tiny hint of peat which enhances the flavours. Three principal beers are brewed: Skye Gold, Skye Red and Skye Black (no fancy names here then). I tried all three, as one must, and I have to say I was suitably impressed.

Skye Gold (4.3% abv) is a golden craft ale brewed using fine porridge oats, Maris Otter, Crystal Malt, and Challenger and Fuggles hops. Exceptionally soft and smooth with a creamy head.

Skye Red (4.2% abv) is a balanced, nutty traditional Scottish ale. Three different types of malted barley are used along with Challenger and Fuggles hops which results in an exceptionally smooth ale. Majoring on malt, nuttiness and fruit with just the right amount of hops this was Skye Brewery's first ever brew and an award winner too!

Skye Black (4.5% abv); malted barley creates the traditional taste of Scottish ale. The roasted variant is the darkest of them all, so





its bitterness is balanced with the sweetness of rolled, roasted oats and pure Scottish heather honey. The taste of Challenger hops is there too but never overbearing.

In addition to these three beers Skye Brewery also produce up to 12 special and seasonal beers; twice a year they brew Tarasgier, (4% abv) using peat smoked malt. Not all were available at the time of my visit but I did take away (or should that be 'carry oot'?) four of the range to sample later:

Skye 'Yer Ben' (5.5% abv) is a smooth, creamy, golden, delicately hopped craft ale inspired by Scotland's Michelin-starred chef Tom Kitchin who took the passion of the Isle of Skye Brewery and created this exceptionally smooth ale.

Skye Blonde (5.5% abv) is made mainly with Lager malt but with some Pale Ale, Amber and Caramalt too. Lightly hopped with a soft, lingering finish.

Skye IPA (5% abv); a clean, golden bitter ale with an underlying biscuit flavour and zesty, zingy citric aroma and aftertaste. Finally, Cuillin Beast, at 7% abv this is Skye Brewery's strongest ale; it's fruitiness, sweetness and dry caramel belie its underlying strength. Not for the faint-hearted!

As well as distribution throughout the Isle of Skye and Scotland, Skye Brewery supply Punch Taverns and Wetherspoons. Who knows? We may be fortunate and see some in our neck of the woods! So, should you ever be lucky enough to visit Skye, make a beeline for Uig and visit the Skye Brewery – you can be sure of a warm welcome!

Winter 2016

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PUB NEWS

Chelmsford and Mid-Essex

Bryan Grimshaw reports

The Butchers Arms at North End has reopened after a relatively short closure, under new ownership and with an emphasis on good quality food. I have no reports yet but you may learn more from social media, [butchersarmsessex](https://www.facebook.com/butchersarmsessex). Good luck to the new owners.



The Green Man, Howe Street

Just a few miles down the road the **Green Man, Howe Street** has reopened after a much longer closure. You may see it referred to as the Galvin Green Man, reflecting the fact that it is now owned by the Galvin brothers who are award-winning chefs.

So, expect top quality food in the large newly constructed restaurant but be re-assured that the original building fronting the road is still a bar for drinkers.

Both the old and the new parts look very good, with exposed beams and several open fires. At opening Adnams Southwold Bitter, Ghost Ship and Bishop Nick Heresy were on the two sets of handpumps, with a selection of bottled real ales.

This pub was sorely missed in the village and in its new guise appears to be an instant hit, with tables in the restaurant hard to come by, although pub meals are available in the bar.

Again, good luck to the Galvins who have brought this historic pub – one of the claimants to oldest pub in Essex – back from the dead. www.galvinrestaurants.com/section/315/1/the-green-man or [galvinrestaurants](https://www.facebook.com/galvinrestaurants) on social media.

Again, a long closure looks to be nearly over for the **Rayleigh Arms, Terling**, known to some as the Monkey and recently as the Terling Inn. Lots of work

going on here and a recent application was made for a premises licence. Although I can't give a date for reopening it must be very soon. This is one of our most remote pubs and you pass through some lovely countryside to reach it. No public transport to speak of, so walk, cycle or get someone to drive!

The Cross Keys, White Notley, whose reopening was announced in the last issue, has appointed an experienced chef and is now serving meals from Friday to Sunday.

Beers on offer here are Adnams Southwold Bitter as a regular with one to two changing guests, all from local breweries. This is another pub whose return has been enthusiastically welcomed by locals. Give it a try. What about the revival of the traditional (to this pub) sausage breakfast on Boxing Day? Social media [crosskeyswhitenotley](https://www.facebook.com/crosskeyswhitenotley).

The lease of the **Green Man, Edney Common** has been advertised for sale for over a year without success. Now a planning application has been made for change of use to a residential dwelling. It would be a great shame if this early 19th century grade II-listed pub was closed but a viability study, admittedly by the freeholder, paints a depressingly familiar picture.

Even with a good reputation for food, 'destination' pubs like this struggle to attract enough customers to provide the funds necessary for a decent living and reinvestment in the property. It is the only pub in the village and several villagers have objected but we wait for the council's decision. www.greenmanedneycommon.co.uk and on social media.

Another pub which has been closed and on the market for over a year is the **Rifleman, Braintree**. Without a buyer, almost inevitably an application has been made for change of use to residential.

The Eagle at Galleywood struggles on. There is still no decision on the application to build a Co-op store on the garden and part of the car park, which is vigorously opposed by local residents. Unfortunately, the pub is only currently open on Thursdays (quiz night), Fridays, Saturdays, and Sundays until 6pm, due to a lack of business on other days.

Message re all of the above – we all have our favourite pubs but let's resolve to visit some of the less well-known ones while they are still there.

Here's a way to increase the return on your investment and retain a pub. New River Retail have applied for planning permission to convert the upper floors of the **Nags Head, Braintree** into four self-contained apartments. Never mind living next to a

PUB NEWS

pub, maybe you could live above it!

News from Will at the **Woolpack, Chelmsford**. Their beer garden is now completed, all set for summer next year! The Halloween Beer Festival was a big success and they're now setting up for two December Festivals – Xmas Ales from 7th-10th and their 'Most Requested Ales of 2016' – from 27th-30th. Up-coming highlights on the beer front include Titanic Grand Reserve 6.5% and some old favourites – Hop Back Summer Lightning (not very seasonal), Cairngorm Trade Winds & Black Gold, Fyne Ales Jarl and Black Wolf William Wallace.

They are hosting a superb value Christmas lunch for CAMRA members on 11th December – more details on our website.

And for any of you who like to think while you drink... they are welcoming John Sweeny (BBC investigative journalist) to the pub on Wednesday 14th December for one of their regular 'Essex Skeptics' events at which John will talk about and discuss Scientology... 'Church of Fear: Inside the Weird World of Scientology'. These are relaxed affairs – you're free to go the bar when necessary! <http://thewoolpack.wixsite.com/woolpackchelmsford> and social media.

The Compasses, Littley Green is now winding down after a busy summer and looking forward to a merry Christmas, writes Davina. Their week-long Christmas Beer Festival kicks off on Monday 19th December with the monthly Folk Night, then Carol singing, live music from Graham Wood and their annual Tractor Run! "We will have a great selection of Christmas Ales, Ciders and Mulled Wine during the Christmas period," says Davina.

"The annual Summer Beer Festival, Hopstock VII, was a very successful event with live music from Redwood, Gunrunners and a few other acts, not to mention the fantastic selection of real ales and real ciders.

"We hold this event each year with help from locals who organise charity stalls to raise money for Farleigh Hospice. This year we raised over £4,000!" A great result. www.compasseslitleygreen.co.uk and social media."

The end of an era is approaching at the **Endeavour, Chelmsford**. Jacqui and Mike are leaving in February after 15 years at the pub. They will be greatly missed, not only by the regulars and other visitors, but by many local charities. Over the years they have raised nearly £17,000 with this year's Christmas raffle still to come. Their coffee mornings, quiz nights, raffles, sponsored dog walks,

race nights, movember, sponsored head shaves and of course collection tins have raised money for Farleigh Hospice, Kids Inspire, Guide dogs, Chess, Women's refuge, Helen Rollason, RNLI, Tom Browns African project, Dreams come true... – the list goes on! This year they've taken the pub into the GBG for the ninth time during their stay.

Meanwhile, Christmas meals are now available and Harvey's Sussex Best is a new regular alongside Mighty Oak Maldon Gold, Adnams Southwold Bitter and Wibblers IPA and their two weekly guest ales. Jacqui adds: "This will be our last Christmas and New Year as landlord and landlady at the Endeavour and we will be having a leaving party on Saturday 4th February; we hope to see friends old and new to say goodbye."



Vine Inn, Black Notley

Tony Keogh, the landlord and owner of the **Vine Inn, Black Notley** for the last 13 years, has also decided to move on. He chalked up six appearances in the GBG – a great performance and we wish Tony well. We understand that the new owner intends to continue to run the pub along similar lines.

Pub Beer Festivals that we know about (all in December):

- Wednesday 7th – Saturday 10th: Woolpack, Chelmsford, 'Xmas Ales'.
- Tuesday 13th onwards: White Hart, Witham, '12 days of Christmas'.
- Monday 19th till Christmas: Compasses, Littley Green, 'Christmas Beer Festival'.
- Tuesday 27th – Friday 30th : Woolpack, Chelmsford, 'Most Requested Ales of 2016'.

PUB NEWS

Maldon & Dengie

Chris Harvey, MAD Chairman reports

In mid-October, the **Mitre in Wickham Bishops** was put up for sale by the current owners, pub company Hawthorn Leisure. It was advertised on the Fleurets' website for a sale price of £295,000. We have just learned from Hawthorn Leisure that they are "progressing an offer that has been made" for the historic village inn. As the Mitre was generally regarded as one of the best pubs in mid-Essex in its heyday in the eighties and nineties when owned by Ridleys, we can only hope that the eventual buyers are committed to restoring this iconic pub to its former glory.



Mitre, Wickham Bishops

After months of protracted negotiations with the owner of the **Compasses in Great Totham**, licensees Alex Chambers and Hayley Rogers have purchased the freehold of the 16th-century pub, thereby guaranteeing its long-term future.

This is a fantastic turnaround in fortunes for the Compasses, as the previous owner had applied to the local council for permission to demolish it only three years ago; thankfully this was thrown out.

The Maldon & Dengie branch of CAMRA spearheaded a high-profile campaign to save the pub, ensuring that two subsequent planning applications to build houses on the pub's car park were also rejected.

To top it all, this year the Compasses was awarded the accolade of CAMRA's Essex Pub of the Year. Alex and Hayley work hard to ensure that they satisfy the taste buds of every discerning beer-drinker, with at least five beers available at all times, mainly from Essex breweries.

There's usually one high-strength special beer on offer, as well as an excellent selection of real ciders and perries. There are plans for a phased refurbishment over the next year or so, which will further enhance the character of this historic pub.

Refurbishments galore!

Work on the **Wibblers Tap Room in Southminster** continues apace; the bar (with three handpulls) has now been finished, new furniture is now in place and a very impressive kitchen has been installed.

An extensive upgrading of facilities at the **Bell in Purleigh** has started. Bed and breakfast accommodation is being added adjacent to the historic hilltop inn; the bar layout will be reconfigured and the car park is being moved to the opposite side of the road.

The **Swan Hotel Bar and Grill in Maldon High Street** has opened its doors after a very comprehensive refurbishment. The accent is now on food, with steaks the main speciality. Drinkers are however catered for, with a dedicated seating area and four real ales on tap.

The **Town Crier in South Woodham Ferrers** has recently reopened after a major refit; there are four handpumps serving Greene King beers, although they can offer other breweries' beers which are on the Greene King list, too. The pub still offers a 10% discount on real ale to card-carrying CAMRA members.

The very popular **One Green Bottle** micropub, which is situated in the heart of the Battlesbridge Antiques and Crafts Centre, has recently expanded into the adjacent unit, which means there is now more seating inside. There is now also a dartboard.

North West Essex

Chris Rouse reports

There are new tenants at the **Red Lion, Belchamp Otten, the Green Man, Toppesfield, the George, Shalford**, and the **Bell, Wendens Ambo. The Green Man, Takely** is now serving beer again. **The Bell, Great Bardfield** is now reopened and significantly refurbished. **The Victory, Saffron Walden** is now closed.

Elmdon Dial, Elmdon – under threat

North West Essex Branch of CAMRA registered

PUB NEWS

its objection to the proposed change of use from public house to mixed use including licensed café, shop, delicatessen etc. for the **Dial at Elmdon**.

Until its closure in 2012 following the death of Chris Crane the landlord, the Dial was a viable and flourishing public house, recognised as such with the award of our Branch Pub of the Year in 2008 (one of the criteria for selection being excellence as a community-focused pub) and regular appearances in CAMRA's annual national Good Beer Guide publication.

It is our view that the Elmdon Dial, with the right management regime in place, has the potential once again to become a viable business and a flourishing community pub and we are aware of several parties who have expressed an interest in taking the premises on.

Furthermore, we consider that it meets CAMRA's Public House Viability Test (updated November 2015), a tool recognised and applied by many planning authorities throughout the country when assessing planning applications relating to the future

of public houses.

Additionally of course, the Elmdon Dial is the 'last pub' in the village and we understand that Uttlesford's policy in recent years has been to refuse change of use planning applications in this situation.

We recognise that many pubs, especially those in rural areas, need additional income strands to survive and prosper and the idea of a shop, delicatessen or hairdressers attached to licensed premises is an interesting one.

Indeed there are a number of rural pubs across the country whose viability is enhanced by running a number of additional services such as those proposed in this application and there is no reason to suppose that these could not function alongside a re-opened Elmdon Dial.

However, a 'licensed café' is not the same as a village pub and we have urged Uttlesford to reject the planning application as it presently stands and to encourage another individual or pub company to bring the Elmdon Dial back to its former status AS A PUB.



WIBBLERS
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Christmas Open Day
Saturday 17th December
Tours between 12 & 3pm
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NATIONAL CIDER TRIP

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

Fifty-seven cider circuiters set off from Ely station to visit three CAMRA award-winning cider makers in Cambridgeshire on Saturday 8th October 2016. Seasoned cider bar managers from CAMRA festivals throughout the country happily shared their knowledge with newbies and a super time was had by all. Thank You to Chris Rouse, Cider Co-ordinator for East Anglia for organising it and ensuring that we all had plenty of food and cider to sup!

CAM VALLEY

Tim Elbourn is a fifth-generation grower of various fruits, the family having established their orchards in the Melbourn and Meldreth area of Cambridgeshire in 1864. The Heritage Orchard of 12,000 trees was re-planted in January 2005 with more than 50 varieties of apple ripening at different times. Many are Victorian for a niche market with the vast majority used for juicing. However the Court Pendu Plat was brought over by the Romans and was called 'Wise Apple', as it is late flowering and so misses the frosts. There was plenty of opportunity to taste various apples as we strolled among the surprisingly-small trees, learning about his fruit and cider. Orchard trees which are hand-picked are much smaller than garden apple trees.

Ashmead Kernel, Hereford Redstreak, Falstaff and Darcy Spice were familiar to me but you could have quite a party with the likes of Annie Elizabeth, Captain Kidd, James Grieve, Rev W Wilks, Tom Putt and William Crump. Notable cider apples growing in the orchard are Kingston Black, Michelin, and Dabinett but the dessert apples he uses to make fruity cider include Spartan, Ida Red and Discovery.

Although the red skin on his Saturn apples was stunning, the ones he recommended for giving red tint to the juice are Discovery and Red Devil. The apples are allowed to ripen properly on the tree before being hand-picked to ensure that they develop their full flavour.

Tim started making award-winning cider and perry in 2008. At the farm shop we had the opportunity to quench our thirst with a few single variety ciders

such as Scrumptious which was sweet; Discovery, Kingston Black with its distinctive flavour and dryness; Dabinett with soft but full-bodied tannin and also as a cloudy version. It was fun to make blends in our plastic glasses for each individual's taste.

PICKLED PIG*

Charles Roberts welcomed us to his cider barn in Stretham, then asked who had travelled the furthest to come and learn about his cider; he thus awarded a three litre pouch of Pickled Pig cider to a cider circuiter from Devon.

He produces Eastern Style cider using 70% eaters and 30% cookers, using apples from the orchard in Haddenham a few miles away.



Prior to seeing pressing in progress he gave a talk about his cider including the process of malo-lactic fermentation that converts malic acid in the apples to lactic acid, which has a softer acidity that improves and makes the flavour more complex.

This occurs due to the presence of lactic acid bacteria in the oak vats in which the cider is matured, kick-starting the malo-lactic fermentation and changing the flavour over a span of several months to be "brilliant by May", a CAMRA Cider Month.

Charles uses old orchard fruit that is not fertilised or sprayed but washed instead, to get rid of wild, extraneous yeast. This ensures that the natural yeasts from the cider shed create his cider, in a similar way to the wild yeasts for Belgian Lambic beers. He makes a pure natural cider with no sugar, sulphites or extra yeast added.

Pickled Pig have received an award in either the East Anglian Cider & Perry Competition or East Anglian Bottled Cider & Perry Competition every year since 2007. 'Porker's Snout' won the National

TO CAMBRIDGESHIRE

Bronze award at CAMRA's National Cider & Perry Championship in 2010. Charles' wife Laura had a stall selling the 3 litre pouches of cider complete with tap for £10, so I bought Porker's Snout and Naughty Sow to take home.

SPINNEY ABBEY

Spinney Abbey Farm in Wicken has been home to the Fuller family since 1892. Jonny Fuller gave a talk on the farm and their cider, which went commercial in 2012. They have won a cider award every year since 2013. The wittily named 'Monk and Disorderly', 'Virgin on the Ridiculous' and 'Nun Beehaving Badly' (made with honey) prompted many comments.

DRAYMAN'S SON

Those who did not have to travel home that night enjoyed the delights of 40 ciders on offer at a marvellous micro pub in Ely called the **Drayman's Son**.

About half of the ciders were from East Anglia including new ones such as Downham's 'Woodhall', which was medium dry and very appley, Franklin's

'Fuddle' medium dry and Cromwell's 'Oliver's Downfall' which I found to be very dry compared to their 'Last Gasp' which had been the driest in the Cromwell's range. The pub is well worth a visit and had 10 real ales including 'Cat's Whiskers' from Colchester Brewery.



Chris Rouse, East Anglian Cider Coordinator and trip organiser

*For more details of Pickled Pig see my write up in Thirsty Times 12 Winter 2014, on the Chelmsford & Mid-Essex CAMRA website.



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SOCIAL CALENDAR

CHELMSFORD & MID-ESSEX BRANCH

Please note that for all trips in a minibus driven by our volunteer drivers the drop off is not a set route but we drop off our members close to their homes. This service is included in the fare quoted.

DECEMBER

Tuesday 6th December

Branch meeting 8pm for 8.30pm start

The White Hart, Witham. Minibus for members only from opposite Chelmsford Station leaving at 7.45pm. Cost £7.50, includes drop off afterwards.

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

Please be seated by 1pm, proposed cost for three-course Christmas Dinner just £9.95 (two courses £7.95). Full menu to follow. Please book your place as soon as possible with the social secretary Martin Joy on 07878 624443.

Tuesday 13th December

The Famous Mystery Runabout

No longer a mystery! It's a trip to the Upminster Taproom then a jaunt across the Dartford Bridge to visit the Dartford Working Men's Club. Minibus from opposite Chelmsford Station at 7pm. Cost £8. Usual drop off afterwards.

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.

JANUARY

Wednesday 18th January, 2017

Branch Meeting – Barista Chelmsford

8pm for 8.30pm start. Members encouraged to make own arrangements to attend. First time = FREE pint!

Saturday 21st January

All day trip to Sawbridgeworth

Hoping to be joint social with HEB branch, visiting the best pubs in town as well as a visit to the award winning Queens Head at Allens Green nearby.

20

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 this festival. Regular Bus and Train service to and from Chelmsford, Witham, Braintree.

FEBRUARY

Wednesday 8th February

**Branch meeting, The Woolpack,
Witham CM8 2JP**

8pm for 8.30pm Start, Minibus from opposite Chelmsford Station departing at 7.45pm Contact the social secretary if you would like picking up from Braintree or Witham. Cost £7.50 includes drop off home afterwards- Members Only. Free pint for first time attendees.

**Wednesday 15th to Saturday 18th February
Chelmsford Winter Beer And Cider Festival,**

King Edward VI Grammar School (KEGS) Broomfield Road, Chelmsford, CM1 3SX
Open noon to 11pm each day, all members encouraged to attend and support this festival.

Wednesday 22nd February

Evening Pub Crawl

On the hunt for Stouts and Porters in the City of Chelmsford. Meet 7pm at the Ale House, then proposed stops at the Railway Tavern, Hop Beer Shop, Orange Tree and Queens Head. All members welcome to come along and join in en route. Call Martin 07878 624443 or Doug 07743 950382

MARCH

3rd and 4th March

Chappel Winter Beer Festival

At the EARM, Chappel and Wakes Colne Station, Chappel, Essex CO6 2DS. Open 11am to 11pm each day, members encouraged to attend and support this event fund raising for the East Anglian Railway Museum.

Saturday 4th March

Branch Cider POTY Judging trip

Free campaigning minibus, 16 spaces and members only, 11am opposite Chelmsford Station.

SOCIAL CALENDAR

All day event judging pubs selling more than one real cider or perry. This is a judging trip so those persons wishing to partake must be prepared to complete score sheets for each pub we visit. ETA back at Chelmsford 6.45pm for evening trip, next below.

Saturday 4th March

Evening trip to Chappel Winter Beer Festival

Minibus Opposite Chelmsford Station 7pm and 7.20pm for Witham pick up Outside Battersford Court. Cost £7.50 bus fare and drop off home afterwards.

Saturday 11th March

Nethergate Brewery trip and Sudbury visit

By small coach opposite Chelmsford Station at 11am (pick up available in Braintree en route). Visit to Nethergate Brewery, which includes a tour and drinks, followed by time in Sudbury exploring the best pubs, before we end the day with an evening visit to the Green Man Community pub and Pumphouse Microbrewery at Toppesfield. Cost £20 per person. (NB: Price may come down if we manage to attract a full coach of participants). ETA back to Chelmsford for 10pm.

Wednesday 15th March

Branch meeting, Woolpack, Chelmsford.

8pm for 8.30pm start. Free drink for first time attendees. Please make own arrangements to attend as no minibus to this event.

Tuesday 21st March

Totham and Tollesbury Runabout

By minibus opposite Chelmsford Station at 7pm. Plan to visit The Compasses Great Totham, The Swan Little Totham, Queens Head Tolleshunt D'Arcy and Kings Head Tollesbury. Cost £8 which includes drop home afterwards. Members only.

APRIL

Saturday 1st April

Essex Cider Pub of the Year Judging

Free campaigning minibus opposite Chelmsford Station, 11am departure. 16 spaces available for members only. Visiting and judging each of the Essex branches Cider POTY to determine the overall winner for the county. This is a judging trip so those persons wishing to partake must be prepared to complete score sheets for each pub we visit.

Winter 2016

Friday 7th April to Monday 10th April CAMRA AGM and Members Weekend – Bournmouth

See main CAMRA website, own arrangements for travel and accommodation

Wednesday 5th to Saturday 8th April Maldon Beer Festival

At Plume School, Maldon, Essex. Members encouraged to attend and support this event.

NB: If anyone is interested in doing a walk from Chelmsford to Maldon on the Saturday, please contact the social secretary, so that a plan of action can be drawn up.

Friday 14th April

Annual Good Friday Pub Crawl

Walk along Springfield Road into the city centre, finishing at the Woolpack Pub Easter Beer and Cider Festival, visiting pubs along the way. Noon meet at the Endeavour Pub [note that, as per CME pub news, this will be under new management by this date – Ed].

Wednesday 19th April

Branch Meeting, Walnut Tree, Broads Green, CM3 1DT

Minibus opposite Chelmsford Station 7.45pm departure. Cost £7.50 with drop off home afterwards, members only. First time attendees get a free pint.

Saturday 22nd April

Essex Real Ale POTY Judging

Free Campaigning minibus, 16 spaces and members only. All day event visiting the Best pubs in the county as chosen by each Essex Branch.

This is a judging trip so those persons wishing to partake must be prepared to complete score sheets for each pub we visit. Depart from opposite Chelmsford Station 11am, with usual drop off afterwards.

Friday 28th April-Monday 1st May

German Trip to Dortmund, Dusseldorf and Cologne

Friday afternoon flight Stansted to Dortmund FR1788 13.00–15.20. Overnight in Dortmund. Saturday train to Düsseldorf. Overnight in Düsseldorf. Sunday train to Cologne. Overnight in Cologne. Monday evening flight Cologne to

SOCIAL CALENDAR

Stansted FR2815 21:50–22:10. Trains and airport transfers in Germany 43 euro (£36).

You should book your own flights and rooms ASAP to secure cheapest rates and availability. For assistance and suggestions on hotels please see website. So we know how many are participating, please advise our secretary on secretary@chelmsford.camra.org.uk after booking your flights and rooms.

- For social bookings email socialsecretary@chelmsford.camra.org.uk or contact Martin Joy on 07878 624443. Last minute arrivals may be accepted at some events but for most pre-booking is suggested or compulsory. Please be advised that the social team have decided to use self-drive minibuses driven by CME members and volunteers where possible. With minibus hire we are only allowed to take CAMRA members on these trips. Spaces are limited to 16 per minibus. Non-members who wish to attend members-only trips are encouraged to consider joining CAMRA, especially at this year's winter and summer beer festivals where there will be special offers.

- On all minibus trips, you will be dropped off in reasonable walking distance to your home. Other coach trips will include the Chelmsford Circuit drop off on return to Chelmsford, <http://www.chelmsford.camra.org.uk/viewnode.php?id=1538>. We will still continue to use coach companies for our all day trips and also runabouts that are a little further afield and where we know demand for places will be high. Please note that for over-subscribed events we reserve the right to give priority to CME Branch members over members of other branches or non-members.

MALDON & DENGIE BRANCH

DECEMBER

Sat 3rd December

Mighty Oak Brewery Open Day

West Station Yard CM9 6TW

Pop along and check it out!

NO BRANCH MEETING

Fri 9th to Sat 17th December

Winter Beer Festival

Swan, Lt Totham CM9 8LB

Thursday 15th December

Branch social, 8pm.

Sat 10th December

MaD Christmas Meal

The Compasses, Gt Totham, CM9 8BZ

7pm for 7.30pm, cost from £19.95 for canapés and main course, £23.95 for additional dessert.

Book with Richard and make menu choices

Sat 17th December

Wibblers Brewery Open Day

Goldsands Road, Southminster, CM0 7JW. Pop

along and check it out (bar nibbles available!)

Wed 28th December

Chelmsford & Mid Essex Branch

Tour of Maldon

From noon at The Carpenters, CM9 5QF

MaD Members are invited to join them.

Thurs 29th December

Mystery Minibus Tour

Meet White Horse, Maldon CM9 5PJ

Start 5pm, £5. Book with Richard

JANUARY

Mon 16th January

Branch Meeting

8pm, Chequers, Wickham Bishops CM8 3NN

Mon 23rd January

Food pairing/tasting with beer or cider

Carpenters Arms, CM9 5QF.

8pm, bring cheese and pate and nibbles to share, bread and biscuits provided

Wed 25th to Sat 28th January

Colchester Winter Beer Festival

Arts Centre, CO1 1NF. Members are

encouraged to support and attend

FEBRUARY

Tues 7th February

Games Night

8pm, Mighty Oak Tap Room CM9 5PJ

SOCIAL CALENDAR

Mon 13th February

Branch Meeting and GBG entry selection and POTY voting

8pm, Town Crier, South Woodham Ferrers
CM3 5TB

Wed 15th to Sat 18th February

Chelmsford Winter Beer and Cider Festival

King Edward VI Grammar School, Chelmsford

All members are encouraged to support this festival and make your own way there.

Thurs 23rd February

Mystery Bus Tour

Meet White Horse, Maldon CM9 5PJ

Start 6.30pm, £6. Book with Richard

Tuesday 13th December

Branch Christmas Dinner

7.30pm Prince of Wales, Brick
End, Broxted, Dunmow, CM6 2BJ.
Contact NW Essex Branch Chairman
chairman@northwestessex.camra.org.uk

JANUARY

Tuesday 3rd January

Branch meeting

8pm Bell Inn, Royston Road, Wendens Ambo,
Saffron Walden, CB11 4JY.

FEBRUARY

Monday 6th February

Branch meeting

8pm Three Horseshoes, Thaxted Road, Duton Hill,
Dunmow, CM6 2DX.

MARCH

Monday 6th March

Branch meeting

8pm Kings Arms, 10 Market Hill, Saffron Walden,
CB10 1HQ.

NORTH WEST ESSEX BRANCH

DECEMBER

Monday 5th December

Branch meeting

8pm Bell Inn, Dunmow Road, Great Bardfield,
CM7 4SA

Tavy joins CAMRA on his 18th birthday

By Doug Irons

Congratulations to Tavy Hayden who joined CAMRA on his 18th birthday at the South Woodham Beer & Cider Festival witnessed by Doug Irons, Chairman of Chelmsford and Mid-Essex branch.

Tavy has helped at previous Chelmsford festivals by washing the glasses and doing odd jobs. Now he is 18 he can join in with the rest of the festival volunteers in sampling the beer, cider and perries.

Well done and welcome to Chelmsford and Mid-Essex CAMRA branch.



CIDER PRESS

By Claire Irons, CME Branch Cider Rep

NATIONAL CIDER PUB OF THE YEAR (POTY) 2016

The ultimate winner of the of the CAMRA Cider Pub of the Year competition has been won by **The Unicorn Inn, Bayford** near Wincanton, a coaching inn on the main London to Plymouth road in Wessex.

Over the last nine years Jayne Wallace and Richard Cummins have extended the range of real cider and perry on offer, showcasing some fine Somerset ciders and even the occasional guest appearance from elsewhere such as Devon. Richard was overwhelmed to win saying "We've won the Heart of Wessex branch cider award three times in a row from 2014 and winning this year overall is a great honour".

Sarah Newson who organises the competition stated: "The licensee Richard promotes the real ciders and perries that he sells with a great passion. He is genuinely interested in their provenance and knows many of his local producers well. The quality of the carefully chosen products are top notch being kept at a constant cellar temperature."

REGIONAL CIDER PUB OF THE YEAR

A former winner of the National Competition in 2013 and the East Anglia Regional winner this year unfortunately has closed.

The Railway Arms on the platform of Downham Market railway station, complete with its own model railway going around the ceiling of this micro pub, was unique and will be sadly missed by many.

The Three Elms at Chignal St James near Chelmsford has been the Essex Cider POTY and runner-up in the regional round for 2015 and 2016. With more pubs extending the range and quality of real cider and perry the competition for next year will be interesting. See Social Diary for pub visits.

CIDER PUB OF THE YEAR COMPETITION

Each CAMRA branch may submit a pub or club that best promotes and encourages the sale of quality real cider and perry with judging between January and mid-March.

The judging form for this competition has the extra category 'Promotion and Knowledge of the Product' in addition to the standard Pub of the Year categories as listed in my Pub of the Year



Photo shows Claire Irons, Alice Warren, Pete Thomas and Chris Rouse, Cider Coordinator for East Anglia at the Three Elms, Chignal St James for the presentation of the Silver Award for the Regional Cider Pub of the Year 2016

article in this magazine. They award their Branch Cider POTY.

The Essex Round of Judging occurs between mid-March and Mid-April followed by the presentations in May, a CAMRA Cider & Perry month. The regional winner from the judging of the six counties of East Anglia in May then progresses to the next stage. The last 16 pubs in the competition from each of the regions are then through to the super-regional judging from mid-May to mid-July to establish the finalists, with the final judging occurring mid-July to September. The winner is normally announced on 1st October, CAMRA Cider & Perry month.

CHELMSFORD WINTER BEER & CIDER FESTIVAL FEBRUARY 2017 CIDER BAR

The theme for the cider bar will be FRUIT and SPICE and ALL THINGS NICE! Come and tantalise your taste buds with the likes of Orchard Pig Chilli and Ginger sweet cider and other seasonal mulled ciders to give you warmth in the winter.

I have chosen many familiar favourites and as well as some products featuring at Chelmsford for the first time including Henderson's Spiced Cider from the Kent Cider Company. Thank You to Molly for her informative write up of the company. Come to the cider bar for the chance to try some of their SPECIALITY FRUIT range.

CIDER PRESS



CHELMSFORD FESTIVAL CIDER BAR TEAM:
Paul, Geoff, Ian and Malcolm



CHELMSFORD FESTIVAL CIDER BAR TEAM:
Geoff, Paul, Claire and Terry


Please come and chat to members of the Cider Bar Team who will be happy to help you find something sensational to sup to help you " Look on the Bright Cider Life!!


ECS REAL CIDER SUPPLIES

Due to semi-retirement Cliff Noakes will be closing the Essex Cider Shop at 166 Moulsham St, Chelmsford on 31st December 2016, to concentrate on the wholesale business to pubs, clubs and festivals. However he will still be able to supply customers who buy cider in the bag-in-box format or by the crate of bottles. Contact him on 07837 907648. As usual Essex Cider Shop will have a stall selling mulled cider outside Debenhams at Colchester Christmas market.

WASSAIL!

Winter 2016







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Our Seasonal beer for March:



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---	---

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KENT CIDER COMPANY

We were pleased to be approached by Claire Irons at the Canterbury Food and Drink Festival 2016 – having spoken at length with our barman, Claire asked us to write a piece for the Thirsty Times magazine describing ourselves and our products.

Kent Cider Co. are a multi award-winning producer of contemporary craft ciders using 100% pressed apples sourced from the orchards of our home town in Faversham, Kent. Now in our eighth commercial year, we have received over 20 CAMRA awards and offer a wide and distinctive range which is getting international recognition for its bold look.

BACKGROUND

Eight years ago in a stable near Faversham, the Kent Cider Co. was created by Mark and Serena Henderson who were interested in pursuing a new career; a fortuitous chain of events led them to meet a cider maker who was looking to retire from his orchard. A deal was struck and since then Kent Cider Co. has grown to be a proud part of the flourishing real cider industry.

CORE

Because everything starts with real apples, we now have a well established core range of single variety dry ciders; Russet, Granny Smith and Gala. Our medium pear cider is blended from Comice and Conference pears, while Blend 23 is our easy drinking medium and made up of over 80 different cider varieties from the National Fruit Collection at Brogdale Farm, Faversham.

We are very fortunate to be surrounded by such an extensive variety of apples!

HENDERSON'S

Moving now into autumn and winter, our Henderson's range is particularly popular. Infused with real caramel and demerara sugar, Toffee Apple cider over ice with a shot of dark rum makes a delicious and melt-in-the-mouth cider cocktail to be enjoyed over Halloween and Bonfire Night evenings.

At Christmas markets throughout the UK our Spiced cider is enjoyed mulled. When slowly warmed through the unmistakable scent of ginger, cinnamon, star anise and cloves is perfectly festive. Tripled with elderflower, the Henderson's bottled range makes for a perfect gift for the cider-drinker in your life!

SEASONAL

Looking back to this summer, one of the things that has really set us apart from other cider producers



is our constant movement and keen eye on the seasons. We produce quite an array of real fruit ciders, even if it means only making very small and limited batches. This year our Strawberry, Cherry, Apricot, Damson and our best-seller, Rhubarb cider, have flourished. On top of these fresh fruit ciders, we also have interesting and unique infusions; from early Green Hop to Pear with Wild Nettle.

In 2016 our seasonal flavoured ciders were recognised by CAMRA with Strawberry and Pear & Nettle both taking Gold in the Speciality Cider/ Perry category at their Kent Beer Festival in Canterbury.

YOWLER

We are now looking forward to our next product launch. Yowler is a sparkling whole-juice apple cider which provides a premium quality alternative to any mainstream offering. Powerfully symbolic, Yowler has all ready received international praise for its innovative design, having been featured by Packaging of the World and included in Dieline's Top 10 Packaging Projects.

The namesake, Yowler, conducts the centuries old ceremony of wassailing where bad spirits are driven from the orchard and good ones are welcomed in. At dusk, a cup is shared among the gathering crowd to celebrate the blessed crop of apples. With Yowler, we want to continue this tradition while looking to the future of modern cider drinking.

KENT CIDER COMPANY

Our mission has always been to create something exciting for the drinker and challenging to ourselves as the producer: ciders with depth, unique flavours and finishes that truly celebrate the seasons and diversity of apple traditions. We are proud to supply a multitude of local micro-pubs, restaurants and delis and our stockist list is growing rapidly throughout the UK.

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CALLING TIME FOR PUB OF THE YEAR

**By Claire Irons, Publicity Officer
Chelmsford & Mid-Essex**

Don't Panic! CAMRA is not finishing the Pub of the Year (POTY) competition but as all CAMRA members are entitled to get involved in the choice of the Branch Pub of the Year now is the time you should be thinking about it, if you have not decided already...

Branches may decide how they choose their POTY. To help the process CAMRA has provided a checklist and some guidance on what to look for in a potential Pub of the Year with explanations for each category, as it is not all about the beer. "I know a good pub when I see one!" you may say and everyone has their own opinion.

This topic brings out strong opinions and to give everyone a fair crack of the whip Chelmsford & Mid-Essex (CME) have the system where ALL members can vote for their choice out of the 160 or so pubs in the branch area not just those in the current Good Beer Guide. We all know of worthy pubs so please make the effort to go out and do some surveying. You may find a hidden gem quite different from your usual drinking den.

The new criteria for 2017 (which has different weightings and slightly different categories than in the past) should be used for judging a potential POTY. Details can be found on the Chelmsford & Mid-Essex website under PUB OF THE YEAR

JUDGING, where you can download the judging form. [Scan the QR Code, valid as of Q4 2016 – Ed.]

Alternatively there is a form in the CME LocAle Pub Trail which is inside the branch Recommended Pub Guide. These have been distributed at various beer festivals and pubs but are also available from me. They can be used for judging pubs after the LocAle trail finishes on 30th November and returned to the address on the form.

Votes for CME POTY must be accompanied by your CAMRA membership number and will be accepted until 31st January 2017. They may be submitted by email to puboftheyear@chelmsford.camra.org.uk or handed in at a branch meeting to Doug Irons. *****FREE BEER***** if it is the first time you have attended a branch meeting. **NO EXCUSES NOW – PLEASE GO TO PUBS AND GET JUDGING.**

Chris Rouse writes...How North West Essex choose their Pub of the Year (PotY)

At the December or January branch meeting, a long list of candidate pubs is formed from the GBG short list using the following criteria:

a) pubs with an NBSS score of four or above (scored during the GBG



Category	Mark:	Factor:	Sub-Total
Quality of Beer/Cider/Perry	(x2)
Style, Décor, Furnishing & Cleanliness	(x1)
Service, Welcome & Offering	(x1)
Community Focus & Atmosphere	(x1)
Alignment with CAMRA Principles	(x1)
Overall Impression	(x1)
Total Score =		

selection process), and

b) pubs where there is more than one recommendation from active members of the branch.

The branch PotY long list is then slimmed down by removing pubs with reports (from active members of the branch) of inconsistent beer quality or service.

If necessary (and if the list is not short enough for final judging), active members of the branch visit candidate PotY pubs, and at the next branch meeting the list of candidate pubs is slimmed down further by removing pubs with inconsistent beer quality or service, or unsuitable décor or atmosphere. Further candidate pubs can be added to the list if necessary, but only where there is a significant number of recommendations from active members of the branch.

For final judging, active members of the branch visit the short-listed PotYs and use the national judging criteria to score, and then rank the pubs. Rankings are submitted to the Branch Pub Campaigns Coordinator prior to the March branch meeting for collation. If, for whatever reason, the submitted rankings are not sufficient to produce a winner a final vote will be taken at the March branch meeting, when only members who have visited candidate pubs are eligible to vote. If there's a draw, a second vote is taken for the pubs that drew.

Prior to announcement, only those members who attend the March branch meeting know the chosen Branch Pub of the Year. The public announcement is normally made shortly after the pub has been informed, which is normally within a week of the decision.

Finally Chris Harvey of Maldon & Dengie adds....

In the Maldon & Dengie Branch, we use the following procedure for choosing our Pub of the Year and Cider Pub of the Year. There will be a separate vote for the Maldon & Dengie Branch Pub of the Year at the final selection meeting, which will be held in February 2017 – all branch members attending this meeting will be asked to vote for their first, second and third choice pubs from the top eight pubs selected for the next Good Beer Guide.

There will also be a vote for the Maldon & Dengie Branch Cider Pub of the Year at this final selection meeting – all members attending this meeting will be asked to vote for their first, second and third choice pubs from the shortlisted pubs (as selected by the Branch's Cider Representative and agreed by the committee).

Members will also be allowed to vote on the internet (using SurveyMonkey) prior to the selection meeting for the Branch Pub of the Year and Branch Cider Pub of the Year.

Winter 2016



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BEER IN MALTA



By Mick Allen

There are two breweries in the Maltese Islands, one of which only produces keg beers and lagers.

Simonds-Farsons-Cisk is based just outside the capital Valetta, on the island of Malta, and was formed through a series of mergers starting with Simonds of Reading in 1929. Some people may recall that the UK Simonds brewery and brands were taken over by Courage Barclays in 1960.

I tried a couple of their 'English' style beers and found them disappointing and thin – Hopleaf at 3.8% abv and Blue Label at 3.3% abv. I also found in bottle Lacto Milk Stout at 3.8% abv, which was quite palatable. I can only imagine that we would all be drinking beers like these now without the formation of CAMRA! Trying to find the nearest outlet to the brewery proved problematic. The closest I could find was L-Akwadott, that only sold bottled Cisk, a 10 minute walk away. www.farsons.com (brewery tours by prior arrangement).

The Lord Chambray brewery is a true Craft brewery, located on the neighbouring island of Gozo, close to the main town of Victoria. Named after Fort Chambray on the island, the brewery was opened in July 2014 by Samuele D'Imperio, and partner Valentina Rosetto following a one million euro investment. All of the brewing equipment was manufactured in Italy by Spadoni.

After arriving at the brewery



unannounced I was given a tour and samples of course! The current beer range is Blue Lagoon 5.0% abv (wheat beer), San Blas 5.7% abv (English IPA), Fungus Rock 5.5% abv (dry stout), Golden Bay 5.2% abv (blonde ale), and Special Bitter 3.8% abv. They also now have a seasonal beer, currently Flinders Rose 4.2% abv.

Samuele told me that at sometime in the future they are looking to grow some ingredients on the island, as currently everything used has to be imported at a cost to both the brewery and the environment. Master brewer Andrea Bertola is based in Italy and spends nine days each month at the brewery. Most of the beer is currently bottled on a state of the art machine also made in Italy by GAI and an on-site laboratory takes care of checking the beers at all stages of the brewing process.

I was told that the reason that most of the production is bottled is that Malta and Gozo are difficult places to sell draught beer, as most bars and restaurants are supplied under contract to Farsons, hence





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only limited outlets exist on the islands. However, Lord Chambray is investigating expanding further afield, and are looking to tie up a deal with a distributor.

To this end, they took a 20 litre cask and many bottles to exhibit in the Italian section at the GBBF in August. Apparently the cask lasted only two hours from being broached! More information at www.lordchambray.com.mt – brewery tours available at most times, free.

While in Malta, I thought I would hunt down a couple of their outlets. Close to our hotel in Bugibba was the Plum Tree. The good news was I managed to find San Blas. The bad news, the bottles were three months past the best before date and the bar was not selling them. After some quick negotiation and convincing them that the beer would only be better and not worse, I got to drink two bottles for the bargain price of three euros.

The next night I ventured to the 1930s Carpentry Wine Bar in San Pawl. Here I found Fungus Rock and the Special Bitter (I think that the whole range was sold), although, unfortunately not such a bargain as the previous night. Here's to the next beer hunting trip!

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COMRADE BILL BARTRAMS EGALITARIAN ANTI IMPERIALIST SOVIET STOUT

"A bold and tasty Russian Stout with a mouth filling, airy texture and lots of enjoyable, peppery, bitter chocolate flavours" - Jeff Evans

"Like a party in your mouth" - My mate Kev

"Gabba Gabba Hey" - Joey Ramone

"To qualify as a country you need a beer and an airline, a football team helps..." - Frank Zappa

"We have the beer and the football team, give us the airline and it is devolution for Suffolk" - Comrade Bill



FROM EACH HIS ABILITY - TO EACH A BEER

When is an Imperial Russian Stout not an Imperial Russian Stout?

By Mark Bartram

Comrade Bill Bartram and his Anti Imperialist Soviet Stout has achieved a cult status (and what a silly cult, I hear you mutter) but what is his provenance?

I decided to re-create an Imperial Russian Stout in 2007 and surveyed many old recipes before reaching a recipe of my own. Using Maris Otter Pale Malt, Dark Crystal and Chocolate with a sprinkling of Roast Barley I created the rich rosy hue I wanted; researching hops I came across Galena, a high alpha [i.e. bitterness Ed.] American hop which had been developed from Brewers Gold. This traditionally lent the dark fruit flavours to many an English Stout and, coupled with Fuggles and Goldings, gave the depth for which I was searching.

The name created instant status but it was the beer itself that quickly shone, establishing itself and winning a clutch of both CAMRA and SIBA awards. In 2007 the cask version won Silver with SIBA, while the bottled version was voted the best bottled beer in the country and went on to be placed on the list of the top fifty bottled beers in the World. In 2014 at the CAMRA Winter Beer Festival it was honoured

with the Best Stout and second Best Beer In the Country going on to be nominated for Champion Beer of Britain. In 2015 the bottled version was a contender for Champion Bottled Beer of Britain.

But...

...in 2011 I was involved in a project with my old lecturer, Tim O'Rourke, to re-create the Baltic Trading Route and we sailed 16 samples of Imperial Russian Stout to a beer festival in St Petersburg where Comrade Bill won the 'Special Reserve' Award – the Russians felt that, at 6.9%, it was not strong enough to qualify as an Imperial Russian Stout.

But never fear...currently maturing in a corner of the brewery is 'Comrade Santa Bartram's Egalitarian Anti Imperialist (ho ho ho) Soviet Stout' at 8.5%, scheduled to make an appearance in casks at selected beer festivals over the festive period but the bulk of which is to be bottled. So if you find yourself in this neck of Suffolk swing by and introduce yourself to the latest fictitious member of the Bartram family.

Further details at www.bartramsbrewery.co.uk or social media

'YOU HAVE REACHED YOUR DRINKING DESTINATION'

PostTag – Making hard-to-find pubs and breweries a thing of the past for CAMRA members, by Paul Yewman

Developed over the last two years, 'PostTag' is a simple, innovative solution that enables those with hard-to-find addresses to be located first time, every time.

The system came about after Keith Lewin, PostTag's founder, moved to a new home in Great Braxted and found that delivery drivers could not find him – Royal Mail's postcode for his home directed them instead to the middle of a local golf course!

After discussion with friends and a little research of his own, it became clear that Keith was far from unique; talking to delivery drivers he quickly learned that hard-to-find addresses in rural areas were a daily nightmare for them. What has the trauma of parcel delivery services got to do with CAMRA, you might ask?

Recently I arranged to meet Keith at the George and Dragon in Kelvedon. Using Royal Mail's official postcode, my SatNav directed me to a spot over a mile and six minutes drive from the pub. "You have reached your destination" – not. Rather than verbally directing me back

on course over the phone, Keith instead generated a PostTag for the George and Dragon while standing at the bar.

Using this and the PostTag app on my phone, I arrived in the pub car park a few minutes later.

Naturally our first thought was "how many others might have been looking for a pub and given up because Royal Mail's official postcode was nowhere near the pub's location?" With that in mind we decided

that donating PostTag to CAMRA pubs and members would actually bring value to all concerned.

How does it work?

Let's use the Square & Compasses as an example.

Step 1: Enter the Royal Mail postcode into the PostTag system at www.posttag.co.uk This generates a pin on an Ordnance Survey map showing where the postcode assumes you are.

Step 2: Move/drag the map so that the pin points to your own building; users can zoom in to pinpoint a front door, a back door or a delivery entrance given the precision of the underlying mapping.

Step 3: A PostTag is then generated – #914 in the case of The Square & Compasses. This stays with the pub forever, so can be used on their website or social media.

Step 4: By entering the Royal Mail postcode and PostTag (CM3 2BB #914) into the app, visitors and deliveries are vectored with pinpoint accuracy



to the exact address.

PostTag is available from the usual app stores – just search for 'PostTag Maps' – and is free of charge for all CAMRA pubs and members.

Pubs in the CME recommended Pub Guide already have PostTags – see CME website

[Please contact paul.yewman@posttag.co.uk if you wish to use the system for non-CAMRA purposes – Ed.]

BREWERY NEWS

CME & MAD BREWERY NEWS

BILLERICAY BREWERY

Trevor writes



The last few months have been times of celebration and commemoration for Billericay Brewing. We received our first CAMRA award for South East Essex summer pub of the year and were also pleased to see the micropub feature in the 2017 Good Beer Guide for the first time. At the end of September we were also given a first SIBA award – Bronze in the speciality category at the East region competition for Chilli Porter.

The brewery has been close to capacity for production. We brewed a couple of special ales to mark the 100th anniversary of the shooting down of Zeppelin L32 over Billericay during the First World War. As part of the weekend of commemorations we were visited by the family of Frederick Sowrey, who was the airman that shot down the Zeppelin (they were keen to drink some of our Billericay Zeppelin) As way of tribute we brewed Sowrey Ale (a classic British amber ale) and in a spirit of peace and reconciliation Friendship Ale (an Anglo-German deep golden ale).

We are now busy preparing for the busy Christmas season, including brewing favourites such as Black Christmas. Micropub and shop are open seven days a week with lots of Christmas gift ideas including brewery tours, Brewer for Day experiences and gift packs.

BISHOP NICK *Libby Ridley tells us*

Bob Sleigh is our winter offering. Coming in at 5.1%, this strong premium pale ale is a nod to an old Ridley's favourite Old Bob. Now available in cask and in bottle though selling fast. Spot on for the festive season. Business is booming and we've just invested in a new stock of casks to cope with the Christmas demand. Have you booked yours?

Autumn is well and truly upon us and EMBERS (3.8%) our seasonal Amber Ale brewed with Bramling Cross hops is sold out in cask but still



available in bottle though as is Witch Hunt (4.2%) our devilishly dark porter which, incidentally makes a perfect addition to a homemade Christmas pudding!

Heresy (4%) our golden ale won Silver at the SIBA East Region awards in September. Coming second overall in the Pale Ale and Best Bitters category was thrilling especially as it is a blind taste panel of discerning judges from all quarters of the industry. We'll be setting up stall at Priors Hall Farm for their Taste of Christmas day on 19th November – a lovely day for all the family. Support local!

New and more regular stockists for our cask ale include: Old Kinds Head in Stock, Cross Keys in White Notley, The Leather Bottle in Blackmore, The Peterboat in Leigh on Sea, The George Inn in Shalford and now permanently on the bar at The Ale House in Colchester. Two Brews in Colchester which has just opened is stocking our full range of bottled beers. We are thrilled to have listings with two Michelin Star establishments in Essex now – The Flitch of Bacon and the newly refurbished Galvin Green Man in Howe Street. All our outlets are listed on our website at www.bishopnick.com

The brewery shop is open on site to the public. Mondays to Fridays 9am-4.30pm (till 6pm on Thursdays and 10am-2pm on December Saturdays for Christmas). We stock our range of bottle conditioned ales and gifts including t-shirts, branded glasses and bottle presentation packs and a range of 8pt mini-casks. Ample free parking and easy access to Braintree Freeport and the town centre. Come see us and buy your Christmas beer at source! For a full product list see www.bishopnick.com, call us on 01376 349 605 and follow us on social media – BishopNickAle and @BishopNick, or sign up for our newsletter at info@bishopnick.com

BRENTWOOD BREWING COMPANY

Wendy Pike waxes lyrical

Christmas

If you're planning a Christmas drink with your mates, we ho-ho-hope you can make it to our Christmas Beer Festival at Brentwood Brewery on 10th December, 10.30am-5pm.

A good range of Christmas beers feature in the line up, including a new one Figgy Pudding 4.3% ABV. Other Brentwood festive favourites are Santa's



BREWERY NEWS

Paradise 3.5%, Chestnut Stout 3.9% and 5 Gold Rings 5%. Best of all, all beer is £2 per pint.

Festive street food will be served from the brewery's Beer Grylls mobile snack van. Musical entertainment is planned and we're told that, although he is rather busy, the big cheese himself will be making an appearance. That's Santa. Not Roland. Although he will be barkeeper. That's Roland. Not Santa. Fun family activities are on offer too, bring your best singing voice as there's the option of joining in with some sing-along Christmas carols. Would you rather drag around the shops Christmas Shopping or enjoy a pint celebrating with us instead? Fun times!

Fragile Xmas Beer is another special Brentwood brew which will be available at the festival and beyond. It is so new, the ABV is tba (to be advised). For every bottle or pint of this special beer sold, a 10p donation goes to The Fragile X Society, an Essex-based charity which raises awareness about Fragile X Syndrome and supports families and children with the condition throughout the country. It is the most common known, inherited cause of learning disabilities and the charity is a cause close to our hearts.

To make it easier for you to stock up on Brentwood Beer for the holidays and to buy some fabulous Christmas gifts, the Brewery Shop and Bar is extending its opening hours during December: weekdays 9am-5pm, Saturdays 10.30am-3.30pm as usual and open Sundays 11th and 18th 10.30am-2pm.

Elephant School

The latest Elephant School Brewing news is that Cheru Kol 4.5% AB, Porter in a Storm 4.9% and Sombrero 4.5% are now available in bottles from the Brewery Shop and online. Put some on your Santa list and (only if you're good) you might find some in your Christmas stocking.

Dixons Gold

As well as preparing for Christmas, Brentwood Brewery has been working on a celebrity collaboration, supporting charity Dixon's Gold. Former Arsenal and England footballer turned TV commentator and columnist, Lee Dixon, has teamed up with Brentwood Brewery to promote Dixons Gold, the beer with a heart of gold. Donations from sales of this special beer will benefit the charity the Yorke Dance Project.

For every bottle sold a £1 donation will go to the Yorke Dance Project. Lee supports the charity

which nurtures young artists and works with underprivileged children throughout the country. The charity is run by Lee's wife Yolande Yorke-Edgell. See www.yorkedance.com.

Lee said: "I'm really pleased to be working alongside the craft brewers at Brentwood Brewery to launch Dixons Gold. I now understand what goes into making a delicious craft beer – love, care, great ingredients and a little bit of magic!" See www.brentwoodbrewing.co.uk/dixonsgold

Planning New Year celebrations? The Brewery Shop will be open for pre-ordered beer collections 10.30am-2pm Wednesday 28th to Saturday 31st December.

January

Looking ahead to the New Year, anyone anticipating participation in DryJanuary (dry January), may be pleased to learn that BBC1, at 1.5% ABV, will be our Beer of the Month. For those of us not inclined to decline throughout January, all beer in the Brewery Bar will be £2 per pint!

In the meantime Roland and the brewery team would like to raise a glass to wish all Thirsty Times readers a very Merry Christmas and Happy New Year. Cheers everyone.

CROUCH VALE BREWERY

Colin says:

Draught beer-wise, we are launching Summit (ABV 4.3%) as our beer of the moment. Available from Monday 14th November, it will be pouring in various outlets from mid-end November onwards and through December. Our Christmas beer Santa's Revenge (ABV 5%) will be available from late November onwards.

We will have three bottle-conditioned beers available for the festive season alongside our usual range of bottles namely Summit and Santa's Revenge as above, but also Yakima Gold (ABV 4.2%). All are or will be available for purchase from our brewery shop here in South Woodham Ferrers and also at Tap Room 19, next door to the brewery.

Also, brewery tours are now available to Tap Room 19 customers by arrangement. Please email the tap room (taproom19@crouchvale.co.uk) or see the Tap Room 19 Facebook group, for details.



BREWERY NEWS

MALDON BREWING COMPANY

Chris tells us

The Maldon Brewing Company have produced six Christmas Ales which are available in cask and bottle.

The two favourites – Farmers Christmas Stout 4.8% and Five Gold Rings 3.8% – are joined by Rudolph's Red 4.3%, a traditional ale, and Good 'Elf a golden ale with orangey citrus notes, and a Winter's Ale, a best bitter with the addition of some fruity hops. The last beer of the Christmas 'suite' is Snowdrift which is a 5% Wheat beer. The Brewers Charlie and Fez were keen to have a go at this, and are pleased with the result.

The brewery has recently won a bronze medal in this year's SIBA Regional Beer Competition for A Drop of Nelson's Blood 3.8% – a dark coloured bitter with a drop of brandy in every glass!"



MIGHTY OAK Gill says:

The much awaited and anticipated Mighty Oak Open Day with FREE Beer tasting takes place this year on 3rd December – hope to see you all here at the brewery; doors open 11am and close at 3pm.

Our Festive Ales this year are something rather special – my favourite is Wonky Donkey, 4.3% pale gold fruity, zingy and refreshing. Other beers include Bingle Jells 5.2% copper which is brewed every year, along with the strangely named but ultimately



prophetic Yellow Snow 3.8% golden.

Look for Starman Porter 4.5% dark and truly delicious, Making Merry 4.5% Rich golden full flavour. The rather lovely tippie, Wilde Spirit, is beginning to sell out – hoping that we have enough to last through Christmas, for you and for sharing in the office (hic). The Mighty Oak Tap Room will, of course, be showcasing all the festive specials and the Wilde Spirit throughout December and into January. Visit the Tap Room at 10 High Street, Maldon.

Looking ahead into 2017, January sees the grand opening of our new sales office – still in West Station Yard Maldon – our sales team and directors are moving to a larger office next door. It's a huge upgrade from the current rather cramped one in our dear old goods shed.

Gill, Lynn, Roger and Jenny are very much looking forward to moving out of the broom cupboard and into the posh new ground floor office. Not only are the new offices totally glorious but will offer our customers a more relaxed and easier shopping experience, so do come and see us soon.

ROUND TOWER Simon says:

All is going well, here at Round Tower. We hope you enjoy our winter beer offerings and have found them available in plenty of pubs in the area, especially Northern Lights which is predominately brewed with aurora hops.

Also, you may have been lucky enough to have some of our small batch 300ml bottles. We are particularly proud of the Belgium Chocolate Stout and also our Braggot brewed with local honey. These bottles are all available at the brewery on Saturday afternoons in December when we will be opening as a pop up bottle shop. You may also find them at The Hop Beer Shop and other bottle retailers.

Now come the time of year when we plan what is going to happen in 2017, so if you've got any suggestions then let us know!

WIBBLERS Abby writes:

News from us is, first of our new fermenters has arrived and will have a brew of Genesis, the first beer brewed in our new home, going in shortly. [wouldn't 'Exodus' have been more apposite? - Ed.]



BREWERY NEWS

Taproom fit-out has moved on, take a look at our presence on social media if you haven't been down. Custom made seating and tables along with a dresser unit for our bottles and mini casks. All being well the catering kitchen will be up and running early December. On the menu, among other delights, will be British Tapas! Think home-made mini-burgers, chicken wings in various flavours, pigs in blankets, chorizo skewers, halloumi skewers, mini Yorkshire puddings, double crunch chicken bites, scotch eggs to name a few items we plan to offer. We will be starting off slowly before hopefully expanding into main meals and Sunday roasts.

Open day for a tour of the brewery with four pints included is 17th December, 12 to 3pm. Come along and sample some of our festive ales and pick out a few bottles for a tipple at home. Festive specials include Santa's Night Off, 4.2% traditional ale, Festive Star, 4.1% golden and bright and our range of Dengie Porters, 4.5%, four flavours available; don't forget our Oatmeal Stout, 4% and Winter Wibble 6% old ale. Most available in bottles and mini casks, or you can buy a two litre Wibblers Stainless Steel Growler for £25 (plus the cost of the beer) for a loved one as a gift. Once they have finished the beer, send them to the taproom and have it refilled for between £10-£12. Numbers are limited so if you are interested please contact abby@wibblers.co.uk

We're looking forward to all the festive events for which we are providing bars, including the Museum of Power Christmas Fayre on 11th December. We will be open between Christmas and NYE providing a normal service, please keep an eye on social media and our website for opening hours. The taproom will be open until 12.30pm Christmas Eve.

NWE BREWERY NEWS

PUMPHOUSE COMMUNITY BREWERY, TOPPESFIELD

Now just over a year old (started in Oct. 2015), a few statistics:

Winter 2016

- production equivalent of 399 firkins (28,728 pints);
- 75% of production has been sold to the Green Man, Toppesfield;
- produced almost 2,000 bottles of various ales;
- 11 different beers have been created, ranging from a Dark Mild at 3.4% to Little Freckled Wren at 5.3%; and
- they have supplied beers directly to seven weddings, to six beer festivals, to birthday parties and private functions, and to the Plough in Birdbrook and the Fox & Hounds in Steeple Bumpstead.

The next focus is the Christmas period and especially producing sufficient bottled beers for sale. It looks as though they will be able to supply the following bottled beers: Pumphouse Bitter (3.6%), Pumphouse Gold (4.2%), Pumphouse Black (4%), Plough Dog (4%), and Pale Oktober (3.8%). The aim is to sell bottles individually or in gift packs, but community shareholders are given first opportunities.

Finally, the brewery has been short-listed as a Regional Finalist in the Community Ownership Awards 2016 for the East of England. These are sponsored by Plunkett Foundation and winners will be announced on 28th November. Fingers crossed!

NETHERGATE BREWERY, PENTLOW

The brewery has now had licensing agreed on their new site and planning is under way. There have been a few newspaper articles in the last couple of weeks about their move. The new location is on the outskirts of Long Melford, currently used as the Rodbridge Car Sales centre.



As with every property purchase exchange of contracts is dependent on licensing, planning and agreement on terms. Nethergate are hoping that exchange will happen before Christmas so they can open a festive pop-up shop at the site.

On the beers front, they have Black Shadow back out again, a dark porter (4.7%) that has been very popular in the past couple of years. Up and coming is Maple Leaf (4.3%), a ruby ale with a full on flavour of maple syrup. North West Essex CAMRA branch is sad to see Nethergate move over the border into Suffolk, but our loss is West Suffolk's gain!

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Winter 2016

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