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REAL ALE

Thirsty Times



CONGRATULATIONS WE DID IT!

**THE BEER DUTY
ESCALATOR IS SCRAPPED**



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

Issue 005
Spring 2013

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Pub News

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

First things first. With our publication date so close to Easter you'll have to be quick to catch some of these events.

Easter Beer Festivals.

The Viper, Mill Green (01277 352010) and the **Rose & Crown, Writtle** www.roseandcrownwrittle.co.uk, have festivals running from 29th March to 1st April.

The Woolpack, Chelmsford starts one day earlier on 28th March and also runs until Easter Monday. 85 beers and ciders including 2 from Round Tower and 3 from Hop Kettle (Worcestershire), food at all sessions and live music every evening except Thursday. (01245 259295)

The Eagle at Galleywood has live music on Easter Sunday evening – Charlie Sansom singing Michael Bublé. Diners and drinkers welcome. www.eaglepub.co.uk.

The Butcher's Arms at North End is now a



free house managed by the Real Essex Pub Company and going from strength to strength. As I

write Lez tells me the beers on are Brentwood Best, Black Sheep Bitter, Sharp's Doom Bar & Penpont Cornish Arvor (Arvor is Cornish for coast). More good news - Stella has been ousted by a genuine German Pils, alongside a wheat beer from the same country.

Reviving something of a tradition in these

parts they are hosting a steam rally on Easter Saturday & Sunday. The X30 & 42A buses from Chelmsford stop bang outside the Butcher's. (01245 237481)

St Anne's Castle at Great Leighs always gets a mention because Dave, the landlord, sends me regular updates on the live music scene there. I'd go at a quiet time for a choice of 4 real ales but you might prefer to enjoy them to a background of Redwood (Good Friday), acoustic soul acts (Easter Sunday), or even Rock the Castle (13th April & every month). www.stannescastle.co.uk.

Congratulation to Joss Ridley for the **Compasses, Little Green** being voted branch Pub of the Year for the second year running. The accolade is well deserved. The certificate will be presented on the evening of April 11th when I'm sure there will be an even larger-than-usual range of beers and ciders, and plenty of good exercise for the bar staff in serving them! Last year the Compasses went on to be Regional Pub of the Year – could it do even better this time? www.compasseslittlegreen.co.uk.

Love 'em or hate 'em those Morris dancers will be back as the days get warmer. They obviously love them at the **Rodney, Little**



Baddow because on 8th May Chelmsford Morris Dancers will perform, with Mayflower Morris Dancers appearing

on 5th September. There's a lot more going on at the Rodney though. Landlady Lynne highlights a quiz night on 13th April in aid of Farleigh Hospice, and a darts night on 27th April to raise money for Help for Heroes. Examples of the marvellous fund-raising that

Pub News

some pubs do for charity. Last year the Rodney raised £1,660 for Help for Heroes and £250 for the Air Ambulance. Great stuff. www.therodneyinn.co.uk.

Here's another way to raise money. Hold a fish finger eating contest, as the **Royal Oak in Braintree** did recently. The winner downed 61 in 1 hour and the event netted around £1,700 for the breast cancer clinic at Broomfield Hospital. Well done members of the Guinness Club. You don't have to drink the black stuff here though; there are always 5 guest beers on. As I write, Penpont Cornish Arvor, Theakston Black Bull Bitter, Mighty Oak IPA & Brass Monkey, and Caledonian Flying Scotsman. Well worth a visit. (01376 618033)

The **Baker's Arms at Danbury** is a Gray's pub with 3 regular beers – Sharp's Doom Bar, Adnams Broadside & GK IPA plus an ever-changing guest ale. They have their 4th beer festival over the spring bank holiday weekend (25th-27th May). At least 12 ales & 5 ciders. Held in the large garden with live music, and food will include homemade curry, chilli and their famous fish & chips. www.bakersarmsdanbury.co.uk

Looking a bit farther ahead the **White Hart, Margaretting Tye** has its regular summer beer festival from 18th – 21st July. Full details in our next issue.

This year's will be the 12th since Liz arrived at the pub on 19th April 2002 and started winning awards from CAMRA and others. You might like to buy her a well-deserved anniversary drink next time you're in. www.thewhitehart.uk.com.

The only remaining pub in Tindal Street in Chelmsford has re-opened after being closed for over a year. **Judge Tindal's Tavern** has been sold by Greene King as a

free house. It is managed by Garry, the son of David & Lynn Lovejoy, tenants of the Horse & Groom at Galleywood. Two Shepherd Neame beers – Spitfire & Early Bird – were on on our first visit but the beer range will change regularly.

Another long-term search for a tenant has ended with the re-opening of the **Swan at Felsted**. "The Village Pub Is Back" is the slogan of licensees Sue & Gerry. Expect IPA plus a couple of guests from the GK range. On opening night I had Belhaven Robert Burns Scottish Ale. (01371 820245)

The Alma in Chelmsford has been bought by a new company - Fireside Pubs and Restaurants. It has been renamed the **Admiral J McHardy**, who was the first Chief Constable of Essex. The good news is that although this is primarily a restaurant you can drop in just for a drink at the bar where you will find Sharp's Doom Bar plus a guest ale. www.admiraljmchardy.co.uk

I like to leave the bad news to last but we have to face the fact that we are still losing pubs. **The New Barn in Chelmsford** is closed and up for sale. After being boarded up for many months, offers are invited for the lease of the **Three Stars** in Chelmsford. The annual rent is only £256.

The saddest news this quarter is possibly the closure of the **Sportsman's Arms at Nounsley**. It looks likely that the site will be redeveloped as private housing and the loss of this village pub will be keenly felt by the locals who now face a trip in to Hatfield Peverel for their nearest pint. Unfortunately many will not be able or willing to do so

And that's it. Don't forget that there are many more pubs out there waiting to be visited for no particular reason other than to drink good real ale. Try them.

4 Support your local pub - don't give them an excuse to close it!

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The Road to Witham Beer

The proposal for a Witham beer festival in September 2013 took a small group of us to that town recently. Naturally, the visit included a few pubs.

Witham became a centre of social importance in the middle of the 18th century and, briefly, the influx of many fashionable people caused Witham to believe that it could rival Bath and Cheltenham.

The town's transformation was due to the efforts of one man, Dr. Taverner, who in 1737 rediscovered the medicinal properties of a mineral spring near a row of lime trees which at that time flanked the drive leading from Faulkbourne Road to Witham Place. The doctor widely advertised the spring.... "This most excellent mineral water whose singular virtues and efficacy will render it beneficial in many if not in most chronic diseases incident on mankind" To encourage visitors to the town he convinced them that the water was "of so exceeding volatile a nature" that it could not be transported "even if the bottles are ever so carefully corked and cemented". Dr Taverner encouraged the local inns not only to accommodate visitors but also to entertain them. So both The White Hart and The George held assembly balls, concerts, dinner, card games and, at The Black Boy (now the Red Lion), even cock fighting was provided to attract aristocratic clients.

The spa literally changed the face of Witham, but its success was short lived. After Dr Taverner died in 1748 it gradually declined in popularity, with only a brief revival among the local townspeople around 1796.

The no. 71 bus from Chelmsford, or the 132 from Braintree, will drop you almost outside the Battersford Court, 100-102 Newland Street.

Formerly The Battersford Court Hotel, this 16th-century building was the courthouse of the manor of Battersford. It opened as a Wetherspoons in 2002 and retains some original features such as exposed timbers which divide the interior into lots of small drinking areas. The 8 handpumps dispense the usual JDW mixture of regular and guest ales. We bump into a table of CAMRA members who praise the quality and range of the beers here and raise their eyebrows at our intention to visit some other Witham pubs. It's Monday evening and there are not many empty seats. A map is available from the bar to help you find the toilets!

We walk along Newland Street towards the centre and visit the White Hart Hotel, sprawled on the corner of Maldon Road,



with an excellent signboard jutting over the pavement. This is a Greene King pub which just about offers everything

to everyone. A huge rambling place, more beams, with separate dining areas, an outside rear courtyard and even accommodation. In 1849, the upstairs Assembly Room of The White Hart Inn (as it was known then) was rented out as the local magistrates' court for petty criminal cases in the ward of Witham Hundred.

The beers on offer were Greene King's Old Speckled Hen and Morlands Original, together with Hook Norton Hooky & Holden's Temple of Love, plus Sierra Nevada Pale Ale in bottles. Did you know that Temple of Love is named after a hit single by the Goth band Sisters of Mercy? The beers were in good form and a couple of light bites from the food menu were also excellent.

6 Support your local pub - don't give them an excuse to close it!

The Road to Witham Beer

A little further along Newland Street stands the Red Lion, rebuilt in the 17th century from two 14th century cottages. Naturally, it features exposed timbers. This is now part of the Heineken empire, one of the Star Pubs & Bars acquired from S & N in 2009. So the beer choice is restricted but on our visit the “regular” Young’s Bitter (in perfect condition) was joined by the currently very popular Caledonian Flying Scotsman. The landlady is back on her second stint as host here over a 20 year period

Now we force ourselves to pass three pubs for reasons which will become apparent. Almost opposite is the ex Ridleys, now Greene King, George – looking for a new tenant and offering IPA. Outside the station stands the Albert, another Heineken-owned pub which is also available to lease – no real ale. Finally the White Horse, a large Greene King house with the smallest range of ales, namely one, whose name would be superfluous.

Our goal is the Woolpack Inn 7 Church Street just past the magnificent Church and churchyard. There are 4 doors to choose from but ignore the two in the middle – they don’t open!



Before you ask, yes, the Woolpack has beams – all pubs in Witham are beamed and that’s that! There were 3 beers to choose from including Oscar Wilde in perfect condition but the surprise of the day was **No Name**, a 5.2% abv bitter from Witham Brewery. It is



brewed behind the bar on a dinky 100 litre set-up. (See Brewery News) It was an excellent pint and gave no hint that this was only the third commercial brew.



The pub, a long-time recommendation by the CAMRA branch has two distinct drinking rooms, with an open fire, dartboards and pool table and a large collection of soda siphons (and a bargain meat raffle every Sunday - £1)

Easily reached by bus or train Witham is worth a visit. More time, and more walking, could have taken us to four more pubs, though sadly the Jack & Jenny remains closed. One last tip - don’t rely on late night buses as they don’t always turn up!

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Brewery News

Round Tower Brewery

First of all, the biggest news to hit brewing in Chelmsford since Grays sadly closed its doors at its Springfield Road Brewery back in the dark days of 1974. **Brewing is back in Chelmsford!**



The Round Tower Brewery, based on Navigation Road, just round the corner from the old Grays brewery site, has not only started brewing but has won an award for its quality beers already, The Brewery is run by Simon and Hannah Tippler who live locally in Broomfield.

Simon worked on some test brews over the New Year and went into commercial production during February with a brewing capacity of 2.5 barrels per week. Three beers were launched at our Winter Beer Festival.

Tippler's Gold 4.2% abv a golden refreshing session beer with a bitter finish, made from European and American hops with English barley.

Solo Galaxy 4.2% abv Part of the Round Tower 'Solo' range of beers showcasing the single hop, Galaxy. The Galaxy hops give this beer subtle notes of citrus and tropical fruits with a malty backbone, sweet undertone and a long lasting bitterness..... are you feeling thirsty or is it just me?

Rectory Stout 4.8% abv Rich and smooth, crafted from seven different malts to deliver a deep and complex stout.

The Rectory Stout won Beer of the Festival on its first outing.

If you want to keep up to date with Simon's beers get yourself down to The Orange Tree where Mike is eager to feature his beers. There will be also a limited distribution to other pubs in the Gray's estate, other local pubs and beer festivals.

There are lots of interesting developments at the brewery already, watch out for a special article on Round Tower Brewery in the next issue of Thirsty Times.

Witham Brewery

Well who'd a thought it? Just when one new brewery comes along, it is swiftly joined by a second.

The excellent Woolpack in Witham now has a brewery too. Brewing started on the auspicious twelfth December. 12.12.12!! They had a dinky 100 litre kit on our visit in early March but this capacity is already looking to double with the acquisition of a new fermenter. In a world filled with brand names, they have decided to call their first beer "No Name" A full bodied, full flavoured 5.2%abv amber beer, this is dangerously drinkable

Glenn Ackerman, publican and brewer has already had help from esteemed brewers such as Sophie from Brentwood Brewing, Nelion from Bishop Nick and John from Mighty Oak, so expect some great brews in the future.

Again, watch this space, as to this development in Witham and a possible new beer festival in the centre of Witham.

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

Brewery News

Colchester Brewery

Have had a lot of success with their new Cream Stout, "Cats Whiskers" and hope to follow it with their much researched Burton Pale Ale. Also, watch out for a new saison style beer in May, which should be available in bottles too. Tom Knox, the brewer is certainly brewing some adventurous styles of beers these days, well worth seeking out.

Pitfield Brewery/Dominion Brewery

Is a project of Canadian Andy Skene, who has been living and brewing in the UK for the last 25 years. The idea of Dominion is to experiment with the production of special, unique, beers that push the envelope about what beer can be. Born in Toronto to British parents, married to an Ecuadorian lady, he draws on his personal knowledge of several distinct cultures for inspiration.

Dominion Brewery beers are brewed at the Pitfield Brewery, which is located near Moreton in Essex. Dominion is running Pitfield Brewery with the aim of producing fine quality organic beers participating more in the organic food industry. Billericay Brewing Company are also brewing here at the moment with a view to finding a brewery of their own,

Mighty Oak

New brews coming up are Golden Bear 3.9% golden pale ale April, Brockton Blockbuster 4.4% dark mild May and Muddly Talker 4.9% best bitter June, this year's theme is Sporting Nicknames. As always, the pump clips have appeal to collectors and the beers are well thought out by their brewer, Dr Alex, using the latest hops and trying new recipes to satisfy taste for something a bit different.



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01376-324641

Winter Beer Festival



Chelmsford & Mid-Essex CAMRA's first Winter Beer Festival at King Edward VI Grammar School (KEGS) in

Chelmsford was a huge success with almost 14,500 pints of beer and 2,300 pints of cider drunk. Despite increasing the beer order by a third on the previous year and the cider order by at least as much the festival ran out of real ale at 8.30pm on the last day and of cider at 9.30pm, leaving just the International beer bar soldiering on until we closed. We sold every saleable pint of beer (well, except for the two part casks kept for the staff party afterwards!). Eight nine gallon casks out of just over two hundred were returned to suppliers for refunds and just one had to be thrown away the day after closing as it would have been ready to sell early the next week!

Views from the almost 5,500 visitors who attended over the week were unanimously positive. The expansion into two large, airy, high-ceilinged halls compared with previous festivals - we used the school assembly hall and dining room - made for a much improved atmosphere that definitely encouraged visitors to stay longer.

The festival was opened by the beer author Pete Brown, who then signed copies of his new book "Shakespeare's Local: Six Centuries of History Seen Through One Extraordinary Pub", a book about the George Inn near London Bridge.

Chelmsford's first brewery since the closure of Gray's in 1974 used the festival to launch its brand new beers. Round Tower Brew-

ery's three beers were Rectory Stout, Tipplers Gold and Solo Galaxy. Rectory Stout was voted Beer of the Festival and a presentation will be held later in the year. The beers are now available in some local free houses such as the Ale House, and Grays pubs, notably the Orange Tree.

If all goes well the festival will return to KEGS in 2014, hopefully expanding to a third room for more beers and more space. See you then!

In the meantime if you now have a thirst for beer festivals in Chelmsford then come and join us at our Summer Beer & Cider Festival in Admirals Park Chelmsford from Tuesday 9th July to Saturday 13th July 2013. The sun is going to shine.




The Village pub is back

Gerry and Sue welcome drinkers and diners alike. We have two to three real ales, good wine selection, home cooked food using fresh, local and seasonal produce. Functions catered for. New large secret garden coming end of May.

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www.theswaninn-felsted.co.uk

10 Seek out Local Ales in your local pubs. Support your local breweries.

Craft Ale

Renowned Essex craft brewer, tutor and beer expert Nigel Sadler has just published a short book on brewing. "Notes on Craft Ale Brewing" is a 64 page guide to the essentials of brewing theory covering the raw materials through to the finished item in the glass.

Nigel says "This is the culmination of 5 years work and has involved a lot of chopping and changing during that time. It started life as accompanying course notes for my Learn2brew Introduction to Craft Brewing Course. I've tried to condense all the information that I myself learnt on Institute of Brewing & Distilling, Brewlab and Campden BRI courses along with practical experience into a handy format."

Nigel hopes the book will appeal to micro-brewers and home brewers alike in underpinning a certain level of practical brewing with the relevant science to reinforce it. Nigel has pointed out that it was put together and designed specifically to be not too heavy on calculations and equations which are the remit of far more detailed books on the subject.

Nigel adds "There are lots of ways of achieving the same goal, in this case brewing great craft ale. As in many things there are not necessarily right and wrong ways to go about it. However, as with learning to drive, you need guidance at the start, then once you're competent you go on your own way. And we all know that a quick glance at the Highway Code now and again helps keeps things fresh and that's where this book might also help the more experienced craft brewer."

Nigel continues to run a number of courses from brewing through to bar staff training under the Learn2brewschool banner. The brewing school is based at The White Hart Inn, Margaretting Tye which is itself a highly successful and award winning pub, a firm favourite with many for its excellent selection of real ales and good food.

The book costs £9.95 including p&p and is available direct from www.learn2brew.co.uk from 21st March. It will be appearing in brewing supply shops across East Anglia in the months to come.

Nigel Sadler is currently Commercial & Operations Manager at Mayland based Wibblers Brewery. He has studied brewing on and off since 1985 gaining qualifications with the Institute of Brewing & Distilling and the Beer Academy. He is Vice-chairman of the Society of Independent Brewers (SIBA), a part time tutor and board member of the London based Beer Academy. He was voted APPBG Beer Sommelier of the Year 2012.

Nigel has also been an active member of the Chelmsford & Mid-Essex branch of CAMRA for the past 7 years. He is also a member of the Brewery History Society, The British Guild of Beer Writers and the Craft Brewers Association.

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Good times, great value



Grays Elegy

The recent features on Gray & Sons pubs have taken me back to the summer of 1974.

At that time CAMRA was in its infancy and I



was a regular at the **Coach & Horses in Billericay**, then and now a Grays house. The

news that Grays were to cease brewing came as a great shock and there and then I resolved to visit all their pubs whilst they still sold Grays beer.

First off I had to obtain a list and then I met with Michael Gray at the brewery in Springfield Road. He gave me a tour of the premises which as I recall were a somewhat smaller version of Riddleys. At some point on my tour I decided to make notes of the pubs and characters I met and the result was "Grays Elegy", a 16 page booklet jointly financed by Michael Gray and the Chelmsford branch of CAMRA. Some 2,000 copies were printed and sold.

Although few outward changes have taken place in the nearly 40 years since the booklet was published a great many other changes have occurred. All 51 pubs sold real ale, as they do today, but all the beer was in wooden casks and very few had handpumps, the vast majority serving on gravity. The larger Grays pubs often had a wooden pin of Stock Ale on the bar.

It seems amazing in these days of technology but in 1974 three pubs were not even on the phone, one of which was the **Orange Tree**. Equally, if you had occasion to write to the brewery, you



would invariably receive a reply on headed notepaper, always handwritten and always in fountain pen ink.

The licensees had often been behind their bar counters for many years, often handing down from father to son, and what characters they were.

Several years after decimalisation Mr Gentry at the Orange Tree still dealt in pounds, shillings and pence. It was quite alarming to be told 'that will be four shillings and six-pence!' Then there was the licensee deep in Dengie who had had a delivery of over-sized pint glasses but normal measure half pints. He would fill the pint glasses to the brim and, because he couldn't do the same with the half pints, he rounded down the price!

There was also the landlord who would sit on a chair in the entrance to the pub and would only let you in if he liked the look of you!

Given the way pubs have closed at a frightening rate it is to the credit of Gray & sons that only 2 of the original 51 have closed and one of these, the Prince of Orange in Hall Street, Chelmsford is still a pub. The Railway Hotel, Southminster fell victim to developers.

Whist Gray's trading area is fairly compact, ranging from Brentwood and Ongar in the west to Feering and Tiptree in the east, there are a sizeable number of pubs in Maldon and Dengie. This is explained by the existence until the 1940s of a second Grays brewery which was situated close to the Carpenters Arms, almost where Farmers Ales are brewed today.

Outside of the relatively compact trading area is the **Cricketers at Westcliff**, far and away the largest pub in the chain and believed to be the one selling the most beer.

Grays Elegy



Roundbush, Sir Evelyn Wood, Tulip and United Brethren.

I think it is greatly to the credit of Gray & sons that by and large their pubs are still exactly just that, and not gastro establishments where sitting down quietly and just having a pint is frowned upon.

I hope that my reminiscences will give you the urge to perhaps go a little further afield and discover the joys of those Grays pubs you've never visited. The chances are you will find an excellent range of ales.

Michael Turner

If you happen to have an original copy of Grays Elegy, then Podge would be very interested to know.

Also outside, and when asked Michael Gray could throw no light on how they came to be Grays houses, are the two in the Heddinghams. Lately they have been joined by an addition to the chain, the Victory at Wickham St Paul.

Finally I would just make mention of the names of Grays pubs. There are no Red Lions, no Crowns, no White Harts or New Inns. Instead we have most unusual and in some case unique names, e.g. Endeavour, Hurdlemakers Arms, New Welcome Sailor,



Dominion Brewery produces a range of unique and inspirational beers inspired by history, culture or fate. The first brew Yukon Gold took us to the Klondike. Amber Porter took us to a bank in Colchester. The next brew will be an American IPA brewed with English Cascade hops.



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Dominion Brewery Company, Pitfield Brewery, Moreton, Essex, CM5 0JE
www.dominionbrewerycompany.com

Beer and Cricket

The UK first class cricket season will soon be upon us. Cricket has always had a happy [mainly!] association with beer, indeed the Essex County Cricket Club is currently sponsored by Kent brewer, Shepherd Neame and their beers are available at all home matches at Chelmsford.

Former Essex brewer, Ridleys, were the cricket club's sponsors prior to Shepherd Neame and they sometimes produced a beer with a cricketing theme, for example Golden Duck, supposedly named after a rare occasion such as when Graham Gooch was out first ball for a duck. I can also remember seeing captain of the time, Keith Fletcher, being interviewed on television after one of the many Essex successes that were achieved in our glory days with a pint of beer in his hand, which he referred to as training fluid. I tried to follow his example by drinking copious amounts of beer but my cricket abilities remained on the poor side of poor!

Many years ago when I was the youngest member of the works cricket team, and certainly an underage drinker [I think I am safe in confessing that some 50 years on!], we had a Saturday cricket match at Tillingham. We got there early and went in the pub. It was the first time that I had encountered beer from a wooden barrel, on the bar, and with hops floating in it. It was delicious. After the first pint we had more. I then achieved my lifetime best bowling figures although I didn't remember it until I read the captain's report several days later; I don't even remember getting changed before or after the match. We probably only won because the Tillingham lads were in the pub before us!

Cricket, probably like real ale, is a complete mystery to those who don't understand its finer points. I once read a quote attributed to

Rafa Benitez, then the manager of Liverpool FC, now the manager of Chelsea – who knows where he will be by the time this article is published! The quote went something like "how can a fellow say to his wife that he is going to a match.....then he gets home five days later." I gather also that Americans simply cannot grasp how a game can last for several days and have no decisive result. At least the American beer scene is improving.

I have supported Essex for many years, through good and bad times. I particularly enjoy watching cricket at the County Ground in Chelmsford; it is small and friendly and a huge bonus is that Chelmsford is blessed with a number of superb real ale pubs, several within walking distance of the ground. Over the years I have worked out how many minutes it takes me to walk to each pub. All of the pubs mentioned below are currently in the *CAMRA Good Beer Guide*.

Closest to the ground in walking time is The



Queen's Head at 30 Lower Anchor Street. It is very popular with Essex cricket fans and is often crowded at

lunch times. It used to be interesting to watch the efficiency of Silent Mike and his staff as they speedily produced hot lunches and served excellent beer.



Silent Mike has now moved just down the road to **The Orange Tree** at 6 Lower Anchor Street, probably another

Beer and Cricket

minute of walking but worth it!

Then comes **The Woolpack** at 23 Mildmay



Road – you can see it from the Parkway dual carriageway as you go through town. A couple more minutes walk from the

ground but this is my personal favourite. The pub has won several awards recently but the main reason I use it at cricket lunch intervals, which are of 40 minutes duration, is that not many cricket supporters seem to frequent it [maybe they will now!] so I can walk straight in and be served, creating an opportunity to get two pints at lunchtime rather than probably just the one in the hostels mentioned above.

Crossing the main through road and north of



the ground is the delightful **Railway Tavern** at 63 Duke Street, but quite a small pub. In former days this pub was a magnet for Essex cricket fans. The landlord, the late Leslie Woolard, posted the latest Essex score on

a little blackboard, immensely valuable to those who couldn't be at the match, in the days before new fangled gadgets enabled one to get the racing results in advance!

Also in Duke Street at 44/45 is Barista, a new modern bar. Local beers are often stocked, served on gravity.

All of the above mentioned pubs provide lunchtime food; snacks at least and often



cooked meals.

A new venue, not yet in the Good Beer Guide, is the **Ale House**, underneath the arches right near to Chelmsford railway station. This is a beer lover's paradise. What better place to finish a day at the cricket, since both trains and buses are a mere stumble away. Take care not to fall asleep on your way home!

Essex's first home match is from Wednesday 10th April to Saturday 13th April starting at 11am each day. Playing cricket in April always seems unnatural to me, but if you wear thermal underwear and about five layers of clothes on top you should be ok! If frostbite takes hold you can always visit one of pubs mentioned above to thaw out! Conversely, a couple of years ago, the first match of the season, again in early April, was played in hot sunny weather, probably the best week of that "summer"!

Essex start this year by playing Gloucestershire, a county which is also blessed with good beer.

If you wish to find more information on Essex Cricket the headquarters are at New Writtle Street, Chelmsford, telephone 01245 252420, or visit their website at www.essexcricket.org.uk

Graham Price

Ale & Hearty

Since you are reading this article it is highly likely that you live in or near to Chelmsford and that you enjoy a pint of beer, but would you like to know more about the story of brewing and drink in your town? If you would then make sure that you visit Chelmsford Museum between 11th May to 14th September this year for a special exhibition “Ale and Hearty” about this very subject.

People have lived in the area now known as Chelmsford since before the Romans established a settlement here in the 60s A.D. Archaeological work in the Moulsham Street area has located evidence for various Roman buildings including those to a mansion complex, a kind of Imperial hotel and staging post, which was established in about 120 A.D. After the Norman Conquest in 1066 Chelmsford grew as an agricultural centre, travel hub, market and assize town. This naturally required the establishment of inns and the services of inn-keepers and publicans and the breweries, maltings and other businesses which supplied them. In the Nineteenth Century these businesses thrived as new industries were established and the town grew. However, by the 1970s the last local brewery had been closed (Gray & Sons Ltd), many of the well-known town centre public houses had been lost to redevelopment and the quality and choice of beer available had become an issue.

This exhibition gives a brief history of hosteleries in the town, what they provided and the people who worked in the trade. It also includes



those of the Temperance Movement who

opposed the sale of intoxicating liquor and brings the story up to date with micro-breweries, new entertainments and the decline and loss of public houses. Topics covered include hop-growing, malting and brewing, pubs as social centres for clubs, sports and music and inn signs and their meanings.



Chelmsford & Mid Essex CAMRA members have been fully involved with the Friends of Chelmsford Museums (FCM) in the preparation of this exhibition and it will include information about the campaign and the story of successful Chelmsford beer festivals. Local members have also loaned items for display to supplement drink-related exhibits from the Museum's collections

There will be four talks during the run of the exhibition. Appropriately the first will be about the experience of brewing by Franco Davanzo, inspirational brewer of beers from the local Felstar Brewery (Saturday 1st June). The impact of the First World War upon the brewing industry and beer on the Western Front is the topic of Siobhan McGinn, a beer book writer who is currently pursuing post-graduate military studies (Saturday 6th July). The book by beer writer Pete Brown, Shakespeare's Local, has had great success following serialisation on Radio 4, and he will talk about the unique building which inspired his book, The George Inn in Southwark (Saturday 3rd August). The

16 To advertise in this newsletter contact Neil on 01536 358670

Ale & Hearty

special story of Malt and Maltings will be the



subject of Elphin Watkin, an historic buildings specialist who successfully

campaigned for the restoration of the Dunmow maltings, the oldest surviving maltings in Essex (Saturday 14th September).

A number of Chelmsford centre walks are planned, which will point out some of the sites and buildings related to the licensed trade.

There is also a wish to create a lasting archive from the exhibition by involving as many people as possible in an oral history recording project. This will aim to record individuals' memories so if you have reminiscences about breweries or pubs in Chelmsford that you would like to share please make contact with the recording organiser (Edward Gregory 01245 265529; Edward.gregory@talk21.com).

An accompanying booklet will be available which, like the rest of the exhibition, is supported by a significant grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund. The exhibition will be opened at Chelmsford Museum (Oaklands Park, Moulsham Street) on the 10th May by Michael Gray of Gray & Sons in the presence of Lord Petre (President of FCM), and the Deputy Mayor of Chelmsford.



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Branch Diary

Tuesday 2nd April Real Ale Runabout to Halstead, Toppesfield & Cornish Hall End. Bus departs opp. Railway Stn at 7.30pm, fare £9 mems/OAPS, £10 non-mems.

An unusual Runabout in that none of the pubs to be visited is in the current Good Beer guide! The first two changed hands recently - The Griffin, Halstead (ex-Greene King) has just been taken over by the same owners as the GBG-listed Five Bells at Colne Engaine and The Green Man, Toppesfield has been owned by the local community since last December. The Horse & Groom, Cornish Hall End should be in the next GBG.

Saturday 6th April Essex Pub of the Year Bus. We'll go around all the other Essex Branch Pub of the Year winners and formulate the Branch vote for Essex POTY. As the full list of winners is not yet known, nor is the schedule. We'll leave from opp the Railway Stn sometime Saturday morning and we usually get back late afternoon/early evening. Full details will be on the website as soon as they are known and I'll obviously keep those who've booked informed of the departure time. **Free - please book in advance for this.**

Thursday 11th April Branch Pub of the Year Presentation to The Compasses, Littley Green. Bus departs opp. Railway Stn at 8pm, fare £9 mems/OAPS, £10 non-mems. Presentation at 9pm. **Please book in advance for this by 31st March to guarantee your place.**

Wednesday 17th April Branch Meeting at The Oddfellows Arms, Chelmsford. No bus to this meeting which starts at 8.30pm.

Wednesday 24th April Presentation of Winter Beer Festival Beer of the Festival 2013 to Round Tower Brewery. Round Tower Rectory Stout won the Beer of the Festival vote at the Winter Beer Festival. We'll meet

the brewer at the Oddfellows Arms, Springfield Rd at 8pm, then move down for a quick visit to the brewery (which is very small) in Navigation Road and finally finish at the Orange Tree.

Saturday 27th April Visit to Windsor & Eton Brewery. A visit to this great brewery followed by some pubs in the area. The brewery tour will cost £10/head. Dep Chelmsford opp. Railway Stn 10.15am, fare £22 mems/£24 non-mems. We should arrive back in Chelmsford (Lower Anchor St) before 11pm. **Please book in advance for this by 18th April.**

Tuesday 7th May Real Ale Runabout to Coxtie Green, Chipping Ongar & Stapleford Tawney. Bus departs opp. Railway Stn at 7.30pm, fare £9 mems/OAPS, £10 non-mems.

Wednesday 15th May Branch Meeting at The Square & Compasses, Fuller St. Bus fare £5 members, £6 non-members. Depart from opp. Railway Stn at 8pm.

Saturday 18th May Mild Crawl of Chelmsford. Our annual 'May is Mild Month' crawl around Chelmsford pubs selling mild, some selling it especially for the occasion. Start at the Oddfellows Arms, Springfield Road, Chelmsford with a 12.45pm departure to the next pub. The full schedule is still being organised and full details will be put on the website and emailed once confirmed.

Tuesday 28th May Rail Trip to Colchester Beer Festival. Meet at Chelmsford Station at 1825 to arrange Groupsave tickets for the 1846 departure.

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

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Thirsty Times

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**Deadline for Summer 2013
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Cider Press

25 YEARS OF CIDER AND PERRY CAMPAIGNING

CAMRA has now been campaigning for 25 years to promote real cider and perry alongside British real ale. This landmark anniversary will be celebrated throughout 2013 with various local and national events and festivals. Please see our branch social calendar and website for details.



Over recent years the popularity of real cider and perry has been increasing year on year with more variety, choice and range for each of the Chelmsford Festivals. The name was changed to Chelmsford Beer and Cider Festival in 2012 in recognition of this. Most pub festivals now also sell real cider.

Local Cider News

Having introduced 2 new Essex ciders at our festival last July (Sir Carter's Scrumpy and London Glider to have all 6 producers



represented) I was pleased to have the new kid on the block at the Winter Beer and Cider Festival namely Dengie Dry Cider which was 6% and well received. This is currently available at The Three Elms in Chignal St James. The bottled version is medium dry and 5% and plans are in process for Wibblers Brewery to market it. The Elms currently have Glebe Farm (from Cambridgeshire) Side-R in medium and dry both 6.5% as well as Castling's Organic cider to add to the usual range from Gwynt Y Ddraig, Westons and Crones.

Cliff Noakes, proprietor of The Essex Cider Shop in Moulsham St, Chelmsford has now got ECS as VAT registered and is keen to

supply local pubs and events. New stock for The Ale House in Chelmsford includes Bid-denden Dry, Millwhites Rum Cask, West-croft's Janet's Jungle Juice and Dudda's Tun cherry. He will have a cider stall at Hyde Hall in June. (See their website for details of this event).

He has supplied the Rose and Crown at Writtle for their Easter festival and will participate in the Easter Saturday Secret Vintage Fayre at Colchester with the location to be announced the week before. All very mysterious!

King William IV at Braintree currently have Millwhites Rum Cask 7.5%; Navel Gazer 6%; GYD Autumn Magic and Westons 1st Quality 5%. At the end of June they will be holding their Proms In The Garden event complete with 30 piece Silver Band and Fire-work Finale.

The Compasses at Little Green have Firey Fox from GYD and Double Vision Perry.

Cider Pub of the Year

At the time of going to press judging is underway for the CAMRA Cider Pub of the Year competition and follows the same guidelines as the Pub of the Year.

The categories for judging include the Quality of Cider /Perry; Promotion/Knowledge of Product; Atmosphere/Style/Decor; Service/Welcome; Community Focus; Sympathy with CAMRA aims and Overall Value. The cider should not be stale or vinegary but should be right for the style.



Winter Beer and Cider Festival

Paul Sams, Geoff Palmer and Me.

20 Support your local pub - don't give them an excuse to close it!

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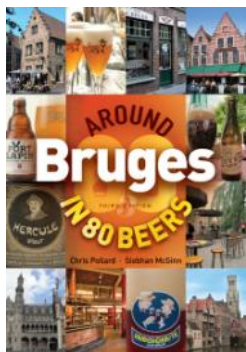
The definitive guide to drinking in Bruges

Around Bruges in 80 Beers, Chris Pollard &

Siobhan McGinn (Cogan & Mater, £9.99)

www.booksaboutbeer.com

Can there really be 80 outlets for good beer



in this tiny town?

“Podge” Pollard and

Siobhan McGinn

have found them in

the third edition of

their seminal guide.

They have pounded

the pavements, careened

over the cobblestones

and left no glass un-emptied

in their quest for outlets

that serve the finest that Belgian brewers

can offer.

It's a guide that wears its heart on its sleeve:

“If it is lager and chips you are after, put us

down and move on, as we will be of no use

to you,” the duo state firmly in the introduc-

tion. In short, it's a stellar book but not for

Stella drinkers.

As someone who finds it difficult to leave

Daisy's bar, I must make a greater effort on

my next trip to follow in Podge's and Siobhan's

footsteps and take out some of the

outlets they have discovered. I use the term



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

“outlets” deliberately, for this is more than just a pub guide. It covers restaurants, De Halve Maan's brewery and museum, beer shops, hotels, a boat and even a bookshop that sells beer – Waterstone's take note.

As well as the listings, the guide is helpfully



broken down into the different categories of outlets. This means that when your stomach rumbles you will know where you can eat as well as drink. On my recent visit, I passed Bron in Katelijnestraat and had no idea

it was a vegetarian restaurant that sells the

sublime beers from Dupont, including the

impeccable Saison. I shall not make the

mistake again.

Helpfully, the guide lists the main types of dishes you will find in Bruges restaurants – I

discover that sea bass is called zeewolf,

which is rather alarming, while monkfish is

sea devil: I'll stick to pannekoeken or filled

pancakes. For the first-time visitor, Podge

and Siobhan also run down the main Bel-

gian beer styles, so you can sort your Dub-

bel from your Tripel and will never mistake

an abbey beer for a true Trappist.

As with all Cogan & Mater guides (proprietor

Tim Webb of Good Beer Guide Belgium

fame), the book is also shot through with a

dry and acerbic wit – or witte, if you prefer.

It's excellent value for money and hand-

somely designed by Dale Tomlinson, who

enjoys a glass or two himself.

Don't catch Eurostar without it.

Roger Protz - Molson Coors Best Beer

Writer in National Publications

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