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SUMMER 1992

Steve

FREE

INN VIEW



The Beehive

Modest Corner, Southborough.



The Official Magazine of the Townbridge & Tundridge Wells Branch of The Campaign for Real Ale

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An Introduction

Dear Drinking, Thinking Reader,

May I congratulate you on your good sense on reading our magazine and hope that you find it enjoyable and informative. Please feel free to pass it on to your friends, relatives or workmates!

May I crave your indulgence briefly to interest you in what the magazine is all about before you become absorbed and lost forever in the magic of the contents to follow.

Although this magazine is the official branch magazine of the Tonbridge and Tunbridge Wells Branch (incorporating Sevenoaks Area) of CAMRA, it is not primarily only for the eyes of said Branch Members. Oh no! The "Rag" at present in your hot sticky little hands is, like CAMRA itself, designed for the promotion of real ale. The best way, of course, is to buy lots of the lovely stuff itself, thus forcing your friendly local landlord to order more from the breweries and the breweries then have to brew it instead of that nasty lager substitute.

By supporting your local pubs with your custom and CAMRA by joining your local Branch (see membership form in this very publication - what could be easier?) you ensure that the breweries have to supply your never-quenched thirst for ever and ever -Amen!

For new readers and new converts to real ale, you will find in this magazine, a guide to CAMRA and Real Ale; news of forthcoming festivals and beers; news about local pubs; meetings of the local Branch of CAMRA and articles of interest to all discerning drinkers everywhere (and a cartoon).

Please enjoy your beer and this little attempt at a sophisticated piece of journalistic endeavour.

Yours drunkenly,

G.P. SAYER,



Halfway House

London Road, Riverhead, Sevenoaks, Kent.
Telephone: Sevenoaks 457108



3 REAL ALES

- **IPA**
- **RAYMENTS**
- **ABBOT**

A WIDE RANGE OF BAR MEALS

ALL WEEK (EXCEPT MONDAY EVENINGS)

EVENING A LA CARTE MENU

TUESDAY TO SATURDAY INCL.

A friendly, cosy, traditional pub

Cask Ale - unique beer of the world...

NEW READERS
START HERE

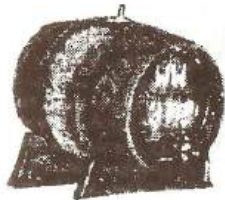
Real ale - or cask-conditioned beer, to give it the correct technical name - is the champagne of the beer world, a beer that reaches maturity inside its container in the pub cellar.

It is that conditioning in the cask that marks it out from the rest of the world's beers. The rest of the world drinks mainly lager beers and even in countries such as Belgium where ale-type beers are produced they come to fruition in the bottle rather than in the cask.

The British drink most of their beer in draught rather than bottled form. A cask ale is brewed from the finest malting barley, produced in the main

in East Anglia, with the addition of English hop varieties.

Before barley can be used in a brewery it must be turned into malt. This requires great skill



A vented cask.

in encouraging the barley to germinate, producing the natural starches that will provide sugar for fermentation.

In a malting the grain is allowed to germinate, with roots breaking through the husk of the barley, and is then heated in a kiln to produce a pale or darker malt according

to the brewer's needs.

In the brewery the malt is ground into a coarse powder called grist. It is thoroughly mixed in a large vessel called a mash tun with hot pure water. The sugars dissolve into the water and the sweet liquid, called wort, is pumped to a copper.

The flowers of the hop plant add bitterness to beer and the oils in the plant also guard against any infections during the brewing process.

As the wort is boiled in the copper with the hops many brewers also add sugars, such as glucose or cereal syrup, to encourage a strong fermentation. CAMRA would prefer beer to be brewed solely from barley malt but the use of sugar dates back to the 19th

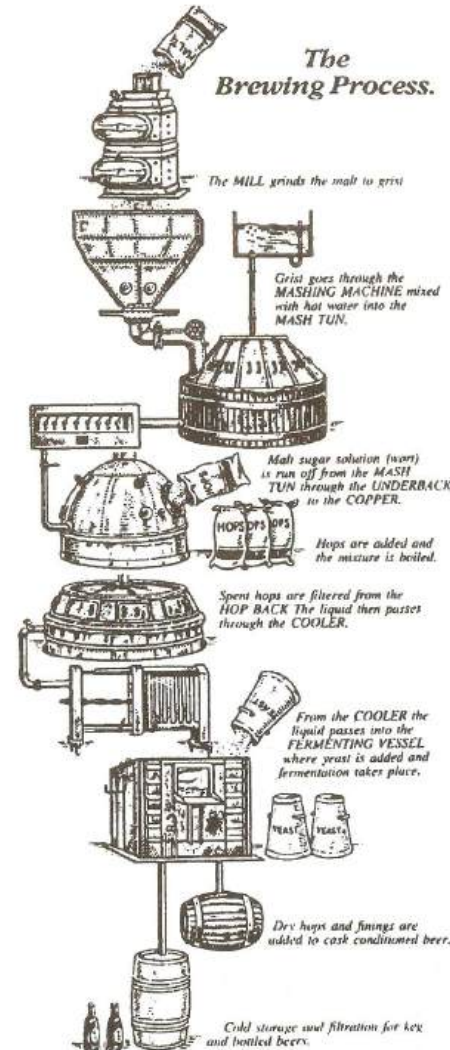


SOLE BAY BREWERY

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The Brewing Process.



aromas that add to the pleasure of ale drinking.

The great head of yeast created during fermentation is cropped off and after a week the remaining yeast is overcome by the alcohol it has produced and sinks to the bottom of the fermenter. The liquid is not officially called beer but it needs a few days' further conditioning in the brewery, to purge some of the rough alcohols, before it is ready to leave for the pub.

The beer is run into casks. Brewers may add sugar to encourage a strong secondary fermentation and also additional hops to give the finished beer a pleasant hoppy aroma. Finings, a glutinous liquid made from the swim bladder of the sturgeon, is also added: this slowly clears the beer of its yeasty deposits.

It is in the pub cellar that the beer reaches maturity. The remaining yeast in the casks turns the residual sugars into alcohol while the natural gas produced escapes through a soft porous wooden peg knocked into the shive hole on top of the cask.

When a vigorous secondary fermentation begins to die down the soft peg is replaced with a hard one to keep the gas inside the cask, which gives the beer a natural sparkle in the glass.

Two days after reaching the pub the beer is ready to be served. Plastic tubes or "lines" are connected to the tap in the cask and a pump - known as a beer engine - or an electric pump draws beer from the cask to the bar.

As the beer has been vented and is open to the atmosphere, each cask must be sold within three or four days to stop the beer becoming oxidised.

century and many renowned beers, such as Marston's Pedigree, have recipes that include 10 per cent or more brewing sugars.

When the hopped wort has been cooled it is run to fermenting vessels where it meets its destiny with yeast. The type of yeast strain used for ale is known as "top fermenting". It works at a warm temperature and vigorously turns the sugars in the wort into alcohol and carbon dioxide, producing at the same time ripe fruity

Branch Visit to Morland's Brewery

Some 12 members assembled at Tonbridge on an unusually warm sunny morning and were transported non-stop in a rather-too-fast mini-coach to Abingdon by way of the M40.

On arrival the party split into small groups to do their own thing for two hours. The majority of the pubs are, of course, tied to Morland's so the obvious thing to do seemed to me to visit the two Morrell's pubs. These both proved unremarkable but the three different brews they offered were most enjoyable.

The party gradually reassembled at the very rambling Morland's brewery and were immediately taken to the hospitality room. Here we were given a brief welcome by the Head Brewer, who had learned his craft at Mackeson's at Hythe and then at Everard's. It seems Morland's are now the second oldest established brewers in the country after Shepherd Neame.

An interesting video film on the brewing process was then shown. Some of this had been filmed at Harvey's in Lewes and showed a youthful looking Miles Jenner. The party was then introduced to the

retired Cooper, Mr. Fred Heavens, who conducted us round the brewery.

The tour proved interesting, but there were no truly vintage buildings or old items of equipment to attract attention. There is no bottling plant at Morland's, this job is done for them by Charles Wells of Bedford.

Ending up at the hospitality room again, we then spent a pleasant hour or more chatting to the Head Brewer and Fred, hearing many anecdotes about the old days while quaffing Original Bitter, Old Masters and Old Speckled Hen. It was interesting that the Head Brewer claimed always to have been a mild man and still drank it in fizzy form. After buying items of "Morlandiana", the party returned to the waiting coach.

A different route homeward took us along the M4. The need for a stop became press-



ing but in the absence of a "Good Beer Guide" an impromptu halt was made at a "Harvester" called "The Horse & Groom" in Bracknell. Fortunately, this offered real Courage and Bass. John Williams caused amusement here by buying his pint with a credit card! Had we but known a GBG-recommended pub was lurking 100 yards away from the Horse & Groom roundabout - but we only missed Bass and Charington IPA.

Tonbridge was then achieved without a further halt (for any reason).

Thanks are due to Paul Bailey for organising the visit.

Brian Fletcher.

19th March 1992

NOTICE

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Branch Diary

The following meetings are open to non-members, and friends are particularly welcome.

9th September - Social Meeting at the Royal Oak, Lower Hayesden, Tonbridge.

24th September - Social Meeting at the Green Cross, Nr Goudhurst.

7th October - Joint Social meeting with the Gravesend branch at The Vigo, Meopham.

20th October - Social meeting at the Grapevine, Chapel Place, Tunbridge Wells.

For further details contact Trevor, Social Secretary, Tonbridge & Tunbridge Wells Branch. CAMRA.

Tel: 0892 863667



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Just fill in the form below and send, with a cheque for £10 (payable to CAMRA Ltd) to Membership Secretary, CAMRA, 34 Alma Road, St Albans, Herts, AL1 3BW.

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 POST CODE

I wish to join the Campaign for Real Ale, and agree to abide by the Memorandum and Articles of Association. I enclose a cheque for £10 (£14 if overseas).

Signed Date

KEGBUSTER

Bill Tidy



Desperation Stakes at SHEPHERD NEAME

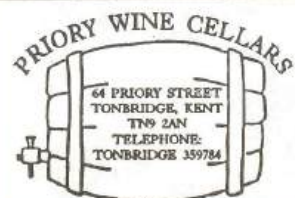
Those of you who saw Mr. Robert Neame on TVS in May trying to convince you that his beer is alright, may wonder what it's all about. CAMRA Members are all too aware of Shepherd Neame's (hereinafter called Sheps) increasing desperation to get his pubs back in The Good Beer Guide (GBG).

For the last 2 years, Sheps have been trying to foist "Blanket Pressure" on his tenants and managers and his customers, to the stout opposition of CAMRA. "Blanket Pressure" is a method of filling the barrel as it empties with CO2 instead of air, thus preventing the beer going off. The technical section of CAMRA have decided, in

their infinite wisdom, that this is not a proper way to keep and dispense "Real Ale" as defined by CAMRA. To their immense credit, large numbers of Sheps Tenants and managers have had the courage to resist this for the same reason as CAMRA. As a result, Sheps have resorted to putting the hated equipment into their pubs as they become vacant so that the incoming Landlord has no choice but to dispense beer "with blanket pressure". The reason for this indecent insistence on "blanket pressure" is simple. Sheps are able to issue pubs with 18-gallon barrels (18's) instead of 9-gallon casks (9's), thus allowing savings on transport and labour costs, which needless to say, means extra profits for Sheps, not lower prices for the customer.

The distorted view given on the TVS item, however, gave the game away. Mr. Robert Neame has stopped CAMRA members inspecting his pubs cellars when surveying for the GBG (which is standard for all GBG entries) because CAMRA have decreed that any Sheps pub using "Blanket Pressure" cannot go in the GBG. Mr. Robert Neame, therefore, thinks that by stopping our members inspecting his cellars we will not be able to find out what he is doing. Mr. Robert Neame is wrong in this, as in so many other things such as restricting the beers in some of his pubs to Master Brew and one other in the winter and, in some cases, even not allowing some of his landlords to avail themselves of his own approved Guest Beer List. Heaven alone knows why!

GRAHAM SAYER



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by the pint from our cellar
or in firkins (72 pints)
and polypins (34 & 17 pints)



BIDDENDEN CIDER

95p pint, or in
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A Sortie to the Lake District

(or How a CAMRA member visited 16 Cumbrian pubs at Easter)

Having attempted to beat the Easter rush, we made our way, via two pubs, to Lancashire the night before Maundy Thursday. Our first stop on reaching the Lakes next day was the famous Masons Arms at Cartmell Fell. Beer menus sit on the tables and list many, many different bottled beers from around the world, most of which are kept in stock. However, I preferred to sample two of the beers brewed by the landlord himself; namely the Amazon Bitter and Great Northern. Delicious!

Our walk that afternoon took us past the cosy Britannia Inn at Elterwater where the Hartleys XB and Jennings Bitter were in fine form.

Then, later on, we visited the Drunken Duck at Bargates where Yates Bitter was to be had. This used to be known as Bargates Inn but was renamed after an incident in its dim and distant past when some passing ducks helped themselves to real ale which had leaked into a ditch from a burst barrel. The landlady found them comatose and, thinking that they were dead,

plucked them ready for cooking. The ducks then started to come round. On realising that they were not dead and that she had deprived them of their natural garb, the landlady felt obliged to knit them jumpers to wear until their feathers grew back!

It rained on Good Friday, so we manoeuvred our horseless carriage over the spectacular Hardknott Pass towards the



Sellafield Visitor's Centre. We stopped en route at the Woolpack and Burnmoor Inns at Boot in the hope that some Theakston's Best Bitter (ok) and Jennings Cumberland Bitter (really nice!) might afford us some radiation protection (not a very good excuse but you don't really need one when you're on holiday). Then we ventured on for more Cumberland Bitter at the Gosforth Hall Hotel (in Gosforth, would you believe) which

seemed delightfully restful after the busy Burnmoor.

Our return trip took us via Keswick where, it was rumoured, we could find an Indian restaurant. As aperitifs, we drank Yates Bitter in the George Hotel (quiet) and Theakstons in the Dog and Gun (very busy).

Would you believe it, Saturday was wet again! Inside and out! Hartleys XB in the Crown

Hotel at Coniston and again in the Queens Head in Hawkshead. The latter boasts the largest clog in England which was made for a local mole-catcher who had contracted Elephantiasis causing his foot to swell to about twice its

normal length and circumference. Later on, we continued with the Hartleys XB in Ambleside at the Golden Rule and then spent some time trying various brews in Stringers Bar at the Waterhead Hotel. Two of these are Charles Wells Bombardier, which was unfortunately "on the turn", and their Fortress, which was rather nice.

On Easter Day, the weather finally cleared up and we felt

obliged to do a bit of walking. Most walkers in the Lake District feel an urge to rush up steep slopes into the mountains. However, I figured that a walk around a small lake would avoid this problem and, furthermore, was more likely to provide the necessary refreshment facilities, so we set off around Lake Buttermere. Halfway around, we came to Buttermere Village which boasts the Bridge Hotel which serves Theakstons. The famous Old Peculier is on draught and, to my mind, tastes just as good as it used to when I first started drinking and we used to seek it out purely for its strength. Nowadays, of course, there are many other real ales which are as strong or stronger.



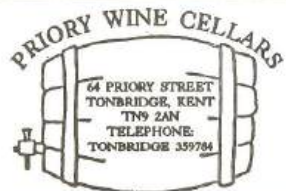
The Coledale Inn at Braithwaite offered Yates Bitter (for which I was developing quite a taste) so we stopped there awhile before finding somewhere to eat.

And that was it, for we had to leave the Lake District next morning for the long drive home. "But wait," you will say, "that's only 14 pubs since arriving in Cumbria. What of the other two?" Have no fear, never being keen to miss an opportunity we stopped off at the Rose and Crown at Ark in Cartmell for yet more XB before finding the excellent Hardcragg Hall in Grange-over-Sands where we discovered a new brew, Thwaites Craftsmans - quite a pleasant way to round off a fairly full weekend.



A few years ago a habit broke out in Chipstead (Bricklayers Arms) and Seal (Prince of Wales) where freehouses were sold and converted into Indian Restaurants. Now we have the fish restaurant. The Hole in the Wall, Tunbridge Wells is now a fish restaurant. The Duke Without a Head, Watlington, has become a Mulligan's fish restaurant, but it is licensed. The Flute and Flypaper, Tunbridge Wells is also a fish restaurant, but it does have a bar; round the back, down the stairs and knock three times.

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by the pint from our cellar or in firkins (72 pints) and polypins (34 & 17 pints)



BIDDENDEN CIDER

95p pint, or in polycasks (40 pints)


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Changing Pubs or not Changing Pubs

By November the five national breweries should have reduced their number of pubs to a maximum of 2,000. Whether they will have reached this target by the Government's deadline, depends upon how successful their present manoeuvres are in convincing the Government that more time is needed, or the target is beyond reach.

With the exception of Grand Metropolitan (Watneys) who have pulled out of brewing, the other companies do not seem to have adopted a permanent policy or strategy in reducing the number of pubs. More precisely, not only have the breweries' policies changed as they approach November, but they can even differ in their application towards individual pubs.

 These practices have occurred in this region, and have consequently damaged the atmosphere of many a good local as both landlord and customer await the breweries' final decision.

When the process began, Allied-Lyons (Ind.Coope) set a promising pace with the sale of a chain of pubs to Greene

King including the Halfway House, Sevenoaks. Courage brewery began to follow suit with the sale of pubs to other breweries - The Windmill (Weald) to Greene King and The Nelson (Tonbridge) to Shepherd Neame. However, with the supply deal Courage have struck with Grand Metropolitan for the proposed national eating house-pub chain, they have changed their practice in

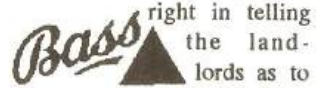


discharging their surplus pubs. Consequently, it is not unsurprising to find temporary holding managers in some of their pubs, e.g. the Harrow, Hadlow and The Bell, Golden Green. The uncertainty of such cases has consequently killed off the local atmosphere in some pubs.

Whitbread began, apparently, attempting to sell their surplus pubs at housing market prices with little or no success. They have sold off some of their pubs to resident landlords: The Addlestead, East Peckham, The Three Squirrels, near Hadlow. Others have been sold off as free houses: The Harp, East Peckham, and The Kentish Rifleman, Dunks Green. Before one gets excited about this news, the sale arrangement of these pubs in-

cludes a barrelage condition. Therefore, you will still be able to buy Flowers, Marstons Pedigree and/or Boddingtons in these pubs, but occasionally, even a guest beer.  However, Whitbread have begun to sell chains of pubs to other breweries, such as the Star and Garter, Tonbridge, and the Rose and Crown, Hadlow to Shepherd Neame. Unfortunately, they have adopted this policy in mid-flow of their arrangements for some pubs, for example The Papermakers Arms, Plaxtol will be sold in a chain despite the effort of the landlord to raise the capital to purchase the pub; the landlord will be leaving in July. Another of their pubs on the market is the Blackbird, Thrush and Bush near East Peckham.

Finally, Bass Charrington are supposedly selling off chains of pubs including the Prince of Wales, Hadlow. Unfortunately, they are not very forthcoming in telling the landlords as to who they are selling to and when. No wonder some landlords are running a minimum service!



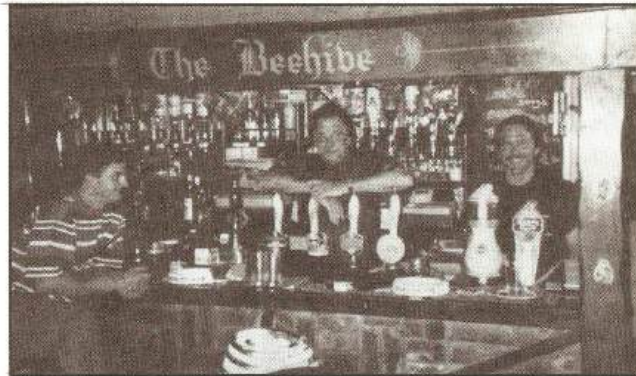
THE BEEHIVE

This issue's featured pub..

If ever the phrase "well worth finding" was to apply to a public house, then I think that pub would be The Beehive on Southborough Common. Many people I have spoken to were blissfully ignorant that it even existed or where it was or how to find it. I must confess that I was the same before my first visit and I took the precaution of taking along a friend of mine who drinks there regularly. The time of this first visit was the Saturday before Christmas and after having survived my search for presents I was desperately in need of therapy to get over braving the hordes of last minute shoppers. Well, my doctor could not have prescribed anything better - "vorsprung durch technik" as they say. Upon entering, I discovered another friend ensconced in one of the many little corners of the pub. He had been there since opening time and, unable to drag himself away, was by then in a very relaxed and merry frame of mind.

Happily, I have been back many times since and am sober enough to tell you, dear reader, about the place.

The pub consists of 2 bars, one smaller with just 2 tables, the larger one with rather



more seating, and both are dominated by large inglenook fireplaces and are decorated in a basic and honest way. No plush carpets here, just a plain wooden floor that matches the character of the pub with its many beams and "real pub" atmosphere. With summer now upon us, the patio drinking area and large green outside the front of the pub allows you to enjoy an excellent way to spend an evening outside with your pint in your hand.

Converted from 2 farm cottages, dating from 1762, the pub was first licensed in 1873. Following conversion in 1857, the cottages had functioned as a small brewery and eventually passed into the hands of The old Tunbridge Wells brewers, E & H Kelsey and

acquired a full licence in 1952. Sold by Whitbread last year, Roy and Sue, the Licensees of the little oasis, must be given full credit for their enlightened attitude towards the running of The Beehive. A good value menu of home-cooked food is on display, although the main feature of the pub is Real Ale. A look at the list of beers, all of which constantly change (except Adnams - see below for why), will impress but leave you with one problem - which to try first? The choice varies from 6 to 9 different beers and is what The Beehive has become noted for and reading what is on offer is an education in itself. The majority of these fine ales are drawn from small breweries from all over the country, many of which

have never been available in this area before. Beers which have become firm favourites include Ballards Best, Bunce's Pigswill, Hopback Summer Lightning, Robinwood Old Fart and Guernsey Best, a beer available in only a few public houses in this country. For those tired of life, the universe and everything, the pub is also remarkably well stocked with real lagers, (there are such things) 3 German and at least 2 others.

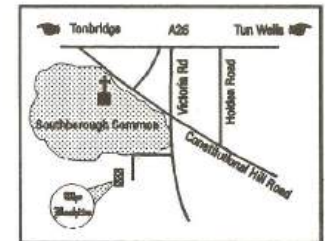
Pub games include bar billiards, a fast disappearing facility in Kent, helping George find his wallet and romping with the dogs - Penny and Boot: the one an ageing dowager of dogdom, the other, a

hirsute hearthrug on paws with a taste for bar snacks and the occasional customer, come closing time.

In addition to the foregoing delights, watch out for the "Glowworms". For eight years, rain and shine, man and beast, they've trudged the Common, torches in hand, in their weekly quest for Real Ale, assuaged only by a Wednesday dose of Adnams (see, I told you I would tell you) - never have so few been so dedicated to so many! The Beehive also seems to act as a magnet for musicians, good, bad, indifferent and drunk (or maybe all 4). They like it and so do the locals, not to mention Billy Bones the gardener

(Terry to his friends and creditors) - whoops! Mentioned him - sorry!

So, if this sounds like your sort of pub, maybe you ought to test your powers of navigation (see map) or give Roy or Sue a call (0892 - 529151) not only can they tell you what delights are available, but their directions will also give you more time to sample them. Drink deep and leave your brain at home. Cheers!



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Ole dark eyes is back

How encouraging to read recently that Theakstons' brewery in North Yorkshire is to recommence production of mild after an interval of some fifteen years.

The renaissance of mild has often been trumpeted in the pages of the licensed trade press, but when a national brewer takes an interest, (Scottish & Newcastle own Theakstons), perhaps we should all begin to take the revival seriously.

Can it ever regain its position as the people's drink that it held in the early years of this century? Sadly, I think not. The lager gas bubble is too big to burst now. Mild will never regain its former popu-

larity across the country, despite still being a big seller in the Midlands & North West. For instance, Thwaites of Blackburn brew two milds and only one bitter, while Banks's in Wolverhampton advertise their mild on television with an upbeat image designed to appeal to the younger drinkers. Many will eschew mild for its lack of strength, but therein lies its value.

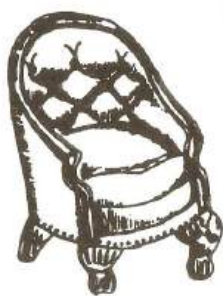
Besides allowing you to have a "good drink" without too much ill effect, it has always offered the opportunity for adolescent drinkers to graduate to stronger tasting beers demanded by a maturing palate without offending taste buds accustomed only to lemonade. Regretfully, its place

has been taken by lager, which is inoffensive to the point of blandness.

Besides Theakstons' new arrival, the comeback of mild has been given added impetus with the news recently that Hampshire brewers Gales are currently brewing a Festival Mild for a limited period to celebrate CAMRA's 21st birthday. If you can't make it in time, don't despair, how often in the past has a brewer produced a "special" and been encouraged by demand to retain it as a stock item. Step forward Harvey's Armada and King & Barnes Festive.

Local brewers Harveys have always brewed a mild, the recipe of which has been improved in recent months. Those wishing to further their education of mild matters should keep a bloodshot eye open for Tally-Ho by Palmers of Bridport and Bateman's prize-winning Dark Mild.

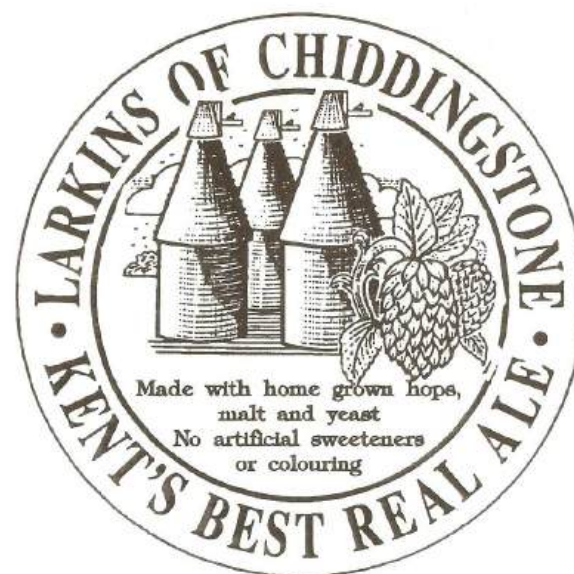
Why not persuade your local to try a cask-conditioned mild? Both Sussex brewers sell mild in pins (4 1/2 gallons), so sales of just seven pints per day would suffice, while the beer kept its quality.



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| Chiddingstone - Castle Inn, Little Brown Jug, Rock Inn | London - Angel at Rotherhithe, Dickens Inn at St. Katherines Dock, Dog & Bell at Deptford |
| Cowden - Crown | Mark Beech - Kentish Horse |
| Dunks Green - Kentish Rifleman | Mayfield - Railway |
| East Peckham - Addestead Tavern, Merry Boys | Modest Corner - Beehive |
| East Grinstead - Royal Ashdown Golf Club, The Ship | Pembury - Blue Boys |
| Eynsford - Working Mens' Club | Rotherfield - Bicycle Arms, George Inn, Kings Arms |
| Firle - The Ram | Sevenoaks - St. Julians Club |
| Five Oak Green - Kings Head | Southborough - Bat & Ball |
| Friars Gate - Half Moon | Speldhurst - Northfield House |
| Hadlow - Fiddling Monkey | Stansted - Black Horse |
| Halsted - Rose & Crown | Tonbridge - E&B Wines, Priory Wine Cellars, Uncle Tom's Cabin |
| Hawkhurst - Wellington Arms | Tunbridge Wells - High Rocks Inn, Toe Rags, Vino Vita, White Horse |
| Hever - Greyhound | Under River - White Rock |
| High Hurstwood - Maypole | Wadhurst - Best Beech |
| Hildenborough - Thirst & Last | West Malling - Lobster Pot, The Bull |
| Horam - Gun Inn | Westerham - Grasshopper on the Green |
| Hunton - Prince of Wales | |
| Hurst Green - White Horse | |
| Ivy Hatch - Plough | |

ASK FOR LARKINS AT YOUR LOCAL!

Larkins Brewery, Larkins Farm, Chiddingstone, Edenbridge, Kent
Telephone: Penshurst 870328

A LOCAL LARK

Blessed again with a sunny day as for the Branch's visit to Morland's Brewery, some twelve members and friends set off in the (so labelled) school bus for Chiddingstone. The journey was so soon completed that we arrived ten minutes before the due time.

Larkin's Brewery is in a part of Larkin's Farm and comprises an enlarged former cowshed, another smaller shed and a concreted yard. From this, there is a fine view to the north towards the Greensand Ridge.

On first looking into the brewhouse it resembled a charity flag day in Aberdeen but the brewer/owner's mother eventually appeared and explained that he, Bob Dockerty, was drawing off some beer in the storage room.

This job complete, he gave us an informative description of the materials and the equipment he uses. Whole hops stood out among the former and two conical-bottomed fermenting vessels among the latter. We learnt that his yeast strain had come from Ridley's Brewery in Crouch Vale. Also, that a number of London pubs regularly take his beer.

Obviously any tour of a micro-brewery does not take long, so in no time at all we were being offered well-cooled samples of Bob's three brews - all delicious. It was found that a sheltered sunny corner of the yard was the most comfortable place to drink - and drink, a quite generous quantity being made freely available to us. I can think of larger brewers that have been less forthcoming to their visitors.

Having made a contribution towards Bob's expenses, we said our thank yous and farewells and, because the bus had another mission, walked the short distance through the village to the Castle Inn. For those that do not know this National Trust-owned inn it has an upmarket restaurant presided over by a head waiter with a dicky bow, a plush saloon bar and a splendid simple public bar. This has a stone-flagged floor, simple decor and furniture and, usually, plenty of dogs in evidence.

Shunning the Shepherd Neame and Harvey beers on offer, the party soon settled down with more Larkin's beer. After perhaps half an hour, Mr. Dockerty reappeared and made the splendid gesture of buying beer for the party. What generosity!

Three o'clock and the minibus came round all too soon and put an end to another enjoyable branch fixture. It was most unfortunate that the employers of the organiser of the trip, Paul Bailey, chose that day to move offices. However, as he is CAMRA's Brewery Liaison Officer for Larkin's he can, presumably, visit at any time of his choosing.

IMBIBER

RAMBLING RON

Walking is an enjoyable exercise, and more my kind of speed. However, walking or rambling with no purposeful destination in mind is exercising for the sake of exercising. This makes it healthy, which cannot be a good thing if you're meant to be a CAMRA walker. Therefore, this is my attempt to rectify the matter with advice as to direction for your rambles.

For the first ramble of the season, I'll start from my front door in the village of Hadlow. The village is situated on the A26, four miles from Tonbridge and is noted for its folly, or Hadlow Castle. The villagers are also noted, occasionally, for their patience; patience in waiting for a by-pass, and in waiting for a public car park in the village. Therefore, it's a good place to walk around.

Unfortunately, the first walk is less than fifty yards to the Fiddling Monkey. A free house pub with an unusual name, for no apparent reason, but some old locals still remember it as the Albion. It is probably the largest pub in the village, which is emphasised more by the alterations of a few years ago to make it a one bar pub. Despite being a free house it used to have a reputation of being a lager pub, and it's accompanying attractions. However, the present landlord and landlady have worked hard to re-establish it as a family village local. This has included the reintroduction of real ales, including Larkins, Sovereign, Harveys and Boddingtons as regulars, plus a fourth pump for guest ales; soon to come is Everards Tiger.

Although some visitors may not be keen on the open bar attractions, for the discerning drinker the six o'clock club is a most enjoyable opportunity to put the world to right again. Being a large pub, it does need to look beyond the village for its customers. Consequently, plans are forming to develop a restaurant in the front area of the pub. If achieved this would remove the games attractions to their own room and enhance the ambience of the bar area, as a place to chat and enjoy one of their four real ales. However, this is a walk so once again we will try to get further.

Heading off in the Maidstone direction, past the village pond, you come to the Harrow. It lies on the edge of the village and once had a very good reputation for its restaurant, and strong ties with the village cricket team. Unfortunately, its a Courage pub and as the brewery "hums and ahhs" as to what to do with it, they have installed a temporary manager. Although, he has added Theakston XB to join Courage Best and John Smiths on handpumps, it is now a very quiet pub. For a walker, such as myself with a dog, it has lost its attraction as dogs are barred from entering. There is always one dog who has to get drunk and ruin it for the rest of them. Therefore, after just a quick pint of XB in this very quiet pub, it is time to really ramble. Opposite the pub is a footpath leading to Williams Field. This is rambling, with mud on your feet. Only to discover that Williams Field is the village park and across it lies the main housing estate of the village. With a quick step through Marshalls Garden (a safety requirement), turn right, then left and you should be in Carpenters Lane. If not, then you're lost.

Off Carpenters Lane lies the Freehold, an interesting square of mixed country cottages

surrounding an allotment. On the corner stands the Rose and Crown, formerly a Whitbread house now owned by Shepherd Neame, and so offering Master Brew on hand pump. The present couple were appointed to the pub in March and have been keen to establish a friendly local. An unusual pub in that it was once a two bar pub, when they knocked out the doors to make it open plan. So you can see through the pub to three separate areas, the games area, the quiet area, and the main pub bar. The locals are friendly - mainly because they know each other, and visitors rarely find the pub - and are known for their initiative in providing their own pub entertainment. This has included organising their own quiz nights, to holding a boot fair. An interesting crowd.

We now head along Carpenters Lane, back to the village centre and opposite the end of the road is the Blacksmith Arms. The second free house of the village. It offers two bars, and the clientele who visit the two bars makes an interesting sociological study of village life. It unfortunately does not welcome dogs, and for other reasons we both had to stay tied up outside. The dog, waiting for a pat on the head, I an offer of a pint from either Shepherd Neame, Harveys or Greene King. But why wait for a kind donation when we are both welcomed in our final port of call.

Just along the road is the Prince of Wales. A weatherboarded pub owned at present by Charringtons. This probably looks more like a pub than any of the others. It has two bars, the back bar is definitely for games or sport, and the front bar for those who wish to enjoy a chat and a drink. The real ales on offer are Bass, Charringtons IPA and a guest ale. Despite the enthusiasm of the landlord, the guest ale is very much determined by the Charringtons list, but it has been Harveys or Boddingtons; the latter not served through a swan neck sprinkler valve pump.

NEWS from AROUND

Congratulations - to the Halfway House, Brenchley. Sold by Whitbread last year a bought as a free house. Any more info?

Congratulations - to the Beacon, Tunbridge Wells (just off the Langton Road). Just re-opened. Doing Harveys, Tetley & Burton.

Lost - Dog & Duck, Tunbridge Wells (neé Bruins). Closed down last year after about 5 months.

Congratulations - to the Little Brown Jug, Chiddingstone Causeway, still the only pub in the area with Gales H.S.B.

Congratulations - to the Fiddling Monkey, Hadlow. Gradually turning former 'Lager Pub' into good Real Ale pub. Fourth beer going on. Guest ale to be changed regularly

Lost - Beau Nash, Tunbridge Wells. Regrettably no longer a Free House. Now Grand Metropolitan. Selling Courage and Ruddles. NOT in the 'Good Pub Guide' next year.

Changes - Whitbread have sold 60 pubs in Kent to Shepherd Neame. IN OUR AREA - ELMTREE Paddock Wood, The BELL Southborough, HIGHWAYMAN Horsmonden, STAR & GARTER Tonbridge.

Although the locals are friendly and particularly amusing, it also allows you to find a discrete corner to sit and chat undisturbed. The same cannot always be said of the curry, especially if the landlord has made it. Finally, this is the only pub that has began regularly opening all day on Fridays and Saturdays.

Thus, the walk ends. After five pubs and up to ten different ales to choose from one should rest. A regular habit in Hadlow, which may explain why few villagers ever travel outside of it. However, this intrepid rambler will do what no other Hadlow villager has done, and with a stumble and a hic! I set off to the Rose Revived. But that's another story.

The Glory that is England

The two chief glories of an English summer are watching cricket in a picturesque setting and enjoying some glorious real ale in the company of friends. When you can combine the two, then truly God's in his heaven and all's right with the world.

On Monday, 8th June such an occasion came to be at the Cricket Week at the Neville Grounds, Tunbridge Wells. Despite the poor weather in the previous days the dawn broke bright and sunny and things augured well for the last day of the County cricket match against the champions,

Essex. Thanks to some personal influence, we were able to avail ourselves of an unused tent and 3 excellent barrels of beer awaited our delectation. As the sun blazed down and the thirsts rose, the tent filled up gradually with a mix of members and guests in search of good cricket and good beer. The Mayor of Tunbridge Wells honoured us with a visit early on. Branch members photographs of the Mayor's visit may be used for publicity in the Courier. Bernard of the Royal Oak, Lower Haysden and several other invited guests attended keenly to the twin delights on offer and a number of branch members (and later on - Gill Knight - Canterbury Beer Fes-

tival organiser) also helped to swell the numbers. The general consensus was that the Archers Village, Cotleigh Tawny and Nethergate (in that order) were in fine fettle, especially straight from the barrel. Food was also available and special thanks must go to our fellow branch member, Martin of the Brecknock Arms, Bells Yew Green and his assistants for organising everything so splendidly. Hopefully, we will have a CAMRA beer tent next year at the cricket all week, so we can look forward to that.

Finally, to round the day off perfectly, Kent won an excellent match in fine style, everyone had topped up their sun-tans and a good time was had by all.

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Games with Frontiers

Pub games, until recently, have been steeped in myth and history. Whiling away the hours with games such as "Spoof", Table Skittles, Bar Billiard, Bat & Trap and darts accompanied by large quantities of ale. In the last few years, pub games have moved on, and still accompanied by quantities of ale we now play, video games, quiz nights and Bingo for example.

Now hear this - new entertainment has arrived: forget video entertainment, disco's are things of the past, even Karioke is old hat because the new breed is here.

It takes place outdoors and can be found locally around your area. It's name - Bar Flying - all the way from New Zealand. It involves wearing a velcro jump suit then when ready you aim and run up to an inflatable base and wall (here comes the tricky bit), then using the base as a springboard you somersault into the air and, with luck, land upside down stuck to the velcro wall. Large quantities of ale are not advisable.

Alternatively, indoors for the less adventurous, how about Grand Prix Scalextric. By chance, one night my friend and I arrived at the local in Laddingford to be greeted by the sight of sons and father vying for poll position on a track around half the bar, with children of all ages all lined up to take their turn.

So what's next I wonder? League Subbuteo. Championship Monopoly. Hero's Quest. Beginner's Dungeons and Dragons. Who knows?

An outing on a Boots' rail ticket

"What about Cardiff," said Tom. "We can surely have a lovely Brain's tour." "Yes," we agreed, "but is there no other beer we can sample as a bit of light relief? And we don't mean Worthington BB." Tom said, "If we go a little way up one of the valley lines, we can visit a free house selling Bullmastiff, Felinfol and Summerskill's beers." So the plan of campaign was agreed.

We duly reached Cardiff and changed trains and arrived at Lisvane Station. From here the "Ty Mawr Arms" proved to be about 3/4 mile away in the rain. It was quite a pleasant semi-rural walk but we were greeted by locked doors at 11.25am. Reference to the Good Beer Guide showed that it didn't open until 12.00 so we would have plenty of time to admire the peacocks, and the aviary. (Moral - always read the small print first.)

In the circumstances, we decided that time was of the essence so, cursing Tommy, we returned to the station and almost immediately were lucky enough to catch a late-running diesel, packed with Welsh mums and kids, back towards the capital.

We decided to break journey at Heath High Level Station to visit the "Three Arches", a huge Brain's house with three public bars. Here we thankfully quaffed our first pint of dark mild while gazing awestruck at the surroundings but more than an hour later than planned. Back to the station or, rather the other station, Heath Low Level, by way of a change. We knew when the train was coming as we heard its horn at frequent intervals. This was because a dog was preceding it down the line. Once aboard, the train travelled at normal speed so presumably the dog had gone into a siding.

Back in the City Centre, we were soon in the thick of Brain's territory and lost no time in visiting some six of their pubs, a number of which opened all day. Of these, the "Golden Cross" stood out as it had original stained glass windows, a bulging tile-fronted bar, old shelf fittings and a base wooden floor. We were disturbed to find two Brain's houses boarded up, one of which was, unfortunately, the "Cambrian Hotel", a truly basic boozier of happy past memories. As a relief from the Brain diet, an Ansell's house was tried. Here we had Crown Buckley Dark masquerading as Ansell's Local Mild but, unluckily, this was in less than prime condition.

During the tour, we met a CAMRA member from Dyfed who was due at a Good Beer Guide nomination meeting and who recommended more Cardiff pubs than we could possibly visit in the time. We also encountered a local citizen who was interested to know what "foreigners" were doing in his pub. On explaining that we had travelled 150 miles to sample the splendid ale of his home city, he had to agree that it was worth journeying for. We parted after tearing the membership application from the GBG and handing it to him with the clear instruction that he must act upon it without fail.

All too soon, it was time to leave Brainland and head back east as a break of the return journey at Swindon was planned. Great care had to be taken that we did not all drop off and so miss the stop. Arriving successfully, we soon found the "Gluepot", an Arkell's tied house where a few more glasses ensured that we slept the remaining hour of the journey back to Paddington. On arrival, I was informed that I should not have travelled in a non-snoring coach.

Brian Fletcher.

KEGBUSTER

Bill Tidy



"Hunt the treasure" at the Red House

Buried deep in the back streets of Boughton Monchelsea, South of Maidstone, is a classic country pub with unimaginable rewards for its discovery. An entrant in "Publican" free-house-of-the-year competition and featured in "50 Classic Country Pubs of the Kent Weald" by our very own Paul Bailey, this surviving example of a vanishing "Locals" country pub is well worth the effort of finding it.

Normally serving at least 5 different independent beers (more at weekends), this pub also features 24 foreign bottled beers, 21 country wines, 4 ciders, and what's more, is the only pub in the south to feature Liefman's Belgian Kriekbier on draught. Inside, you will be

able to drink your beer etc. (and lager, if you must) in 4 different drinking areas - one of which is used during daytime as a childrens' room, so families are welcome (pub features in CAMRA's Family Guide). The extension of the older, smaller pub can be seen clearly in the low beamed rooms and open walls (strung liberally with hops). In addition to regular pool, darts and quiz nights and a 48" TV for rugby and world cup finals, there is an annual beer festival for charity featuring 40 different beers, disco, etc., and the pub is characterised by the mixture of different types and ages who frequent the place, something you rarely find these days

Having found your pub and settled down to your first pint, you are rewarded with your prize for finding the pub at all (this in addition to what you have already got) namely - a map telling you how to get there! This quaint tradition of all obscure pubs to give out a map to those who are lucky enough to find them is carried on enthusiastically by Iain and Linda (mein host and hostess) and, gentle reader, who are we to discourage them from their little hobbies We should indulge them in their whimsy with a smile and a friendly nod of the head.

Finally, we recommend a visit to this relaxed country pub.

Yours,
GRAHAM SAYER

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