

# East Kent Drinker



North East Kent CAMRA branch news

WINTER 2023/24

FREE

ISSUE 2



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# GREAT BRITISH BEER FESTIVAL

**WINTER**  
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Campaign  
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## Welcome

**T**hank you for picking up and opening our new magazine, the second edition of the EastKent Drinker. This is a collaboration between the three EastKent Branches of CAMRA and aims to showcase the very best beeriness of our area.

I trust that you are in a favourite establishment, tasting a fine beer whilst quietly reflecting and recovering from the Christmas festivities.

We hope that there are many articles to interest you, and adverts for excellent pubs and breweries in our rather special part of Kent, that you really should plan to explore.

If you want to learn more about some wonderful pubs and breweries, come along, join a branch, get involved.

And finally, I wish you all a less eventful year than our last ones and hope we can all concentrate on the serious business of beer.

Cheers all,  
Glyn Parry



## Events diary

CANTERBURY,  
HERNEBAY, AND  
WHITSTABLE  
BRANCH  
[www.meetup.com/  
camracanterbury/](http://www.meetup.com/camracanterbury/)

SWALEBRANCH  
[swale.camra.org.uk/  
diary](http://swale.camra.org.uk/diary)

THANET BRANCH  
[thanet.camra.org.  
uk/diary](http://thanet.camra.org.uk/diary)



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KENT CAMRA  
BRANCHES  
[kent.camra.org.  
uk/viewnode.  
php?id=196760](http://kent.camra.org.uk/viewnode.php?id=196760)

NATIONAL  
15-17 February: Great British Beer Festival  
Winter. Burton Town Hall, King Edward Pl,  
Burton-on-Trent, DE14 2EB  
In non-CAMRA festival news. The second  
Ramsgate Tunnels beer festival will take  
place on Saturday 3 February 2024. It will be  
a ticket only event and held in two sessions.  
Tickets will be sold online.



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Full Page £120

## Pub news

### Canterbury, Herne Bay, and Whitstable

Two Doves, 25 Nunnery Fields, Canterbury. The planning appeal by LJW Developments to overturn the decision not to allow the pub to be converted to residential flats has been dismissed. Having had 3 planning applications and 2 planning appeals denied it remains to be seen whether the owners will now seek to restore the premises as a pub.

The Compasses, Crundale. Shepherd Neame have granted a new 'free of tie' tenancy on this pub to the licensees of the Timber Batts at Bodsham. Operating limited opening hours, the pub businesses have merged to become the Timber Batts @ the Compasses. See [www.timberbattsalehouse.com](http://www.timberbattsalehouse.com).

The Brickfield, Swalecliffe. This new micro pub at 80 Herne Bay Road close to Swalecliffe station is due to open its doors on 2nd December, in time for the Christmas Festivities.



The Plough and Harrow, Bridge. The deadline for objections to the planning application by the new owners for a change of use from pub to take away/restaurant has closed. Along with others, CAMRA have objected to this 18th century grade II listed pub, with historic interior, becoming another

loss to the community. A decision is awaited.

The Duke of Cumberland, Whitstable. Shepherd Neame have completed and re-opened the town centre hostelry after a £1.8m refurbishment, including 8 ensuite bedrooms, restaurant and function room. The general manager plans to keep live music events going at the pub.

The Duck Inn at Pett Bottom. Described as one of James Bond author Ian Fleming's favourite pubs, the Duck sadly closed in September due to the impact of rising costs. It is not known at this stage whether there are plans to re-open the former Michelin Guide pub.

The Ship Inn on Herne Bay's seafront has been sold by Stonegate Pub Company to Shepherd Neame. The town's oldest pub will continue to be run by Alan and Michelle Clarke who are also Shepherd Neame tenants at the Chestfield Barn. It is to be hoped that the brewery's acquisition will help secure the future of this historic pub.

### Thanet

Bulls Head, Margate, 1 Market Place, CT9 1ER. Re-opened in July 2023. It has no cask ales but has occasional craft beers and real cider.

Shakespeare, Margate, 1 Canterbury Road, CT9 5A. Re-opened in August. Two cask ales are available.

Camden Arms, Ramsgate, 13 La Belle Alliance Square, CT11 8HU. It re-opened in August and has two cask ales.

The Queen Charlotte, Ramsgate, 57 Addington Street, CT11 9JJ. Now sells a cask ale.

Chiltern Tavern, 187 Pegwell Road, Pegwell, CT11 0LY. Permission was granted in August for its demolition and the building of three houses.

The Yard of Ale, 61 Church Street, St Peter's, CT10 2TU, closed in early September. It was East Kent Pub of the Year in 2015 and has been in the Good Beer Guide multiple times. It is understood that its lease expired and was not renewed.

Stingray, Cliftonville, 3 Northdown Parade, Prices Avenue, CT9 2NR, is now called Picnic and serves two craft beers on tap.

Northern Belle, Margate, 3 Mansion Street, CT9 1HE. Re-opened in October and serves two cask ales.

The Hussar, Garlinge, 219 Canterbury Road, CT9 5JP. Has withdrawn its cask ales. CONT.



# The Elephant Pub...

The Mall, Faversham



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Themagnet



Themagnetbroadstairs



themagnetbroadstairs

The replacement bar/micropub for the Sportsman in Cliffsend has opened and is called Njord Café and Bar. It sells well known national keg beers.

Gates Meze Bar & Restaurant in Ramsgate opened in early November at 66 Harbour Parade, CT11 8LN. It had two cask ales from the Shivering Sands brewery when visited.

The Britannia on Fort Hill in Margate, CT9 1HH has a planning application (planning reference L/TH/23/1080) for change of use to that of residential, this includes a plan for two "cottages" to be built in its back garden. It is a listed historic building. Thanet CAMRA has submitted an objection to this stating among other things "Let's be clear, pubs in Margate need to be protected from being converted to flats or houses in multiple occupation (HMOs). Pub businesses are important for the town's continued prosperity and vitality." Also, "Regarding the proposed 'cottages' in the rear garden, such backfilled sites benefit from vehicular access points, but other than an existing narrow alley this proposal has nothing and is quite inaccessible and confined, it should be regarded as inappropriate and over-development."

## Swale

In Swale, you may have noticed that several of our pubs and bars are switching to winter hours. This has been something of a trend since we were released from covid restrictions back in 2021. Licensees, it would be appreciated if you could get

in touch with us so we can update your entries on WhatPub. Here in Swale please email johnsissons@sky.com with any changes.

At the Railway Hotel, Faversham, Donna and Dave have now settled into the role of licensees, whilst at The Anchor, also in Faversham, experienced licensees Josephine & Patrick took over on November 10th.

Over in Sittingbourne, two milestone birthdays have recently been celebrated with Sara and team at The Yellow Stocks in the High Street having commemorated five year trading, whilst Marianne and Harvey Melia at The Paper Mill in Charlotte Street, Milton Regis have celebrated 10 year trading as their latest milestone at this many times Swale CAMRA Pub of the Year.

Over on Sheppey, Timmy Taylor's Landlord seems to have been regularly found at The Old House at Home in Queenborough.

The Pilot's Rest in Sheerness High Street has been offering a goodly number of unusual cask offerings plus an excellent selection of Belgian and German bottles.

The Heritage at Halfway has been putting on some great entertainment of late, along with their regular quiz night.

## Brewery news

Whitstable Brewery have submitted a planning application to convert and extend warehousing at the oyster bed site at Reculver, owned by sister company Whitstable Oyster Co, to a microbrewery and visitor attraction. This is a proposed relocation from their brewery at Grafty Green to Reculver.

Shepherd Neame have released Christmas Ale at 5%. A slightly tweaked recipe from previous years, so keep an eye out for it.

Swale's other brewer, Peter Meaney at Mad Cat, is also out on the prowl during November and December as he continues to ply his wares around Swale's marketplaces for those seeking to stock up on bottled beers. He and the team can be found at Brogdale Farm Faversham, ME13 8XU. Mad Cat is producing a Christmas ale, Christmas Jumper, ABV 5.4%, which contains Scotch, bourbon, vanilla extract and oak chips. It is available in bottles and will be in cask soon. The brewery is also delivering Brogdale ciders. They had a beer stall in the marketplace at the Faversham Christmas lights switch-on.





## Kent's Green Hop Season

Come September, come the green hops. Each year as summer fades briskly into autumn, a whole regiment of Kent brewers snaffle up the first harvest of fresh hops from the vines and dash off to brew the first of the new season's green hop beers.

In 2023, the Kent Green Hop Season officially ran from Friday 22nd September to Monday 30th October, though some of us managed to get hold of a drop a week or two beforehand...

The official launch of the Kent Green Hop Season coincides with the annual food & drink festival in Canterbury's Dane John Gardens, where many of the new season's beers are unveiled for the public to taste in the Kent Green Hop Bar. Each year CAMRA provides an experienced tasting panel to sample the full range of brews and reveal the coveted Green Hop Beer of the Year award. This year saw sixteen or so beers, ranging in style from pale ale to stout and saison, presented for tasting and judging.



The tasting panel at work

The results, reached after much sampling and deliberation, were:

- 1st** Kent Brewery, Green Giant IPA 6%, brewed with East Kent Golding Hops
- 2nd** Musket Brewery, Flash in the Pan Pale Ale 3.7%, brewed with Fuggles Hops
- 3rd** Canterbury Ales, Green & Pale Ale 4.2%, brewed with East Kent Golding Hops

The panel noted that all the sixteen beers sampled were of excellent quality and a credit to the brewers involved.

They won't be around for long though; inevitably only small quantities of each brew are produced, and these sell out usually within a few weeks.

Seek out Green Hop Beer while it lasts and celebrate a true local brewing tradition, where Kent brewers and Kent hop farmers co-operate to produce a unique range of distinctly local beers. CONT.





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GADDS'   
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## What is Kent Green Hop Beer?

Brewed only with freshly picked green hops, Kent Green Hop Beers have a unique spicy, fresh bitter taste and aroma; quite distinct from normal beers produced from dried hops.

According to the official Kent Green Hop Beer website, [www.kentgreenhopbeer.com](http://www.kentgreenhopbeer.com), the criteria for a beer to qualify as a Kent Green Hop Beer are as follows:

- The beer can only be produced by a Kent brewer, in Kent.
- The hops used must be from Kent.
- The beer must only be flavoured with fresh green (undried) hops.
- The hops must be used within twelve hours of picking.



## What makes a green hop beer different to a beer made with dried hops?

When hops are dried, they lose monoterpenes, especially myrcene, which is very volatile. Myrcene is responsible for giving the pungent aroma which hops impart to the beer – this is what you can smell when you rub fresh hops with your hands.

As you can imagine, green hop beer is only brewed around the time of the hop harvest. Whilst some is bottled and can be enjoyed after the green hop season you are unlikely to see a green hop beer on draught after November.







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market traders in years gone by. There are up to three real ales served usually from local breweries, traditional pub food and Sunday roasts.

The Crispin Inn has recently reopened, this 15th century pub is by the old toll bridge. It serves Harvey's and Timothy Taylor ales and a pub classics menu. There is a courtyard overlooking the river which is lovely in the summer months.

Sandwich has many more excellent pubs, the George and Dragon, the Mermaid's Locker and the Time and Tide Taphouse to name but a few. You could easily spend a weekend exploring the medieval town and enjoying beers in any of the pubs.



Local food and local beer at The Chequer Inn

Back via the local chippy to the bus stop at the Guildhall, the 43 takes you back to Canterbury maybe for a final beer.

Louise Coleman

\* At the time of writing a single adult bus ticket on the 43 route is capped at £2.00. A South East Day Rider ticket costs £8.70 (more than 4 single tickets but less than 5) and is a cost-effective way to travel around East Kent. The Day Rider ticket allows you to hop on and off buses as you wish.



Real ales and traditional grub at The Red Cow



## Does he drink beer? Pubs, can you help?

**M**y husband is in a wheelchair, and it can be a struggle to find out if he can use certain pubs. Yes, we know that CAMRA beer guides and whatpub.com have a disabled access symbol, but it means “easy access to the pub and WC’s”. When our CAMRA branch compiles their entries to beer guides or WhatPub, we are reluctant to include the symbol unless access is completely step-free.

We are not suggesting that pub owners spend huge amounts of money in making their pubs completely step-free. Anyway, it’s not always possible with old buildings.

Can you help mobility-impaired people to use your pub? We need more information. The best and cheapest way to help your customers is to give more information on your website or on

your social media. You only need to do it once and update it occasionally.

The level of disability varies tremendously from one person to another. A lot of wheelchair users can take a few steps. Helpers can often tilt a manual wheelchair over a low step.

On a recent visit to the Lake District, we were very impressed by the amount of information given by the Crooklands Hotel. Have a look at their website, <https://www.crooklands.com>, and check out their Accessibility Statement. The amount of detail is incredible. Most pubs won’t need that much information, but it’s a great model to go on. If your pub isn’t completely step-free, you could add information about how many steps there are and if they are low, or if step-free access can be reached round the back.

Are there any other fixes which pubs could consider? A rail or banister can help arthritic customers to heave themselves up steps. A rubber threshold ramp can be used by wheelchairs (or buggies) to get over low steps. Try googling “threshold ramps” to check out the wide range of products available.

How much of a problem is accessibility? Sitting in the window of the West Gate Inn in Canterbury on a wet and windy November lunchtime, I counted passers-by for an hour from 1pm to 2pm. I saw six people in wheelchairs or mobility scooters and seven people with walking aids. There’s a lot of impaired mobility about.

There is another quite different problem. We visited one hotel and one pub recently which were fully wheelchair accessible – but neither of them stated that in pub guides, or on their websites.

We would be interested if anyone reading this article has any suggestions or comments to make, or if any licensees would like us to visit them. Please use the Canterbury Branch contact email, [gillanderrykeay@btinternet.com](mailto:gillanderrykeay@btinternet.com).

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# A history of cider

“Cider is the unsung hero of the English landscape and way of life.”

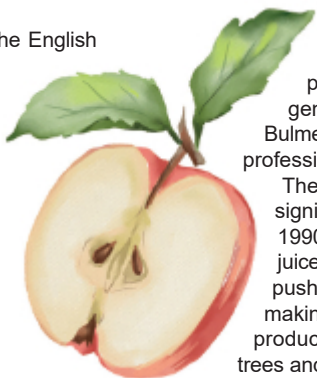
This quote by the author of *Ciderland*, (2008) James Crowden, is a reminder of the resurgent growth of cider drinking in the United Kingdom. This article presents in brief form some historical notes about cider, presented in June at a Friends of Canterbury Cathedral talk.

The Tien Shan mountains in Kazakhstan are acknowledged to be the genetic source of wild apple orchards, protected in deep valleys through ice ages and spread by nomads, animals and eventually traders. These apples often are seventimes more tannic than domestic eating apples with a variety of flavours, and cider-like descriptions of bittersharp, bittersweet, soft and hard textures.

Persians then Greeks traded apples, and the Romans built cider apple Pomeraniums, cool storage rooms. Romans introduced apples to England, mixing with the wild local hedgerow fruits. The goddess Pomona, and the Celtic wood nymphs, were viewed as guardians of orchards.

Scholars debate 10C abbeys having orchards. In Canterbury there is evidence of old orchards near St. Augustine's ruins. Monastic orchards were profitable, 'cyder' was drunk, not rationed like wine. 11C records said the Kentish monks preferred cider to ale.

After the dissolution these profitable lands were purchased by gentry, and fashionable cider and ornamental orchards were created. Henry VIII with his arborist Richard Harris designed apple orchards. Wine was seen as "popish", and cider became important to the economy. Cider paid rents, wages, and fines.



The "pet nat" or fizzy cider meant a need for stronger bottles. Huguenots were also skilled glassworkers; glass made with charcoal from the forest of Weald was darker and stronger, used to bottle cider.

The Lord Scudamore flute of 1620 was for sparkling cider, a beautiful 14" flute design that anticipated the much later champagne flutes.

Post-Restoration cider societies were popular.

Cider was taxed, however the 1643 tax led in 1763 to cider riots over the tax, repealed in 1766.

By the end of the Georgian era, professional cider makers replaced gentry farmers. Taunton, Coates, Bulmers, and Sheppey's began to professionally produce.

The 20th century post-war saw a significant decline of acreage, and by 1990 cider needed to be only 2% apple juice. Now laws decree at least 35% and pushback has led to better cider; cider making is now on a rise with artisanal production and re-discovery of heritage trees and orchards.

Brogdale, near Faversham, now cultivates over 2200 known varieties. The future of English cider may be bright for these fruits who survived in Kazakhstan to populate world orchards.

Terrie Chrones

Lord Scudamore flute, 1620



## A walk on the mild side

Covid and lockdown seem to have changed people's routine since 2020 and perhaps it is time to reinvigorate some of that drive for visiting pubs.

Back in 2016, with help from Jen, together we set about trying to boost the appeal of the CAMRA campaign "Mild May" in our branch area. The aim for our pub trails was to lay down a list of 27 pubs known to have mild at various times and persuading quite a few to stock mild in May.

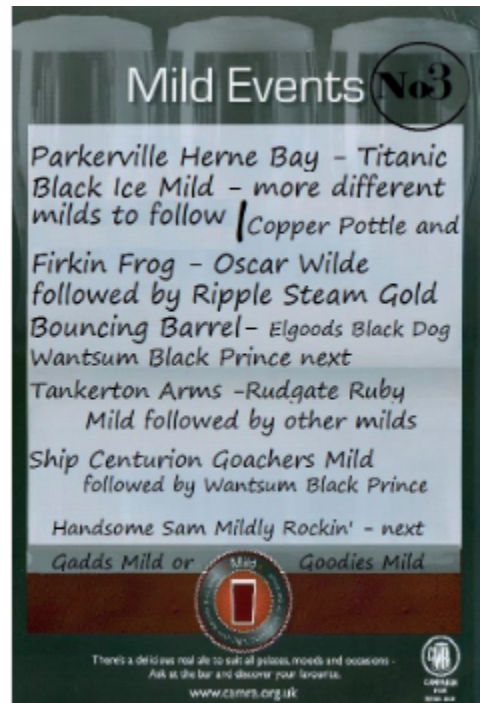
Our local trails and tours are sometimes organised by minibus or perhaps local Stagecoach bus services. For mild, with five pubs committed in Canterbury, five in Whitstable, four in Herne Bay and another two in the villages, regular service bus trips seemed obvious. As I recall quite a few of us met up and visited the towns at various dates, as well as individual regular pub trips to empty the casks. I was fortunate to have secured lists of beers/breweries by writing to pubs, canvassing and circulating a pub hand-out, then creating a "chalk board" which was updated during May on our Yahoo group and Twitter page. CAMRAHQ had provided me with posters for promotion and I make no excuse for utilising these as the pattern.

It was quite successful and in 2017 we followed it up with "Another walk on the Mild side" in the same manner. I even wrote to Shepherd Neame asking if they would release cask mild for this event; no luck there. 2018 and 2019 brought about continued support by some pubs but for personal reasons (the Kent Beer Festival), I didn't devote so much time to promotion, just to drinking.

Often misjudged by some drinkers, mild was once quite common all year round and a cool refreshing drink in summer months, somewhat lighter in taste than porters. The CAMRA webpage [camra.org.uk/what-we-do/mild-month/](http://camra.org.uk/what-we-do/mild-month/) gives a good background to what is fast becoming a rare drink.

As we approach May 2024, I think it is time to campaign with our local pubs to put Mild May back on the map. Many other branches across the country are successful in doing this so I am looking for some branch help in campaigning and marketing ourselves to this end.

Brian R Simpson







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## Travels with my beer guide: GREATER MANCHESTER

Manchester: famed for music, football, meat pies— and ale. Sadly, many of the historic Mancunian breweries are but mere memories, but now a new breed of top-notch cask and craft brewers help to showcase Manchester as one of our great beer cities.

The pubs aren't bad either. Ranging from traditional street corner locals to stylish craft beer outlets, first-rate beer can be found readily across the city. Here are but a few of the places that stood out on a recent visit.

First off, Portland Street in the City centre, nestling between the cheeks of Chinatown and the Gay Village, boasts some real gems. The Grey Horse (80 Portland Street) vies to be the narrowest pub in the country; little more than a corridor with a diminutive bar dispensing excellent pints of Hyde

beers. Two doors down, The Circus Tavern (86 Portland Street), with Tetley ales, is scarcely bigger but does boast a couple of pint-sized seating areas. Both are worth visiting for their classic interiors.

Keep going along Portland Street, into Great Bridgewater Street and here's an untouched classic, Peveril of the Peak (127 Great Bridgewater Street). An exuberant green tiled exterior fronting a sublime four roomed traditional northern pub full of polished wood, stained glass, and a busy bustle of friendly locals of all ages. Four beers are available, usually including one from the local Brightside brewery.

The Northern Quarter, just northward of Piccadilly Gardens, openly showcases its industrial past. Today it's a vibrant area with many new-style bars and a host of traditional ale houses. The Georgian Crown and Kettle (2 Oldham Road) is a stunning

CONT.





edifice with an eye-popping confection of a decorated bar ceiling. The seven handpumps offer an impressive selection of beers. The building was once the central court and the gent's toilets are supposedly built on the old hanging pits. Moving swiftly on, the nearby Smithfield Market Tavern (37 Swan Street) is owned by the Blackjack Brewery, serving their beers and at least two guests. A welcoming and spacious bar with comfy sofas and a variety of pub games, it's a pleasant spot to while away one of those frequent rainy Manchester afternoons.

A short walk takes you the Marble Arch Inn (73 Rochdale Road). This is one belting beauty of a boozer. Yet more Northern gothic finery with the eponymous marbled arched doorway, a mosaic floor, and tiled walls. Home to the Marble brewery, it



stocks the full range of their much-loved beers. Excellent meals and a roaring log fire help make the Marble Arch an exceptional pub.

Fast and frequent bright yellow Metrolink trams make the outer suburbs of Greater Manchester, and some more outstanding establishments, easily accessible. Top favourites include Chorlton (take an East Didsbury tram) for The Chorlton Tap (533 Wilbraham Road) with six regional beers, food, and a beer garden. Also, The Beer House (57 Manchester Road) for more Marble Brewery ales and other guests in a friendly, welcoming suburban pub. Or journey north to Bury for the fabulous Trackside Bar at Bolton Street Station, home base of the East Lancashire steam railway. Ten handpumps offering an esoteric range of beers from around the country, served in a comfortably refurbished station buffet with the nostalgia of real steam engines just outside the windows. What's not to like.

I mean, there are just so many great pubs and decent beers, that you'll never be lost for a great time out in the capital of the North. Check the Good Beer Guide for even more recommendations.

Denis Palmer

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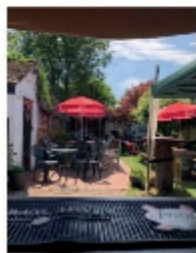
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## Being a semi-active CAMRA member

I grew up drinking keg beer brewed by the nationals. It was not until I went to university some 25 years ago that I discovered real ale and found that I preferred it to what I had been drinking. I wanted to meet other people who drank real ale and find out the best places to drink it. With social media not yet being a thing, the best idea I could come up with was to join CAMRA, whose leaflets I had seen in some of Canterbury's pubs.

It was not until I finished my degree and moved back home that I started going to branch meetings. I met people to go drink real ale with, as I originally intended, but I started to get involved with some of the work a CAMRA branch does. There are many things a member can do without having to really

commit to anything for more than a few days. Some require little effort such as submitting beer scores, passing on news about pubs and breweries, or dropping off CAMRA materials to pubs. Others

require more effort but still without much commitment such as gathering details from pubs for use in writing entries for WhatPub or writing an article for a branch magazine.

Working a CAMRA beer festival can take as little as a few hours (if you are helping on, for example, one evening). Working an entire festival however requires taking a few days off work and giving up a weekend. Some festival jobs require more commitment than others. I pitch in running the cooling system at the Bexley beer festival, a task that requires many hours of time but is over within the space of a week. I find it a rewarding experience and working beer festivals is my favourite thing about being a CAMRA member but, even so, I only work one or two festivals per year.

The people who make up a branch's active members can seem like a closed group – some of these people have known each other for over 50 years – but I have never found turning up as a new member at a branch meeting or social event an unwelcoming experience. Branch meetings are a bit formal as there is business to take care of and often not much time for the “getting to know you” stuff. A branch social, on the other hand, provides a great opportunity to get to know people before you try getting more involved with them on CAMRA business. Most branches organise socials including ale trails, visits to beer festivals, visits to breweries, and beer tastings. Your activities are not restricted to the branch of which you are a member. It is not uncommon for people from one branch to turn up at the social activities of another branch; depending on where you live you may find it easier to get to some places in neighbouring branches than parts of your own.

Be assured that even if you do only a little bit it is appreciated by the more active members. I have never felt pressured to take on more work or commit to a committee role, though having said that I have recently become the Membership Secretary for the Canterbury, Herne Bay, and Whitstable branch. If you are not a member or are a member but have never thought of getting involved, I recommend giving it a go. If nothing else, you might find some new drinking buddies.

Joseph Mist



## Watering the worker's beer

It has been reported that beer prices have risen more than 11% in recent months. Not good when we are in the grips of an economic crisis, and a lot of pints are now priced the wrong side of £5. The Oxford Partnership stated that visits to pubs increased following the lockdown by 6% in February but have now declined again to a negative 2% from that figure.

So how do brewers increase their revenue without making it too obvious? By law the retail trade must display current price lists, so for the brewer the answer is simple: water the beer down.

In the recent past John Smith's Smooth, Wells Bombardier, Wychwood Hobgoblin and Greene King Old Speckled Hen had their draught beer ABV (alcohol by volume) cut, but none had the price reduced to recognise that less excise duty and VAT were being paid. No wonder brewers are happy to reduce beer strengths.

In August this year there were changes to the alcohol duty system, but rest assured that this will not reduce the amount that comes into the Chancellor's coffers.

One of the changes reduces the duty on draught beer and cider but also bans any sales from draught duty-paid containers for consumption off the premises, which includes from CAMRA festivals. We are campaigning to get this reversed.

The reductions in duty will get absorbed into the excessive costs that pubs are facing, so don't expect the price of a pint in the pub to reduce for a long time yet.

It was a key aim when setting up the CAMRA over 50 years ago that alcohol levels of beer were made public, some keg beers being brewed at the time were so weak that they could have been sold in America when under Prohibition.

Let's focus on the most recent ABV reductions. Shepherd Neame of Faversham,

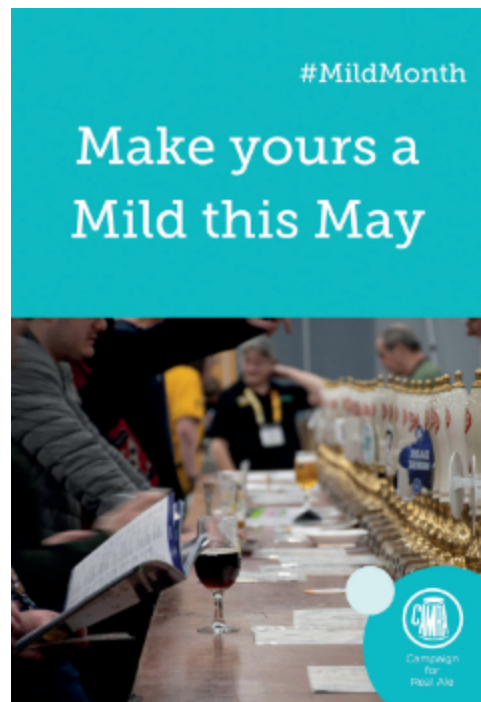
Kent announced that following surveys they would reduce the strength of Spitfire from 4.5% to 4.2%, Bishops Finger from 5.4% to 5.2% and Whitstable Bay Pale Ale from 4.1% to 3.9%.

They are not alone; Greene King have reduced the strength of Speckled Hen again from 5.0% to 4.8%. The beer was originally brewed at 6.2% by Morland's brewery in Abingdon, Oxfordshire to celebrate the centenary of MG car production, the brewery and car factory are now long gone.

So why is there no reduction in cost to the customer? A reader of the "Times Guardian" local paper has calculated what the changes meant. A reduction of 0.1% equates to one penny per pint so on an average strength beer. A small amount, one might imagine, but if every brewer reduced their beer strengths by 0.3%, they would save collectively £250 million in tax per annum.

Beer bought in the pub is a two-tax commodity; excise duty is levied at the brewery gate and VAT at the point of dispense - effectively taxing the tax.

Steve Bury





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# Beer Crossword Challenge No.1

Created by  
Pat Woodward

Available at  
patspints.com



## ACROSS

- Popular American variety of hops. Developed at Oregon State University and grown in the Pacific Northwest.
- Murder in reverse.
- An Indian dish made from split lentil beans (or peas), onions, tomatoes, curry and other spices.
- A well-known brand of English beer made in Burton upon Trent.
- A relatively light beer style first made in the Czech city of Plzen.
- A gargyle is the unofficial mascot of this large San Diego craft brewery.
- Dutch word for white, and the first three letters in a style of beer resurrected by Pierre Celis in his hometown of Hoegaarden.
- Style of beer commonly referred to as a Belgian Farmhouse Ale.
- Great Lakes Brewery seasonal imperial IPA, Lake \_\_\_\_\_ Monster.
- Acronym for the low cost beer from Milwaukee now popular with hipsters.
- Micro-organism responsible for fermenting beer.

- Beer style most closely associated with Guinness, Irish dry \_\_\_\_\_.
- The largest of the Trappist breweries.
- Craft brewery located in Kalamazoo, MI.
- English beer style, \_\_\_\_\_ brown ale.
- A beer brewed in a monastic brewery that is not one of the official Trappist breweries is called an \_\_\_\_\_ ale.
- Short for Public House.
- Style of beer originally brewed with higher hop content to keep from spoiling over

the long seavoyage from England to India.

- Type of grain used in a Weiss beer.
- Large American craft brewery located in Newport, OR.
- Native American tribe whose lands are located in Western New York.

## DOWN

- Beer festival celebrated every fall in Munich.
- A beer made with a bottom fermenting yeast at 34-36 °F.
- Rogue's popular maibock.
- Grain traditionally used in the making of beer.
- A beer made with top fermenting yeast at 50-75 °F.
- Jamaican beer, Red \_\_\_\_\_.
- A dark beer made with unfermentable lactose sugar.
- A term that originally applied to stouts that were brewed for export to Russia, and has come to be used to signify any style that is higher in alcohol (and usually flavors).
- A style of dark beer dating from 18th century London whose name is derived from the transportation workers who known to favor this type of beer.
- Brewery located in Petaluma, California.
- A style of English bitter that is more hopped with higher alcohol content than the standard bitter.
- America's oldest continually operating brewery.
- Large brewery located in Golden, Colorado. Maker of Blue Moon Belgian White.
- Chicago area brewery, Goose \_\_\_\_\_.
- An ale that is spontaneously fermented with airborne yeasts indigenous to the Senne Valley of Belgium.
- American style lager, first brewed in California in the 19th century. Brewed at higher temperatures than most lagers. The name has been trademarked by Anchor Brewing.

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## It's time to Wassail again

It is most important that cider and perry drinkers take part in the ancient tradition of wassail to ensure that we have a good apple and pear harvest in 2024. The name originated from the Saxon "waes hael" literally translated as "good health" or "be healthy" and involved drinking cider and visiting orchards. It should be remembered that cider was the staple drink of the working classes from serfs, followed by farm labourers, right through until the industrial revolution. The wassail should take place on 17th January, which is the old twelfth night after Christmas, and is conducted to ensure a good harvest and that the orchard is protected from a late frost. Of course, if you have a lot of orchards, they can't all be done on the same night, so a little flexibility is allowed. Ceremonies vary involving different characters and often the local Morris dancers, and start with those present selecting a Queen and Princess who approach the central tree and recite:

*"Here's to the old apple tree,  
That blooms well, bears well,  
Hats full, caps full,  
Three bushel bags full,  
All under one tree".*

Some groups light twelve small bonfires around the orchard and a thirteenth Judas fire which is then stamped out. Torches are optional, and in modern times of health and safety (they are hot and on fire) lanterns or battery powered ones are used. The Queen then places a cider-soaked piece of toast or cake in the fork of the central tree followed by apples being thrown at the trunk. Again, in some cases a burning lantern of Herefordshire thorn is hung from a branch of the tree. A momentary silence follows after which is the cry of "Oh lily, white lily!". Then a shotgun is fired through the branches normally using a cartridge filled with salt, not pellets. Alternatively, this can be replaced by fireworks being



set off, or the assembled crowd making as much noise as possible by shaking stones in tins and banging metal instruments. The aim of the exercise is to scare away the bad spirits from the orchard.

The wassail song is then sung by all present: - "A wassail, a wassail, the moon shines down, Our apples are ripe and the nuts they are brown,

And whence thou mayest bud dear old apple tree,  
And when thou mayest bear we sing unto thee With our wassail a-wassail a-wassail

Oh apple tree prosper, bud bloom and bear. So that we have plenty of cyder next year, And where there's a barrel we hope there be ten. That we may have cyder when we come again".

This is then followed by cider drinking; the wassail bowl is passed round for people to fill their cups and some groups use mulled spiced cider for this. A good wassail will then adjourn to the pub. Not mentioned earlier in this article is the optional traditional rural dress, which includes the blacking up of faces.

Steve Bury





ANSWERS:

## Beer Crossword Challenge No.1



## RECIPE

# Chocolate cake with beer

**T**his delicious cake is made with a dark beer. We used Canterbury Ales Merchant's Ale, but there are many other local dark ales which would be great. Wantsum's Golgotha or Black Pig, Gadd's Dogbolter, Goody's Good Lord or Foundry Streetlight Porter all spring to mind. You can get them in bottles either from the brewery shops or from the excellent bottled beer ranges in many farm shops and the Offy in Whitstable.

## Ingredients

Spreadable butter	Cocoa
Dark brown muscovado sugar	Dark beer
2 large eggs	Dark chocolate (minimum 70% cocoa solids)
Self-raising flour	Icing sugar
Baking powder	Walnut pieces
Bicarbonate of soda	



## Method

1. You need 2x20cm cake tins with loose bases. Grease them and line the bases with non-stick baking paper.
2. Heat the oven to 180 degrees C, gas mark 4.
3. Cream together 110g of softened spreadable butter with 270g of dark brown muscovado sugar in a large bowl.
4. Beat 2 large eggs and add gradually to the butter and sugar,
5. Sift together 175g of self-raising flour, one quarter teaspoon of baking powder, 1 teaspoon of bicarbonate of soda and 50g of cocoa and stir gradually into the other ingredients with a metal spoon.
6. Stir in 200ml of the dark beer, a little at a time.
7. If you like raw cake batter, try this – it's delicious!
8. Divide the batter equally between the 2 cake tins. Bake near the centre of the oven for about 30 to 40 minutes until they are firm and springy when pressed and pulling away from the edges.
9. Allow to cool for 5 minutes, then run a knife round the edges and turn out with the tops downwards onto a wire rack. Very carefully remove the base and the baking paper. Allow to cool completely – this cake is very soft at first and tends to crumble.
10. Icing: place a bowl over a pan of simmering water, don't allow the bowl to touch the water. Break 75g of dark chocolate (minimum 70% cocoa solids) into the bowl and add 2 tablespoons of the dark beer.
11. When the chocolate is melted take the bowl off the heat and cool slightly. Beat in 35g spreadable butter. Cool a little more then beat in 75g of sifted icing sugar. Stir in 20g of finely chopped walnut pieces.
12. When the icing has cooled and is spreadable, use it to sandwich the 2 cakes together.

Allergens: Eggs and walnuts. Flour and many beers contain barley or wheat. Check the label on the other ingredients for potential allergens such as soya and milk.

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