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THIRSTY TIMES

FREE

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



Courtesy of the Maldon & Burnham Standard

**Beers from Yorkshire showcased at this
year's Maldon Beer & Cider Festival**

10th - 13th April, Plume Academy Maldon



THE CROSS KEYS

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Web: www.ckwn.co.uk

Toni, Trevor and the Team welcome you to The Cross Keys, a Grade II listed Country Pub in the heart of White Notley village dating back to 1700s.

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Food is available Wednesday through to Saturday from 12pm-2pm & 6pm- 9pm. Sunday 12pm - 4pm.

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Performing on Friday 21st 8:30pm

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What we have to offer...

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The Ale House really is a great place for the discerning drinker. Everyday there is a selection of 12 Cask Ales, 8 Craft Keg Beers, 5 International Beers on Tap, 12 Traditional Ciders, 1 Guest Keg Cider and over 100+ Bottles and Cans.

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The Ale House 24-26 Viaduct Road Chelmsford CM1 1AQ
01245 260535 - Thealehousechelmsford@hotmail.co.uk

Beer Festivals & Tap Takeovers

One Mile End Tap Takeover

Thursday 2nd May (6 Cask 8 Keg)

Siren Craft Tap Takeover

Thursday 16th May (6 Cask 8 Keg)

Beer Festival

Thursday 30th May - Sunday 2nd June
(24 Cask 16 Keg)

Brew By Numbers Tap Takeover

Thursday 27th June (6 Cask 8 Keg)

Hammerton Tap Takeover

Thursday 1st August (6 Cask 8 Keg)

Beer Festival

Thursday 29th August - September 1st
(24 Cask 16 Keg)

ELB Tap Takeover

Thursday 31st October (6 Cask 8 Keg)

Beer Festival

Thursday 28th November - Sunday 1st December
(24 Cask 16 Keg)

Xmas Beer Festival

19th December - 23rd December
(24 Cask 16 Keg)

From the Editor



Thanks for picking up this Spring 2019 issue of Thirsty Times, the first of a new era for the tri-branches where we will be responsible end-to-end for production, marketing and printing of TT. Of course, many

thanks to all the various contributors, but in the preparations for this switch away from our previous production company I would like to single out Chris Harvey (MAD), Claire Irons (CME), Mike Cutler (MAD) and Chris Rouse (NWE) as prime 'movers and shakers' without whom it would not have happened.

Although I produce a similar CAMRA magazine end-to-end for Highlands and Western Isles, there it's only a single branch and its contributors and rapporteurs to manage; here in Essex with three branches already in the 'consortium' with South East Essex shortly to join, it's a different scale of co-ordination challenge. With the kind support of our advertisers, to whom we are very grateful, we hope to bring you many more interesting and informative issues through coming years.

SPORTSMANS ARMS, NOUNSLEY

How do we save pubs? Well, one at a time is a good start. So often we hear the tragic news of the only pub in a village succumbing to flats or houses, sponsored by PubCos. How welcome is it, then, to hear of Braintree District Council's decision to refuse planning permission for this on the Sportsmans Arms, Nounsley, on which we reported last issue when the owners shamelessly burned the bars in front of the pub, in a very public demonstration of victory. Very well done to the campaigning team, local and afar.

PoTy PRESENTATIONS

Stop press for the finalised CME Pub of the Year presentations which are: Pub of the Year – Woolpack, Wednesday 17th April from 8pm, Cider Pub of the Year Good Friday 19th April from 7pm and (very admirable) runner-up in both compos the Compasses, Little Green on Holy Saturday 20th from 6pm. From a personal point of view, the Compasses will always hold an emotionally special place, as when I had my kids on noughties weekends they loved the 'huffer' experience.

WELL DONE TO HELIONS BUMPSTEAD

Congratulations to the campaigning team in Helions Bumpstead, featured on page 25, for finally purchasing the pub as a community concern. They are now in the process of recruiting a tenant and, as I was corresponding with them this week about an image to go with the feature, were pulling up the pub sign to replace this. Grand launch was Saturday 30th, follow-up photos to be published in TT30.

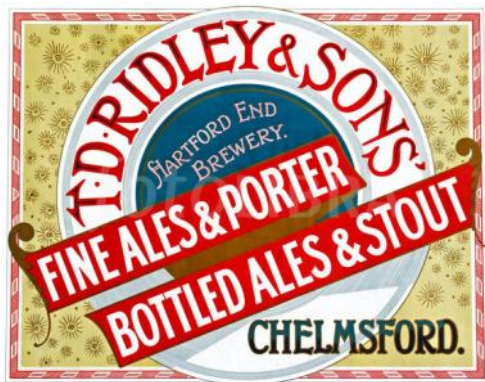
CHELMSFORD RACECOURSE BEERFEST

Just room for a quick plug for our second-year advertiser, the Chelmsford City Racecourse who have seen the light, and realised that it's Ale [and cider] all the way. The Racecourse's James Hall has reached out to the tri-branches asking whether we could assist with making their May Day beerfest event a success. It's not an official CAMRA jaunt, but drop me a line at the email address below if you'd like to be involved, and I'll pass on your expression of interest to James.

Ad multas cerevisias

Tony Vernon
editor@chelmsford.camra.org.uk

Ridleys Revisited - by Chris Harvey



I got the idea of writing this article after a chance conversation with a friend of mine, Nick, whilst we were watching cricket at Chelmsford last summer. We got talking about the “good old days” of the late seventies, when the most exotic beer we could get in our corner

of Essex was Ridley's!

He mentioned that he had kept a leaflet Ridley's had issued about twenty years ago which had a map showing the location of all their pubs. This sparked my curiosity, as I didn't recall ever seeing this, and we agreed it would be interesting to have a look at it.

Nick brought the leaflet to the cricket the following day; I was fascinated by the map and the list of pubs. It brought back memories of trips around Essex in a mate's clapped-out banger visiting isolated, historic rural inns to sample the delights of Ridley's Bitter, often served straight from wooden casks. Growing up in Southend, the most accessible Ridley's pub in the 1970s was the Wheatsheaf in Rettendon which sadly, is no longer a pub.

The beautifully crafted map showed that by the late 1990s, Ridley's portfolio of 65 pubs stretched all the way from Southend in the south to Ipswich in the north. They even had a pub in Walthamstow in East London in those days.

As many of you will know, Ridley's brewery closed its doors for the last time in September 2005, after 163 years of brewing beers. The company (with the entire pub estate) was purchased by Greene King. This got me thinking – what has happened to all these pubs since the map was printed? CAMRA's excellent WhatPub website was a good place to start my investigations, and after a few hours' work, I managed to discover the fate of every single pub:

- Only **15** of the pubs are still owned by Greene King. This is quite ironic, given the fact that the Bury St Edmunds' brewers bought Ridley's principally for their pubs! They include pubs such as

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the food-oriented **Anchor** in Runsell Green, near Danbury and the **Dolphin** in Stisted; the current local CAMRA Pub of the Year, the **Woolpack** in Chelmsford, and the **Lion & Lamb** in Little Canfield.

- **20** of them are now free houses. Some of them are justifiably well-known for their character, hospitality and fine ales. Pubs such as the **King William IV** in Braintree, the **Stag** in Little Easton, the **Green Man** in Little Braxted and the **White Hart** in Little Waltham are good examples.

- **8** pubs are owned by the pub company Hawthorn Leisure. These were part of a large transaction between Greene King and Hawthorn Leisure in 2014 which resulted in the purchase of 275 pubs. They include the **Wheatsheaf** in Hatfield Peverel; the local Branch's Most Improved Pub of the Year in 2017, the **Eagle** in Galleywood and the **Black Lion** in High Roding.

- **2** pubs are owned by Admiral Taverns. These are the **Onley Arms** in Stisted and the **Silver Oyster** in Colchester.

- **6** pubs have been converted into restaurants. The **Saling Oak** in Blake End is now the Palm Trees Chinese restaurant and the **Plough** in White Notley is the Raj Gardens Indian restaurant.

- **5** of the pubs have been converted into houses. These include the **Cricketers** in Great Dunmow (which appeared in the very first Good Beer Guide in 1974), the **Rising Sun** at Duton Hill and the **Three Horseshoes** in

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Bannister Green, near Felsted.

• 9 pubs have either been closed or have been demolished to make way for houses or other properties. The **Thomas Eldred** in Ipswich and the **New Barn** in Chelmsford have been replaced by housing; the **Cock** in Boreham and the **King's Head** in Braintree are closed, future unknown.



*Compasses,
Little Green*

If like me you are interested in old brewery history, which former Ridley's pubs have the best collection of memorabilia? Well, the first port of call must be the former brewery tap, the famous **Compasses** in Little Green. This classic country pub has plenty of reminders of its time as the nearest pub to the brewery at Hartford End.

*Red Lion, Great
Sampford*

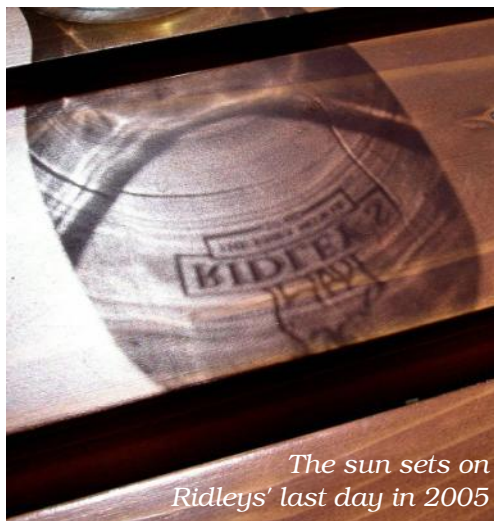


Two other favourites of mine not too far away are the **Leather Bottle** at Pleshey and the **Walnut Tree** at Broads Green. Both have retained old brewery signs inside. These are the two pubs I

visited to drink my last few pints of Ridley's IPA in late August 2005, just before the brewery closed.

Another pub which boasts a good collection of Ridley's mementoes is the **Nag's Head** at Ramsden Heath, near Billericay. The **Red Lion** in Great Sampford has a large painted wall sign which says, "Ridley's Fine Ales" and the **Old Crown** in Messing has kept its old Ridley's pub sign hanging outside.

It's sad to see that nearly a third of the old Ridley's pubs are no more, but let's end on a positive note. The **Mitre** in Wickham Bishops closed in early 2017 and was purchased by a couple who converted the rear of the property into a beauty salon in early 2018. They indicated that they would open the front of the building as tearooms with an alcohol licence.



*The sun sets on
Ridley's' last day in 2005*

I was really pleased to learn recently that the owners have listened to the views of the villagers and intend to reopen the Mitre in the next couple of months as a pub/tearoom. So that's one pub which can be removed from the "closed" list!

charvey23@gmail.com

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Drinking in Vilnius - by Mick Allen



Cathedral Square, Vilnius

For this trip, we decided on a whistle stop tour of the ex-USSR Baltic States, allowing three nights in each of Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia, all of which gained independence in 1991.

Vilnius, our first stop, was added to the UNESCO World Heritage List in 1994. For the purposes of maps, I have just

included a (very!) basic city map; the Tourist Information Centres all provide free, more detailed maps of the maze of small narrow streets. I have also omitted hours of business, as these vary with season.



Craft & Draft

Having arrived in Vilnius at around midnight (it's a 2½ hour flight from the UK, and it's GMT +2), there was no time for drinking. All of the pubs I mention are accessible without the use of public transport and the beers were all in the €3-4 range for ½ litre.



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Būsi Trečias

The first port of call was **Craft and Draft** (1), located at Gedimino pr. 5, and opened in 2016, this cellar bar microbrewery has 6 of its own ales, and a selection of others. The *Light Lager* and *Seasonal Brew (Red Ale)* were sampled. Food was also available.

On to **Būsi Trečias** (2) after this, close



observation deck (something you used to be able to visit at the BT Tower in London until it was closed in 1981!), at 165m offering extensive views towards Vilnius. The final visit of the day was to **Vilniaus Alus(4)** at Pilies g. 6, and if you can find this place first time, you've done very well. It's tucked up through an arch off Pilies g., and the beer of choice in here was *Armeniukas Brewery Tamsusis 666*, a dark red brown ale.



The next morning was an early start for the train out to Trakai, as missing the 07.50 meant a four hour wait for the next train. Although the trains here run on time, there seems to be no

rhyme or reason to the timings, but for €3.20 for a round trip of over thirty miles, one can't complain. The castle at Trakai is a major tourist destination. A couple of hundred years ago it resembled something like a dilapidated Fountains Abbey, but has now been fully ~~restored~~ rebuilt, something that English Heritage would have frowned upon in the UK. Very little in the way of drinking experiences here, so back to Vilnius.

by at Totorių g. 18. Again the choices were a *Light* and a *Dark Lager*, both home brewed in this cellar bar, priced at €3 for ½ litre. After a quick look around the small brewery here, just around the corner is **Nisha Craft Capital (3)**, at Stuokos-Gucevičiaus g. 9. A selection of 17 Lithuanian and foreign beers were available on draught: I plumped for a Danish/Lithuanian collaboration *Herslev/Sakiškių Dark Smoked Saison*, brewed about 12 miles to the north of Vilnius.



A break was taken here for a bus trip out to the 327m high Television Tower, with a revolving restaurant and

the first bar of the day was the original **Špunka bar (5)**. The name is a good selling point, but it's pronounced 'Shpoonka', for anyone who wondered. Located at Užupio g. 9, it's a local's bar off the tourist route serving beers from the *Dundulis Brewery*. I had the *Gutstoutas Stout*. Next it was off to another bar from the chain (there are 3), **Savičiaus Špunka (6)**, at Savičiaus g. 9.

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Savičiaus Špunka

With 12 ales on tap, I got chatting to the barman, Benas, and persuaded him to serve me 3 beers from the list in smaller measures - *Lipčius*, *Kurko Keptinis*, and *Publijus Palemonas Baltic Porter* (warned by Benas that the abv of this one was more likely to be 8% and not the stated 7.2%), all by the *Dundulis Brewery*. This bar had been open a year. Upon leaving, Benas told me the beers were gratis, but I insisted on paying, nonetheless.



Leičių Bravoras

Leaving here, and just the other side of the square at Stiklių g. 5, I found **Leičių Bravoras** (7). This bar has many different Lithuanian bottled beers and a microbrewery at the rear. On each table is a metered pouring tap, connected to one of the vessels in the microbrewery. On this occasion the beer on the tap was a *Munich Helles Lager*. I opted for a tasty *Hemp beer* from one of the taps on the bar.

The last three bars of the day were the **Monstro Pizza Bar** (8), **Etmonų Špunka** (9) and **Prohibicija** (10). All of these bars can be accessed from Arklių g. 6. It's a strange set up here, as all three places share a common central area,

where you can take your drinks and food from any bar. I finished here nicely with a pizza and a 200ml each paddle of *Sori Brewery* (Estonia) *Coffee Gorilla Baltic Porter*, *Sakiškių Brewery* (Lithuania) *Neipaand Milk Stout*, *Kuro Aparatūra* (Lithuania) and *Nemiegose Pareigose* and *Pinta Brewery* (Poland) *Oto Mata IPA*.



Pub Leičiai

The next day there was time in the morning before our coach to Riga to visit a couple more bars. The first was **The Pub Leičiai** (11), located opposite Leičių Bravoras at Stiklių g. 4, also offers beers from Leičių Bravoras, and a nice *Black IPA* was the order of the day.



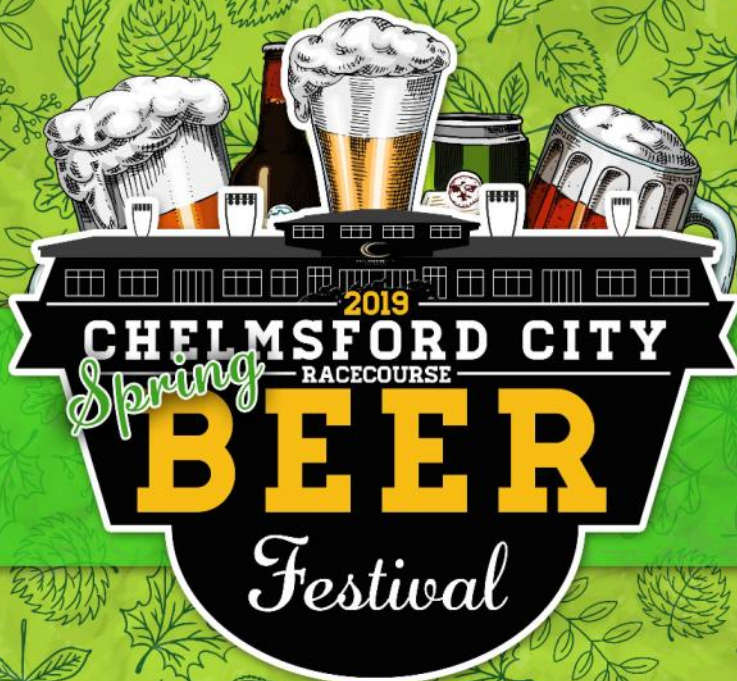
Šnekutis

Final pub of the morning was a little place that we had discovered the previous night. **Šnekutis** (12) is to be found at Šv. Stepono g. 8. A nice café bar serving a range of 11 beers, I selected the *Dundulis Gutstoutas Stout* to wash down the rather unappetising dish of pig's ears, which I'd been threatening to try. If I can give any advice, don't be tempted!

Off to Riga next.....

Mick Allen
Gravesend and Darent Valley CAMRA
mickyallen@tiscali.co.uk

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Colchester & North East Essex: New Inn, Colchester, CO2 7AX,
<http://whatpub.com/COL/10833>

Herts/Essex Borders: Woodbine Inn, Honey Lane, Waltham Abbey, EN9 3QT,
<http://whatpub.com/HEB/11457>

Maldon and Dengie: Farmers Yard, 140 High Street, Maldon, CM9 5BX,
<http://whatpub.com/DEN/11506>

North West Essex: Fleur de Lys, High Street, Widdington, CB11 3SG,
<http://whatpub.com/ENW/11396>

South East Essex: West Road Tap, 2 West Road, Westcliff-on-Sea, SS0 9DA,
<http://whatpub.com/ESE/11598>

South West Essex: White Hart, Kings Walk / Argent Street, Grays, RM17 6HR
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Wibblers 'Porty Imperial Stoaty' wins Overall Bottle & Can Gold at BeerX

Wibblers were incredibly pleased and proud to receive what it recognised as the highest accolade possible in the brewing professional world for a beer that's bottled or canned.



At the SIBA (Society of Independent Brewers) BeerX Conference in Liverpool our 9.4% 'Porty Imperial Stoaty' Ruby Port Barrel Aged Imperial Stout not only

won it's class but also overall Supreme Gold Bottle and Can Champion.



This came a matter of days after we were awarded our CAMRA certificate for 'Winter Wibble' having won its category in the CAMRA East Anglia Beer Competition and being a finalist at the CAMRA Champion Winter Beer of Britain Competition in Norwich.

abby@wibblers.co.uk

Spotlight on the Queen Victoria,

Maldon - by Chris Harvey



If you drive into Maldon from the A414 along Spital Road, one of the landmarks has always been the “Queen Victoria”, with its eye-catching displays of colourful floral hanging baskets.

The pub dates back to 1845, when John Garrad had the alehouse built. He went into partnership with Walter Grimston in 1868, and Garrad & Grimston beers were sold at the pub until 1885, when the pub was sold to Walter Gray – it has been a Gray’s public house ever since.

The “Queen Victoria” was a regular entry in the Good Beer Guide for a few years until 2014, when the long-time landlady Mandy Cheek was running the pub, followed by Kelvin Willis. After Kelvin’s departure, the pub went through a few relatively lean years, but things have really changed since late last year.

James Burrell took over as landlord in

September 2018, and he has totally transformed the pub in a remarkably short pace of time. He spent over twenty years working in catering for British Airways, and his last role was as bar manager for the “Cricketers” in Mill Green, near Ingatestone. James is very welcoming, and it’s noticeable how friendly and engaging all the staff are. The pub is always immaculately clean and tidy, and the walls are now adorned with interesting pictures of historic Maldon and Queen Victoria.

Word has spread on how good the pub is, as on my last visit on a Tuesday lunchtime, it was full of contented diners and drinkers. The good food is definitely a big draw. The menu is very varied, and locally-sourced produce is used wherever possible.

On this visit, it was National Pie Week; the specials menu contained no less than ten different types of pie to

choose from! The one I chose was superb.

So, what about the beers? Well, James has slowly but surely changed the real ale offering in the pub. Maldon Brewing's Puck's Folly, Adnams' Southwold Bitter and Green King Abbot are all regulars, and Mighty Oak's Captain Bob will soon join that list (once he removes Doom Bar). There will be one or two changing beers available, too. During my visit I tried Nethergate's Venture and Mighty Oak's The Old Man and the Sea, which were both in excellent condition.

James is also introducing lots of events at the "Queen Vic". Last year they held a Beaujolais Nouveau evening, and he dressed up as a rustic Frenchman for the night! There are regular quiz nights (where money is raised for local charities). Not content to rest on his laurels, he also has plans to significantly



upgrade facilities in the pub in the near future. We'll keep you posted on developments in "Thirsty Times".

So, on your next visit to Maldon, why don't you pop into the Queen's Victoria? You'll be sure of a warm welcome and a very good pint of beer!

charvey23@gmail.com



Registration still open at agm.
camra.org.uk
Come and help us shape the future of the organisation for the "twenties" and beyond!



LOCAL FEST
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Diary Dates



A Night at the Races

Have a bet and try your luck.

*A great night of fun with prizes on the night Saturday
20th April from 7pm*



*Singer David Norwood Sunday 21st April
from 4pm*

Afternoon Quiz Dates: Sunday 28th April, Sunday 2nd June and Sunday 7th July

Beer Festival

*We are hosting our first ever Beer festival from 24th - 27th May. There will be over **20** Real Ales, **4** German beers and **12** Ciders. We will also have a great selection of over **40** gins at our Gin and Prosecco Bar.*

*On the Saturday we have pizzas by **LOT 33 Pizza** and on Sunday we have gourmet burgers and chips by **The Real Grub Club***

*We are delighted to have a great music line up over the festival starting with **Lesleyandste Wanderers** on the Friday evening Saturday DJ **Mark Weale** and **Blackwater - Essex Band***

*Sunday **J.B & Brown Acoustic Duo** and DJ **Mark Weale***

 **The Cross Keys**

The Cross Keys, The Green CM3 2JQ Tel 01245 633339

Pips from the Core - SICA - by Ray Blockley

The following article first appeared in issue 150 of The Nottingham Drinker



You know the sort of thing - that "closing down sale" which never ends... that Recommended Retail Price which may (or may not) have

been available somewhere in the world at some point in time... the small print, that well known trap for the unwary... Or that beer which has a funky new label and includes the word "craft" even though you know it's the same old national industrial brew, a bit like "The Emperor's New Clothes".

So it is with cider and of course perry. Ask anyone what cider is and the answer will be an alcoholic drink made from apples. However, the changes in recent years over what the label "cider" is applied to, has turned that answer into a vague notion. Only a few years ago, the Government and HMRC had to stipulate what the term "cider" could be applied to and specify the minimum juice content - a lowly 35% if you are interested! Then there are the myriad of flavours and colours being added to that apple juice, but it was and is still, being labelled and sold as "traditional" or "real" cider. And where did those apples come from to make the cider? Fresh picked from an apple tree growing in the UK - or imported as concentrate from the biggest manufacturers of apple concentrate in the world such as China or the USA or Poland?

These and other points all add up to the confusion facing consumers who are interested in the provenance of their chosen drink. There is no compulsory

ingredient labelling for alcoholic drinks so finding out facts is often a shot in the dark; and what is listed may be meaningless marketing- and/or ad-men drivel. Example: "Made with 100% real apple juice." Does that mean only the minimum 35% of the drink is real apple juice? More smoke & mirrors?

Just as with the discerning beer drinker and passionate craft brewer, so discerning cider drinkers and small independent craft cidermakers began to despair. Some cidermakers have tried to tackle the issue of what "real cider" is - or at least should be - but have been thwarted and unsuccessful. CAMRA have their own "definition" of course, but let's be honest it has no teeth and sadly that definition is even ignored by some CAMRA festivals who should be campaigning for and promoting those cider and perry that do meet or exceed said CAMRA definition.

In the summer of 2018, another small group of cidermakers got together and threw around the idea of having a Quality Mark for cider which had some legal basis in that it could only be applied to products meeting specific criteria; such as juice content, where the apples came from, and that the apples were fresh picked. Steered by James McIlwraith of Sampford Courtenay Cider in Devon, this group of cidermakers became the Small Independent Cidermakers Association and began to attract other like-minded passionate craft cidermakers from around the UK. Following the all-day "Cider X" conference at Exeter University in September 2018, agreement was made to move forward and set up a Community Interest Company - importantly one that is legally registered and so has teeth. A group of directors has been set up with all but one being a small passionate craft cidermaker, and the directors

cover all regions of the UK, with two of the directors being based in the East Midlands.

SICA has a number of aims but the most important to consumers will be the introduction of the UK's first National Cider Quality Mark, auditing how the cider or perry has been made, to ensure and maintain product legality and quality. To be able to prove how a cider or perry is made, from what and the percentage juice content, is a major step forward - somehow it seems ludicrous that we need to prove that a British cider or perry is made from fresh British grown and picked fruit, and that it is at least 90% fresh pressed juice. So, key to the aims of the SICA Quality Mark is working with the KIWA Agri Food group who will audit exactly how cider & perry that is to bear the SICA logo is made. Inspection will take place regularly and if a product does not meet or exceed the required standard then the right to carry the SICA Quality Mark logo is withdrawn. This is a guarantee to the consumer that, for once, there are no 'smoke and mirrors' involved here.

The scheme is deliberately for independent cidermakers classed as "small", so covers those producing up to 15,000l PA including the Duty Exempt makers producing less than 7,000l PA. Very importantly though, SICA is focused on the quality and integrity of the final product - and not the size of the maker. Part of the aims of the Association also include looking at Duty and campaigning for a Small Cider Duty Relief Scheme, similar in scope and benefit to the relief scheme enjoyed by small brewers; to lobby for changes to existing duty rules and regulations so that they might better reflect the interests of the smaller cider and perry maker; and to preserve and maintain orchards along with building mutually beneficial links with orchard groups and similar societies.

More information on SICA can be found on their website at:

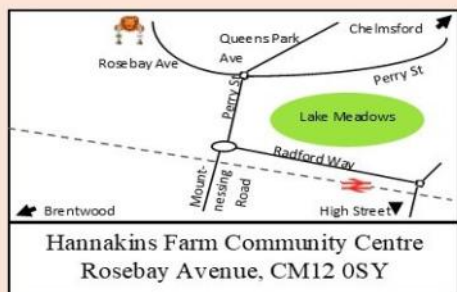
www.smallindependentcidermakers.co.uk
Follow them on their Facebook page: Small Independent Cidermakers Association or via Twitter: @SICACider




9th Billericay Beer Festival

28th - 30th June 2019

40 + Real Ales, Ciders and Perries
Food and Soft Drinks available all sessions



Opening Times

Friday	28th	£3	5pm—11pm
Saturday	29th	£3	11am—11pm
			
Sunday	30th	Free	12 noon—6pm

Refundable souvenir glass deposit £2

CHELMSFORD & MID-ESSEX BRANCH

For social bookings email Martin Joy socialsecretary@chelmsford.camra.org.uk or contact on 07878 624443. Last minute arrivals may be accepted at some events but for most pre-booking is suggested or compulsory.

Please be advised that the Social team have decided to use self-drive Minibuses driven by CME members and volunteers where possible. Unfortunately we are only allowed to take CAMRA members on these trips. Spaces are limited to 16. Non-members wishing to attend members only trips are encouraged to consider joining CAMRA, especially at this year's winter and summer Beer Festivals where there are often special offers.

On all Minibus trips you will be dropped off within reasonable walking distance of your home. Drop off after other coach trips to be arranged with the driver on the day. We shall continue to use coach companies for all our day trips and also runabouts that are a little further afield and where we know demand for places will be high. Please note that for over-subscribed events we reserve the right to give priority to CME Branch members over members of other branches or non-members.

APRIL

Fri 5th – Sun 7th - CAMRA Members' Weekend, AGM & Conference Caird Hall, Dundee, DD1 3BB. All members are encouraged to attend and support this event. NB: discounted direct flights via Stansted from Loganair, alternative lower price flights to Edinburgh from London. National Express also offering discounted rates by coach.

Weds 10th – Sat 13th - Maldon Beer and Cider Festival 2019, Plume School,

Maldon, CM9 6AB. All Members encouraged to attend and support this event. Regular public buses available from Chelmsford and Witham.

Saturday 13th - Annual Walk from Chelmsford to Maldon. Departing 9am from Railway Tavern, CM1 1LW. Walk along the canal to Maldon, stop off at Papermill Lock 12ish, then Carpenters Arms, Maldon/Beer Festival/ other great pubs, tap rooms in the town.

Monday 15th - Committee Meeting, Hop Beer Shop, CM2 0LD. 8 for 8.30pm start. Open to all members.

Wednesday 17th - Pre-festival drinks Invitation and CME Branch Pub of the Year Presentation, Woolpack, CM2 0DN. From 7pm onwards for branch members showing valid membership cards. Special Invitation from Will and the team at the Woolpack for branch members to sample some of the beers on offer at the forthcoming Beer and Cider Festival at £2.50 per pint.

Friday 19th - Cider Pub of the Year Presentation, Hop Beer Shop, 7pm.

Friday 19th - Good Friday Easter Amble, Galleywood and Chelmsford. Meet Eagle Pub, Stock Road, Galleywood, CM2 8PS. Visiting Eagle at noon; Galleywood Social Club; Running Mare; Horse & Groom, then a short walk to the Clay Pigeon and Fox & Hounds, Tile Kiln, before walking or bussing into Chelmsford to end the day at the Woolpack Beer and Cider Festival, Mildmay Road.

Saturday 27th - Volunteer Thank you Party, Leaman Scout Hall, Meteor Way, Waterhouse Lane, Chelmsford CM1 2RL. From 6pm, open to

volunteers who worked at the Summer and Winter Beer and Cider Festivals. RSVP by 20th April to volunteer @cbcf.info or contact Luke 07779 626109 with any dietary requirements.

MAY

Saturday 11th - Essex Pub of the Year Judging Trip. Free Minibus departs opposite Chelmsford Railway Station CM1 1LW at 11am. Route, pick-ups and drop offs TBC once all 8 Pub of the Year candidates have been declared. Please book early to avoid disappointment.

Tuesday 14th - Committee Meeting, Walnut Tree, Broads Green, CM3 1DT. 8 for 8.30pm start. Open to all members.

Saturday 18th - Mild Meander & Cider Safari for MAY BEING MILD & CIDER MONTH. Meet noon at the Endeavour, Springfield Green, CM2 6AW. Public bus 54 from Chelmsford centre. All welcome to explore pubs serving mild and real cider. Check website and social media for itinerary and planned route nearer the date.

Wednesday 22nd - Branch Meeting, Woolpack, CM2 0DN. 8 for 8.30pm. Free pint to first time attendees. Everyone is welcome.

JUNE

Saturday 1st – Visit to Tring Brewery and Oxford by coach. Non-members welcome. Fare £25 approx depending on numbers. **Please indicate your interest to Martin Joy, CME Social Secretary at the contact details at the head of this article.**

Sunday 16th – Revelry Day, Bishop Nick Brewery, East St, Braintree, CM7 3JJ. Noon to 4pm. Fathers' Day social.

Saturday 22nd – London River Bus Trip Visiting pubs along the Thames: Greenwich to Embankment. Meet 11am Chelmsford Station. All welcome.

JULY

Tuesday 2nd - Saturday 6th July Chelmsford Summer Beer & Cider Festival, Admirals Park, Rainsford Rd, Chelmsford, CM1 2PL. VOLUNTEERS REQUIRED. See www.cbcf.info

Tuesday 16th- Branch Committee Meeting, Square & Compasses, Fuller Street, CM3 2BB. 8 for 8.30pm start. Open to all members.

Saturday 20th - Epping & Ongar Railway Beer Festival (in association with CAMRA). Meet 11am Chelmsford Station. Train to Shenfield then vintage bus to and from the festival at North Weald. CAMRA Discount, unlimited rides on the trains, Event 19th-20th. See <http://www.eorailway.co.uk/events/real-ale-festival>.

Wednesday 24th - Branch meeting & Social Cross Keys, 1 The Street, White Notley, CM8 1RQ. 8 for 8.30pm start. Free pint for new members attending their first meeting.

Saturday 27th & Sunday 28th - East Anglia POTY judging trip. Judging the 6 nominated pubs for each of the EA region counties, overnighting in Cambridge. Free minibus for the first day but a contribution requested for the second day's hire. Departing opposite Chelmsford Station 11am on Saturday, pick up in Braintree & Witham if demand. Please book your place and own accommodation in Cambridge.

Check chelmsford.camra.org.uk and social media for news and updates.

MALDON & DENGIE BRANCH

For more information or to book any of these events, please contact **MAD Social Secretary, Mike Cutler** at **mjcutler59@gmail.com** or **07754 206099 / 01621 850833**.

APRIL

Weds 10th - Sat 13th: Maldon Beer and Cider Festival, Plume School, Farnbridge Road, Maldon, CM9 6AB. Open Weds: 4–11pm, Thurs–Sat: noon–11pm. 64 beers featuring 45 from Yorkshire and 14 Ciders. Belgian beer bar Friday & Saturday evening. Hot and cold food available at all times. Remember to complete the **MAD ALE TRAIL** and bring your card with you to claim your prize! Admission £1.00, CAMRA members Free. £3.00 refundable glass deposit. Contactless payment available at the bar.

Tuesday 23rd: Branch Meeting & Festival Feedback, Red Lion, 47 The Street, Latchingdon, CM3 6JR. 8pm. Come along and find out all the latest news on what's happening in our branch, including how our beer festival went. First pint **FREE** to new members attending their first meeting.

Thursday 25th: Branch Pub of the Year Award, Farmers Yard, 140 High Street, Maldon, CM9 5BX. 7.30 for 8pm, join us as we present the award for our Branch Pub of the Year to the Team at Farmers Yard.

Date TBA - Essex Pub of the Year judging trip. Visit to the eight Branch pub winners in Essex. This will be done over two days. If you wish to take part in this interesting and important judging trip please advise me of your interest by no later than Monday 15th April so that appropriate transport can be arranged.

Free campaigning trip for CAMRA members only.

MAY

Saturday 4th, London Walk, Clerkenwell and Farringdon Revisited. The next in our series of popular London pub walks. This was the area we explored on our very first London pub walk back in April 2013 – we thought it would be interesting to see how much it's changed since then. Look out for more details soon.

Tuesday 28th: Branch Meeting, Maltsters Arms, 34 The Street, Heybridge, CM9 4NB. 8pm, come along and find out all the latest news on what's happening in our branch. First pint **FREE** to new members attending their first meeting.

Wednesday 29th: Colchester Summer Beer Festival, Colchester Arts Centre, Church Street, Colchester, CO1 1NF. Free admission for CAMRA members. Social from midday onwards. Meet for breakfast in Playhouse (Colchester, Wetherspoons) at 11am. Festival runs from Tues 28th May to Sat 1st June.

JUNE

Thursday 6th: Bar Billiards Tournament, The Chequers, The Square, Goldhanger, CM9 8AS. 7.30pm, come and join us for a fun evening, drink some beer, and challenge our current champion for the trophy, at our biannual tournament.

Thursday 13th: Beer Festival, The Swan, School Road, Little Totham, CM9 8LB. Join us from 7.30pm for a social evening of chat and beer drinking at this lovely little country pub. Festival runs from Fri 7th to Sun 16th.

Tuesday 18th: Branch Meeting, Kings Head, 2 High Street, Southminster, CM0 7DE. Come along and find out all the latest news on what's happening in our branch. First pint FREE to new members attending their first meeting.

Saturday 22nd: Midsummer Crouch Valley Rail Ale Trail and BBQ. Following the launch of the official Rail Ale Trail booklet, we will be doing the trail, visiting pubs and brewery taprooms in Battlesbridge, South Woodham Ferrers, Burnham on Crouch

and Southminster finishing with a BBQ at Wibblers Brewery tap room in the early evening. Booking required for Rail Trip and/or BBQ by no later than Saturday 15th June. Look out for more details and times nearer the event.

Fri 28th - Sun 30th: Beer & Cider Festival, Hurdlemakers Arms, Post Office Road, Woodham Mortimer, CM9 6ST. Come and join us for a social evening of beer or cider drinking from 7.30 onwards at this award-winning pub's brilliant summer festival.

NORTH WEST ESSEX BRANCH

contact@northwestessex.camra.org.uk

Tuesday 26th March: North West Essex Branch Pub of the Year Presentation, Fleur de Lys, High Street, Widdington, Saffron Walden, Essex, CB11 3SG. 7.30pm

Monday 1st April: Branch Meeting, Coach & Horses, Cambridge Road, Newport, Essex, CB11 3TR. 8pm.

Tuesday 9th April: North West Essex Branch Cider Pub of the Year Presentation, Waggon and Horses, High Street, Great Yeldham, CO9 4EX. 8pm.

Tuesday 7th May: North West Essex Branch Club of the Year Presentation, Castle Hedingham Social Club, Church Lane, Castle Hedingham, CO9 3DA. 7.30pm.

****Tuesday** 7th May: Branch Meeting & AGM, Bell Inn, 10 Saint James's Street, Castle Hedingham, Halstead, Essex, CO9 3EJ. 8.30pm.**

****Tuesday** 4th June: Branch Meeting, Rose & Crown, 31 Bentfield Green, Stansted Mountfitchet, Essex, CM24 8HX. 8pm.**

Monday 1st July: Branch Meeting, White Horse, Mill Road, Ridgewell, Halstead, Essex, CO9 4SG. 8pm.

Monday 5th August: Branch Meeting, Red Cow, 11 High Street, Chrishall, Essex, SG8 8RN. 8pm.

For the current list of meetings see the Branch Diary page of www.northwestessex.camra.org.uk

Broomfield RBL Social Club

BEER FESTIVAL

Bank Holiday Weekend

23rd - 26th August 2019



Many local beers
Souvenir Pint Glass



22 Live Bands playing

Main Bar open too
Lots of Games & Prizes

Sponsored by



Candy Floss



Bucking Bronco

www.broomfieldsocialclub.co.uk

**Broomfield Royal British Legion Social Club,
Saxon Way, Chelmsford CM1 7YA**

April

Maldon Beer and Cider Festival, Plume School, Maldon.

Wednesday 10th to Saturday 13th April. The 17th Maldon Beer and Cider Festival will feature 45 real ales from Yorkshire, nearly 20 beers from Essex, and 14 ciders and perries. There will be a special Belgian Beer Bar on the Friday and Saturday. Hot and cold food will be available during all sessions. Entrance £1, (free to CAMRA members) with a £3.00 deposit for the souvenir pint glass, fully refundable if it is returned.

'Local Fest' Beer Festival, Queen's Head, Boreham

Wednesday 17th to Tuesday 23rd April 2019. Locally sourced ales and ciders, plus German lagers.

Resurrection Brewery Tap Takeover The Old New Inn, Colchester

Thursday 18th to 22nd April 2019.

Easter Beer Festival

The Woolpack, Chelmsford. Good Friday 19th to Sunday 21st April 2019. Over 80 ales and ciders.

Easter Beer Festival

Mersea Island Brewery, Rawsalls Lane, East Mersea. Good Friday 19th to Easter Monday 22nd April 2019. 35 real ales, all brewed in Essex. Plus entertainment, and a hog roast. With Mersea Island being an actual island and there only being one road (The Strood) on and off it, and it sometimes gets covered at high tide. Mersea Brewery informs us that "...daytime high tides for Easter are as follows; Good Friday 1:07pm 5.4m;

Saturday 1:49pm 5.4m; Easter Sunday 2:29pm 5.4m; Easter Monday 3:07pm 5.3m. These are some of the highest tides of the year so potentially there is a chance The Strood causeway could be covered up to an hour either side of high tide. You have been warned!"

Spring Real Ale Train

Epping Ongar Railway, Saturday 27th April 2019. "Following the success of our Real Ale Trains last year, we're running them again this year! We plan to have a selection of local real ales and 2 ciders available, bottled ales together with bar snacks, onboard the train in the Flag and Whistle Bar."

May

Grain Star Wars Tap Takeover

The Old New Inn, Colchester, Thursday 2nd to Bank Holiday Monday 6th May 2019. Another in their series of popular tap takeovers.

Real Ale & Cider Festival Essex v Suffolk battle of the counties

South Benfleet Social Club, 8 Vicarage Hill, Benfleet SS7 1PB. Thursday 2nd to Bank Holiday Monday 6th May 2019. "20 real ales, 10 from each county... scorecards available on the bar. 7 Real ciders. All Ale & Cider £3 a pint. Free entry. Food available all sessions. Entertainment Saturday & Sunday night."

The Harwich Ale Trail

Various locations, Thursday 2nd to Bank Holiday Monday 5th May 2019. "Harwich Ale Trail is an ale & cider festival set in the wonderful pubs, restaurants, hotels

and other venues in Historic Harwich. There's one beer & cider list covering all the venues, check back just before the Ale Trail for the list but expect ales & ciders from far and wide."

The Ale House Beer Tap Takeover – One Mile End

The Ale House, Chelmsford. Thursday 2nd May 2019, www.the-ale-house-chelmsford.co.uk for more details.

Siren Craft Brewery Tap Takeover

The Old New Inn, Colchester, Thursday 23rd to Bank Holiday Monday 27th May 2019. www.theoldnewinnpub.co.uk/events

The Hoop Beer Festival

21 High Street, CM4 9BD Stock, Essex. Friday 24th to Bank Holiday Monday 27th May 2019. Restricted again to the pub and the beer garden, no quaffing off the premises! A focus on Essex breweries this year.

Beer and Music Festival

The Cross Keys, The Green, Hatfield Peverel CM3 2JQ. Friday 24th to Bank Holiday Monday 27th May 2019. "We are hosting our first ever Beer festival. There will be over 20 Real Ales, 4 German beers and 12 Ciders. We will also have a great selection of over 40 gins at our Gin and Prosecco Bar."

May Beer & Music Festival

The White Hart, Margaretting Tye, 25th to 27th May 2019. www.thewhitehart.uk.com/events/may-beer-festival for more details.

34th Colchester Beer Festival

Colchester Arts Centre, St. Marys, Colchester, Tuesday 28th to Saturday 1st June 2019.

The Ale House Beer Festival

The Ale House, Chelmsford, Thursday 30th to Sunday 2nd June 2019. www.the-ale-house-chelmsford.co.uk/our-beer-festivals/

June

Wantsum Tap Takeover

The Old New Inn, Colchester
27th June 2019 to 30th June 2019

July

July Beer & Music Festival

The White Hart, Margaretting Tye
19th to 21st July 2019. www.thewhitehart.uk.com/events/july-beer-festival.

Colchester Summer Real Ale, Cider and Craft Gin Festival

25th to 28th July 2019, Colchester and East Essex Cricket Club, Catchpool Road, Colchester CO1 1XN

Dark Beer & Scotch Eggs Festival

The Old New Inn, Colchester
25th July 2019 to 28th July 2019



Have a Hadham.

Helions Bumpstead to get its Pub Back - by Tom Bogie



When the Three Horseshoes in the small north west Essex village of Helions Bumpstead closed its doors for the final time some four years ago, a group of villagers were determined that it would not follow the example of many a rural pub and become a bijou private residence. So they set out on a course to eventually bring it back to life.

With the active support of the Parish Council, Braintree District Council imposed an Asset of Community Value order on the building, thereby restricting its future development as anything other than a pub and the villagers set about raising the money to buy the building and reopen their village pub.

The Helions Bumpstead Community Benefit Society was established and in May 2018 shares were offered, with a minimum investment of £50. Within a very short time, 125 shareholders had

raised an incredible sum in excess of £280,000 with 75% of investors coming from the village itself - a remarkable achievement for a village of just 100 households and a firm indication that villagers 'wanted their pub back'. Additional grants and loans were secured from the Plunkett Foundation and the purchase completed mid-March.

A considerable amount of renovation and decoration will be required to restore the Three Horseshoes to a condition ready for opening and the management committee have decided to appoint a tenant to run the pub on a day-to-day basis. Recruitment is under way and, if everything goes to plan, Helions Bumpstead will once again have a village pub by the end of March!

For up-to-date news, more information or to become a shareholder, visit www.helionscommunitypub.co.uk.



Cider Press - by Claire Irons, Cider Representative CME CAMRA and Essex Cider Co-ordinator

End of Era for the Three Elms, Chignal St James

I was sad to learn that Pete Thomas and Gill Miller are moving on to pastures new having created the Three Elms, Chignal St James as an iconic cider pub in our branch area, much revered by cider drinkers from around East Anglia. I am proud to have presented them with many awards over the last several years.

Having been judged CME branch Cider Pub of the Year in 2015 with 15 ciders on, they upped their game to extend their range to 20, with 5 perries (made from pears) in the summer for 2016 and added in 2 extra Ale and Cider festivals for May and October (CAMRA Cider months) to the popular August festival.

Their enthusiasm and dedication were rewarded by the judges to win the Branch and the Essex County rounds. It was very close for the Regional round, to be pipped at the post, picking up the Silver Runner-Up award with the Railway Arms at Downham Market being the East Anglia Cider Pub of the Year 2016.

Since then with the increasing popularity of cider, many pubs have introduced or extended their range of cider and perry which is great news for cider drinkers and makes the competition more interesting.

Apparently the new owners taking over the Free House opening in Mid-March plan to continue with real cider and the festivals, rebranding it as the Three Elms Pub & Kitchen. Obviously I shall sup cider for research of course, but Pete and Gill will be a hard act to follow having been awarded branch Cider Pub

of the Year and Runner up three times each out of the last seven years. I wish them and the new owners well for the future.

Cider Pub of the Year Competition

The National Cider and Perry Pub of the Year judging form has different weightings and the extra category of Promotion/Knowledge of the Product compared to the Pub of the Year Judging form. This has the first category as Quality of Beer/Cider/Perry (not just real ale as some people perceive). As well the quality of the drinks on offer, pubs are marked on Atmosphere/Style/Décor; Service/Welcome; Community Focus; Sympathy with CAMRA aims and Overall value.

Over recent years the judging has been close with five different pubs taking the top spot in the CME branch area. With the Three Elms not being eligible this year and each of the previous winners on the shortlist joined by the Moulsham Tap in Chelmsford it was tight at the top.

Gold: Hop Beer Shop, Chelmsford

Silver: Compasses, Littley Green

Bronze: Ale House, Chelmsford

Presentations for branches, the Essex Round and the East Anglia Round will be in the summer issue of Thirsty Times.

Mill Lane Cider Company

Mill Lane Brewing Company was founded in 2017 to produce high quality cider made from local apples and was registered in Stebbing. They make cider produced from 100% apple juice, eschewing artificial ingredients. With no

CHELMSFORD SUMMER 2019 BEER & CIDER FESTIVAL

Chelmsford Beer and Cider Festival - Tuesday 2nd to Saturday 6th July 2019
Admirals Park, Rainsford Road, Chelmsford

• Welcome to the Chelmsford Beer and Cider Festival. The festival is one of the oldest CAMRA beer festivals and one of the largest in the country.

- **Brewery bars**
- 300+ Real Ales
- **Key keg bar**
- 100+ Real Ciders, Perries & Pyders
- **Wine**
- **Podge's Belgian Beer Bar**
- a world food kitchen with over 15 different foods from around the world
- **entertainment with live bands**
- Fun Day for the Family Saturday 6th July

The festival is organised and run by volunteers, like all CAMRA festivals. We always welcome volunteers both old and new.

Find out more about volunteering at the Chelmsford Beer and Cider Festival.
www.cbcbf.info

concentrate or colouring added to the still cider, it complies with the CAMRA definition of real cider.



**Peter
Parkinson**

The company was founded by two ex-IT Directors: Bernard Bazley and Peter Parkinson, who gave up 20 years of executive life in the City of London insurance markets to fulfil a lifetime ambition to brew beer and cider.

The first year of production was 2017, when 100 litres of cider were produced using manual methods. The equipment was upgraded in 2018 and an electric apple mill and a hydro-press were installed, which made life much easier. In that year just over 200 litres of cider

were produced. For 2019 they plan to double the output again to approx. 500 litres. All the juice will continue to come from apples local to the North Essex area although the cidery is in Mill Lane, Broomfield, near Chelmsford.



**Bernard
Bazley**

Currently three varieties of cider are produced; **still**, unsweetened, natural cider and two **sparkling** ciders; one unsweetened and one sweetened by a natural sweetener. The **still** cider is delivered in 3 litre and 20 litre boxed bags. The **sparkling** cider is force-carbonated and stored in-keg under pressure, before being delivered in 500ml bottles to local shops and restaurants.

As the plans to brew beer have been shelved they are re-branding as *Mill Lane Cider Company*.

Pub News - by branch rapporteurs

North West Essex - by Chris Rouse
magazine@northwestessex.camra.org.uk

Railway Arms, Saffron Walden - the fight continues

Charles Wells have now withdrawn their planning application to demolish existing toilets, build a new toilet block, and do other 'adjustments'. It had become apparent that there could be plans to build 2 dwellings on the current pub garden. However, pre-application discussions concerning a revised scheme from Charles Wells are expected to commence shortly. The fight will continue!

Pub News in Brief



North West Essex CAMRA Pub of the Year 2019 is the **Fleur de Lys**, High Street, Widdington, Saffron Walden, CB11 3SG. The presentation will take place on Tue 26 March at 7.30pm. Our Cider Pub of the Year is the **Waggon & Horses**, Great Yeldham, CO9 4EX, with the presentation taking place on Tue 9 April at 8.00pm. Finally, our Club of the Year is the **Castle Hedingham Social Club**, 15-19 Church Lane, Castle Hedingham, CO9 3DA, with the presentation taking place on Tue 7 May, at 7.30pm.

Maldon & Dengie - by Chris Harvey
charvey23@gmail.com



The results of the Maldon & Dengie Pub of the Year awards have been recently announced. Branch Pub of the Year for 2019 is the **Farmers Yard** in Maldon; the Maldon Brewing Company's diminutive taproom

is a firm favourite amongst locals and visitors alike. Joint runners-up were the **Hurdlemakers Arms** in Woodham Mortimer and the **Station Arms** in Southminster. Branch Cider Pub of the Year is the **Carpenters Arms** in Maldon; the community backstreet local usually offers more than 20 ciders at any one time. Runner-up was the **Hurdlemakers Arms**. Congratulations to our award winners; we are looking forward to presenting the awards in the very near future.



Here's some good news. The owners of the **Mitre** in Wickham Bishops plan to reopen the pub in April or May; they have listened to the concerns of the villagers and reversed their decision to rename it as the Mulberry Tree. They are leasing out the pub, which they say will be open for normal pub hours (lunchtime and evening), and several real ales and food will be available. The

CHELMSFORD BREW CO
BLUESHACK BEERS

CHELMSFORD
BREW CO

BLUESHACK
Bitter

Floral & MALTY

ABV - 3.8

pub will also operate as a tearoom during the day to attract families.

There will soon be changes at the **Rose Inn** in Southminster. Gray & Sons have recently advertised the tenancy on their website for this charming roadside pub outside the village, with the target change date being May 2019.

Gray's have also announced that they are submitting planning applications to Maldon District Council for the development of residential properties on the site of the **Sun & Anchor** in Steeple. The pub has been closed since June 2017, and the pub company has reluctantly decided to take this step, because they did not think the pub would be commercially viable if it was reopened.

After carefully considering the special circumstances in this case, Maldon & Dengie CAMRA decided to support Gray & Sons with their application. The village of Steeple has one well-run and popular public house, the Star. In the currently difficult trading environment, we believe that it is in the long-term interests of local pub-goers that Gray & Sons remains a major pub owner in our Branch area.

The **Mill Beach**, on the Goldhanger Road east of Heybridge Basin, has been closed since November 2018 after the tenants decided to quit. We have no news at this time on the long-term future of the large riverside pub, but we will endeavour to find out more as soon as we can. With a decent investment, this could be a superb pub!

The extension to the **Wibblers Brewery Tap Room and Kitchen** in Southminster has been open since December, and there is now lots more room and a variety of seating in the airy bar. They have recently started showing Six Nations rugby on a big screen in the brewery, which has been very successful.

Chelmsford & Mid-Essex - by Rob West with contributions from branch members
pubnews@chelmsford.camra.org.uk

CME CAMRA PUB OF THE YEAR

CME members are invited to celebrate at the **Woolpack**, Chelmsford, that it is the branch Pub of the Year 2019, an accolade it had in 2010 and 2011 under different management. With a valid CAMRA membership card, festival ales and cider will be £2.50/pint, 8-11pm Wednesday 17th April to kick start the Easter festival running from Thursday 18th – Sunday 21st April.

Nag's Head, Baddow Rd, Chelmsford, seems to have closed, reopened and closed again over the last few months.

Monkey, Terling, has been sold and is due to reopen under new management.

Cross Keys, White Notley is thriving with real ales proving to be so popular that they have increased to an extra pump, so as to have three guest beers in addition to the regular Adnams Southwold Bitter. The guest beers are usually local with the occasional foray into Norfolk.

Swan, Braintree has reopened serving a changing real ale and food from early March.

Golden Lion, Braintree, was due to be sold at auction in February. The sign outside suggested that it was being sold as a pub with planning permission for a change to residential.

Eagle, Braintree re-opened after a re-fit following a change of landlord.

Swan, Witham is now a free house, sold by Greene King to a Tiptree business man. The new number is 01376 618490. The landlady is Melba Hume, former manager of the Victoria in Witham.

CME+MAD Brewery News - by Martin Joy



All going well at Bishop Nick HQ. Thrilled with a **GOLD** for Ridley's Rite in CAMRA's Champion Beers of East Anglia 2019 Bitters category. That's all three of our founding brands now awarded Gold for East Anglia. Our range is increasing. Currently on the pumps is our milk stout – DARK TIMES (4.5%) which is deliciously roasty and smooth. Plus a new departure for us: HAZE (4.5%) a Belgian Style cloudy wheat beer which has converted even the most sceptical of the team here. Alex says judge with your taste-buds, not your eyes! Our admin staff are now operating out of a new office on site giving our master brewer a quiet space in which to thaw out and concoct wonderful new recipes. New accounts every week and gearing up for Revelry Day in June so all buoyant and happy Spring is here. Next up is EAST STREET (4.2%) Blond Ale...



Hope you are well, our tasting room will be ready for visitors very soon.

We have a limited edition Pale Ale being released in the next two weeks. Its a Hazy Bio-Pale, Simcoe and Galaxy. It has been dry hopped prior to fermentation using the magic of biotransformation.

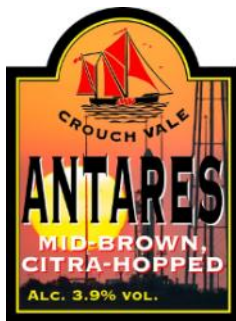
We are also very pleased to be dealing direct with Gray and Sons and will be available in the coming weeks. Super pleased to be serving our local pubs.

Thats about it for the moment I think, thanks, Hans.



Colin from Crouch Vale tells us: beer of the moment is Antares (abv 3.9%) which is amber and Citra-hopped. It

will be followed in April by Falcon (abv 3.9%, too) but pale and Summit-hopped.



Martin writes:
Exciting news this month where we are soon expecting our new branded chiller van to take to the road!

With thanks to Motormode uk for their help with design & application – see their Instagram @MotorModeUK - look out for our chiller van around town.

We hope to be delivering our 'brews with a cheeky twist' soon around to our local customers & also look forward to attending this years festivals providing chilled beers & ciders!



Shortly we also look forward to introducing our Cowgirl Golden Ale the 'sister' of our already popular Cowgirl Copper Ale!



Mike writes:

Our new series of beers for 2019 are named after Prog Rock tracks, with Jack in the Green (golden 4.0%)

and The Writ (red 6.0%) coming in April and May. Our craft brand "Blackwater Brewhouse" is being very well received. We have 3 new beers in the range: Panta 5% with American tropical hops, Seax 3.8% a dry hopped session IPA and Blackbeard 6.0% a cold brew coffee infused stout. All 3 will be in keg soon.

We are also very pleased that our tap room Farmers Yard won Maldon and Dengie CAMRA branch pub of the year.



An exciting time at Mighty Oak - we've had a bit of a revolution! A new brewer and brand new products. Our very own John Roberts-Morgan has moved up from 2nd Brewer to Head Brewer. John learnt his trade here under two of the best; Dr Alex, and Charles (both now moved on to pastures new). Welcome to our new 2nd Brewer Jamie Wade, a recent Cardiff University Chemistry graduate, who started with us just before Christmas.



BOTTLES! After mulling it over for 20 years, we are now bottling four of our

favourite ales: Captain Bob, Oscar Wilde, Maldon Gold, and Jake the Snake. Available at the brewery and our Tap Room.



Taproom news - Our Spring Open day is 6th April, 12 until 3pm. Try a range of our products and have a tour and talk around the brewery. £15 per person for 4 pints and tour.

Our Taproom and Kitchen are going from strength to strength. We have taken on additional staff and sales continue to grow.

Abby has also taken on the catering at Knightswood OAP Day Centre in Asheldham, delivering hot lunches for their clients. Knightswood will also be the charity at the Maldon Beer Festival. We have our third Korean Night on 4th May, with Steve from ROK Kitchen guest cheffing with us. Booking required.

Be the brewer days are proving to be a big hit this year with more booked than ever before. It gives us the chance to make some interesting beers, a recent one was a Coffee Stout.

Please email abby@wibblers.co.uk for queries or bookings for the Taproom and Kitchen.



Winter Wibble won the Strong/Old Ale category at the CAMRA Champion Beers of East Anglia 2019 competition.

A Day trip to...Lowestoft - by Tony Vernon



Monday morning, attempting and failing to catch the sun's first rays in true druid fashion, due to the overcast sky, seen left. Thus it was that I discovered that I had not hours to wait till opening time, but an entire day and a half.

The town's unique geography is commemorated in a giant compass rose called the 'Euroscope', built out on Ness Point slightly to the north east of town. Snapping away at the various compass points and locations on the Euroscope, I was gratified to see Ardnamurchan Point, a location on the Scottish Mainland that is perhaps closest to chez moi in the Hebrides and past which I steam when the South Uist ferry goes to or from Oban (the rest of the time it services Mallaig).

For this latest instalment of our occasional series featuring outstanding pubs just outside the area, we visit Lowestoft, Home of the Sunrise. As England and Britain's most easterly point, it gets to see the rays of the sun first for most of the year except the summer months, when that accolade goes to the Shetlands.

On this trip up south from Mission Control in the Hebrides, I was attempting to combine running leg 10 of the Essex Way relay race finishing at Harwich, the expedition to Lowestoft and thence on to the Chappel and Wakes Colne Beer Festival. As the relay race took place on Sunday during the day, with mine being the last leg finishing around 7pm, this meant that the more obvious beer scoring day of Saturday was out of the question.



However, I wasn't in Ness Point by accident, as WhatPub informed me that the Triangle Tavern lay close by. This is the brewery tap and former business location of Green Jack brewery, an award-winning Suffolk outfit that is regularly mentioned in dispatches from the main CAMRA competitions. I parked up mid-afternoon, fortuitously bought parking up till the next day and after a few cursory shots of the pub exterior, locked S-foils to attack position and dived in.

Thus I tipped up in the town late on Sunday evening 2nd September, via a twisty trip up the parts of the A12 that are marked with dragons on the map. Now, the more experienced in these matters would have checked WhatPub in advance, and spotted that my main destination, the Stanford Arms, was closed on Mondays. This I only discovered when awaking on

Immediately upon strolling through to the long-ish rear public bar (neither front nor

rear had the appearance of lounge bars), I knew I had hid the mother lode. Pretty much all of Green Jack's range was present and correct, with the added bonus prize of a guest in the form of Church End's Supreme Gold Champion Beer of Britain 2017, Goat's Milk Stout. This was indeed going to be a merry afternoon and evening.



My drinking partners for the day were New York Nick, Jimmy Clayson (windows cleaned) and Adrian Jackson via whom I was supposed eventually to email my finished piece to Green Jack. We were ably served by bar manager Jordon Almond (centre) and bar-persons Stacey Howes and Brendan Mortlock, pictured right.



A Lurcher Stout 4.8% (3), Baltic Trader Export Stout 10.5% (3.5, half) and Gone Fishing ESB 5.5% (3) slipped down while the conversation flowed, mostly concerning the Birds Eye factory shut down in the town. The lads were quite interested in what I was doing and my mission in coming to Lowestoft, so I explained all about Thirsty Times etc.

Before you knew it, a Green Jack Golden

Best 3.8% (3.5), Mansheer IPA 5.8% (4) Trawlerboys 4.6% (4) and Jester 4.4% (4) had been quaffed, at which point New York Nick had to take leave to go to work. Conversation then flowed about one of the photos around the bar, of former publican Mike Collins who, after departing this earth, had made his final journey according to his wishes, laid out in the Green Jack Transit on bags of hops. With this mental image a Mandarina 4.2% (4.5, high score of the evening) and Flower Power 6% (4) rounded out my tour of the Green Jack hand pumps.



History in general and my phone's notepad in particular does not record what happened thereafter, save to say the score of the Church End Goat's Milk tragically did not make it in, and there is an entry for Gwynt-y-Ddraig's Black Dragon cider, 7.2% but no accompanying score. Next thing I knew I was back at my car, looking for my wallet before kipping up for the night. Somehow said wallet had been removed by an enterprising Lowestoftian somewhere in the 100 metres between the Triangle Tavern and the public car park where I had intended to bivouac.

Awaking ridiculously early on Tuesday morning to beat any early bin collections, and on the basis of previous experience having had possessions thieved from Chelmsford Swimming Pool lockers, I searched farther afield and retrieved my wallet from a takeaway wheelie bin, minus the small amount of cash that had remained in there after the merriment at the Triangle, but mercifully still with all cards

present and correct. It was then just a matter of straightening out with the help of a McDonalds breakfast and radio-actively-strong coffee, then treading water till the Stanford Arms opened up for the day.



All of the guidebooks you will ever read describe this pub as a very unassuming local boozer. Words cannot describe how true this is. Tucked away on a secluded suburban street, you could easily not even glance at the pub, a past Overall UK Pub of the Year finalist, while negotiating the sharp-ish corner where it is located, with cars parked either side of a narrow street.



Parking was easy, directly outside the pub, and the door into the bar opened onto a well-stocked but otherwise unremarkable set of handpumps. In fact the entire visit to the Stanford Arms, originally planned to be the centrepiece and *raison de voyager* of Lowestoft, was very low key; the pub had actually had a London beers mini-festival on at the weekend and what was left on the pumps represented the aftermath of this. So only two beers were worthy of scoring, Winter's Geniuss 4.1%,

a Norfolk Irish Stout (4) and a Raspberry Cheesecake Pale Pink 3.8% from Three Blind Mice (4), the latter being nowhere to be seen on the Three Blind Mice present or archived brews page.



I asked proprietor of five and manager of seven years David Burd, what was the secret of running a CAMRA Pub of the Year finalist pub. His reply was that he had done nothing special, other than taken out the TV and jukebox straight away and insisted on a regular rota of cleaning and redecorating to keep the pub fresh, even with a relatively old-style interior. Looking around, the décor was charming and the outside patio area spotless, everything you would expect of a former finalist basking in its glory.



As far as I could discover, there's no direct coach service between Chelmsford and Lowestoft, do get in touch if your information is different. Rail via Norwich takes 2 and a half hours (last train back leaves at 21h07), and comes in at a very reasonable £20 for advance bookings, with Groupsave sure to shave even more off that. Why not have a day trip to Lowestoft!

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Publication date for the SUMMER 2019 issue (30) is 24th June. To volunteer to distribute Thirsty Times or if you have run out of stock contact the relevant branch distributor:

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- Pub of the Year Presentations
- Drinking in Riga
- CBCF Preview
- Visit to Chelmsford Brew Co

THIRSTY TIMES



Thirsty Times is a Vector Sum publication on behalf of Chelmsford & Mid-Essex, Maldon & Dengie and North West Essex Branches of CAMRA, the Campaign for Real Ale. It is brought to you quarterly by unpaid volunteers with 6,000 copies distributed free to pubs and festivals across Essex. It is also available to read online at www.chelmsford.camra.org.uk.

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

Views or comments expressed in Thirsty Times are not necessarily those of the Editor, CAMRA Ltd nor the Chelmsford & Mid-Essex (CME), Maldon & Dengie (MAD) nor Northwest Essex (NWE) branches of the Campaign for Real Ale.

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Rates for Summer issue (30), electronic transfer (CHAPS, PayPal etc.)

1/8 page.....£35

1/4 page.....£50

1/2 page.....£85

Full page.....£140

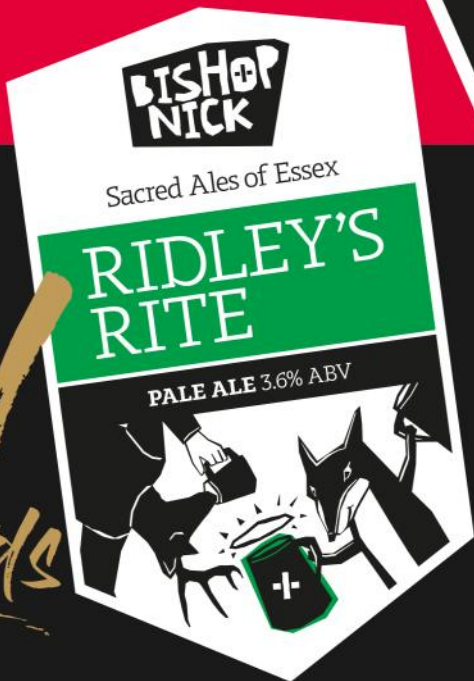
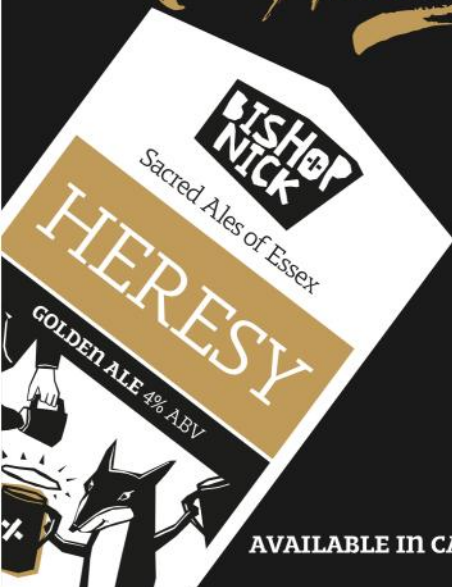
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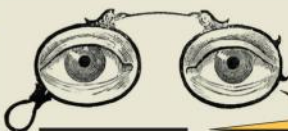
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