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Campaign
for
Real Ale

THIRSTY TIMES

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



Issue 32

Winter/Spring 2020

CHELMSFORD BREW CO.



BLUESHACK BEERS

From the Editor



Deadline day has come, and we are gone. No, not that, I'm talking about Greene King's delisting from the LSE after an overwhelming 99.4% approval of CK Bidco's share offer on 9th October last year,

just after TT31 hit the news-stands.

As I observed last issue, it's the first and so far only time that a member of the public has looked up and called my number, distraught at the prospect of losing her local. Well I hope she is a bit happier now, as the omens are good so far, plus or minus a looming strike by brewery workers over pay increases.

Nearly four months on, CK Asset Holdings is still purring over its prize, enunciating words such as "...ensuring the long-term success of the company." If only they'd mentioned beer in the same phrase....

THE VIPER, MILL GREEN

Many in Essex and farther afield will be deeply saddened at events in Mill Green, where The Viper's new owner Rupert Cherryman has been corresponding with CME's Claire Irons over plans for the future.

Rupert has been invited to CME's next committee meeting to chat about possible branch assistance. The pub, which I myself fondly remember from many trail races based out of it back in the early noughties as a Springfield Strider, has been allowed to "rot to the core", and he is starting from deep negative territory, for example having discovered that the power connection was fraudulent. In addition to no electricity, there is also no waste water

treatment nor any heating in the building. The situation is worse than a new-build, given the Viper's Grade II listing.

We all wish Rupert well, and if you would like to make a more tangible contribution to restoration efforts please contact him via Claire, details inside the rear cover.

PUB OF THE YEAR

Yes, it's PotY time again! Members of all four branches may not be aware that the shortlist from which branch PotYs is generally voted is based on beer scores for that pub, derived from CAMRA's National Beer Scoring System. So if you have any beers yet to score, please log on to WhatPub? and enter these.

WHITE HORSE, TOWNFIELD ST

From my Hebridean roots comes a tradition of 'The Third Death'. The first is the day you depart this earth, the second when friends and family lay you to rest, in pit or pyre. The third death is the day your name is last spoken by anyone, anywhere. With beautiful commemorations such as Ian Hennessey's on page 11, it will be many years before we last speak of the White Horse, Townfield Street.

AND FINALLY....

Grateful thanks to CAMRA member Roger Corbett who, picking up a copy of TT at the recent Rochford Festival, spotted that our Trading Standards advice was incorrect. This has now been updated and we hope that no short measures nor missing prices have gone unreported as a consequence.

Ad multas cerevisias

Tony Vernon
editor@chelmsford.camra.org.uk

Gray's Elegy Revisited - 45 Years On

- by Chris Harvey, Chairman Maldon & Dengie

There seems to be an appetite amongst Thirsty Times readers for historical articles about local breweries and pubs; my recent piece about Ridleys pubs prompted some generous comments from readers near and far. I thought I'd follow this up with an article about Gray & Sons, who own so many pubs across Essex.

John Hubbard, Gray's General Manager, unearthed for me a copy of a booklet called "Gray's Elegy", which details a "Grand Tour" by Michael Turner, his wife and two colleagues between March and September 1974 of all 51 of the pubs owned by Gray's. This was just before brewing ceased.

Michael introduces us to his subject on a somewhat wistful note: "My one regret in writing this guide to some of the best pubs in East Anglia is that those following in my footsteps will not be drinking Gray's beer in any of them.

"Michael Gray, forced to close the brewery because of death duties, is however still performing sterling work for the discerning palate in that he has chosen to distribute Greene King IPA and Abbot Ale to each of the pubs from the new distribution centre at Galleywood. This factor plus the range of Ridley's bottled beers available at every house make each Gray's establishment a most attractive proposition.

"For those like myself to whom Gray's was nectar, the pleasure in obtaining sufficient material to compile this guide

can be well imagined. I hesitate to guess how many pints were downed but oh what pleasure we obtained! Best Bitter of the dark brown, smooth taste, Ordinary (perhaps the one we liked the best) with its lighter appearance which slipped down so easily, and Stock with its rich, ruby colour and unforgiving nature if you drank too much. The Exchequer has so much to answer for!"

Michael Turner started his "Grand Tour" by heading north from the brewery in Chelmsford to the Endeavour which "is run by a lady licensee. Edie Perry is a real enthusiastic supporter of Gray's

beer, so much so, that she poured the last pint of bitter into a bottle and placed this beneath a stone in the yard at the rear."

Elsewhere in Chelmsford, he sings the praises of the Orange Tree in Lower Anchor Street: "Mr Gentry, the landlord, has

either lived in, or presided over the Orange Tree for 50 years. Enthusiasts will be delighted to learn he has a positive phobia about pressure and the bitter is from the barrel." Close by, the United Brethren was "probably one of the very few pubs in the country serving beer straight from the barrel to a background of 100-plus decibels of pop music. Clearly the youth of Chelmsford is more discerning than elsewhere!"

West of Chelmsford, Michael was evidently a fan of the Wheatsheaf in Writtle, which he describes as "a gem, having genial hosts with a love of real



beer. How well I remember chasing over in the week after the last Gray's delivery hoping for a pint of Stock, but we were an hour too late. The bitter which was provided as a substitute was, however, despatched eagerly!"

Heading south of the town, the Horse and Groom in Galleywood had "the prettiest location of any Gray's house. Fronting on to the old Galleywood Racecourse, the setting is idyllic. Not only this but the combination of loving care and just the right temperature always ensured the Gray's bitter was at perfection, which in my opinion could not be bettered anywhere in the group."

In Billericay, the Railway Hotel supplied "its bitter by handpump, and caters largely for Billericay's darts and cribbage set. Until mid-1974, there were two doors, one marked saloon, one public, each opening on to the same room. If you walked through the public door you were charged 13p a pint for bitter and 14p if you went through that marked saloon – happy days!"

The Cricketers in Westcliff-on-Sea was "Gray's largest pub not only in actual size but in terms of beer sold. It was the only Gray's house to dispense Stock Ale by handpump and today it is unique in being the only pub in the group to offer Greene King and draught Bass from its nine handpumps. This two-bar house is almost the only place to sell real beer in Southend."

In Maldon, if you entered the Carpenters Arms, you were "confronted

by a picture of the champion hurling team for 1974 - you may guess you are in an Irishman's house, and you would be right! Not only is the landlord Irish but he can be easily persuaded to tell you just what he thinks of pressurised beer. Needless to say, his bitter is from the barrel." To the north in Heybridge, the Maltsters Arms "just has no chance to excel situated as it is in Hall Road, a particularly depressing part of Heybridge. This then is a basic establishment right on the pavement. In one respect it cannot be faulted, the beer from an impressive rack just inside the door is first rate. Here incidentally one can sample the excellent Ridley's mild ale."



On the Dengie Peninsula, Michael describes the Railway Hotel in Southminster (demolished in the 1980s): "A massive Victorian structure once a hotel now only a pub, but what a pub! Here you can meet one of Gray's characters, Mrs Vera Andrews. Not only

does she shy at the very word "pressure", but she doesn't even use the highly polished handpumps on the bar, preferring the gravity method for serving bitter. Do not miss this one!"

"Gray's Elegy" provides a fascinating insight into the world of Gray's pubs as it was over 45 years ago. Although much has changed around us, it is comforting to be able to recognise many of these pubs in the descriptions Michael Turner uses in this booklet.

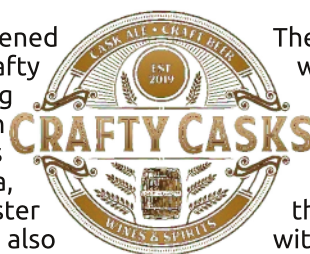
charvey23@gmail.com

Crafty Casks - Rayleigh's First Micro

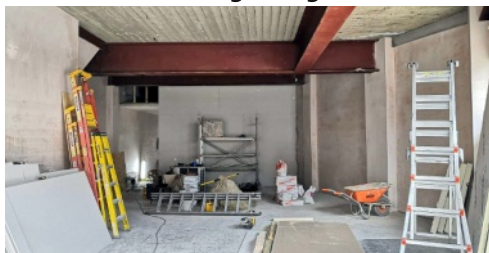
- by Maggie Pinto, chair@see.camra.org.uk



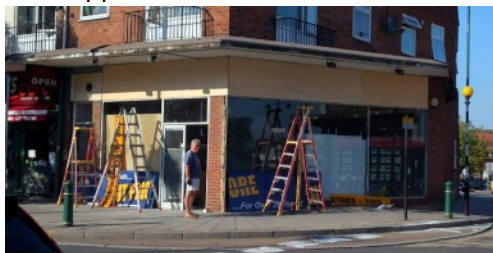
Rayleigh's first micropub opened in November 2019. Crafty Casks has 17 taps featuring six real ales, with an emphasis on local breweries including Fable, Leigh on Sea, George's, Billericay, Colchester and Mighty Oak. There are also three ciders and eight keg beers.



The journey began a year ago when Change of Use from A1 (retail) to a mixed use of A4 (drinking establishment) was applied for and some A1 (retail) to allow for use of the building as a micropub with retail sales. Permission was approved and then the hard work



Lots of other options are available including wine (some from Essex vineyards), spirits and prosecco.



began on converting a space that had recently been operating as a hardware store.



Cheese and antipasto platters are a popular accompaniment to the drinks. Several popular live music events have also been held.



Chris and John Smith and their team have been welcoming customers to the venue for three months and people love having a place in Rayleigh to drink real ale brewed here in Essex.



CanalAbility

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It offers a unique experience for nursery, primary and secondary schools as well as youth groups.

The grandmother of a local primary school pupil: "My granddaughter was out with her class today.....Happy she got a certificate and enjoyed her day on the boat."

Canalability is proud to have awarded a fully funded Christmas Cruise to 10 organisations and groups who support the socially isolated and lonely.

After her first trip a 16yr old brain tumour patient said; "I'm taking my life back and I want to do this trip over and over again."

Make the most of this mild winter, enjoy the beautiful Essex and Hertfordshire countryside from one of our centrally heated canal boats.

Plus we are offering a 25% discount on trips booked and taken in January and February 2020.

The Ale House Chelmsford

What we have to offer...

We are conveniently located in central Chelmsford, a stones throw from the bus and train stations. We're also just a 10 minutes walk to Essex County Cricket ground and a 5 minute walk to the High street.

The Ale House really is a great place for the discerning drinker. Everyday there is a selection of 12 Cask Ales, 9 Craft Keg Beers, 4 International Beers on Tap, 12 Traditional Still Ciders, 1 Keg Cider and over 100 different Bottles and Cans.

We unfortunately don't have space for a kitchen, but we welcome our customers to bring in their own food.

Pizza is by far the most popular.

Moor Tap Takeover & Meet the Brewer
Thursday 13th February

Beer Festival 8 Kegs & 18 Casks
Thursday 27th Feb - Monday 2nd March

Mad Squirrel Tap Takeover
Thursday 12th March

Siren Tap Takeover
Thursday 26th March

Brew by numbers Tap Takeover
Thursday 9th April

Cloudwater Tap Takeover
Thursday 30th April

Chelmsford Record Fair
First Saturday of Every Month

Quiz Night
Last Sunday of Every Month



The Ale House 24-26 Viaduct Road Chelmsford CM1 1TS
01245 260 535 - Thealehousechelmsford@hotmail.co.uk

Recommended Reading

- by the Editor



Numismatists beware, there's a new kid in town... With the launch of its Rural Pub Trail, Chelmsford & Mid-Essex aims to combine the enjoyment of the outdoors with delight in the indoor surroundings of selected pubs along the way.

There's also a collectors angle, as each pub has signed up to provide a unique stamp or marker that, when placed on a 'passport'-cum-map that will be available at the KEGS Winter Beer Festival, will serve as a fond and tangible memory of the experience.

The ad to the left is what was available when TT32 went to press, a revision will sport a reference to CME's Recommended Pub Guide, downloadable at chelmsford.camra.org.uk, where thirsty trekkers will be able to read more about each pub along the way.

This one's been propping up the inbox for nearly a year. Ian Clayton's 'It's the Beer Talking - Adventures in Public Houses' is the author's 'thought poem' as he muses on his experiences of enjoying great ales in great ale houses.

Part of what makes the love of beer unique is the difficulty we all have when we try to define or distill what makes the experience of pub refreshment such a delight. Perhaps it's the memories of people who existed in a certain year, maybe the Rites of Passage of life that were celebrated within their walls. Our own Victor Savant continues his strivings to capture this essence later in this issue.

Ian's book was published last year by 'Route', you can find it for £12.99 in paperback at www.route-online.com/all-books/its-the-beer-talking.html



Rochford Festival 2019 Report

- by Maggie Pinto



Apollo spacecraft which famously dispensed with various stages on the way to the moon.

The first stage (representing the brewing process) depicted by the fermenter, the second stage (representing the methods of container-ship for distribution) depicted by a barrel and a craft-keg; and the final stage depicted by a pint glass and a bottle.

November 2019 saw the 40th South East Essex CAMRA Beer and Cider Festival. Our festivals have been held at various locations throughout South East Essex over the decades, and in recent years at the Freight House in Rochford.

We are very grateful to the dozens of volunteers,

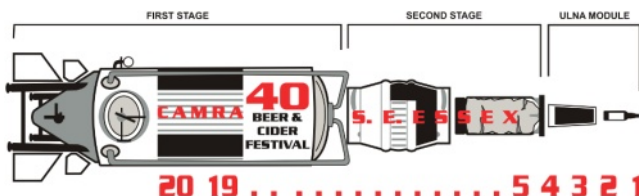
many of whom give their time for up to eight days around the festival, with no pay and very long days. Several of them spend months before the festival organising the publicity, glasses, programme, beer, cider, tokens, equipment, volunteers and more. Huge thanks to Chris Rouse (Staffing Officer) and Steve Murray (Festival Organiser).

From the set up to the front stage desk and the servers to the take down, ALL are volunteers. Many people still don't realise that: it is not run by breweries or by the Council. Even the local paper captioned our volunteers as "from the brewery" just because they were wearing brewery shirts! Thank you to Leigh on Sea Brewery who provided our VOLUNTEER shirts!

The 2019 logo was based around the

You may think that there is a spelling error on that final stage as we called it the ULNA MODULE – which is almost the same letters as LUNAR MODULE.

However, the Ulna is one of the bones in the forearm – and it is generally the forearm that raises the bottle or glass.



Thank you to all the pubs and participants in the 2019 Ale Trail which encouraged people to drink real ale in pubs throughout South East Essex



during the weeks before our Festival. Please keep supporting pubs throughout the year.

See you again in November!

chair@see.camra.org.uk



10 great reasons to join CAMRA

1 CAMPAIGN
for great beer, cider and perry

2 Become a
BEER EXPERT

3 Enjoy CAMRA
BEER FESTIVALS
in front of or behind the bar

4 GET INVOLVED
and make new friends

5 Save
YOUR LOCAL

6 Find the
**BEST PUBS
IN BRITAIN**

7 Get great
**VALUE FOR
MONEY**

8 DISCOVER
pub heritage and the
great outdoors

9 Enjoy great
HEALTH BENEFITS
(really!)

10 HAVE YOUR SAY

What's yours?

Discover your reason
and join the campaign today:

www.camra.org.uk/10reasons



Campaign
for
Real Ale

My First Time - RIP The White Horse

- by Ian Hennessey

This article serendipitously arrived in my mail box just as I was about to pen my own piece describing 'My First Time', the story of my first pint (of lager shandy, unfortunately). It's the first in a new series, in which readers are invited to send in their own fables of first pints, first pubs and similar derring-do. Contact details inside the rear cover...Ed.



On 31st March 2019 a Chelmsford icon, the White Horse in Townfield Street, closed its doors as a pub for the very last time. Here, it is remembered as it was almost half a century ago by former regular Ian Hennessey; in the next edition, more recent years will be covered by its final landlord, Marc McLeod.

THE WHITE HORSE OF OLD

I first knew the pub almost 50 years ago, in the very early 1970s. It was my first 'local' and I remember it with great affection.

It was much different then from its final years. In the 1970s, you could still drive up Townfield St. and turn into Glebe Road if you were cutting from behind Chelmsford Railway Station through to

Broomfield Road. The White Horse stood right on the corner of Townfield and Glebe and in the same footprint as more recent years, encompassed (one for you there, Marc!) a front porch, a saloon bar, a public bar with a Ladies loo, a stained-glass sash window for Off Sales and a permanently dank outside Gents. And in the pavement right in front of the porch was the big wooden hatch for barrels into and out of the cellar.

Opposite the entrance were back gates to the old Marconi New Street works, but all you saw from the pub was two very high curving brick walls leading into a pair of massive steel gates.

THE BEER BACK THEN

I recall it only sold three draft beers – how times have changed! They were Charringtons (dark) Mild, Charringtons IPA and Carling Black Label. Very rarely for those days, the IPA and the Mild were both cask ales on hand pumps. But back when I was first there, those beers were respectively 9p, 10p and 11p per pint! Sigh...



When I first drank there, more than a year before I became 'legal', the landlords were Jim and Vi Crouch, a

lovely couple. Jim was an ex-RN Chief Petty Officer and he had the beard to match. It was a happy place when they were there, but when they 'retired' around 1975, to go and run a post office in Kent, the next landlords were a family consisting of husband and wife, plus



wife's parents; and the atmosphere was never quite the same, though the licensee Roy, the husband, was a nice guy.

ET LA MONNAIE?

So many memories...going in there for a pint before my French oral 'A' level exam at KEGS and then being asked by the examiner "Vous avez bu une biere?", aquaplaning a motorbike for the first



time on a wet night and going straight past Glebe Road as a result, playing darts for the pub all over Chelmsford, snogging my way through the entire

evening of my 21st birthday (you know who you are, Heather) discovering Fernet Branca as a hangover cure from Jim on a New Years Eve...and all the regulars – my schoolmates Rob, Jamie and Steve and others, the girl friends from the High School, locals Ivor and Terry and their wives, dear old Tom playing dominoes, Pauline and her family...the list goes on.

And in those days, so did the now almost gone Essex accents - "Thass orright, ennut?" Sadly, the place closed for (as far as I know) the first time in 1977 or possibly 1978, with the stated intention of conversion to a wine bar called Mr. Jones's. I never went back in,



having lived elsewhere for most of the intervening years, until I found myself working across the road for Marconi Radar around the year 2002, by which time it was more or less in its final format. Us? Most of us moved on in 1977/8 to the Royal Steamer, then run by the legendary Derek and Ellie. But that's another story...

Ironically, Marc is now running the Compasses, the only pub in Chelmsford where I ever had beers before we decimalised in 1971 (Light ale pints for 1/10). Small world, huh? Over to you, Marc.

ipl_123@talktalk.net

A wealth of history, great pubs
and beer await you

CAMPAIGN FOR REAL ALE



MEMBERS' WEEKEND,
AGM & CONFERENCE

3-5 April 2020

YORK

Register to attend
and/or to volunteer at
agm.camra.org.uk



Campaign
for
Real Ale

No pub where you live? Lost your local? - Then bring in the Portable Pint! - by Janet Drysdale



Tony Kelly is also a champion of 'locale'. At the event at Hadstock the beer was from Rough Acre in Castle Camps - travelling only 5 miles. He was also serving Spinney Abbey cider from Cambridge-shire.

Photo (left to right): Mark Jackson of Rough Acre Brewery, Tony Kelly of Portable Pint, and Ian Fitzhenry, Chair CAMRA North West Essex.

*ViceChairman@
northwestessex.camra.org.uk*

If you are a regular reader of Thirsty Times you may have seen a previous article about Portable Pint who provide a 'pop-up' pub in village halls in North West Essex and South Cambridgeshire.

In addition, Portable Pint always ensures that the event is partnered by a mobile food van serving anything from curries to waffles or scotch eggs, using small local businesses. He also brings along board and other pub games to the event.

The North West Essex Branch of CAMRA see the importance of this venture, which assists with bringing residents together - just like a pub would, and made a presentation to Tony Kelly on 11th October 2019 at Hadstock Village Hall - a special CAMRA award in recognition of his innovative support to real ale and cider 'bringing a pub to villages that no longer have a pub'. He tries to get back to successful sites in villages on a monthly basis.

EAST ANGLIAN RAILWAY MUSEUM
WINTER 2020
CHAPPEL BEER FESTIVAL
CHAPPEL WINTER BEER FESTIVAL 2020
Friday & Saturday 28 & 29 February 2020
11.00am to 11.00pm
Ticket Only Admission Friday Eve After 5.30pm
East Anglian Railway Museum
Chappel & Wakes Colne Station CO6 2DS
Late night trains to Marks Tey, Colchester & Chelmsford
<https://chappelbeerfestival.org.uk/winter>
Fri eve., arrive before 5.30pm pay on door, and stay all evening, but if you arrive after 5.30pm then you must pre-purchase a ticket from the website above. Discounts for CAMRA Members and Season Tickets Holders to Chappel, Bures and Sudbury stations.

Think That You Have Fallen Down a Black Hole?

- by Claire Irons, Publicity Officer, CME

To make sure you receive Branch emails, follow these steps:

- Log in to the HQ website camra.org.uk, hover over 'My Membership' on the right side of the menu bar and click the 'Edit Membership Details' dropdown.
- Scroll down the 'Personal Details' tab, and **carefully** check your email address is correct. If not, click 'Edit', correct it and save.
- Now click on the "Preferences" tab, scroll down to 'Communication preference' and ensure the opt-in setting for "I wish to be contacted by my local CAMRA branch....." is set to 'Yes' for both email and postal communications. If not, click 'Edit' at the bottom of the tab, change and save the new settings.
- Before leaving the 'Communications preference' editor, take a moment to reflect whether you might like to amend any other preferences, e.g. to receive information about CAMRA fundraising.

Due to General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) you need to opt in to receive communication from your branch. Note also that the database for volunteering mailouts at the festivals is different from that used by the branch Comms Tool to send branch and general CAMRA emails; if you wish to receive information as a festival volunteer visit cbcf.info and register.

BILLERICAY BREWING CO. SPRING BEER FESTIVAL

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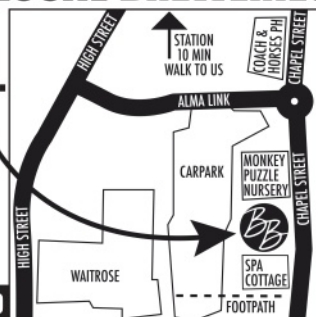
THURS 19TH - 1PM - 10.30PM

FRI 20TH - 11AM - 10.30PM

SAT 21ST - 11AM - 10.30PM

SUN 22ND - 11AM - 7PM

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CHELMSFORD & MID-ESSEX BRANCH

For more information or to book an event, please contact Martin Joy on socialsecretary@chelmsford.camra.org.uk or 07878 624443.

ALL SOCIAL & CAMPAIGNING EVENTS ARE OPEN TO ALL CME BRANCH MEMBERS.

Members are encouraged to score the beers they drink on whatpub.com or gbgapp.camra.org.uk.

FEBRUARY

Saturday 8th – Trip to Cambridge by train. Meet Chelmsford station at 9am to arrange GroupSave tickets for 0926 train to London, then 1028 Liverpool St to Cambridge arrives 1151.

Wednesday 19th - Saturday 22nd – Chelmsford Winter Beer & Cider Festival, King Edward VI Grammar School (KEGS), Broomfield Rd, Chelmsford, CM1 3SX. Noon-11pm all days. Non-members after 6pm £3. Free entry for CAMRA members with valid membership card.

Saturday 29th – CME Branch Cider Pub of the Year (POTY) Judging. Contact Claire Irons 07773 093399 for details and judging forms.

MARCH

Tuesday 3rd – Branch Committee Meeting, Rose & Crown, Great Waltham, CM3 1AG. 8.30pm.

Saturday 14th – Visit to Twickenham Brewery and pubs in the area. Minibus departs 10am opposite Chelmsford railway station. Members only £15 fare. Brewery visit costs £15 for tour, glass & 3 pints of beer.

Wednesday 18th – Branch Meeting and Social, The Compasses, Broomfield Rd, Chelmsford, CM1 1RY. 8.30pm, all welcome. Free pint for first time attendees. Dark beer promised, probably Oscar Wilde!

Saturday 28th – Essex Cider POTY Judging Trip to the best cider pubs chosen by each CAMRA branch in Essex. Open to members from all Essex branches. Minibus departs 11am from opposite Chelmsford railway station. Other branches requested to contribute towards costs if their members join in. All attendees to mark all the pubs on various merits.

APRIL

Friday 3rd – Sunday 5th National Members' Weekend and AGM University of York, YO10 5DD. Please make own arrangements to attend this event.

Tuesday 7th – Branch Committee Meeting, Queen's Head, Boreham, CM3 3EG. 8.30pm

Friday 10th – Good Friday Amble. Meet at noon at Sir Evelyn Wood Pub, 56 Widford Rd, Chelmsford CM2 8SY for amble down Moulsham St visiting pubs along the way, finishing at the Woolpack Easter Beer Festival, 23 Mildmay Rd, CM2 0DN.

Saturday 18th – Annual Walk to Maldon Festival. Meet 9.30am outside the Railway Tavern, 63 Duke St, Chelmsford, CM1 1LW to walk along the Chelmer and Blackwater Navigation Canal. Break at Paper Mill Lock tea-rooms noon-ish then on to Carpenters Arms, finishing at the Maldon Beer & Cider Festival in Plume Academy, CM9

6AB. Everyone welcome to come and join anywhere along the way.

MAY

Saturday 2nd – Essex POTY Judging Trip visiting the Pub of the Year (POTY) for each Essex CAMRA branch. Open to all ESSEX CAMRA members with priority given to CME members. Minibus departs 11am opposite Chelmsford Railway Station. Free bus with all judges marking all the pubs on various merits.

Tuesday 5th – Branch Committee Meeting, Square & Compasses, Fuller Street, CM3 2BB. 8.30pm.

Saturday 9th – Mild Meander and Cider Safari visiting Chelmsford pubs serving mild and real cider as part of CAMRA's campaign for these drinks.

Further details to follow. Check social media or branch website chelmsford.camra.org.uk.

Saturday 16th – Trip to Colchester Brewery by train. Further details to follow. Check social media or branch website.

Wednesday 20th – Branch Meeting and Social, Queen's Head, 30 Lower Anchor St, Chelmsford, CM2 0AS. 8.30pm, all welcome. Free pint for first time attendees.

Friday 29th - Sunday 31st – Branch visit to Edinburgh. Everyone is welcome to join us for a long weekend away in this wonderful city. Please book own flights/train and accommodation. Itinerary and possible brewery visit details to follow.

SOUTH EAST ESSEX BRANCH

Please see website for further announcements www.see.camra.org.uk.

FEBRUARY

Tuesday 4th – Branch Meeting, Mile and a Third, 67 Hamlet Court Road, Westcliff-on-Sea, SS0 7EU. 8.30pm.

MARCH

Tuesday 3rd – Branch Meeting, White Hart, 274 Main Road, Hockley, SS5 4NS. 8.30pm.

NORTH WEST ESSEX BRANCH

contact@northwestessex.camra.org.uk

FEBRUARY

Monday 3rd – Branch Meeting, Chequers Inn, 27 Stortford Road, Great Dunmow, CM6 1DA. 8pm.

MARCH

Monday 2nd – Branch Meeting, Finchingfield Lion, 6 Church Hill, Finchingfield, CM7 4NN. 8pm.

APRIL

Monday 6th – Branch Meeting, Fox, Old Church Lane, Bulmer Tye, CO10 7EB. 8pm.

MAY

Tuesday 5th – Branch Meeting & AGM, Prince of Wales, Brick End, Broxted, CM6 2BJ. 8pm.

JUNE

Monday 1st – Branch Meeting, George Inn, The Street, Shalford, CM7 5HH. 8pm.

See the Branch Diary page of www.northwestessex.camra.org.uk for the current list of meetings.

MALDON & DENGIE BRANCH

For more information or to book any of these events, please contact MAD Social Secretary, Robert Longley at raclongley49@btinternet.com or tel. 07869 146569 / 01245 320381.

MARCH

Tuesday 10th – Annual General Meeting, Bell, Main Road, Woodham Ferrers, CM3 8RF. 8pm prompt, please bring your membership card to vote.

Tuesday 24th – Branch Committee Meeting, Chequers, Church Street, Goldhanger, CM9 8AS. 12.30pm, open to all members to observe and perhaps become involved in branch activities.

APRIL

Wednesday 15th - Saturday 18th – Eighteenth Maldon Beer and Cider Festival, Plume Academy, Fambridge Road, Maldon, CM9 6AF. Open Weds 4pm-11pm Wed, Thurs-Sat Noon-11pm. Only two minutes' walk from Maldon High Street. 60 Real Ales and 12 Ciders. Featuring 45 beers from the NW Midlands area. Hot food Available All Sessions. Admission £1, Free to CAMRA

Members. Refundable glass Deposit - £3.50, look out for the beer and cider list on our branch website www.maldonaddengiecamra.org.uk.

Tuesday 28th – Branch Meeting, Bell, Purleigh, CM3 6QJ. 8pm, dark ale promised! To include a financial update and feedback from the beer and cider festival. Free pint to members attending their first meeting.

MAY

Wednesday 6th – Branch Committee Meeting, Wibblers Brewery Taproom & Kitchen, Goldsands Road, CM0 7JW. 12.30pm, open to all members to observe and perhaps become involved in branch activities.

Thursday 14th – Bar Billiards Competition Chequers, Church Street, Goldhanger, CM9 8AS. 8pm, nothing serious, just a fun evening. Anyone can win the coveted trophies.

Tuesday 19th – Branch Meeting, Norton, 54 Latchingdon Road, Cold Norton CM3 6JB. 8pm, dark ale promised!

19th MALDON BEER & CIDER FESTIVAL

15th-18th April 2020

**Plume Academy,
Fambridge Road, Maldon**

60 Real Ales and 16 Ciders
Featuring 40+ Beers from
the West Midlands

CAMRA
CAMPAIGN
FOR
REAL ALE

2020 Maldon Beer & Cider Festival to showcase beers from the West Midlands

The counties which make up the West Midlands (Herefordshire, Shropshire, Staffordshire, West Midlands and Worcestershire) have 65 breweries making good beer.

This year, the 19th Maldon Beer and Cider Festival will feature 45 real ales from this famous brewing region of England; we are aiming to source some really unusual ales this year.

There'll also be nearly 20 great beers from Essex on offer, and cider drinkers will not be disappointed either, as we'll have over a dozen ciders and perries for you to enjoy.

The Festival will be held at the Plume Academy, Farnbridge Road, Maldon,

CM9 6AF, between Wednesday 15th and Saturday 18th April. The venue is extremely popular, as there is plenty of space in the hall, an outside drinking area and ample parking.

Excellent hot and cold food will be available from our fantastic caterer, JP's Kitchen, during all sessions.

It is only a couple of minutes' walk from the bus stops in Maldon High Street. Last year, over 1,600 people visited the festival, downing well over 4,000 pints over the four days.

Entrance to the Festival is £1, (free to CAMRA members) with a deposit for the souvenir glass, fully refundable if it is returned. We hope to see you there!



CHELMSFORD & MID-ESSEX

2020

WINTER BEER & CIDER FESTIVAL

King Edward VI Grammar School (KEGS)
Broomfield Road
Chelmsford, CMI 3SX

Wednesday 19th - Saturday 22nd February
Noon - 11pm

£3 from 6pm.

Card-carrying CAMRA members are free

More info at www.cbcbf.info

February

Beer and Sausage Festival. Fri 7th - Sun 9th, The Live and Let Live, Millers Lane, Stanway, Colchester CO3 0PS. 19 real ales, five ciders and 20 flavours of sausages.

Fourth Anniversary Ale and Cider Festival. Fri 7th - Sun 9th. The Maybush Inn, Farm Road, Great Oakley, Harwich CO12 5AL. Local and national ales to commemorate the saving of the pub and its re-opening as a co-operative.

Chelmsford Winter Beer and Cider Festival. Weds 19th - Sat 22nd, King Edward VI Grammar School, Chelmsford, CM1 3SX. See main listing for details.

Chappel Winter Beer Festival, Fri 28th and Sat 29th, East Anglian Railway Museum, Chappel & Wakes Colne Station nr Colchester, CO6 2DS.

March - April

Beer and Chicken Festival. Thurs 9th - Mon 13th Apr, The Queen's Head, Boreham, CM3 3EG.

19th Maldon Beer and Cider Festival. Weds 15th - Sat 18th, Plume School, Maldon, CM9 6AB. 60 real ales and 16 ciders including more than 40 Midlands beers.

Harwich Ale Trail. Tues 30th Apr - Bank Holiday Mon 4th May. Various locations, this year the fifth event coincides with the Mayflower 400 celebrations.

May

35th Colchester Summer Real Ale and Cider Festival. Weds 27th - Sat 30th, Colchester Arts Centre, Church Street, Colchester, CO1 1NF.



RAYLEIGH'S FIRST MICRO-PUB

LIVE MUSIC | REAL ALE

17 TAPS WITH SIX REAL ALES,
THREE CIDERS AND EIGHT KEG
BEERS, MOST FROM LOCAL
BREWERS

ESSEX WINE, SPIRITS AND
PROSECCO

MON-WEDS: 2PM - MIDNIGHT
THURS-SUN: NOON-MIDNIGHT

33 EASTWOOD ROAD
RAYLEIGH, ESSEX
SS6 7JD

The Essence of Pub

- by Victor Savant



Sitting in a micro-pub, tiny, crowded, buzzing with talk and laughter, this minuscule space distils the essence of "pub" for me. There's no television. No SKY sports. No music noise. No gambling machines on the wall, no bright

casino lights along the bar, no frills, no extras; just good people, good drink, good conversation. If ever the maxim "less is more" was shown to be true, it is here.

Of course opinions and tastes differ, but assuming the quality of the beverages on offer is good, then for me the essence of "pub" is conversation, chatting about this and that in the historically homely and simple atmosphere of a space wonderfully free of unnecessary electronic distraction.

Until not so many decades ago this is the way it was, the only way it was. The "need" for ubiquitous external electronic distraction - whether from the computer-generated banging pulse of pop music or Wetherspoon's silent televisions that constantly draw one's eyes and mind away from conversation - is something we've survived without throughout history.

Ironically, I recently sat in a nice, very traditional Chelmsford pub, a popular place, and witnessed a phenomenon which, for all of its contemporary ordinariness, is no less astounding. Five young lads came in, ordered beers - fizzy ones, to be sure - and sat down at an adjacent table.

Unusual to see them here amongst the older crowd, and considering the existential dangers pubs are facing now

and in the future, it was pleasing to think that maybe the next generation might be getting into a bit of traditional pub culture, that mode of socialising where undistracted conversation is concentrated and there's no need for a sound track (this pub has no music noise). Well, nice to see the lads here this night didn't need that distraction.

Instead, they sat down around the table and each took out his phone and began playing on it. Heads tilted down, staring at their lap, they neither spoke nor even looked at one another!

As the minutes ticked by I observed and listened, more and more fascinated, and found it stranger and stranger. For at least a half hour they remained utterly silent, only their fingers busily tickling their screens.

Even the occasional kid going to the bar to fetch another beer didn't provoke a single word. Wow. That's just weird. And unfortunately common. Maybe they just have nothing to say?

On a recent CAMRA pub tour around much of Essex, among the eight pubs visited were three micro-pubs. Each was crowded and vibrant on this Saturday afternoon.

Business was thriving although none had extraneous piped noise; just conversation where the murmuring hum of many mingled voices was a lovely sound, energizing, complete. These days perhaps it is the micro-pub, stripped down to the old-fashioned essential, showing itself to be the very Essence of Pub.

Less is more. Glasses raised to them.

Contact Victor via the Editor

2020 MaD Ale Trail

- by Chris Harvey

Following our very successful Maldon and Dengie (MAD) Ale Trail last year, we're running it again in 2020.

Visit 30 pubs in Mid and East Essex between January and mid-April, drink pints or real ale or cider (or soft drinks if you're the designated driver) and collect stickers as you go. If you collect all 30 stickers, you'll be able to get **four** free pints at the 2020 Maldon Beer & Cider Festival at the Plume Academy between 15th and 28th April.

17 of the pubs on this year's Trail are taking part for the first time. From the Old Crown in Messing in the north to the Posh Boys Brewery Taproom in Wickford in the south, there are plenty of great pubs for you to visit and enjoy! Leaflets for the 2020 Ale Trail can be found at all participating pubs and tap rooms.



Name the Hop by K8 ----

1. Rubicund mythical creature?
2. Shakespearian drama house?
3. Jason had this?
4. Used in cultivation?
5. Over toasted steer?
6. Pilgrim Fathers' vessel?
7. Citrus Arbor?
8. Spring, drink emporium?
9. Joseph's appendages?

10. Seraph?
11. Orbicular?
12. He looks after Cheviots with his canine
13. Vehicle and saddle wearers
14. It grinds grain
15. Keeps a ship in place
16. Bent place for soldiers to sleep in
17. They hope to catch others balls
18. Clipper
19. Charles lost his
20. Pica

1. Red Dragon 2. Globe 3. Golden
Fleece 4. Plough 5. Black Bull 6.
Mayflower 7. Orange Tree 8. Hop Beer
Shop 9. Carpenter's Arms 10. Angel 11.
Hoop 12. Shepherd & Dog 13. Waggon
& Horses 14. Windmill 15. Anchor 16.
Crooked Billet 17. Cricketers 18. Ship
19. King's Head 20. Maggie

Pub News - by branch rapporteurs

South East Essex - by Maggie Pinto chair@see.camra.org.uk



On Saturday 11th January South East Essex CAMRA presented the award for Pub of the Season (Winter) to Dave Simmonds at the **Coach and Horses, Billericay**.

SE Essex CAMRA Chairman Maggie Pinto presented the award and praised the excellent quality of the real ales at the Coach and Horses.

The welcoming pub with an inviting atmosphere has appeared in the CAMRA Good Beer Guide for over 20 years. Six ales are served with one always from Oakham. Regular beers are Adnams Broadside, Mighty Oak Captain Bob, Oakham Citra and Wibblers Dengie IPA, with guest beers from a wide variety of breweries including Franklins, Leigh on Sea, Sambrooks, Red Fox, Skinners, Bishop Nick, Mauldons and Roosters.

Good quality, home-made food is also available. We look forward to sunny weather when we can enjoy the cosy and attractive courtyard garden again.

Our awards are decided based upon scores received through NBSS: the National Beer Scoring System which is a 0-5 point scale for judging beer quality in pubs. It is an easy to use system that

has been designed to assist CAMRA branches in selecting pubs for the Good Beer Guide and also monitor beer quality by encouraging CAMRA members from any part of the world to report beer quality on any pub in the UK.

If you are a CAMRA member, we want you to tell us about the quality of beer in the pubs you visit. You can use whatpub.com to enter your scores.

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

Railway, Saffron Walden - is now up for sale again, after the revised planning application from Charles Wells was refused. The Save the Railway Arms Pub (STRAP) group intend to put in an offer to buy the pub, and run it as a community venture. **George Inn, Shalford** - has re-opened, and is open Wednesday to Sunday. **Bull, Langley Lower Green** - are doing "Beer & Sheer", using a mobile barber; **Cricketers, Dunmow** - planning application for change of use has been submitted. **Red Lion, Great Sampford** - is expected to re-open with the current tenants of The Gate, Saffron Walden. **Gate, Saffron Walden** - future is uncertain. **Fox & Hounds, Clavering** - has a new licensee in place. **King's Head, Hadstock** - although the community interest company had been wound up, there is still local interest in acquiring the pub. **White Hart, Wimbish** - now re-opened under previous licensees - food oriented, one real ale. **Fox and Hounds, Steeple Bumpstead** - has a new licensee in place (Kate); **Maltings at Elmdon** (formerly the Dial) - photos of extensive renovation work now posted on their website and well worth a look. **White Lion, Sible Hedingham** - now serving food Friday and Saturday evenings.

Let's start with some good news. The managing agents for the **Mill Beach in Heybridge**, Sidney Phillips have recently submitted a planning application to Maldon District Council requesting permission to demolish the current building and replace it with a much smaller unit, which will still be a public house. The application also seeks to use much of the pub's land for new mobile homes. Although we have some concerns that the proposed new building is on the small side, meaning it will not be able to accommodate too many customers at any one time, in principle we support the application. The pub has been closed since November 2018 and boarded up in April 2019. Sidney Phillips advertised the sale of the lease for the princely sum of £1 a few months ago, which received coverage in the national press.

The Queen Victoria in Spital Road, Maldon has secured planning permission to build an extension to the rear of the pub to provide more room for dining. With support from customers and Maldon & Dengie CAMRA, the Planning Committee overturned the planning officers' recommendation that permission should be refused. The Branch's "Most Improved Pub of the Year" will now be able to proceed with the project, which will free up space in the front bar for those who want to socialise and drink.

The Ferry Boat Inn in North Fambridge is currently undergoing a major renovation project; there is a new website for the pub which states that "whilst keeping all the originality of this beautiful listed building, we're giving it a new kitchen, a new cellar and bar, spacious toilets and a complete refurbishment of all the customer areas and gardens. There will also be new

menus, new wine lists and new beers." The pub is expected to reopen in early 2020.

Planning permission was granted to convert part of the old Thomas Cook travel agency on the corner of Silver Street and High Street, Maldon into a craft beer bar and specialist beer/wine store, but it is rumoured this is now not going ahead. Perhaps the conditions placed were too onerous for the applicant. A shame if it's true, as this would have been a good addition to the town's beer scene.

The owner of the **Mitre in Wickham Bishops** is now hopeful that the village pub will reopen in January 2020, as they are close to finalising the tenancy agreement. This will be a real boon for the village, which has been without a proper pub for well over a year now.

The owner of the **Compasses in Great Totham**, Alex Chambers, has advised that he hopes to get the pub up and running again in early 2020 after essential repair works are undertaken. He will be looking for tenants to take on this former winner of CAMRA Essex Pub of the Year.



Following the sad and untimely death of the co-licensee of the **Chequers in Goldhanger**, Phil Glover, a couple of months ago, a buyer has been found to take over the lease of this classic village inn. At this stage it is not clear when the transfer of the lease will take place, but it is likely to happen in the spring or summer of 2020. Phil and Dom were fantastic landlords and the pub was a regular entry in the Good Beer Guide; here's hoping the new licensee will share the same enthusiasm for serving a good range of well-kept ales.

The Woolpack, Chelmsford have their Easter Beer Festival 9th - 12th of April. There will be the pre-festival drinks for card-carrying CAMRA members from 8 - 11pm, £2.50 a pint on Wednesday 8th April.

The Battersford Court (Witham Wetherspoon) are having a beer festival preview night on Monday 23rd March at 7.30pm for CAMRA members.

The Spread Eagle, Witham is still empty with no work being carried out on it. It is due to become a Chinese restaurant, apparently.

The Bakers Arms, Danbury have a four-day beer and cider festival Friday 22nd to Monday 25th May featuring a charity race night on Saturday. Hotdogs, homemade chillis and curries to be served in the beer tent and their famous fish and chips will be available throughout the weekend.



The Nag's Head in Baddow Rd, Chelmsford, near the Odeon cinema, has reopened after refurbishment and is serving real ale: Fullers London Pride and St Austell's Tribute as regular cask beers plus a guest ale. The new tenants are Lucy (pictured above) and Phil Sutton, leasing from Lucy's Dad Steve, who also owns the Anchor in Moulsham

St, Chelmsford. Keeping things local the fine Victorian carved wooden bar has been restabled from the White Horse in Townfield St, Chelmsford which has closed for residential use. Opening from noon until 11pm Monday to Saturday they plan to do simple lunches in the spring after renovating the kitchen. There is an over 25 policy so have your ID ready if you look young!

Marc Mcleod, landlord of the **Compasses, Broomfield Rd**, Chelmsford reports they plan to serve meals from February and to have a dark beer and snacks for the branch meeting on 18th March. All members are welcome to attend various events at the pub throughout the year including quizzes supporting Farleigh Hospice on the second Tuesday of each month.

The Compasses, Little Green, owned by Joss Ridley, will be closed from 27th January for 2-3 months for essential work to the cellar and kitchen. Joss stated: *"For those that are worried, the bar will not be altered in any way apart from the odd bit of essential maintenance and we will preserve its traditional nature and charm. After all, it's why I bought the pub in the first place 12 years ago! The pub is relocating to the Essex Young Farmers' Barn in Chatham Green during this time and will continue to offer food and drink on a somewhat limited basis"*. CME CAMRA wish them well with the work and look forward to the pub being at full steam for the Easter Steam Up.

Terry Roberts, Landlord of the **Wheatsheaf at Writtle**, has retired to enjoy decorating and holidays after 40 years in the licensed trade. As well as being landlord of pubs in Leigh-on-Sea, Billericay, Brentwood and Writtle, he has been chairman of the British Institute of Innkeeping. Terry has trained the new landlord of the Wheatsheaf, Matt Hitchcock, for two

years with the official handover on 20th January. Therefore the pub will still be in the CME Recommended Pub Guide and Good Beer Guide due to continuity of cellarmanship.

The Viper, Mill Green has been a traditional country pub much loved by many of our readers. It is Grade II listed by Historic England and has been on CAMRA's National Inventory of Historic Pub Interiors since 1997. Currently it is closed for renovation by the owner, Rupert Cherryman who has emailed Claire Irons, Publicity Officer for CME CAMRA, stating *"It was always my intention to own and run the pub. The tenant has let it rot to the core causing a huge amount of work being required to reinstate it. I am very aware of the listing etc and have no plans to do anything but preserve the listed parts. It is very difficult to confirm timing for reopening given the mammoth task of repairing the property."* This should reassure those who have been worried

regarding the future of the pub. Thank you to everyone who has contacted me concerned that the pub would be gutted and the historic interior lost forever. Pictured below is the Pitch Penny game in a wooden bench with a drawer underneath to collect the coins.



Claire would also like to put people's minds at rest that two old landlords are not retiring despite the rumours: namely Peter from the **Walnut Tree, Broads Green** and Dave from the **Queen's Head in Chelmsford**.

Cross Keys White Notley is CME Most Improved Pub 2019 - by Claire Irons



The Chelmsford & Mid-Essex CAMRA MOST IMPROVED PUB 2019 is the **Cross Keys at Hatfield Peverel**. Dan and Lucy have tastefully refurbished the pub, increased the offering of real ale and cider, held successful beer festivals and embraced being a pub serving the local

community. This pub does not do meals but has thrived by providing a venue for various events, social gatherings and fund raising for charity. The skittles alley should be opening soon in the garage.

CRITERIA

The pub should have improved in a variety of areas within the last year including some of the following:- Improvement of the quality of beer and cider; enhancing community or charity focus; supporting charity events and adding activities; welcoming; displaying CAMRA publicity and joining in with CAMRA campaigning; promoting real ale & cider, have beer samples for colour; Locale (Essex Ale) and samples for customers to "try before you buy".

CME+MAD Brewery News - via Martin Joy



We have some delicious new beers for you this winter/spring. First up for the New Year was VISION (3.8% Amber) - a floral fruity number with aromas of pine and grapefruit with malt sweetness and a long hoppy finish.

DEVOUT makes a return in February - a delectable stout at 4.5%. Alex, the master brewer of dark beers has improved the recipe and it will be available from the beginning of February. Next up is AMULET a full-bodied copper ale at 4% for March. We hope you like the new design we have for our Limited Editions - thought it was time to shake things up a bit.



Our core beers are continuing to please. RIDLEY'S RITE was awarded GOLD Champion Beer of East Anglia (Bitters Category) for 2020 and HERESY has won Silver (Golden Ales). Nelion was presented with the CAMRA certificates in January. We're visiting and stocking new pubs and supplying new wholesalers all the time and we look forward to Chelmsford Winter Beer Festival. *Libby Ridley*



Head Brewer Hans writes: We are super busy at the brewery at the moment replenishing stocks after a busy December. Spring/Summer specials are being planned and brewed in the coming weeks. Look out for a few exciting pale ales as we start to flex our muscles.

The shop/draught room is almost ready for visitors. Opening date yet to be announced. We look forward to seeing everyone at the Chelmsford Winter Beer Festival.



Martin writes:
Black Death Chilli
Stout O.G 1045
5.3% abv: This
black oatmeal

stout with the extreme heat of Naga chilli, is also smooth and a slightly sour taste. Award winning stout.

Fire in the Hole Golden Chilli Beer O.G. 1045 4.9% abv: Golden ale flavoured with fresh green chillies has the aromatic taste of fresh chilli with moderate heat.

Scotch Bonnet Cider O.G. 1065 6% abv: Strong dry full flavoured cider infused with a moderate taste of Scotch Bonnet peppers but without extreme heat. A popular & refreshing spicy cider.

Gardeners Delight cider O.G. 1048 4.2% abv: Delicious fizzy medium dry 'prosecco like' cider with a zesty flavour that is light to the taste. A lovely summer drink also great with an Elderflower Gin mixer.



Relocation plans are now well underway, with the structure of the new barn having been built in Cock

Clarks. We are now waiting on the weather to improve, to get the floor and drains put in. We are hoping to be moved in during the first half of 2020, but as we have experienced over the last couple of years, delays with this sort of thing are highly likely! 2020's monthly Special Beers take us back to basics as each month we choose a traditional (and some more modern) beer styles to really focus on. April sees an American Pale Ale 5.5% with Rye in the grist and American hops. We have a mild for May at 3.5%, which will be dark and chocolatey. We are producing a VE

beer to celebrate the 75th Anniversary of VE day – check our social media for updates. *via Jerry Emond, BLO*




News from Gill: 2020 brings us into our 25th year of brewing here at Mighty Oak and we have some terrific beers coming your way. Our theme this year is 'Famous Folk from the 1920s' and include Faye Wray 4.1% blonde in February, David Lloyd George 4.2% copper in March, Clara Bow 4.4% ruby in April, and Frank Lloyd Wright 4.3% pale mild in May. The Rugby 6 Nations this February sees the return of an old favourite; Joy Of Six 3.9% ruby, brewed especially for ruggers fans everywhere – ask your landlord to get some in during February.



Have you seen our newest creation in a can yet? It's vegan friendly, slightly hazy in 440ml cans; Nut Bastard 5.8% pale and hoppy and oh so tasty. This is our very first venture into producing beer especially for canning and we are very happy with the results, the beer is hoppy, yes of course, but we've tempered that with gentle aroma of honey to make this beer truly original and unique.



MOODY GOOSE  Moody Goose Brewery at the King William IV pub in Braintree have started brewing again. The new beer is called Mad Men.



Abby writes: Wibblers Crafty Stoat was a finalist in the CBOB National bottled beers award 2019.

Polar Beer is the current seasonal, being followed by something new and interesting but yet unnamed. Permafrost will also coming out of the fermenter by the end of January.



MaD CAMRA presented us with Winter Wibble's Silver in Old Ales/Strong Milds. We have been selected by SIBA to be one of five breweries nationwide to brew a batch of Crafty Stoat for SIBA's 40th birthday party at BeerX in Liverpool in March.

Open days are planned for 4th April and 1st August, no need to book just come along between 12 and 3pm to have a tour and talk about our products and history with Phil and the Brew House Team.

The Taproom goes from strength to strength, Burns Night and other special evenings are planned for 2020, as well as showing the Six Nations on our big screen in the brew house.



Bishop Nick's regular 'Gongs Corner' continues this issue with their spoils from the Champion Beer of East Anglia Golden Ales compo, held at the St. Alban's Festival. 'Heresy' picked up Silver, to go with 'Ridley's Rite's Gold in the Bitter category judged last year at Chappel. Nelion and Claire are pictured receiving the awards from CME's Martin Joy.

SEE Brewery News - via Maggie Pinto



The Christmas Beer Festival from 5th to 8th December was very popular, with over 20 beers and ciders across two bars as well as gins, prosecco and Essex wines.

Brewery Tours and Tastings will continue on selected dates including: Saturdays 8th February, 29th February and 7th March, all at 1pm. Lots of other events are planned for 2020 so please look out for details on social media or the website.



Our latest George's special Wickedly Witch is currently available: a 3.6% amber ale dry-hopped with Brewers Gold. Hop Monster Poltergeist (4.6% pale ale) has been brewed again due to popular demand.

Our award-winning Mad Dog Mild will be going into bottles soon and should be ready for drinking in February. Mad Dog Mild, Child of the Jago, Snake Oil Stout, Banshee Porter and Poltergeist are all now available in Key Keg too! Riposte will be the newest recipe: a 4% oatmeal pale brewed with Palisade hops.



Keppels Brewery



Keppels Brewery had a busy December with festive markets and sales of gift packs, as well as lots of brewing, including Crows by the Crouch (a 3.8% golden ale). Brewer for the Day gift vouchers are available for birthday presents and other special occasions.

Keppels beers can be found in lots of

pubs and beer festivals in Essex and further afield, including the Past and Present micro pub in Gillingham, Kent where the Golden Crow 4% was very popular.



We were thrilled that one of our beers was voted by members of the public as Beer of the Festival at South East Essex CAMRA's Beer and Cider Festival in November 2019. The 4.5% red rye ale is called Let's Get Lost In The Woods Together. Thank you to James Wakeling for organising the competition and many thanks to everyone who voted.

The winning beer appeared alongside our 4.4% Enchanted IPA: Mosaic and Centennial hops were used in the kettle for aroma and bitterness. We then dry hopped at a rate of 10g per litre with Columbus, Centennial and Cascade hops. Also popular was our collaboration with Leigh on Sea Brewery: Old Leigh Ale which is a 5.7% old ale made with Chevalier heritage malt and traditional English hops.



The Tap Room in Progress Road hosted the January 2020 Branch Meeting of SE Essex CAMRA which was very well attended.

In early December a winter beer festival took place, with a visit from Ross of White Rock Brewery. Will this be the next collaboration..? Beers at the festival included their own Barrel Aged SS9 and guest beers from Fable, Solvay Society, Brew York, Stubborn Mule, One Mile End and more.

If you watch Jamie's Friday Night Feast on Channel 4... keep your eyes on the fridge!

NWE Brewery News - via Chris Rouse



Courtyard are expanding and getting more equipment in, as they could not keep up with demand. They are brewing a new beer called "Blues", which is a 5.5% Blond IPA. The shop has been made bigger due to demand. They now have a license to sell from the brewery.

Hart of Stebbing have ceased brewing. The pub and brewery equipment are up

for sale. **Pumphouse** are again brewing "Tap Bitter" and "19 Elms". Arron, the brewer, is now full time, and has a part-time assistant. **Saffron** have ceased brewing and their future is uncertain.



Shalford - Xmas beer was Ebenezer, which was popular and sold well. "Six Nations" beer has been brewed and will be available soon. **Silks** - Xmas beer was 'Santa's Silks'.



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

HILL HOLME MAJOR'S CIDER

Hill Holme Juice, Great Totham, Winner of Best Essex Drink product 2012, for blending juice provided by members of the public with other fruits and cordials including raspberry, blackberry and elderflower soon branched out into making cider.

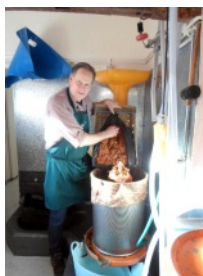
Like many Essex Cider Producers, Nigel Lane started making cider as a hobby and has been able to sell the fruits of his labour at CAMRA beer and cider festivals. The Major's brand is named after Major Coleman, who wrote a book about the apples in his orchard in Great Totham, now owned by Nigel and his wife Clare. The apples include varieties such as Ashmeads Kernel, Cox, Orange Pippin, Ida Red, Jonagold and Russett.

KEEVED CIDER

Nigel invited me and my husband Doug to his garage to learn about his operation on 30th November as he would be pressing his apples.

He enjoys the challenge of producing a naturally sweet sparkling cider by a

method known as "keeving" which is a traditional method in south west England and North West France. In wine it may be known as methode champenoise. Cider and wine made by the traditional method have a second fermentation in the bottle to produce bubbles, the stoppers are caged so the carbon dioxide cannot escape.



After harvesting apples from the orchard in the autumn he does the pressing in late November. The washed apples go through the scatter to produce the pomace which is left for 24 hours exposed

to the air to oxidise. This procedure of maceration develops some juice colour, and pectin leaches out of the apple pulp into the juice. The pulp is pressed to



make juice with its natural yeasts and transferred into clean containers. The natural pectin esterase enzymes slowly change the pectin to pectic acid, but because he is not using West

Country cider apples he adds pectin esterase enzymes and calcium. These join together to form a brown cap (the chapeau brun) of dense gel (calcium pectinate) which rises slowly to the surface as it picks up gas bubbles from the early stages of slow fermentation by yeast trapped in the gel. Some of the pectin combines with juice protein and tannin which falls as sediment leaving clear juice between the two layers, which is drawn off by the



tap into another vessel to ferment with an airlock and its own yeast. The slow fermentation produces a naturally sweet cider which is racked and eventually bottled on a cool high pressure day to condition in the bottles.

Having been kept lying on their side the yeast sits on the bottom so to remove it Nigel placed the upturned caged bottles in glycol to freeze the yeast which should sit in the space in the stopper. Then he opened the bottles with a satisfying pop so we could sip the delicious cider, which was much better than champagne in our opinion.

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