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THIRSTY TIMES

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

CHELMSFORD & MID ESSEX CAMRA



**19TH CHELMSFORD
WINTER BEER & CIDER FESTIVAL
FEBRUARY 14-17, 2018
SEE PAGE 9 FOR DETAILS**

FROM THE EDITOR

Welcome to this winter edition of Thirsty Times and depending on when you are reading this, Peaceful Advent, Merry Christmas and/or Happy New Year! North West Essex have excelled themselves in this issue, with two features in addition to their usual news including the very welcome report of a successful fundraising round for the Railway Arms, Saffron Walden.

Should the community bid eventually be successful it will be a local template for future such efforts to save much-needed village pubs.

On a similar theme, the opening two features highlight Galleywood residents' attempts to save CME's 'Most Improved Pub' The Eagle in Stock Road, a battle apparently still ongoing against developer Hawthorn Leisure.

Drinkers' Voice

Those of you who follow CAMRA events nationally will be aware that a new organisation has been spun off, Drinkers'

Voice, to represent the views of all pub-goers and consumers of beverages alcoholic or otherwise. I was surprised and delighted yesterday to hear DV being quoted on Radio 4's PM programme, supporting the Scottish Whisky Association in the context of the Scottish Government's successful Supreme Court appeal to legalise minimum unit pricing.

DV will in future be a strong voice against the neo-prohibitionists and others who oppose our hobby and passion on ideological grounds.

I would urge you to search for Drinkers' Voice online, and consider a donation. This is my personal view, I have to stress, and is not necessarily held by other members of CME, NWE or MAD CAMRA.

I hope you enjoy the magazine.

Ad multas cereviasias, nunc et semper

Tony Vernon
editor@chelmsford.camra.org.uk

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THE LOVE OF PUBS

By Nick Whymark

I want to write about my love of the pub. It's not something I'd thought much about until my local pub, the Eagle in Galleywood, came under threat.

Actually it's quite difficult to describe a typical pub, because each is unique. That uniqueness comes from there actually being two businesses in most pubs. Firstly a brewery or sadly more often a pub company with only profit on the mind, owns the building. Secondly there is the tenant, often running a single pub in which their heart, soul and savings are invested to make it theirs, to make it different.

Of course, some themes like beer, spirits, friends and a chat, and maybe good food and games, are common to all. Some have jukeboxes and TV sport; some offer a quiet space to chat with friends. Some have football teams, charity events and away-days. Some serve great coffee, some are full of kids running around, some are old and beautiful and yet more are new and ugly.

It's something so successful and so unique to the British Isles that when we go on holiday you'll find ex-pats behind the bar of the "Red Lion" or "The Randy Leprechaun" (I'm not making that up) which are admittedly never quite the same, but give us a place to meet and bring us a 'home-from-home' on our travels.

Personally, the pub has been a continuous thread in my life, from playing in the garden as a child with lemonade and crisps to being able to mix with the adults inside, near drinking age. If not the final destination, then it was always the meeting point or post-cinema or -theatre venue for a "quick" one before going our separate ways. In pubs I've met life-long friends, girlfriends and most importantly my wife. I'm not quite as wild these days but still 'pub' at least twice a week.

The Eagle

My local, the Eagle in Galleywood, is Grade II listed; with a large garden and car park on a crossroads opposite Galleywood common, it was once home to the famous Galleywood racecourse, the only circuit running around a church.

While the Eagle has had its ups and downs, in general it has been well used by the local community. It was particularly important to me about four years ago when my wife left me and moved out (happily, we are now reunited). I had started a new home-based business venture, so hardly left the now-empty house. For the first time in my life I discovered what real loneliness meant.



Nick Whymark

At that time the Eagle was under relatively new management; I'd eaten there a few times previously but it was still with some nervousness that I made my way there one evening alone, just to get out of the house. Long story short the landlord Phil was incredibly welcoming, introducing me not only to the other customers but also to his lovely family. I was invited to events in the pub, family parties and even though he now works abroad, I still consider him a great friend. It's not exaggerating to say that The Eagle, Phil and a few other friends saved my life in those dark days.

Hawthorn Leisure

In 2014 Hawthorn Leisure ("HL"), a new company formed by a city banker and backed by his investment firm May Capital, bought 363 pubs including the Eagle from Greene King for an average of £275,000 each.

For a time we were blissfully unaware of these events but soon discovered that HL had made a deal with the Co-op (the Manchester group, not our local Chelmsford Star) to build a shop in the pub grounds. This would mean sharing parking and the loss of the entire garden apart from a tiny smoking area.

As you can imagine the locals and community were somewhat upset. The garden is much-used for summer community and church-related activities, as well as the odd beer festival. Without doubt, loss of both garden and parking MUST negatively affect pub turnover, the most likely outcome being closure in the near future.

In terms of location, there are no local shops and a small convenience had recently closed down, citing

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lack of trade. The Eagle is on a road junction with the exit leading into a very narrow lane that would create a loop of traffic going into and out of the shop, and would clog the already-busy Stock/Margaretting crossroads.

Then there's the fact that, despite having very few nearby shops, one we do have is a much-used branch of our local Co-op! Surely we don't need two and surely they will compete against each other with one likely to close?

The community and the parish council got together and, with the help of the local CAMRA Chelmsford and Mid-Essex branch, sought to get the pub and garden listed as an Asset of Community Value (ACV). This gives a community group six months to raise funds and the right to bid for a pub in the event the owner decides to sell. It does not mean the owner is compelled to sell to the community.

//

In short order we were told by the developers that the pub wouldn't be viable as it was, so it had to go

Initially being amateurs at this, our first two ACV applications were rejected on technicalities. In the meantime HL had become aware of what was going on, had parcelled the land and sold it to a one-man company run by a developer they have worked with before, erecting a fence across the garden. We can only assume this was to frustrate the process and, while the ACV was eventually granted on the pub, it was refused on the garden.

On a side note the fence did not have planning permission, needed because of the Grade II listing; a retrospective application was refused and the fence was eventually removed but it was then re-erected and a second planning application submitted. Much of the garden was thus lost over the summer months and events that had been pre-booked, including one for charity, had to be cancelled.

While all this was happening our local Chelmsford City Council, far from helping us, had been giving the developers paid-for pre-planning advice behind closed doors. So began a David and Goliath battle; on one side a local community whose one and only resource was time given for free and which knew very little about running pubs and scrutinising planning, on the other a city investment firm with deep pockets, an experienced developer, a large retail chain and a legal adviser (Freeths). Plus our own local council, apparently!

In short order we were told by the developers that the pub wouldn't be viable as it was, so it had to go. Then we were told that it would be perfectly viable with no garden, limited parking and a Co-op next door. The developers sent examples of similar 'successful' arrangements which, on scrutiny, were found either to be very different to our case or where the shop hadn't actually been built yet. For the only situation that did seem similar we received a letter from the tenant relating what a disaster it had all been.

Basically the "facts" changed often to suit the argument at the time.

The community fought back and, beside the ACV, there were over 400 objections; we read about planning and pointed out material planning considerations from the national planning policy framework (NPPF) and the local plan. We scrutinised, pointed out every error, highlighted every omission, warned of the increased traffic and safety issues, cited the lack of need etc etc etc.

The Co-op say they have a planning agreement with CAMRA that includes "not standing in the way of any group seeking to acquire and run a community pub". They claim to care about the views of their community and only seek to obtain genuinely failing pubs. So we spoke to them and expressed our intent to buy the pub.

We spoke to the council, finding out via a Freedom of Information Act application that their (outsourced) Highways Department had agreed HL's plans without even visiting the site.

We maintained a fairly fruitless dialog with HL.

In short we did all we could and – guess what – we won! Champagne all round and at least a few pints in the Eagle!

All came to a head in a tense planning committee meeting; we won by a single vote after two recounts, due to one of the elderly councillors appearing to vote both for and against in the first two votes. It was interesting that the planning department appeared to be very much in favour of HL, for reasons that never became clear. It felt like the planning department was in charge of events rather than working on behalf of the councillors, as it is meant to.

And then we lost! Despite pleading with the Co-op not to proceed, HL appealed the decision and on 17th October 2017 we found out that that the inspectorate had upheld the appeal – again we face the very-real prospect of losing our pub.

We haven't given up, there are a few avenues we can still pursue but ultimately I fear the end is nigh. There have been positives, the community has come together and I've met people I wouldn't otherwise have met – I guess that's the pub effect again.

Continued on next page

THE LOVE OF PUBS

We've also learnt a lot about how pubs work, the planning system and unfortunately that even the most community-minded businesses care little about anything other than profit.

And finally

Ask yourself what pubs mean to you, and maybe look at your local and perhaps consider submitting an ACV or petitioning your local council to include pub protection in the local plan. Then maybe, just maybe, you might be able to save yours when a developer knocks at its door.

Finally I want to share some points of learning on my journey:

The Co-op probably has the poorest record for demolishing or converting pubs!

Property prices have rocketed and developers can buy public houses cheaply as businesses, selling them on or developing them for profit.

In the past pubs were owned by breweries who had a vested interest in keeping them open to sell their beer. These days most are owned by pub-owning companies 'PubCos'; these are basically investment firms, often backed by off-shore (read tax haven) companies for whom selling beer is just a

way to make money.

PubCos ran up a lot of debt to buy their portfolios and servicing the debt has become difficult post-recession. Disposal or development is one way to pay their interest bill. Many pubs run under the tied system, a carry-over from the brewery-owned days. In addition to paying rent, the tenant is also compelled to buy beer and sometimes spirits and wine through the PubCo. Costs can be up to twice those on the open market.

There is an option to go free of tie (MRO or market rent only) but the system that was put in place to allow this seems not to be working - naturally the PubCos will do all they can to avoid it. It only applies to PubCos with 500 or more pubs anyway.

You would imagine that it would be in the interest of the PubCo to invest in their pubs and tenants but actually they can sometime make more money by squeezing the tenant to the point where they leave, usually both broke and broken. They can then take on another inexperienced tenant, rinse and repeat. There are many examples of this practice, called churn. The tenant is often responsible for the maintenance of the fittings and often the whole building despite not owning it. If the tenant can't afford repairs then the PubCo can claim breach of contract and replace them. If the PubCo is planning on developing or selling then the state of the pub is of no concern to them anyway.

Business rates have just increased massively for many pubs due to a 'fair maintainable trade' valuation that is arbitrary and open to manipulation. Shops on the other hand are valued in a different way, largely based on the size of land occupied.

Most pubs are viable with the right operator and with the right deal. There are many examples of successful and profitable community-run or freehold pubs that were once owned by PubCos claiming they were non-viable.

At least 21 pubs close every week and at least 25,000 have closed since the 1970s. That's one in three already lost.

If I could only leave you with one thought, it's that the oft-cited phrase "use it or lose it" doesn't even touch the surface of what's being done to our pubs. Now - go to the pub and have a pint!

nick.whymark@gmail.com

The views expressed in this article are those of the author and are not necessarily those of the Editor, the local CAMRA CME, NWE or MAD branches or the Campaign for Real Ale Ltd.

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'SILENT' MIKE COLLINS RETIRES

By Claire Irons, Publicity Officer CME CAMRA

After 19 years of silent service to the drinkers of Chelmsford, Mike Collins has stepped down as landlord of the Orange Tree in Chelmsford. He is the first landlord in our area to achieve the double success of being landlord of Chelmsford & Mid-Essex CAMRA Pub of the Year for two separate pubs: the Queen's Head in Chelmsford on several occasions and the Orange Tree, 2014 and 2015.

Many feel the 'Silent' moniker ironic because he talks so much, mainly about beer, cricket and rugby. During a selection rugby game playing full-back aged 16, he was admonished by the coach for demolishing his own team's winger. He was told that he should call for the ball rather than be a silent assassin. The name has stuck.

Growing up in his grandad's pub, the Queens Head in Hackney which sold Bass and Charrington's IPA, he developed an interest in good beer, pubs and people. After A-levels, he did an HNC in Production Engineering at Woolwich Polytechnic. While working at the Polybar he persuaded them to stock beer other than Greene King IPA. Following a spell working at Rank Avionics in Rochester, which was taken over by Elliot Flight Automation, he worked as a steward at Orsett Golf Club and CREWS Hill Golf Club.

In 1998, he was pleased to be asked by Colin Bocking of Crouch Vale Brewery to run their brewery tap, the Partners in Lower Anchor St, Chelmsford. There were not many real ale pubs in Chelmsford then so it was a chance too good to miss, especially being located close to Essex County Cricket ground.

Legendary landlord

He told me enthusiastically of his pleasure when the Partners reverted back to its original name, The Queens Head. The pub sign with Queen Victoria on one side and a cricket score board on the other was an idea he and Colin came up with, that remained unique and quirky for many years. His knowledge and devotion to real ale resulted in the pub winning numerous CAMRA awards, keeping it in the Good Beer Guide (GBG) for eight successive years.

In February 2008 he transferred to the Orange Tree, along the same road, taking Trish O'Brien and Karen 'KT' Thomson with him to continue the winning formula at this Gray and Sons pub. He describes it as a back-street boozier and is proud that the Orange Tree has been in every GBG since. Ten hand pumps sport an array of great beers with at least two dark beers including Mike's favourite, Mighty Oak Oscar Wilde. Both pubs continue to be frequented by scores of cricket and rugby fans, umpteen of whom he has known for many years.



Mike delighted in telling me how he has seen some of the young men who play darts and rugby for the Orange Tree grow up, because their parents have been regulars for years. He also

counts among his regulars fans attending from Leicester, Somerset and Yorkshire, who visit annually when their teams are playing Essex.

Rugby is an absolute passion, so he happily entertains the fans for rugby breakfasts when the Six Nations and the Lions tours are on. The pub is always packed when showing rugby with Silent not living up to his name, joining his friends for raucous appreciation of the action.

Reminiscing and retirement

He has made many friendships over the years and although he does not look upon being a pub landlord as a job he admits it involves a lot of hard work. He has enjoyed selecting new beers, especially dark ones and plans to be a regular visitor and offer advice as required to his dedicated team. Trish O'Brien is the new manager of the Orange Tree and Mick Parker will continue to cook wholesome home-made food providing an increasing range of gluten-free options.

Silent Mike told me: "I am proud of the hard-working staff, especially Trish, KT and Mick. I have every confidence that the Orange Tree will continue to provide the same quality beers, food and service following my retirement."

He will not be stumped for things to do, with plans to see more live cricket and put the world to rights at the Monday Club between 4 and 8pm. As well as reading about pubs, he loves to drink good beer on his travels so the Good Beer Guide remains valuable for finding good real ale in a new area.

Presentation and party

Chelmsford and Mid-Essex CAMRA will have a special presentation to Mike at the branch meeting and Christmas party, 8pm onwards at the Orange Tree, Lower Anchor Street, Chelmsford, CM2 0AS on Wednesday, 20th December. We hope that he enjoys many a 'happy hour' and exploring the Historic Coaching Inns of the Great North Road, literally. Come along and say so long to Silent Mike from 8pm, Wednesday 20th December, £5 for buffet, nibbles, and lots of banter.

publicity@chelmsford.camra.org.uk

Thirsty Times

19TH CHELMSFORD WINTER BEER & CIDER FESTIVAL

14th-17th February 2018

King Edward Grammar School (KEGS), Broomfield Road, Chelmsford, CM1 3SX (5 mins from station)

By Paul Murrell

Our very popular Winter Beer and Cider Festival returns to Chelmsford in February 2018, with over 170 real ales to choose from. Although we will have many of the stronger, darker winter brews there will also be golden, milds, bitters and fruit beers amongst the other types such as gluten-free and vegan beers so hopefully there will be something to suite everyone. There will also be a range of over 50 ciders and perries including national award winners and some special winter varieties. All are gluten free.

Hot and cold food will be on sale at all sessions. Hopleaf will provide the hot food including a selection of vegetarian options. There will also be an interesting selection of cold food from Pipers Crisps and Oddfellows Chocolates.

The festival is staffed by CAMRA members who are all volunteers and who give up their time to build, run and take down the festival – for fun!



Tuesday evening is a special session for CAMRA CME branch members and local licensed trade only (replacing the traditional Monday

evening festival briefing) then the festival will be open to the public on all four days Weds-Sat from noon to 11pm. Last orders will be called at 10.45pm and admission is free to valid card-presenting CAMRA Members at all times during the public sessions, and to everyone until 6pm on all festival days, after which time there will be an entrance fee of £3 for non-members.

Our website www.cbcf.info will be updated regularly, please visit for the latest information. Put the dates in your diaries now and remember, we open on Valentine's Day. We look forward to seeing you there!

paul.murrell59@gmail.com



PUB NEWS



CHELMSFORD & MID-ESSEX

By Rob West

The Beehive Pub in Great Waltham has issued their Christmas Menu and has a new menu due soon.

Dec 1 Quiz night £3pp including a ploughman's meal for teams of six.

Dec 9 Christmas party with live music from Stony Road.

Dec 20 Carol service.

All details will be on their website
<http://thebeehivepubgreatwaltham.co.uk>

The Kings Head, Great Baddow reopened in October and is now open seven days a week, also selling food. Only one real ale on at present but it is early days for the new landlady. The pub looks good – food good and beer was well kept on a recent visit by our secret squirrels.

At the Ale House in Chelmsford they have the following events with 12 ales on as usual:

Dec 2 Live Music from The Blarneys, 9pm
Dec 15 Tap takeover and meet the brewer from Round Tower
Dec 16 Live music from Headfirst 9pm

Beer fest news from the Woolpack, Chelmsford. They have two beer festivals in December.

Wed 6-Sat 9 Dec – Christmas and winter ales
Wed 27-Sat 30 Dec – Best Of Essex

Landlord Will said: "Thank you to everyone who attended the Halloween Beer Festival it was a great success!

"Looking forward to welcoming CAMRA members on December 10 for Christmas lunch."

Local Essex pub restaurant Galvin Green Man in Howe Street has been awarded the prestigious Bib Gourmand by Michelin Guide Great Britain & Ireland.

The Bib Gourmand is more budget-friendly alternative to the star rating system, and recognises restaurants serving three courses for under £28, and is judged on both value and quality of food by Michelin's anonymous inspectors.

Thirsty Times

PUB NEWS



Paul Duley, left, new landlord at the Willows Inn, Cressing, above

Working with locally-sourced seasonal ingredients, the menu concentrates on classic pub dishes of the highest quality, while the bar serves craft ales with a strong emphasis on working in partnership with local craft brewers.

The pub hosts a selection of nights and events, including Bottomless Prosecco Thursdays, and the Little Green Man Club, which hosts a series of family-friendly events throughout the year. This includes Kids @ The Movies showing children the latest kids' films plus the old classics for free with free popcorn, while mum and dad relax over lunch or a drink.

A footnote on the Swan, Witham – when Gordon Fish visited a few weeks ago, the landlady indicated that she had no intention of closing anytime soon.

The White Hart in Witham is having a 12 days of Christmas beer festival from 13th December.

After the sudden closure of the Willows Inn, Cressing in September it is good news that it reopened on 27th October with a new landlord, Winter 2017

Paul Duley who also runs another Wellington pub in Brentwood, called the Brave Nelson. He plans to extend the opening hours to open on Mondays with traditional English food but keeping the emphasis on local microbreweries.

After many months of speculation it is good to know that the Two Brewers in Chelmsford is undergoing refurbishment so I would appreciate any reports back regarding progress and what is on offer when they re-open.

Plans have been submitted to Chelmsford City Council regarding the demolition of the Admiral J McHardy pub in Arbour Lane, Chelmsford, formerly the Alma. Planning permission has been applied for construction of a similar size building as the current one, to accommodate eight two-bedroom and one one-bedroom flats with associated parking and gardens with appearance, layout and scale to be determined.

CME CAMRA has objected to this application.

PUB NEWS

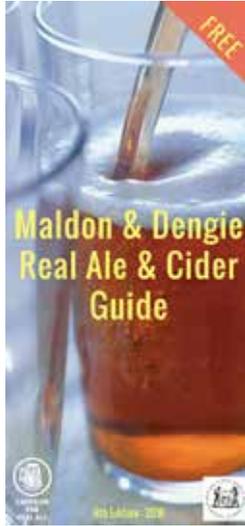
MALDON AND DENGIE

By Robert Longley

New tenants of the Queen Victoria in Maldon are David and Karen Cheek, David being the son of the landlady who ran it for 20 years until 2012. They wish to focus on turning it back into a real community pub serving good home-prepared food. Expect to find beers from the Maldon Brewing Company among others.

New tenants are in the course of being appointed at the Round Bush, Purleigh and it is expected to change hands in early 2018. Wibblers Brewery Taproom & Kitchen has been granted planning permission to extend their taproom in Southminster, with work due to commence in the New Year.

Andy Lodge and Rosie Hill are establishing themselves at the Bell, Tollshunt Major, and hosted a superb firework display on Sunday 5th November. The telephone number has changed, it is now 01621 868154.



Beers are from Mighty Oak and Adnams.

Launched on the same day as this year's Good Beer Guide the new Maldon and Dengie Real Ale and Cider Guide includes all the pubs in our area, from Tiptree in the North to Battlesbridge in the South-West.

Every pub, some ninety in all, were visited between July and September to check on amongst other things, the opening hours, beer, cider and food offerings.

A short description for each provides an insight as to what you might expect upon visiting. Now widely available in pubs within the branch area, further copies are available from Robert Longley, 42 Pertwee Drive, South Woodham Ferrers, Essex CM3 5NT.

Please enclose a stamped addressed envelope.

raclongley49@btinternet.com

NORTH WEST ESSEX

North West Essex Pub News Contact:
magazine@northwestessex.camra.org.uk

Railway Arms, Saffron Walden – Hopefully Saved!

It's been a fantastic few weeks for the Railway Arms. On Tuesday 31st October, STRAP (Save The Railway Arms Pub) passed their initial share capital target of £200,000. This met the requirements of their grant and loan funders. The £200,000 is now more than £400,000! Given the continuing interest in the share offer STRAP decided to extend the share offer to December 31. See www.strap.org.uk for more details. As of 4th November their share capital had reached £211,100. A fantastic sum, that will be the subject of much celebration. This represents the commitment of more than 230 shareholders; more than 230 potential customers for the pub!



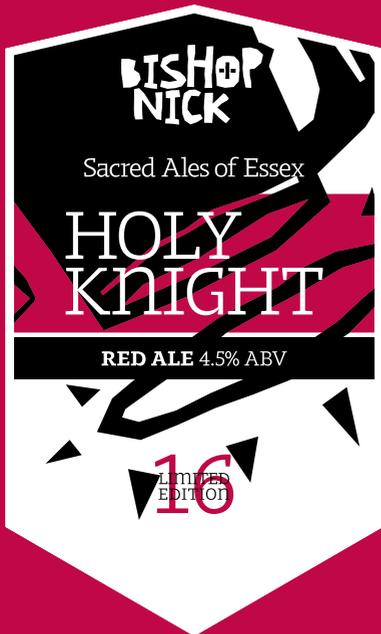
Given this position, the committee felt confident enough to authorise a bid for the Railway Arms. On Wednesday 1st November, The Saffron Walden Community Pub Limited exercised their Community Right to Bid. The offer is currently with the owners

and we all await their response.

Pub News in brief

Maypole, Thaxted has a new tenant. Bell, Panfield, new kitchen installed. Fox and Hounds, Steeple Bumpsted, lease expires in February 2018. Bell, Wendens Ambo, recent 'Bell Bash' beer and cider festival was very successful. Plough, Gt Chesterford has new tenants. George, Shalford should re-open 18th Nov, managed by former barmaid of the Bluebell. Bluebell, Hempstead, Ginny is now the manager. Red Lion, Belchamp Otten, as good as ever. Finchingfield Lion doing well. Wheatsheaf, Castle Hedingham, run a Marsdon's promotion during October.

White Hart, Great Yeldham, intends to close down in January for a couple of weeks for a major refurbishment. Waggon & Horses, Great Yeldham, intends to have a beer festival of local beers next year. Green Man, Gosfield, is to become a B&B. Fleur de Lys, Widdington, featured in this issue, has put in for planning permission for a major re-build. Bell Inn, Panfield, is being refurbished. Plough, Radwinter has changed hands. Welsh Princess, Rayne is closed for a much needed refurbishment. Bull, Blackmore End is closed and up for sale. Swan, Thaxted has a new manager.



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THE EAGLE FLYING HIGH

By Claire Irons, Publicity Officer, CME CAMRA

The Eagle in Galleywood has not only flown high but has landed the prestigious Fred Dowry Award as The Most Improved Pub in the CME branch area 2017. The Award is named in memory of a deceased active member of the Chelmsford & Mid-Essex branch and is not necessarily awarded each year.

The other finalists were alphabetically:

The Endeavour in Springfield, under new management with a refurbishment of the courtyard garden;

The Monkey in Terling, which has re-opened having been closed for four years as an Asset of Community Value and

The UB (United Brethren) in Chelmsford that has been refurbished by the new management from Pin Up Brewery changing to provide an increased range of real ale, craft keg beer and gin.

Having had difficult times over recent years with the owner Hawthorn Leisure causing upheaval, wishing to sell the land for a Co-op store to be built on the site, the local villagers of Galleywood rallied round to form the Eagle To Phoenix Group to save their pub. Being awarded the status as an Asset of Community Value, (ACV) for the Grade II listed pub was a turning point although not having the garden and car park included was like the nest being taken away from the Eagle. (For more details read Nick Whymark's article: The Love of Pubs in this issue of Thirsty Times).

Eventually Hawthorn Leisure realised after colossal campaigning from the community, assisted

by CAMRA that it was worth refurbishing the pub popular with people locally, quizzers and now having an increasing following from drinkers of real ale and cider thanks to the new team of women running the pub.

The managers are Donna Sullivan and Karen Gosling with the cellar and cooking done by Tina Smyth, who told me that they are all over the moon having worked so hard to make the pub a success.

The pub has a lovely atmosphere from recent refurbishment keeping the charm of the building with exposed beams, L-shaped bar with seating at the bar, at tables in the bar itself and in alcoves plus a pool room.

The cellar and kitchen have recently been updated to be able to serve an ever-changing range of three real ales, one real cider (Westons Old Rosie) and the usual range of pub bar offerings.

Freshly prepared home-cooked traditional pub food is served from Tuesday through to Sunday including Sunday lunch, all at competitive prices.

Eagle-eyed seniors savour the Seniors' lunch club on Thursdays 12-2.30pm, while eaglets (children) eat free on Saturday 12-5pm with a bouncy castle in the garden for entertainment.

This king of the birds is soaring with a quiz evening every Thursday, karaoke Fridays and singers/groups on Saturdays with various events for and by the community.

Doug Irons, Chairman of Chelmsford & Mid-Essex CAMRA also proudly presented Kim Sutton with a special award that she accepted on behalf of the

Eagle to Phoenix Group for the hard work, time and dedication given to List Your Local as an Asset of Community Value and to Save the Eagle Pub, Galleywood.

Thank you to Luke Walker, son of Eagle regular Dave Walker, for the photographs by Luke Walker Photography.

Pictured left are the team of ladies who have made the Eagle the success it is today, and in the photo on the right are (L to R) Councillor Anthony McQuiggan, Doug Irons, Karen Gosling, Tina Smyth (behind), Kim Sutton (in front), Karen Sullivan and Councillor Richard Hyland





© Luke Walker
Photography

The Ale House

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December 15th 2017

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Opening hours: Mon-Thur 11am-11pm. Fri-Sat 11am-Midnight. Sun Noon-10:30pm

TRIP TO GHENT IN BELGIUM

29th September to 1st October 2017

By Clive, Katherine, Geoff & Lindsey

Doug picked 16 of us up early Friday morning by minibus then whisked us down to Folkestone for the shuttle to Calais.

Arriving in Calais about 1pm local time, we headed straight to the town of Veurne for our first beer of the weekend. In Belgium you are presented with a beer menu and have a huge choice but we opted for Trappistes Rochefort, one of our favourite beers, to start the weekend.

Second stop was a visit to a chocolate factory in Gaistel, a chocoholic's dream. After making our purchases we headed to the final destination Ghent, a very pretty medieval town in Belgium.

The party were dropped off at their respective hotels with plans to all meet up at Het Waterhuis aan de Bier Kant, a great setting next to the river for a beer or two before our evening meal.

We ate at Amadeus 2 which is well known for 'all you can eat ribs'. Now there was a challenge – as soon as you finished your rack of ribs or jacket potato more were offered. Somehow Geoff managed to eat three racks of ribs! The building was fabulous, replica Art Deco. Here Jean and Barry joined us for the weekend before continuing their European camper-van tour.

After the meal, some carried on drinking in various bars around town while others headed back to their hotels.

Saturday was a day of leisure for us to explore Ghent, which unfortunately was grey, overcast and drizzling with rain. But undeterred, and with our umbrellas, our team leader Clive took us on a historical walking tour of Ghent. We visited St Bavo's Cathedral, many different squares, stopped off in a bar for a mid-morning beer next to the castle, visited St Nicholas's Church and lastly we climbed to the top of the Belfry where we had fantastic views of Ghent.

Tour finished, we were now ready for more beer and so headed to Dulle Griet and The Kwak Bar. Here we bumped into 10 of our party who had already made a start.

Several different beers were drunk here, but Kwak was a favourite. It was served in a unique half yard glass and they make you leave your shoe as a deposit. Great fun.

Some card games followed including a game where we had to stick the card to your forehead and we had to guess how many your unseen card would beat. I am sure Clive made this one up! Not

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quite sure what the locals in the bar thought! Mad British maybe?

After one or four beers we left just as the sun came out, and eight of us decided to go on a sightseeing boat trip on the river.

The river cruised, we were now feeling hungry
Thirsty Times



and found a nice bar/restaurant called Klok Huys for dinner, where Doug and Claire joined us. We had a lovely meal and another couple of beers. Afterwards 'team leader' Clive took us on the 'Ghent at night by light' trip. This was a fantastic opportunity to take some photos of the reflection of the buildings in the river.

At the final bar of the day, Brasserie Bridge, we sampled a few more beers and a game of cards called 'bonk' before turning in for the night.

On Sunday morning there were a couple of hours free before meeting up with everyone, so following an early breakfast our 'team leader' took us on a walk around the seven different markets in Ghent before the rendezvous at Café den Turk at 11.30am. This is billed as 'the oldest bar in Ghent and while Doug and Martin went to get the minibus we enjoyed our final beer in Ghent, but not of the day.

All piled back onto the minibus and headed off to Café Legen Doorn in Poperinge, where we had a group game of 'Boltra'. This is like bowling in a half pipe 2m wide by 18m long with wooden 'bowls' the shape and size of cheese truckles. They have a mind of their own, going anywhere except where they're aimed and twice as fast as you would think. We divided into 'girls v boys' teams and after much cheering and oohs and aahs the girls won 12-1. We had a great laugh and of course a few beers.

Having finished our game and beers, we headed Winter 2017



for Calais where we stopped at the Buffalo Grill for a meal and our last beer of the trip before the train back to the UK and arriving back at Chelmsford to start the 'drop offs' at 9pm.

We would like to say a big thank you to Doug and Martin for driving us safely there and back, and to all who organised such a great weekend and wonderful trip.

SOCIAL CALENDAR

CHELMSFORD AND MID-ESSEX, DECEMBER 2017 TO MARCH 2018

The fare for trips driven by our volunteer drivers includes drop off close to members' homes afterwards following a route determined by the participants of the trip and not a set route.

Please book with Martin Joy 07878 624443 / socialsecretary@chelmsford.camra.org.uk

DECEMBER

Sunday 10th December – Branch Christmas Meal, Woolpack Pub, CM2 0DN

12.30pm for 1pm sitting, Mildmay Road, Chelmsford. Three course Christmas meal for just £12 to branch members. Menu to be confirmed.

After last year's success, Will and his team have kindly invited us back to do it all again. Please book your place as soon as possible as places are limited.

Wednesday 20th December – Branch Meeting and Christmas Party, The Orange Tree, CM2 0AS

8pm onwards, Lower Anchor Street, Chelmsford. Plan is to have a short low-key Branch Meeting followed by a Christmas party.

Cost £5 per person for buffet and nibbles. Please make own arrangements to attend as no minibus to this event. Please book your place so that we can gauge numbers.

Saturday 30th December – Change to previously advertised trip

Due to major train disruptions into London from Chelmsford, we have decided to visit Colchester instead. Meet at 11am Chelmsford Station to catch train to Colchester Town, where we will visit some of the best and most recommended pubs.

JANUARY

**Tuesday 9th January – Committee Meeting, Square and Compasses, CM3 2BB
8pm for 8.30pm, Fuller Street.**

Wednesday 17th January – Branch Meeting, Battesford Court, CM8 1AH

8pm for 8.30pm, Witham. Minibus available from opposite Chelmsford Station, cost £7.50. Drop home afterwards. First-time attendees receive a free pint.

Saturday 27th January – Full Day trip to the Dengie Peninsula

By minibus 11am departure from opposite Chelmsford Station. Cost £10, members only. Plan to visit the best and recommended pubs and micro pubs situated on the Dengie Peninsula, Crouch Vale and Wibblers brewery taps. End the evening in Maldon before drop off home later.

FEBRUARY

**Tuesday 6th February – Branch Committee Meeting, Compasses, CM3 1BU
8pm for 8.30pm, Littley Green.**

Wednesday 7th to Saturday 10th February – Colchester Winter Beer and Cider Festival, CO1 1NF. At the Arts Centre, Church Street, Colchester. All members encouraged to attend this festival.

Tuesday 13th February – Winter Festival Preview Evening, KEGS, CM1 3SX

From 7pm, King Edward VI Grammar School, Chelmsford. Branch members, invited guests and volunteers welcome to attend our Winter Festival Preview, where the Branch Pub of the Year will also be announced. £2.50 per pint with valid CAMRA membership card.

Thirsty Times

SOCIAL CALENDAR

Wednesday 14th to Saturday 17th February – Chelmsford and Mid Essex Winter Beer and Cider Festival

King Edward VI Grammar School, Chelmsford, CM1 3SX. All members encouraged to support, attend and volunteer for this special festival.

MARCH

Saturday 3rd March – Branch Cider POTY Judging Trip

Free minibus during the day to visit and judge the best pubs in our branch serving real cider and perry.

Depart 11am opposite Chelmsford Station, dropping off home or Chelmsford Station. In the evening we are planning a trip to the Chappel Winter Beer Festival at The East Anglian Railway Museum, Chappel and Wakes Colne (If run out will go to Colchester pubs).

Minibus will depart from opposite Chelmsford Station at 7pm, with pick up in Witham on the way if required. Nominal Charge of £5 will apply, members only.

Friday 2nd to Saturday 3rd February 2018 – Chappel Winter Beer Festival, CO6 2DS

11am to 11pm both days, East Anglian Railway Museum, Chappel and Wakes Colne. After 5.30pm on Friday admission is by ticket only.

Tickets go on sale 1st January 2018. 65+ beers, plus ciders and perries. Members are encouraged to attend and support this event. Make you own way there by public transport or join us on the minibus planned for Saturday evening.

Tuesday 6th March – Committee Meeting, The Orange Tree, CM2 0AS

8pm for 8.30pm, Lower Anchor Street, Chelmsford.

Wednesday 14th March – Branch Meeting, The Eagle, CM2 8PS

8pm for 8.30pm, Stock Road, Galleywood. Winter 2017

A chance for members to visit our Most Improved Pub of the Year and partake in our Branch Meeting. Free pint for any first time attendees. No minibus to this venue as ample Bus services available from Chelmsford e.g. 41, 51, 42, 100, 13A.

Saturday 17th March – All day trip to some of the more rural pubs in the southern part of our branch area.

Minibus departs 11am opposite Chelmsford Station. Cost £10, members only.

Plan to visit as many as possible of the pubs that are not accessible by public transport e.g. Roxwell, Blackmore, Mill Green, Fryerning, Margarettng Tye, West Hanningfield, Rettendon etc. Usual drop home afterwards.

Wednesday 28th March – Woolpack Easter Beer Festival preview invitation, CM2 0DN

From 8pm, Mildmay Road, Chelmsford. Card-carrying branch members are invited to this preview to sample some of the beers that will be on offer at the festival, at a special reduced price of £2.50 per pint.

Friday 30th March 2018 – The Annual Good Friday Pub Crawl Tour

This year from Writtle to Chelmsford. Start at the Chequers in Writtle at 12 noon then onto the Wheatsheaf and the Rose and Crown then a walk or bus into Chelmsford where we continue along Lower Anchor Street, visiting the Queen's Head, Orange Tree, and United Brethren before ending the day at the Woolpack beer festival.

APRIL

Saturday 7th April – Essex Cider POTY judging trip.

By free minibus from 11am opposite Chelmsford Station. The plan is to visit all the Cider POTY's for each Branch of Essex in an effort to judge them for the Essex Cider Pub of the Year.

Continued on next page

SOCIAL CALENDAR

Members from other branches are invited along if spaces are available. Book early to avoid disappointment.



In the quaint village of High Roding sits the beautiful Black Lion. The pub has occupied this spot since the 14th century, and it retains its historic charm while providing all of the modern luxuries you could want from a village pub. If you're feeling peckish, there are plenty of delicious options to choose from.

The venue also serves a variety of beverages, including real ales. There's a large beer garden to relax in during the warmer months, while winters can be spent snuggled up inside by the log fire. Whether young or old, part of a large party or after an intimate meal, all are welcome at The Black Lion.

The Street, High Roding,
near Dunmow CM6 1NT
01371 872847

Open: Mon-Thurs noon-3pm, 6pm-11pm;
Fri-Sun noon-11pm.



Tuesday 10th April – Evening trip to Harwich

By minibus from opposite Chelmsford Station at 7pm with pick up available in Witham if demand. Cost £10, members only. Plan is to visit Harwich and its historic pubs including the Alma, Hannover, New Bell and Stingray. Usual drop home afterwards.

Saturday 14th April – Annual Walk from Chelmsford to the Maldon Beer Festival

Meet 9am at Railway Tavern then walk along the canal to Maldon. Stop at Papermill Lock for refreshments and break along the way. Cyclists or persons wanting to do part of the walk are most welcome. Contact Martin 07878 624 443 or Doug 07743 950 382

Wednesday 11th to Saturday 14th April – Maldon Beer and Cider festival, Plume School, CM9 6AB

Fambridge Road, Maldon. Members encouraged to attend and support this event.

Wednesday 18th April – Committee Meeting, Walnut Tree, CM3 1DT

8pm for 8.30pm, Broads Green.

Friday 20th to Sunday 22nd April CAMRA Members Weekend, AGM and Conference

Warwick University, Coventry. Members encouraged to attend, see website for further details.

Saturday 28th April – Essex POTY Judging Trip

All day minibus trip to visit all the pubs judged to be their best for each branch in Essex. Free trip but you must be prepared to vote and judge each pub we visit, depart 11am opposite Chelmsford Station. Usual drop home afterwards. Book early to avoid disappointment.




EARL SOHAM & CLIFF QUAY BREWERY

Brewers of Award Winning East Anglian Ales, Stouts & Porters

Our seasonal beer for December:



Jolabrugg 5.2% ABV

Our winter seasonal pale ale brewed with only English hops. Crisp spicy and herbal flavour all balanced with a malty fruit flavour.

Our seasonal beer for January:



Roaring Forties 4% ABV

Light amber coloured ale. Crisp, citrus and floral aroma with a full hoppy character - a cracking beer to start the new year.

Our range of permanent ales:

<p>Cliff Quay</p> <p>Classic Bitter • Dreadnought Tolly Roger • Tumblehome Seadog</p>	<p>Earl Soham</p> <p>Gannet Mild • Victoria Bitter Sir Rogers Porter • Albert Ale Brandeston Gold</p>
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Also come and visit our brewery shop at:
Unit 1A Meadow Works Business Park,
Kenton Road, Debenham, IP14 6RP
Tel: 01728 861213
Email: thebrewer@earlsohambrewery.co.uk

SOCIAL CALENDAR

NORTH WEST ESSEX BRANCH DIARY

North West Branch Contact:
contact@northwestessex.camra.org.uk

Tuesday 5th December, 2017
Branch Meeting, The Plough, CO9 4BJ
8pm The Street, Birdbrook, Halstead.

Monday 8th January, 2018
Branch Meeting,
Birchanger Sports & Social Club,
CM23 5QJ
8pm, 229 Birchanger Lane,
Birchanger, Bishop's Stortford.

Monday 5th February, 2018
Branch Meeting,
The Bell Inn, CO9 3EJ
8pm, 10 St. James' St, Castle
Hedingham, Halstead.

Monday 5th March, 2018
Branch Meeting,
The Three Horseshoes, CM6 2DX
8pm, Duton Hill, Dunmow.

See the branch diary page at
www.northwestessex.camra.org.uk
for the current list of meetings.

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SOCIAL CALENDAR

MALDON AND DENGIE BRANCH SOCIAL DIARY

MAD Social Secretary Mike Cutler
mjcutler59@gmail.com 07754 206099

FEBRUARY

DECEMBER

Saturday 2nd December, 2017
Mighty Oak Tasting Day, CM9 6TW
14b West Station Yard, Spital Road, Maldon.

Saturday 9th December 2017
MaD Christmas Meal, The Bell, CM9 6RF
7.30pm, Woodham Walter, FULLY BOOKED

Winter Mystery Minibus Tour
5pm pickup, All Saints Church, Maldon
High Street, CM9 5PF
FULLY BOOKED

JANUARY

Tuesday 16th January 2018
Branch Meeting, Beckingham Bell, CM9 8LL
8pm Beckingham Street, Tolleshunt Major. First pint FREE for NEW MEMBERS attending their first meeting.

Thursday 18th January 2018
Ten Pin Bowling, Madison Heights, CM9 5JQ
8pm Park Drive, Maldon, meet 7pm Farmers Yard, CM9 5BX, ending in the Queens Head, CM9 5HN BOOKING REQUIRED by Thursday 4th January

Saturday 27th January 2018 - Chelmsford
Tour of Maldon and Dengie
Look out for details of where to join them for as long as you may...
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Thursday 8th February 2018 – Colchester Beer Festival (Wed 7th – Sat 10th)
Midday meet if you would like to join MaD members attending on this day. No. 75 Bus from Maldon.

Monday 12th February 2018 – Branch Meeting and Voting for GBG + POTY, Blue Boar, CM9 4QE
8pm upstairs in the pub, Silver Street, Maldon. First pint FREE for NEW MEMBERS attending their first meeting.

Thursday 15th February 2018 – Chelmsford Winter Festival (Wed 14th – Sat 17th), King Edward VI Grammar School, CM1 3SX
8pm Broomfield Road, Chelmsford for those that can attend. Chelmsford Bus Station within walking distance, No. 31 Bus from Maldon.

MARCH

Tuesday 13th March 2018 – Branch AGM, Shaw Farm CM3 5QY
8pm, Old Wickford Road, South Woodham Ferrers. First pint FREE for NEW MEMBERS attending their first meeting.

Saturday 17th March 2018 – LONDON WALK
11am-ish – more details nearer the time when Chris has finished his current walkabout.

Please contact MAD Social Secretary Mike Cutler to book a place for any of these events.

Thirsty Times

ALL ABOUT ALE

Gluten-free beer explained and explored

By Phil Wilcox, Brewer and Director,
Wibblers Brewery

When we opened the kitchen at our taproom here at Wibblers, we made a conscious decision to be as inclusive as we could with regards to people with food allergies or lifestyle choices. One of these was a choice of Gluten-free food, which got us thinking, other than our cider we did not have a gluten-free beer.

Now beer is made with malted barley on the whole and this is a source of gluten. This gluten is a mixture of two proteins, prolamin and glutelin. A hugely important part of the whole process as a brewer is about removing protein from the final beer in the form of hot and cold break. Excess protein in the final beer will cause issues with clarity and shelf life in particular. In a well-made beer the brewing process actually reduces the gluten levels by chopping up the proteins into small peptide fragments, however these can still be toxic to people with coeliac disease.

The rules and regulations around how Gluten-free products are labelled are quite straightforward. The UK Food Standards Agency states that, by law, only products with less than 20 parts per million (ppm) of gluten can be labelled as Gluten-free. If a product has between 20ppm and 100ppm, they can be labelled as Low Gluten. Now the only way to know the Gluten levels of a product is by sending a sample to a UKAS-approved laboratory, where they can test for the small peptide fragments down to a level of 10ppm. Anything lower than that is not measurable and as close to Gluten-free as you'll get.

It would have been relatively straightforward for us to send a beer off for testing every time we made it and trust that we had our levels below the 20ppm to enable us to label the beer as Gluten-free. However even at these levels, some people with coeliac disease could have a reaction. So how did we work around that? Quite simply we used magic! Actually we didn't, we used a special brewing aid called 'Brewers Clarex' that chopped up any remaining protein in the beer while it is in the fermenter.

This all sounds very simple, add the Brewers Clarex to the fermenter, send a sample off to the laboratory and hey presto – Gluten-free beer. Well in a way, it is and it isn't. The Brewers Clarex will make the final beer taste thinner than usual and as such, the bitterness of the beer will be more pronounced. When we thought about whether we should make a Winter 2017



new beer or work with one of our existing beers, we very much had these things in mind so we did some experimentation.

We decided to look at Apprentice, our multi award-winning and very popular amber ale. What we worked out was that by tweaking mash temperatures slightly, modifying how much hop was used at what part of the boil we could counter these variations and after some extensive taste testing in our taproom by ourselves, our regular Apprentice drinkers and members of our Beer & Cider Club, it was agreed that no-one could tell the difference.

Of course, these things come at a financial cost; each time we send a sample to the laboratory, it's a £160 bill. The Brewers Clarex costs £150 a bottle, which we'll use in about 12 brews, but one thing we agreed on, was that we wouldn't increase our prices purely because the beer was Certified Gluten-free. So many companies seem to feel its okay to charge a premium for Gluten-free products on the basis that those who either choose a gluten-free lifestyle or have no choice in the matter will pay regardless.

So now we're able to supply a Laboratory-Certified Gluten-free Apprentice Ale with a gluten level of below 10ppm to the public, direct via our taproom and further afield via our trade customers so please feel free to visit us directly or see if your local pub can get some from us.

CIDER PRESS

By Claire Irons

National Cider PoTY

The winner in the National Cider Pub of the Year (CPoTY) competition is Ye Olde Cider Bar in Newton Abbot, which is a traditional cider house in Devon selling only cider, perry and fruit wines.

The other finalists alphabetically were:

The King's Ditch, the first micro pub in Tamworth, Staffordshire

The first micro pub in Scarborough, North Yorkshire, called The Stumble Inn and

The Woodbine, Waltham Abbey, Essex.

Dates for cider circuiteers

As the organiser of the CPoTY judging for Chelmsford & Mid-Essex branch and for Essex I am giving advanced notice of dates for your diary to whet your appetite. Of course anyone can vote using the cider pub judging criteria, providing they visit all the short-listed pubs, available from me nearer the time.

• Saturday, 3rd March 2018: CME Branch Day

Trip, optional evening trip to Chappel Winter Festival/ Colchester

- Saturday, 7th April 2018: Essex Cider Pub Judging
- Friday 25th – Sunday 27th May 2018: Trip to Newton Abbot which as well as Ye Olde Cider Bar also boasts Tucker's Maltings, a brewpub, a micro pub and a Wetherspoon pub so plenty to keep the customers satisfied.
- Friday 28th – Sunday, 30th September 2018: CME are planning a branch trip to Bristol, under the guidance of Cliff Noakes, Director of Essex Cider Supplies.

Cider Brandy & Apple Brandy

'Brandy' as a term is derived from the Dutch for burnt wine – brandewijn – and can be made from many different fruits. The spirit or eau de vie then needs to be matured in a barrel for at least six months to be termed brandy. The first written records of cider brandy in England go back to 1678. HM Customs granted the Somerset Cider Brandy Company the first full cider distilling



CIDER PRESS



brandy, but if there is no doubt we have made an apple eau de vie – something there can be no quibble about, surely the nomenclature dictates apple brandy.”

He distils their apple eau de vie in a copper still five times to intensify the flavours, aromas and complexity of their spirit, before maturing in oak barrels for six months. It takes about 1200kg of apples (about 10 trees-worth) commercially pressed to produce about 80 litres of 40-42% apple eau de vie / water of life.

What about Calvados?

Although calvados is well-known as a cider brandy, it does in fact need to be made with between 10% and 35% pears in order to be called Calvados, depending on which part of Normandy in North West France it comes from.

Claire's compare and contrast

Both are 42% and in my opinion are best sipped rather than diluted with mixers or used in cocktails, as they are specialised connoisseur products. This is particularly true for the Somerset Cider Brandy which is bottled at various time frames from 3, 5, 10, 15 and 20 years, all aged in oak casks. The tingling on the tongue with the warm glow in my chest and cheeks are sensations to savour.

Somerset Cider Brandy: Golden colour with distinctive woody notes from the oak barrel with fulfilling mouth-feel and complex combination of tannins from the oak and the Somerset cider apples, such as Kingston Black and Dabinett.

ESD Apple Brandy: Amber in that it is yellowy brown in colour, with a less distinctive flavour than the Somerset cider brandy woodiness, this has a particular vanilla and apple combination.

cider@chelmsford.camra.org.uk

licence in recorded history in 1989.

When the description 'cider brandy' disappeared from the EU list of approved names in 2008 it made the Somerset Cider Brandy illegal. After a four-year campaign aided by their MEP, Defra, the Wine and Spirit Trade Association and even the French Calvados producers, The Somerset Cider Company was victorious and the law was revised.

On 13th September 2011, despite strong opposition from the Spanish, the Italians and the Scotch Whisky Association, the EU Commission voted to restore the historic description Somerset Cider Brandy hence legalising it. Additionally, Protected Geographical Indication (PGI) was granted. This acts in the same way as the French *Appellation d'Origine Contrôlée*.

Branding of Apple Brandy

Having recently discovered that we have The English Spirit Distillery in Great Yeldham here in Essex, I was intrigued and delighted to learn that they make an apple brandy as well as various other spirits. Here is the explanation of the branding of English Spirit Distillery Apple Brandy.

Dr John Walters, Master Distiller and Founder of the English Spirit Distillery, points out the curiosity of naming the products as dictated by the UK Trading Standards, which among other things ensure that labelling is correct.

“Start with apples, fermented to make cider. Distil the cider to give an apple eau de vie. Mature the apple eau de vie for six months in a barrel and you'd think it would be called apple brandy, but apparently not, it must be called cider brandy. I can understand that if brandy is the burnt wine and the wine is cider then there is some case for a cider Winter 2017

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ALMOST LOST, TO FIRM FAVOURITE

FOCUS ON: The Fleur De Lys, Widdington



Courtesy Chris Rossetto, Fleur de Lys

by Chris Rouse, North West Essex

Chris and Ellie Rossetto have been at the Fleur de Lys for 10 years and, with their two young boys, are a firmly-established part of village life. The pub was almost lost in 1976 but a campaign run by supportive residents and the then newly-established North West Essex branch of CAMRA saved what has been a strong real ale establishment ever since. The Fleur is consistently in the CAMRA North West Essex top five for their Pub of the Year competition.

Five ales are on offer, usually Adnams Best Bitter, Adnams Broadside and Woodforde's Wherry, leaving two spare pumps for changing guest beers which are often blonde, hoppy and under 4% abv. Two ciders round out the liquid refreshment offering – Aspalls, and Rosie's Pig (a favourite with locals). Chris' preferred local microbrewer is Darren at Bishops Stortford Brewery. "He brewed us a green hop ale last year that we called 'Fleur Garden Ale'. It was created using English Goldings and Fuggles hops that we planted in our garden several years ago."

There is also a tap reserved for a guest craft beer from America, frequently featuring Flying 26

Dog, Anchor or Brooklyn breweries. Chris tries to make a visit to the Fleur bar a 'mini beer festival' experience. You could try half of each of the five hand pumps, a taster of Rosie's Pig cider, a sip of the American craft and he might even find you a taste of one or two of the 'next-up' guest ales that will be conditioning in the cellar. If you have the capacity (and a lift home!) you might then finish with a pint of whichever was your favourite.

Widdington is a quiet and pretty 'typical' rural north Essex village which has the added benefit of a beautifully-maintained large pub garden. The pub has easy access to many footpaths, offering circular walks that lead to picturesque views across the open countryside. Food at the pub is reportedly excellent. Chef Mark Green has been at the Fleur for seven years. He offers a short menu of pub favourites like freshly beer-battered fish and chips, handmade burgers, and an ever-changing blackboard of exciting and interesting specials. People rave about the Sunday roasts – especially the beef which is a rib eye from 'Surrey Farm' in Godalming. Visitors say you always feel welcome at the Fleur and get a very personal service.



This traditional English pub offers a welcoming and warm atmosphere, delicious locally sourced food, real ales and fine wines.

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SUSSEX FOR CIDER SUPPING

National Cider and Perry Trip,
October 2017

By Claire Irons, Cider Representative,
CME Branch

Although many would not suspect Sussex of having much in the way of cider, this year's trip organised by APPLE: National Cider & Perry Committee was arranged to open the eyes and indeed the mouths of cider enthusiasts.

As always, those on the trip had travelled from around the UK to attend and enjoy socialising with friends old and new with an interest in cider and perry. Many buy the stock for their respective CAMRA festival cider bars so like me, are always researching new and appealing (appeeling?) products to

//

While the apples were fed into the scrapper and pressed in the press made from food-grade Perspex, we enjoyed their wares

add to the core range.

First up to tantalise our taste buds was Wobblegate, Bolney, West Sussex where director Pete Hazell told us about their journey from producing fruit juices, to the Wobbly Press range of still traditional ciders, then moving on to produce Eden Fruit



Wobblegate bottling line



Village Green cider press in action

lightly-fizzed ciders (available in cans) and then further to developing the Rebel Root experimental ciders.

Their strap line is 'Grown by Us Pressed by Us Enjoyed by You'. We certainly enjoyed their hospitality and full range of products, although the Bloody Winter made with blood orange and ginger will have more ginger in future as a result of our feedback.

Kissinggate Brewery kindly hosted us for lunch having got in special supplies of Village Green cider. There were, of course, several of their beers available to purchase in addition to the cider.

We then moved on to visit Village Green Cider in Turners Hill, which is small operation producing cider literally from their garage and garden but the flavour and quality were superb.

While the apples were fed into the scatter and pressed in the hand-made press made Winter 2017

from food-grade Perspex, we enjoyed their wares.

The dry 5.9% ABV had a great apple taste with a dry white wine-style finish, while the medium 5.7% ABV had broader appeal, offering a refreshing and quaffable taste. As it was getting chilly the hot mulled cider did not last long.

Although some travelled home after being dropped at Crawley station in the early evening, many of us were taken for a tour of the best pubs in Horsham by Paul Sanders and Chris Stringer, respectively Regional Cider Coordinator and Surrey & Sussex Regional Director.

Thanks to Chris Rouse for his planning, paperwork and shepherding us on and off the bus at each destination.

Wassail!

cider@chelmsford.camra.org.uk

BREWERY NEWS

BILLERICAY BREWING COMPANY EST. 2012

Our new six-barrel third fermenter allows us to brew three times per week and gives more than 60% increase in capacity, hence we can brew lots of festive specials this year.

Our Black Christmas (black IPA) makes a welcome return. We are brewing festive versions of our two most popular beers – Christmas Blonde and Christmas Dickie. The 2017 Vintage Mayflower Gold (7.5% ABV) is dry hopped with Citra hops.

All will be available at our Christmas Beer Festival on 30th November to 3rd December.

For Rochford Beer Festival, we have brewed a

special tribute ale in honour of our much-missed micro pub regular and CAMRA member, Dave Walsh – Dave The Mallett is a balanced amber ale at 4.6%.

As usual in the run up to Christmas we will have a wide range of bottled beers available, together with gift packs, merchandise and polypins to enjoy our real ale at home. The micro pub has extra late opening hours (until 11pm) on 21st, 22nd and 23rd December.

A quiz evening takes place on the first Thursday of each month. The November quiz was run by our new staff member Seb along a Halloween theme. Key Kegs have proved very popular in addition to four or five cask ales we have on tap (always including a dark ale) and a real cider.



Libby Ridley writes:

Festive times are upon us and we are busy getting ready for Christmas. Our new limited edition for winter is Holy Knight

(see what we did there!?) a 4.5% ABV red ale guaranteed to warm up a cold winter's night. Hints of seasonal spices, ginger and cinnamon deliver welcome heat. Dark Crystal malt gives this ale its perky red hue and roasty edge, whilst malt sugars provide warmth and body. Hopped with Styrian Goldings, imparting subtle earthy aromas.

Witch Hunt was extremely popular this year and this 4.2% ABV porter has now sold out in cask but is available in bottle. Great ingredient for your Christmas pud!

Our core range is selling well with our award-winning Ridley's Rite (3.6% ABV) sales at an all-time high. East London CAMRA are hosting the Pigs Ear Beer Festival at Round Chapel in Hackney from 5th-9th December and they're taking our Holy Knight. Rochford Beer Festival is also coming up on 21st-25th November – seek out our Ridley's Rite and Holy Knight.

We're getting out and about with our bottle range and presentation gift packs over the 30

next few weeks, setting up stall at Chelmsford Racecourse for their Christmas Gift Fayre in aid of Helen Rollason Cancer charity for the weekend of 25th/26th November.

Our brewery shop is open on site to the public, Mondays to Fridays, 9am-4.30pm with late night shopping on Thursdays, 9am-7pm and every Saturday in December from 10am-2pm. Order your Christmas beer (minicasks, minipins, polypins) for collection and browse our bottle range and brilliant new six-bottle gift packs and merchandise. Ample free parking and easy access to Braintree Freeport and the town centre.

New outlets are being added to our delivery rounds every week so keep an eye on our 'outlets' page on our website for a pub near you that stocks Bishop Nick beers. In particular we're excited about supplying bottles to Suffolk Food Hall, Hall Farm Shop, and Stratford St Mary and Hoppily on line portal, and cask to the Windmill at Chatham Green.

For a full product list see www.bishopnick.com

Reach us on 01376 349 605 and follow us on Facebook – BishopNickAle and Twitter – @BishopNick or sign up for our newsletter at info@bishopnick.com.

Thirsty Times

BREWERY NEWS

Being as it's December, the Brentwood Brewery team is once again aglow with festive spirit and we're also really looking forward to our Christmas Beer Festival.

Christmas Beer Festival,
9th December 10.30am-5pm

Despite a punishingly busy schedule, Santa has promised to make an early sleigh stop at Brentwood Brewery on Saturday 9th December for our Christmas Beer Festival. Entry is free, and there'll be plenty of Brentwood and Elephant School Brewing beer, festive food served from the brewery's snack van Beer Grylls, live music and a variety of games for all the family. Plus the chance to sing some traditional Christmas carols.

We'll be raising donations for SNAP (Special Needs and Parents) a charity based in Warley that helps Essex families with children and young people who have any special need or disability.

New beers

Especially for Christmas we have Frosty Baubles 3.8% ABV – available in cask and bottle. A golden, hoppy, festive little number, designed to make you feel like dancing. Don't stop or your Baubles might ice over.

Also, Good Elf 4.5% ABV is full of Christmas cheer and only available in cask. This warming red, spicy bitter should keep you jolly refreshed throughout the festive season.

Another new Brentwood one to try is Champagne Vlad, a 9.5% ABV Imperial Russian stout on draught. It'll be available at our Christmas Beer Festival and launches at this year's Pigs Ear Beer Festival.



From Elephant School Mallowphant 4.8% ABV is pretty new, having launched only last month. It's a marshmallow stout and judging by the speed it disappeared on draught in our Tap Room, it's worth tasting.



Events

The brewery team will be out and about at Shenfield Christmas Market on Sunday 3rd and Meet the Brewer at The Merchant in Brentwood High Street on the 14th December.

Open Days and Brewery Tours

The last Open Day and Brewery Tours of the year will be on Saturday 2nd December but there will not be one in January. The first Open Day next year is Saturday 3rd February.

Brewery Shop and Tap Room

If you're perplexed about where to find perfect presents for the beer lover in your life, an array of exquisite beer gifts is available from the brewery shop. From four-bottle gift packs to beer hampers, brewery tours and 'Be a Brewer' experience days as well as pick your own cases of beer and a variety of Brentwood-branded merchandise, you'll find something they'll love.

While perusing the goodies in the shop, why not treat yourself to a pint? In the Tap Room we always have two beers on draught and a multitude of tasty bottled Brentwood and Elephant School beers to choose from.

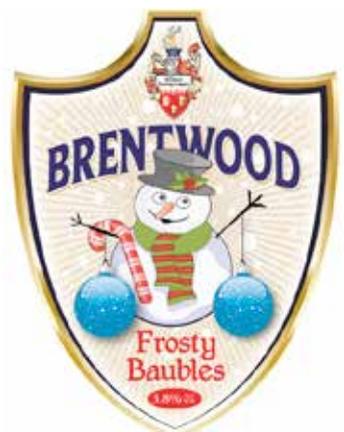
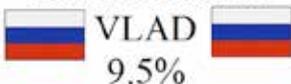
Roland and the brewery team would like to wish all Thirsty Times readers a very Happy Christmas and a jolly good New Year.

Love Beer, Love Brentwood

BRENTWOOD



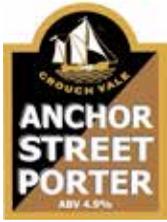
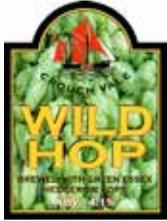
CHAMPAGNE



BREWERY NEWS

Our beer of the moment is Wild Hop (4.1% ABV), which has been brewed using hedgerow hops picked in North and Central Essex.

We also have Brewers Gold Extra (5.2% ABV) and Anchor Street Porter (4.9% ABV). Our Christmas beer will again be Santa's Revenge (5% ABV) and in the run-up to Christmas we will also have Cardinal (brewed with Styrian Cardinal hops) – 3.9% ABV.



Plus our normal range, of course. All of these beers will start appearing in due course in local pubs and, of course, Tap Room 19.

It is also our intention to have Santa's Revenge, Cardinal and Yakima Gold available in 500ml bottles for the festive season, available of course in the brewery shop and tap room here at the brewery. Busy times!

Cheers, Colin.



FINE ESSEX ALES



Mighty News and Christmas Tidings!

As I am writing this, we have just discovered that our much-cherished Brewery Manager (whose role is more or less the same as that of a Head Brewer), is going to be leaving us in the New Year. The marvellous Dr Alex has been with us for 16 years, which is far longer than most people stay in one place these days, and we totally understand that he needs pastures new and new challenges.

We wish him well and will wave him goodbye with a tear in our eye, and of course want to spread the word far and wide that we are looking for a new woman or man to take the helm in our brewing team. We have much to offer, from our excellent reputation for brewing national award-winning ales to our exciting new foray into the craft beer market. If you know someone looking for the chance to shine running their own brewing team then tell them to get in touch with us!

And if you'd like to come and see us at the Brewery then Saturday 2nd December will see our Annual Free Festive Beer Tasting Day when you can come along and try our festive ales (for free!) at Unit 14b, West Station Yard, Maldon. This is always a big crowd-puller and so do get here early to be sure of trying them all – doors open at 11am and close at 3pm.

Once again we'll have hot food on site and Gill, Jenny and Lynn will be taking orders for Christmas beer which you can take home on the day, or collect later in December. STOP PRESS for the first time ever we will also have three-bottle selection packs to buy! The perfect Christmas present for the beer lover in your life.

This year's Christmas beers have something for everyone, from Reindeer Gold an easy drinking 3.5% ABV traditional to our glorious Bingle Jells 5.2% ABV deep copper beer. As always we have a rich, chocolatey Porter (Pickled Walnut 5.0 % ABV, perfect alongside your Christmas pudding), and a number of gorgeous copper, amber and brown ales too!

We love hearing from our drinkers and we do try to respond to what you tell us. You can find us on FaceBook and Twitter under @MightyOakBrew and we also keep a close watch on your feedback via Untapped and YourRound.

All of us here at Mighty Oak wish you and your families a joyful Christmas and a peaceful and prosperous 2018 – Merry Christmas!



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BREWERY NEWS



Abby Writes:

Our planning application for the taproom extension has been approved so works will start once the thaw begins next year.

We will be at the following Festive Fayres – Beckenham Bell 2nd December and Burnham on Crouch 9th December, as well as our Festive Open Day on 16th December.

Order forms are in the Taproom or available if you email sales@wibblers.co.uk to order your ales for the festive period. Order by 24th November and collect by 8th December to get a 10% discount.

Brewery experience days are booking up fast for 2018 so if you are planning on buying someone a voucher for Christmas please ask them to contact Abby as soon as possible.

Run on the third Thursday each month it is a true hands-on day from helping plan the brew prior to your day to pitching the yeast at the end. You get a ten litre polypin of the ale made, two weeks later to enjoy with friends and family.

Brewing-wise Phil has been able to make Vanguard, 4.2% ABV traditional ale with what is likely to be the last of the Vanguard hops commercially available – so get it while you can! Santa's Night Off 4.2% ABV traditional, Festive Star 4.1% ABV golden, Winter Wibble 6.0% ABV old ale and our range of Dengie Porters 4.5% ABV are all brewed and maturing nicely.

Oaky-Stoaty-McStoat-Face 5.8% ABV which has been sitting in a Journeyman-infused whiskey barrel since August and will be bottled in time for Christmas.

It is something a little bit special to celebrate the 10th anniversary of brewing Crafty Stoat, CAMRA National Champion Stout, which our friends made at this year's Flocculation.

Regards to all.

Winter 2017



The big news is that after brewing and individually hand bottling and labelling 36,000 bottles of our Fire in the Hole chilli beer for a major retailer, the order has finally left the brewery to be made into Christmas gift packs!

For those of you with chilli lovers (or alcoholic ginger beer, copper ales or Prosecco/cider) in the family we do free deliveries in the local area – watch out for our Fallen Angel van around town or contact us through our website www.fallenangel-brewery.co.uk.

We have three levels of chilli heat and attractive black gift hamper boxes and wrapping or rattan bags. The hottest is a stout made from Naga Bhut Jolokia chilli, the medium is a golden ale with fresh green finger chillis and the mild is a Scotch Bonnet spiced cider.

Now that we have more space in the brewery we have set about filling it back up again for Christmas festival sales including our Smooth Alcoholic Ginger Beer which we like mixing to make a nice mulled spice drink for those cold Winter nights by the fire.

Upcoming events include a winter chilli festival in Derby on 2nd December before the impending Christmas festivals come upon us.

See you around!



BREWERY NEWS

Chris writes:

We are brewing three brand new beers for Christmas this year: Fireside 5.2% ABV which is a red beer using a mixture of malts including a smoked malt; Secret Santa 4% ABV gold, hopped with the delicious Mosaic hop, and Sleigh Driver 3.9% ABV brown beer, subtly spiced with cinnamon



and orange peel with a citrus boost given by the Mandarin Bavaria hop, just right for Christmas!

We are offering the ever-popular Farmer's Christmas Stout 4.8% ABV and Five Gold Rings the refreshing crisp golden ale. The last of the suite of six Christmas beers is Snowdrift 5% ABV deep gold- a wheat beer with a hint of lemon.

All these will be available in cask and bottle, and will make an appearance in the Farmer's Yard micro pub in Maldon.

Seasons greetings to all!



Simon tells us:

We are doing a "Tap Take Over" on 25th November, to help John celebrate the 3rd birthday of The Hop Beer Shop and then nearer Christmas (15th Dec) we are doing a "Tap Take Over" at The Ale House. Rest assured there will be a fantastic selection of beer at both events and we have got one-off beers set aside for each event.

Look out for our Winter specials over the next



couple of months, ranging from quaffable golds through to rich dark beers. There should be something for everyone.

You may have seen some of our new pump clips popping up around town over the last few months. Overall feedback is that they are distinctive so hopefully you'll all be able to spot them over the bar!

Once again we are opening the Pop-Up Bottle Shop at the brewery on Saturday afternoons in December, so don't forget to pop along to say hello and also to pick up some beer for Christmas.

BREWERY NEWS – NORTH WEST ESSEX

North West Essex Brewery News Contact: magazine@northwestessex.camra.org.uk

Brewery news in brief from North West Essex

Silks – ran a beer festival at Braintree FC in June. They feature in the 'Grape and Grain Trail', a new leaflet promoting breweries in Braintree and Maldon. They had a good summer and have just started brewing a dark porter Pegstar Porter 4.8%, as well as Santa's Silks. The brewery shop is now open Mon-Fri and weekends in the lead up to Christmas.

Saffron – capacity is going up; but they were

having coordination issues. They are probably doing a Christmas beer.

Pumphouse – has a new young brewer Aaron Osborne, who also works at Red Fox in Coggeshall. They have seen an increase in production and are starting to sell their beers a bit further afield.

Hart of Stebbing - nothing to report.

Shalford – brewed a new beer Draught Horse, and have just brewed Ebenezer for Christmas.

Nethergate – have moved out of our branch area and into Suffolk.

WORLDLY EXPERIENCE



© The Fox and Hounds, Clavering

The Fox & Hounds, Clavering

By Chris Rouse

Julie Hicks took over at the Fox & Hounds in November 2014, bringing with her more than 20 years experience in the pub and hospitality trades. This includes a spell living and working in Italy, where she added to her professional skills as a chef perfecting Italian recipes that you will now find on the Fox menu alongside more traditional pub fayre.

Julie's passion for the pub trade began when she helped her father run the Black Swan, Edwinstone, a traditional Nottinghamshire mining inn in the Sherwood Forest. After learning the ropes and qualifying as a chef, Julie and young family moved to a pub on the outskirts of Leicester, rebuilding its reputation as a thriving community hub.

Seeking a fresh challenge, The Hicks family then bought the Rising Sun, Bream. This 18th-century village pub within the Forest of Dean, Gloucestershire – in sad repair when they fell in love with it – subsequently became a thriving foodie destination and picked up numerous awards, including Campaign for Real Ale (CAMRA) Forest of Dean sub-branch Pub of the Year in 2002 and 2003. Julie introduced a large and varied range of real ales of all types, mainly from small micro-breweries.

After almost seven years in Gloucestershire, the Hicks family relocated to a small farm in the Winter 2017

mountainous region of Le Marche, Italy, growing their own grapes for wine, harvesting olives and immersing themselves in village life. Julie worked in local bars and restaurants to learn the language – picking up Italian cookery along the way.

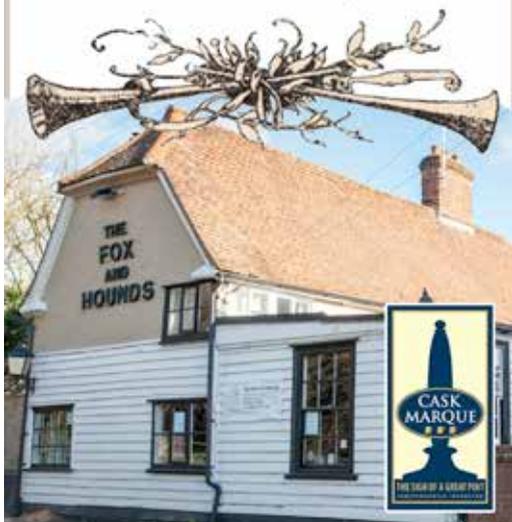
Now Julie – along with their 'little and large' Italian rescue pooches Bimo and Rocky – preside over this friendly (and dog friendly) village pub. The Fox & Hounds offers a seasonal home-cooked menu, including pub favourites and snacks. Menu highlights include authentic pasta dishes and traditional stone-baked Italian pizza. You'll find a wide selection of real ales, with regular guest beers. The Fox has gained Cask Marque status for the quality of its ales, and will be striving for CAMRA recognition too.

There is a large main bar with evening meals available seven nights a week plus lunch served Saturday and Sunday. With ample free parking on site, the pub is located in the heart of Clavering, close to the historic church and the castle ruins. There are excellent walks close by and the area is popular with ramblers. The Fox offers a warm welcome to both locals and visitors and hosts a variety of events throughout the year. This includes its popular twice-monthly pub quizzes, where teams and individuals are most welcome, regular acoustic evenings every third Wednesday and monthly live music.

The FOX AND HOUNDS

www.foxandhoundsclavering.co.uk

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THE ENDEAVOUR UNDER NEW MANAGEMENT



Cask ale is in good condition with Tina and Mike at the helm

By Doug Zeeman

Tina and Mike Collins are the latest tenants of The Endeavour, Springfield Road, Chelmsford. A new courtyard has been 'created', using the limited space behind the building and it has been a success with everyone. It is a real sun-trap and the décor is unique, thanks to Tina's artistic talent.

The five cask beers are always in good condition, the food good value for money and a Golf Society has been launched. Charity continues to be a very important consideration for this local and recently a 'rock and roll bingo' night raised a fantastic £1,300 for the Chemotherapy Unit at Broomfield Hospital. In addition, the 'Biggest Coffee Morning', held on

Winter 2017

30th September for Macmillan Cancer Support, raised £400!

Sunday roast lunches are extremely popular, at just £8.95 per person (pre-booking essential) and Charity Quiz Nights are on the agenda for future events.

The clientele of The Endeavour is a real community and strangers are always given a warm welcome. Tina and Mike have a tremendous amount of enthusiasm and the identity of a local pub, with good home-cooked food is being maintained.

The humour, atmosphere and environment of The Endeavour are unique and extremely impressive. Indeed, the character of this traditional local public house, with its caring community, always looking out for each other, is awesome.

The Endeavour continues to be successful and with Tina and Mike at the helm, long may it continue.

douglas.zeeman@gmail.com

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Partner's Details (if Joint Membership)

Title Surname
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Editor, Thirsty Times Tony Vernon
editor@chelmsford.camra.org.uk
01245 607000 / 07768 662161

CHELMSFORD & MID-ESSEX CONTACT

General Branch Contact Claire Irons
camra@chelmsford.camra.org.uk
01245 290710 / 07773 093399

MALDON & DENGIE CONTACTS

Chairman & Branch Contact Chris Harvey
07743 675622 / charvey23@gmail.com
Secretary Steve Dearing
07736 156745 secmad@btinternet.com

NORTH WEST ESSEX CONTACTS

Chairman Ian Fitzhenry
chairman@northwestessex.camra.org.uk
Compiler of NWE articles for Thirsty Times
Chris Rouse 01799 531582 (h) /
07824 726108 (m)
magazine@northwestessex.camra.org.uk

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- Focus on Bishop Nick brewery
- MAD London Walk of Angel and Islington
- A Day Trip to – The Falcon, Huntingdon
- KeyCask first for the Summer Beerfest
- Beer in Norway

THIRSTY TIMES

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Sue Stone

Tel: 01473 400810

Email: info@grapevinelive.co.uk

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