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Editor's Ramblings

By the time you read this, we'll probably be in February and the festive celebrations may be a distant (and hopefully pleasant) memory. I'm sure you all drank responsibly...

I'm afraid the local CAMRA fraternity has lost another member. Roger Sedgley was a bit before my time but I'm reliably informed that CAMRA has much to thank him for, both on a local and national basis – and on the cricket field! A suitable tribute to Roger can be found later in this issue.

The Christmas and New Year period probably saw publicans facing the familiar problem of trying to decide whether their potential customers are old enough, or sober enough, to be served. Landlords and landladies – and bar staff, as we all know, do a difficult job under often trying circumstances, and personally I always try to see things from their point of view. But sometimes even they don't make it easy. I was in a pub (not in our Branch area) recently where the following conversation took place (both pub and ale had better remain anonymous):

Me: "Good evening. A pint of XYZ please."

Landlord: "You do realise that's a stout?"

Me: "Erm, yes – that's why I ordered it."

Landlord: "You're aware it's 5% ABV?"

Me: "Yes."

Landlord: "And you say you want a pint?"

Me: "JUST POUR THE RUDDY THING WILL YOU!!"

I didn't, of course, say that but I felt like it. In all honesty, do I look like a callow 18-year-old venturing into a pub for the first time?

Brexit and its possible effect on the brewing and hospitality industries is currently much-discussed. Personally I don't think we'll be affected at all – I never thought we'd leave, even after the referendum, and I still don't! Time will tell.

May I take this opportunity to appeal to readers to send in their reports, reviews, photos and articles to the address below. You might not think your experience would be of interest to our readership but I can assure you it would! I can honestly say that every item sent in last year made it onto these pages.

Finally – remember that the fine ales, good company and hospitality you enjoyed in your local over Yuletide will still be there in February and March – so you know what to do!

Good luck!

AI

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The next issue of Beer Around 'Ere will be available on the 28th March. We must have your stories, news and advertisements by 5th March.

Please send your stories and other copy to the editor, Alun Thomas.

For all your advertising needs please contact Neil Richards MBE on 01536 358670 or n.richards@btinternet.com



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Chairman's Corner

Wishing all our readers a Happy New Year for 2019 and urging you to support your local pub... or even visit some you have not been to...especially those in the rural areas.

As 2018 came to a close the local branch held its Annual General Meeting at the Brewery Tap, Peterborough. The quickest on record, the AGM held no surprises with the committee members remaining broadly unchanged. One notable exception was the election of Andy Simmonds, who will now be our Campaigns Coordinator. Andy will aim to support fellow landlords in saving their pubs after saving his – the Ploughman at Werrington. We also say a fond farewell to Berni, our previous Cider Representative, who is off to have a new adventure.

At the end of December, the annual Pub of the Year and Good Beer Guide voting was held at the Burghley Square Club. Congratulations go to Steve and John and their team at the Frothblowers, Werrington, for winning the 2019 Pub of the Year. The shortlisted pubs

for the Good Beer Guide will be surveyed by our small team of volunteers during January and February. Good luck to all those pubs and the poor volunteers who have to sample all of that beer!

With a New Year also comes a new website for the local Peterborough and District Branch. Many thanks to Dickie, our Secretary, for developing it and bringing us up to the new standards required in this ever-changing world of technology. The site includes an interactive map of the pubs in the area and will contain on-line forms for volunteering at the Peterborough Beer Festival, Pub nominations for Gold / Merit Awards, nominations for the 2021 Good Beer Guide and Voting for the 2020 Pub of the Year in due course.

Finally I would encourage all readers and members to maintain the fight to support local pubs and breweries, whether it be by attending one of our organised events or just visiting the local once in a while. If we don't use them we will miss them once they are gone.

Matt Mace
Chair

Pub of the Year and Good Beer Guide Counts

Pictured are the bold and daring counters who braved the elements (actually it wasn't that cold!) to complete the counting of votes for the 2019 Branch Pub Of The Year and 2020 Good Beer Guide entries, as well as sampling the excellent ales on offer at the Burghley Square Club.



As you will know by now, the winner of Pub Of The Year was the Frothblowers at Werrington who thus achieve an exceptional - and possibly unique – hat-trick. The pub is also the current Cider Pub Of The Year and won a Gold Award in October.

Elsewhere in this issue, Steve Williams of the Frothblowers returns in print to the pages he once graced as Pubs Officer with a review of “the story so far”.

Our congratulations go to the pub, but we also commend the other finalists : the Bumble Inn, Charters and the Yard of Ale, extremely worthy contenders. Well done all!

AI

Pub News

Firstly, a Happy New Year to all pub-goers, let's hope 2019 is a good year for us all and that the date is not etched onto too many headstones for pubs in our branch. Looking back, we didn't do too badly in 2018, but, on reflection, certain areas especially had been more or less wiped out.

A Walk out of Stamford

On a shopping trip to Stamford I decided that my time would be better used by taking a walk out to look at Wothorpe Towers, the Elizabethan Folly that was once part of the Burghley Estate. It now sits the other side of the A1 on a trail that leads out of Lincolnshire, and into the Northamptonshire village of Easton-on-the-Hill. Once the Folly had been duly observed, I headed on into the village and its two excellent free houses. Firstly, sitting directly on the A43, **The Exeter Arms** is a country pub with a modern feel, and although now open-plan, it does have two distinct areas for drinking or eating. The beer range is good with three offerings from the Grainstore stable; Red Kite, Triple B, and Stoney Ford's Sheepmarket Supernova, which drank very well.

Dropping down into the village proper we find **The Blue Bell**, which still has two separate rooms and a good range of ales. The bar at the rear is reserved just for drinking, whilst the restaurant / lounge at the front is divided nicely by a large freestanding fireplace. The pub specialises in Italian food, and has a great range of beers to boot. When I visited the options were; Oakham JHB, Nobby's Guzzler, Digfield's Fool's Nook, and Stoney Ford's "Blue Bell"



bitter, a house brew at 4.0%. As I was driving later I could only sample the Fools Nook, which again was in good form.

A Drive out in The Fens

Out in the Lincolnshire fens, **The Plough**, Holbeach St. John, is under new management. Fresh from Leicestershire, Bill & Jane Wright have taken on the freehold lease and are focused on maintaining a traditional fenland pub. The restaurant section remains, but it is no longer a food-only area, and the whole pub has had a good spruce-up and benefits from the addition of a wood-burning stove. The Bar Billiards is still in situ, as are more importantly the Tydd Steam beers, of which I'm pleased to report that their Barn Ale remains in excellent condition. Jane has put together a simple Pub Food menu, which should complement the excellent ale.

Just off the A47 lies the village of Murrow, once home to five pubs but now only one, **The Bell**. This is an Elgood's house that has been run by various members of the same family since the 1980s. For a year now, it has been the hands of Alan and Carol, who also had a spell running it up until a decade or so ago. Alan is obviously customer-focused as he likes to get in beers from smaller interesting breweries for his regulars to try and enjoy. On the day of our visit we had the choice of Elgood's Cambridge or beers from Box Steam and Newsum. It was also nice to see a good range of whiskies, another case of Alan providing something a bit special for his customers to try. The pub is undergoing some refurbishment, with a bit of 'opening out' going on around the restaurant area. Food is now served every day, with a sensibly priced menu featuring Pizzas, Italian dishes, Curries and Traditional Pub Grub. Friday is Fish & Chip night, again at prices to encourage people through the door. As well as running bowls teams, the pub also supports the local pre-school for whom a recent auction raised over £2,400. The pub is just 5 minutes off the A47 at Guyhirn.

In Guyhirn itself, sitting under the river bank, is the **Oliver Twist**, a Free House, which in its previous

guise as The Marquis of Granby was a popular stopping place on the A47 road to Hunstanton. The Guyhirn bypass opened in 1990, so now the pub has to be actively sought out by turning off into the village. The pub is food-focused but does usually feature three Real Ales from National Breweries, it is normal to find Lancaster Bomber, Wells Bombardier and Hobgoblin here.

We held our monthly CAMRA meeting at **The Rising Sun**, Leverington, an excellent village local owned by Elgood's but sporting, along with their Cambridge Bitter, the seasonal "Heroes" brewed from a 1918 recipe, and Navigation's "Rebel" on as a guest. The pub has separate bar and restaurants and the beers were drinking very well, as would be expected from a pub that has made the Good Beer Guide for each of the last three years.

I have to be honest and admit that I had never heard of Tholomas Drove, but it is a small hamlet tucked in-between Guyhirn and Murrow. It does, however, sport a little gem of a pub. **The Chequers** was reopened last year after 18 months of closure by our heroine, Louise, who has forsaken the easy life in the south of Spain to run this friendly Elgood's pub. There are normally three beers on; Cambridge Bitter, plus two seasonals. If the quality matches The "Cranbeery Black" we had on our visit, then it will certainly be worth searching out, especially as Louise says she will be serving "Black Dog" on a regular basis. A special mention should be made of the regulars here, who raised over £1,650 at the recent Charity Auction for the East Anglian Air Ambulance.

It is always nice to drop into **The Wheatsheaf** in Moulton Chapel. Paul, the landlord, knows that it is better to serve one beer well than have two or three that sit around. As is usually the case in the Lincolnshire fens, hoppy beers don't move that quickly, so Paul keeps to the more traditional malty styles, of which Bateman's "Rosey Nosey" was a great example.

After another failed attempt to visit the elusive Five Bells in Parson Drove, we moved on down the street and popped into **The Butcher's Arms**, a pub named after the adjoining slaughterhouse that was

on the site of the current bowls green. Here owners Jan and Julian were only too pleased to show us around the sprawling premises and admonish us (CAMRA) for being less than complimentary on the last review, which turned out to be 27 years ago on their first day in the pub! The building has several rooms, but the mainstay is the restaurant and separate bar, which houses a "Snookerette" table, more commonly know around here as "Bar Billiards". The table dates from 1947.



Sadly, with the busy Christmas schedule, we didn't make it to the **The Sportsman** in Elm, which opened in November, to good reviews. Next issue hopefully.

In and Around Peterborough City Centre

The news that Puzzles had moved a couple of doors down Bridge Street tempted me to brave the Christmas shoppers and have a look. It is now called **SAMM'S** and is located right next door to the Town Hall columns in the venue that was previously the COSTA, and way before that The Wayward Frog. Fans of Puzzles will be pleased to know that it is basically a larger version of the same, but with added extras such as an entertainment venue in the basement. There are three handpumps,

one reserved for Nene Valley's Release the Chimps, which was in excellent condition, and the other two supplying beers from more of our local breweries. The entertainment will host live music on Saturdays, Open Mic on Thursdays, and a monthly Comedy Club, which already has acts booked through to July. This will also be the place to head to for anyone wanting a quality beer late into the night as the opening times on Friday and Saturday have been extended to 3:00am. Lastly, summer should see an extended seating area out the front, and the promise of a food menu. Good to see a local bar in town doing so well. Good news too for CAMRA members, they do offer a discount on Real Ales on production of a valid membership card.

Walking into town along Park Road I saw a new bar with a traditional pub name. Could this be a new micro pub that had escaped me? **The Shepherds Inn**, opposite the Beales department store had to be investigated. Inside there was a traditional styled curved bar front, hosting a few fonts. Sadly, no real ale, but the offerings of international brands in this Lithuanian restaurant may appeal to Lager aficionados.

On my way into town I also stopped by **The Halcyon** to see the revamp, although it has kept its "Hungry Horse" persona. The place was unrecognisable from my last visit (admittedly many years ago), but still retains a two-room layout with bar and dining sections. The bar caters mostly for drinkers, although bar snacks are offered and it has retained its pool table. There were four beers on the bar, three from Greene King and Doom Bar as a guest.

Geography Lesson Required – Ramsey is in our Branch!

When I took on the role of Pubs Officer this time last year one of my first trips out was to survey the pubs in Sawtry. Having diligently made notes, I returned home to write them up only to find that Sawtry is actually in our neighbouring Huntingdonshire branch. This information obviously parked itself somewhere in the back of my mind so consequently

when I looked at the latest Good Beer Guide to see new entries for our area, I discounted Ramsey as "being out that way". As it happens, Ramsey's pubs are in our branch, and soon after submitting my article about the new GBG entries I realised my mistake. Naturally, articles are normally submitted on deadline day, so there was no time to correct my error, and I just hoped I'd get away with it. I've found that the best way to get reader feedback is to make a mistake, and this omission seems to have alerted two keen readers to write in. Firstly Leigh Shepherd emailed me to inform me of some changes and to notify me of **The Angel's** success in making the 2019 GBG. Then within a couple of days Keith Pilkington sent in an email also updating me on the Ramsey pubs and also covering the neighbouring village of Upwood.

I actually visited The Angel in 2017 soon after it had been refurbished. It was obvious from my visit that the owners were focused on quality beers, as the line-up shows:



A return visit is long overdue!

Both gents pointed out the changes at **The Railway Inn**, where after 10 years or so the landlord, Keith

Golightly, has retired and the pub is being operated by the people who run the White Hart in Warboys. However, it is understood that the pub has been bought from Enterprise Inns, and will be run as a Free House. The pub does have a good pedigree, as Keith had been rewarded for his good cellarman ship with a few appearances in the GBG, so we'll keep our fingers crossed that the new owners will take advantage of all the great beers available to the Free Trade, as currently it is offering the usual beers from the PubCo's stock list.

There is good news in the town centre where **The George** has re-opened after 4 years of closure. Typical of old coaching inns, there is an arched entrance leading to a courtyard where the carriages had secure parking overnight. This now nicely divides the building into two distinct sections. On one side is The Botanical House, a gin and prosecco bar, but of much more relevance to this magazine, across the driveway is **The Alehouse Kitchen**, which boasts six handpumps (five from the Greene King portfolio and one "guest"). Let's hope the people of Ramsey can make sure the barrels are swiftly emptied to keep this range in top condition. As the name suggests, there is also a restaurant.

There are two other pubs in Ramsey, **The Three Horseshoes** and **The Jolly Sailor**, both of which serve real ale, so it should make for a great little mini crawl, another one to put on the "to do" list.

The news from neighbouring Upwood is not so good. **The Cross Keys** closed suddenly, and it is hoped that the owner will find a new tenant before too long.

One last Snippet

This is from Alun Thomas: The Queen's Head at Bulwick (Branch Pub of the Year in 2013) has reopened following extensive and tasteful renovation. The man holding the reins is James Trevor, and if you think the name sounds familiar it's because he is part of the family who also run the Beehive in Peterborough city centre as well as the Six Bells at Witham-on-the-Hill. Global domination beckons! Ales available on my visit were Fullers' London Pride plus two from the Grainstore stable, Three Kings and Stoney Ford-Stamford Supernova. Food

and opening times may vary so it's best to check first on 01780 450272.

Mark Finney

Can any reader identify the pub illuminated for the festive period?



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Brewery News



Angles Ales www.angles-ales.co.uk

Angles enjoyed a good Christmas trading period and demand is still high. They are also looking for new (bigger) premises.

Mark Wroe



Blue Bell www.thebluebell.net



Bexar County www.bexarcountrybrewery.com



Castor Ales www.castorales.co.uk



Digfield Ales www.digfield-ales.co.uk



Elgood's www.elgoods-brewery.co.uk

Elgood's continue brewing their range of fine ales. New for 2019 are seasonal beers uniquely crafted by our brewing team. All have an "Animal Meets Hollywood" theme. The January tippie is pale, hoppy and refreshing at 4% and is called Mortal Wombat. The February offering will be a deep brown coffee-infused strong ale called Primates of the Caribbean at 5%.

Shep



Hopshackle www.hopshacklebrewery.co.uk

Well, Christmas and New Year are now a distant memory and the days are drawing out again towards the warmer, brighter days of spring and then summer. In terms of brewing, this time of year puts me in a bit of a dilemma! I can make golden hoppy ales, confident that they will be well received by the pubs and, in turn, their customers. But what about the darker beers? Is it time to put the bags of dark malts back in a corner somewhere until next autumn? Or, like last year, are we to get the "Beast From The East" sequel, returning from Siberia, which would mean the darker beers may still have a place in the market even yet?! I guess the best

compromise is to make the golden ales and to make one more dark beer – but to make it something a bit special and on the stronger, punchier side. This will give it a long shelf life, which will take it well into the period when the Beer Festivals start up again to take any surplus that may remain. So, with that in mind, I will be making the golden ales Jamarillo (3.8%), PE6 (4.0%), Humopulus (4.3%) and Midas (5.2%). And – being revived for the first time since November 2010 – will be Hibernator (5.8%). This is a black, malty, rich, fruity, hoppy beer, loaded with lots of those lovely roasted grain flavours from the dark malts. Then I might just – reluctantly – have to put those bags in a dark corner somewhere until the weather turns toward the cooler side!!!

Nigel



Kings Cliffe Brewery

www.kcbales.co.uk

At the end of 2018, Jez produced a “limited edition” bitter called 6XB with a strength of 3.8% ABV. The cascade hops used in this beer were grown on his own allotment. This beer was sold locally in a few selected pubs, including the Olive Branch in Clipsham, and at the Winter beer festival held at the Ploughman in Werrington.

At some point in the near future, Jez is hoping to add a new core beer to his existing range. Otherwise, sales of other beers are steady and they can be found in several local outlets.

Don Rudd



Melbourn

www.allsaintsbrewery.co.uk



Mile Tree

www.miletreebrewery.co.uk

Mile Tree Brewery attended many events during the Christmas season where our bottled beers proved popular as gift sets with our new pint glasses. The Christmas Fair in Peterborough Cathedral was particularly memorable and we were pleased to support the event in such an inspiring building.

The first half of 2019 will see us installing two conditioning tanks in anticipation for when we will be producing limited edition ales in 330ml and 750ml bottles. A new bottling and labelling machine is also being purchased, which should help to speed up the whole process!

The Beer Festival season began for us with four of our beers featuring at the 10th Elysian Winter Beer Festival, 24-26th January.

Keep a look out for our planned new brews in local pubs, festivals and other events during 2019!

Richard Matthews



Nene Valley Brewery

www.nenevalleybrewery.co.uk

Following a very good summer, NVB has been equally busy through autumn and up to Christmas. The promised coffee beer has been brewed and is available in cans and kegs. Bump and Grind, a 5% Ethiopian Coffee Pale, really does have a coffee aroma and taste, and yet it is most definitely a beer – and a very tasty one too.

The winter special, Lone Star 3.7% amber red ale with a strong caramel malt backbone, balanced with a Moorish orange hop finish, is selling well and I

am currently enjoying the wonderful smooth oak aged Bible Black, the 6.5% lavish chocolate porter, and have tried their newer Have Your Cake And Drink It, also 6.5%, a dark stout with lots of roasted grains and organic cocoa nibs left in overnight after fermentation, which gives it a chocolate taste without that nasty aftertaste you get with the use of extracts. Mmmmmm – delish!

I am really looking forward to the forthcoming brew of an Imperial Russian Stout which will be ready in February. It is expected to be about 12% and much of the brew will be put into bourbon barrels to age it ready for next Christmas. The ageing of beers in old bourbon barrels is something the brewery is looking to do more and more next year.

The brewery shop continues to be a popular drinking place on Friday and Saturday afternoons and now sells good quality merchandise, including caps, T-shirts and sweatshirts. I particularly like the Release The Chimps shirts!

One interesting fact I discovered recently is that NVB's production is now about 50/50 cask and keg. The trend for keg ales is obviously a growing one.

Bill Taylor



Oakham Ales
www.oakhamales.com

2019, a new year, means that there will be some new beers appearing throughout the year through the monthly specials. A 3.5% pale single hop beer, Southern Cross (also the name of the hop), kicks the year off as January's offering. In February we look forward to Dragon in Bavaria, a 3.8% session ale featuring the Dragon and Manderina Bavaria hops and light gold in colour. For March, a golden beer at 4.1% called Bird Brain features four New Zealand hops, so should burst with flavour!

April sees a welcome return for an old favourite, The

Hare and Hedgehog, a tri-American hopped beer at 3.9%. This certainly bursts with hop flavour – good to see it back! Further updates for the rest of the calendar to come later.

Work at the brewery continues and sales in supermarkets continue to grow for the bottled beer market. Three canned beers have now been added to the range : a 4.2% session beer, Best Friend ; a 4.8% New World Pale Thrill Seeker ; and a West Coast style 6.0% IPA called Alpha Inception.

Dave Allett



Sneaky Peacock
www.sneakypeacock.co.uk



Rocket Ales
www.rocket-ales.com

Following on from a successful 2018, Rocket Ales have increased their production of bottled beers and at present they are brewing at full capacity. More recently, Dave Smith, the brewer at Rocket Ales, has come up with two new beers – these being Titan IPE (5.0%), a smooth and subtle porter, and Space Shuttle Brown Ale (3.6%), a brown ale using five speciality malts. Beers from the Brewery continue to be supplied and sold in several local pubs.

Don Rudd



Tydd Steam
www.tyddsteam.co.uk

Everything is going nicely at Tydd Steam Brewery.

Will continues to provide his customers with the regular ales and a selection of seasonal beers. This month, the brewery is busy brewing Armageddon, a 5.0% amber premium bitter and, for the annual Straw Bear Festival in Whittlesey, a pale ale known as Beartown, a 4.5% beer that belies its strength!

Dickie Bird



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R.I.P. ROGER SEDGLEY



It is with sadness that we announce the death of former National CAMRA and Peterborough CAMRA stalwart Roger Sedgley, who passed away suddenly in his sleep on 28th October after a long illness, aged 65, whilst visiting Edinburgh.

Roger moved to the Peterborough area in 1979 and quickly became a key member of Peterborough CAMRA, contributing to both branch activities and assisting with the early Peterborough Beer Festivals. He was already involved with CAMRA nationally as Architectural Advisor, advising on the protection of threatened pubs and planning issues and was also a judge on the CAMRA Pub Design Awards team.

A massive cricket fan, his love of the game and real ale were very much hand in hand and he was instrumental in the formation of Peterborough CAMRA CC.

Roger was also the editor of Peterborough CAMRA's first ever Pub Guide "Come Drinking" which was published in 1983 with the front cover featuring the now long-demolished Elephant and Castle on Westgate. His occupation as an architect saw him working further and further afield from the Peterborough area, and as a consequence in 1984 Roger and his wife Jane moved to Greenwich, London, where in 1989 Roger and his business partner established the award winning architectural practice Alexander Sedgley Ltd., though he, his wife and family continued to visit Peterborough regularly and of course attended the annual Beer Festival well into the 1990's.

Mike Lane

(Photograph : Paul Berrisford)

SPIRITED SPORTSMAN

Once a thriving village pub, The Sportsman had been flagging for a few years. Beer choice and quality were assets that had all but disappeared and around two years ago the pub was closed, another nail in the coffin of the local boozer.

The Sportsman had an advantage though. Due to the building being listed knocking it down or other nefarious changes of use were not options. Sadly this left the building vacant and the lively village of Elm became a real ale desert.



June 2017 saw four local businessmen pool together to buy the premises from the receivers and a painstaking, near 18 month refurbishment began.

The roof was found to be rotten and had to be replaced, planters had caused damp on the walls and even the pathway sloped inward to add to the damp.

Slowly but surely the problems were solved. The old toilets were demolished and the space used to extend so there is now a back room and toilets with disabled access.

The saving grace of the building's listed status was now more of an issue. Restrictions on changes and signage slowed progress and saw plans altered but eventually things got up and running. 20 lines were installed so a variety of tipples could be offered. The new back room was furnished eclectically giving it



an interesting look. Experienced landlady Jacqui Wadsley was brought on board and on October 22nd opening day arrived.

A packed pub's punters saw an offering of four real ales. Woodfordes Wherry, Adnams Ghost Ship and Broadside, and Oakham JHB plus a craft beer, Brew Dog Elvis Juice. Looking in the fridges it made a change not to see a selection of brightly coloured cans! There was a small selection of gins and whiskies as is the fashion these days. In the summer plans are to introduce a real cider and another craft ale.

How lovely to see a small local pub restored and reopened!

James Sheppard

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FROM THE SOURCE'S MOUTH



Mark Finney your esteemed Pubs Officer has asked me to jot down a few words on the subject of the Frothblowers and how our year has been in a response to us being awarded the Pub of the Year for 2019. Quite what he wanted he omitted to specify so I'll see what I can cobble together. I'm honoured by the way. I haven't written anything for the mag since my last missive of Pub News in the Christmas issue of 2012!

So should I do a quick run down of what we've done and how it all went? Why not...

Being independent of any brewer or outside influence we have the freedom to do whatever we damn well please. We can buy beer from wherever we like (or more likely from where I like) and we don't have to liaise with anyone except ourselves when it comes to activities at

the pub. We could have gone down the usual route like so many mainstream pubs and do the ordinary... or we could do a few unusual things to help us buck the trend of pubs being empty. So here goes...

Back in January 2018 we held a Goldie Beer Fest. Yes, I know it was dark and wintry out there but we like to do the unusual and the golden ales went down a storm. Perhaps it gave our customers a sunny outlook in contrast to their doom-laden surroundings! We also did a Dark Beer Fest in August to continue our "what the chuffin' hell are they doing" theme! Both festivals sold out to our great satisfaction.

In April we decided to hold a cider festival and tied in with the Blue Bell just up the road who did similar. As that time of year can be a bit

chilly we laid on a mini bus to get people back and forth lest they be inconvenienced by the 500 yard stroll against a head wind. I think it was appreciated by our many apple enthusiasts.

In July we created a treasure hunt giving our locals the chance to walk the streets of the village, find the answers to the clues, retrieve a couple of pointless items along the way and head back to the pub for refreshment, arguments and mutual recriminations... judge's decision is final and don't you forget it! If you'd like to do this on your own we still have the questions if you fancy a few hours strolling around our little village in an investigative manner?

In a vain attempt to get people to do a bit of exercise we started our Bike Club in July. On the the first outing we had a gathering of around 25 bike clip-wearing pedalists ready to do battle with the elements. We did ask that all combatants wear suitable attire and thankfully there was only one localised incident of lycra. Obviously going for a bike ride in the balmy evenings can only mean one thing? Biking to a pub obviously, which would seem a strange thing for a business to do wouldn't it? Let's read that again...



Take 20 of your customers away from your pub and send them to the opposition, madness surely? What it actually did was bring people together for a laugh, a giggle, a bit of a wheeze and a sit down. And of course we all had a beer before and after the bike ride so we won't go broke

just yet by sending our guests to other boozers! We'll be restarting the Bike Club in May and we'll become an unofficial bicycle repair station where distressed and troubled cyclists can pump up their tyres, mend a puncture or place playing cards in their spokes to make an amusing sound as they zip off into the distance.

We like to think that we can rub along with other pubs around about and we're extremely happy to be part of the Citi 1 Ale Trail put together by Tom of the award-winning Bumble Inn down in town. If you haven't completed the trail yet then I'm not quite sure what you're waiting for. Get on with it, you'll have fun, a few beers and a nice shiny badge when you've completed the whole thing.

We at Frothy Towers are chuffingly pleased and beside ourselves with joy having been nominated as Cider Pub of the Year and of course being a recipient of the rather special and splendid Gold Award. It would now seem that we've also become the Pub of the Year for 2019 which has just about put the icing on our homemade cake. We thank our friends at CAMRA and hope to continue doing what we think we do best... provide some pretty clever beer and cider and a nice place to have a sit and a chat.

Chin chin to you all.

Steve 'Froth Master' Williams



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A LONG WEEKEND IN BELGIUM (AND BEYOND)

For a while I have wanted to visit the First World War Cemeteries and Memorials in Flanders Fields, so this last year we headed to the continent for a long weekend. Four days of looking at gravestones seemed a bit much, so I expanded the trip to include some beer tourism ; here's what we found.

Passchendaele & Ypres

The key destination was “Wipers”, but first we stopped off in Passchendaele to see the sobering Tyne Cot Cemetery. In need of a beer, we parked up in the centre of the village and popped into the **Café Sint Foris** on the main square. There weren't any classic Belgian beers available, but they did have a bottled blond beer named after the battle, which was drinkable at least.

Onto Ypres for the 8:00pm service at the Menin Gate. We arrived in time to check into our B&B and have a beer in one of the several street-side

bars. We chose **The Depot**, which had a short but decent list of beers. A dark, complex, top-fermented beer that re-ferments in the bottle called “**Brasserie LeFort**” and a lighter beer described as “This delightful golden ale boasts a rich, fruity and fresh aroma. With a

light malty and sweet taste, it has a soft bitterness with a delicate aftertaste. A well balanced blend of complexity and simplicity, “**La Trappe Blond**” continues to ferment in the bottle” were duly consumed.

After the service we ate, and then hunted down an old-style Belgian pub. It's worth noting that nothing in Ypres is over 100 years old since the town was literally flattened in WW1 and had to be completely rebuilt, even the spectacular gothic Wool Market. Pub-wise, **The 12 Apostles** fitted the bill nicely, and we enjoyed a few further local brews before retiring for the evening...

Brussels

We passed through Lambicland, leaving that for another trip, and parked up in the capital. Various sightseeing activities were interspersed with some classic beer bars. Close to the Grande Place sits the **Café le Lombard**, a nice corner bar with some old fittings and very unusual “Delirium” Elephant chandeliers. I opted for the draft 6.0% Golden “**Zinnebir**” from Brussels based “**Brasserie de la Senne**”, whilst Sarah again went on the dark side for an excellent “**Hercule Stout**”.



A walk across town took us past a couple of recommended bars that were closed on the weekend (Brussels is a “weekday” town, it seems that all the EU workers retire to their country homes on the weekends) to one of the classics, **A La Mort**



Subite. This unaltered “fin de siècle” long bar is a pleasant place to sit with a Lambic beer and imagine how café life was a century ago.



From here on in the Belgian Good Beer Guide was used more than the Brussels City Guide, thus we found ourselves in the rowdy “**Delirium**” Bar down an alleyway with the somewhat lesser known Jeanneke Pis. Here I rather naively took the recommendation of the young bartender and ended up with an American Craft IPA. Now many of these



are excellent, not this one. It was so bad I didn't finish it, and replaced it with an 11% “**Straffe Hendrick IV**”, a brown quadruple. Sarah was much more sensible and had a Frambois.



We returned to the hotel and then went out later to the **Café le Lombard** to sample some of the other beers available. Bottled Nostradamus and Rodenbach Red Ale from Flanders both went down well as did the fruity draft tripel “**Kanunnik**”. A walk to see the Grand Place at night took us to the

Mannekin Pis and, right opposite, one of the best beer bars in town. **Poechenellekelder** combines a classic ambience with an excellent beer list. It was very crowded but we managed to find a spot upstairs and proceeded to dissect the beer list. At this point, note taking wasn't up to scratch, but suffice to say, you won't go wrong drinking in this bar. One last Belgian GBG entry seemed attainable, so we walked a little out of the centre to the cellar bar **Porte Noire**, unfortunately it was Thrash Metal night, and the fact I ended up with another insipid craft beer rather than a Belgian classic didn't help. Thinking we'd call it a night we headed back down the hill to our hotel. Almost immediately we noticed a door that seemed to lead to another bar. Entering, we found ourselves in the wonderful **Goudblommeke van Papier**, a classic old bar that hadn't changed in decades. The beer was very drinkable, and when the barman called time at midnight, we headed back to the hotel very pleased with our day in Brussels.





Amsterdam

Sunday morning saw us up for a leisurely breakfast and an easy drive into Holland for a couple of nights in Amsterdam. Culturally we visited the Kinderdijk



Wind Mills on the way, and then spent time amongst the canals. First stop was a café that offered a brown ale. You can imagine my horror when it arrived proudly displaying the Heineken Star. It was actually not too bad, but I certainly wasn't staying for a second!



To make sure we didn't follow up with another bland beer, we hunted down the promising sounding **Café Belgique**, where a good selection of Belgian beers was available on both tap and in bottle.



The next morning saw some sightseeing before checking out the best beer bar in town. The **Proeflokaal Arendsnest** is a 15-minute walk



from central Amsterdam, but is worth every step. The beer list is extensive and showcases the very best of Dutch brewing. The bar only serves beers from Holland, and has over 50 on tap, plus at least another 100 in bottles. Whilst we were there, I bumped into a colleague on the Heritage Pub Group who had travelled by train just for the day! With such a choice it was hard to have just the one. Or two. Or three. Anyhow, all were excellent, but it set the scene for the rest of the day.



Having now got the taste for beer, a walk through the Red Light district led to **Brouwerij De Prael**, one of four brew pubs run by the chain. The beer choices were limited, but the quality was fine. Mick Slaughter had given us a list of quirky pubs, so we searched out one from the list, **De Pilsner Club**, the name wasn't all that inspiring, but inside it was a real unspoiled gem with wood paneling and table service from the barman who fetches the beers from a back room. The name proved to be false, as the beers on offer were again an excellent selection from quality Dutch and Belgian brewers. We had one last nightcap back in Café Belgique before calling it a night and taking a leisurely drive back to Calais the next day.



Mark and Sarah Finney

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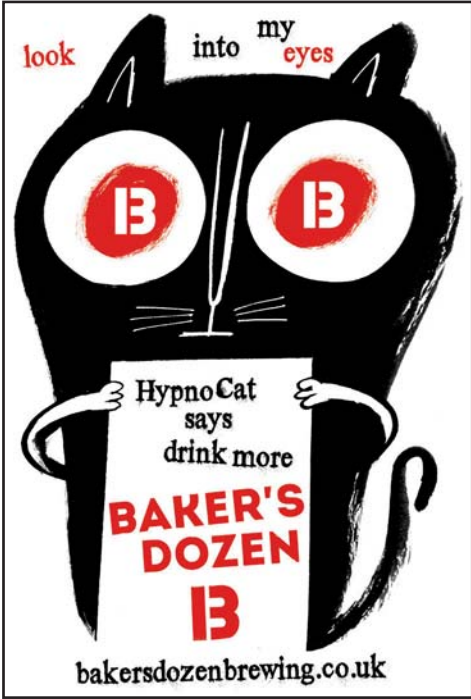
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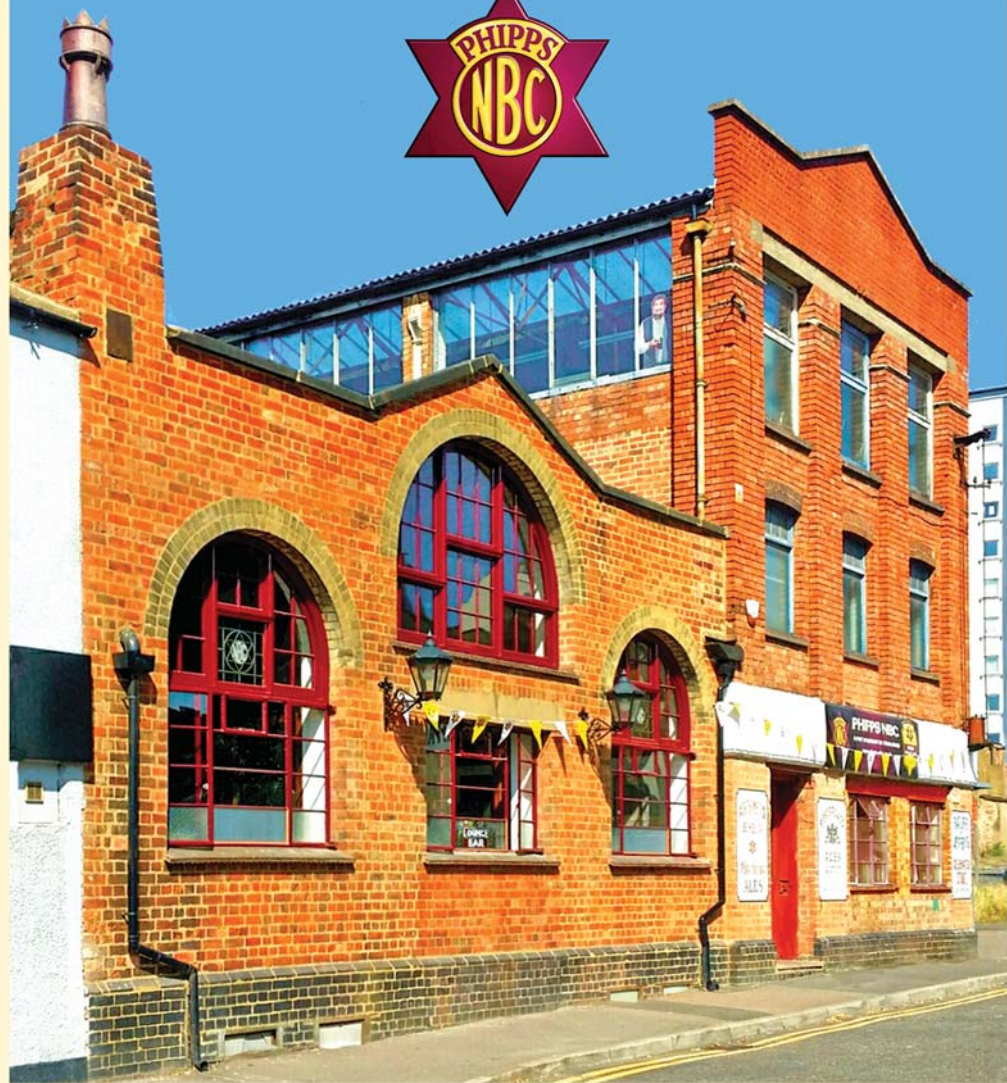


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POSH PINTS

AND AWAY WE GO...

Having managed to jinx Posh's unbeaten away record in the last issue, I will refrain from commenting on the team's performances and simply say that February and March will see them travel to sides with promotion aspirations (Doncaster and Portsmouth) and sides hoping to beat the drop (Oxford, Bradford City and Wimbledon). All have potentially pain-easing pubs to look forward to...

9th February, Doncaster

Rovers, KO 1500

CORNER PIN

145 St. Sepulchre Gate West DN1 3AH

Multi award-winning pub close to the railway station, ales are mainly from small independent breweries such as Leeds and Stancill. Local CAMRA Pub of the Year 2017. Lunchtime food.

DRAUGHTSMAN ALEHOUSE

Station Court DN1 1PE

Located on Platform 3B of Donny station, this former Victorian buffet bar stood empty for 18 years, but now real ales from regional brewers (Exit 33, Thornbridge) change regularly. Baguettes and home-made pies can be enjoyed whilst viewing the Victorian wall tiles and drawings of steam locomotives.

PLOUGH

8 West Laith Gate DN1 1SF

Three ales, including Acorn Barnsley Bitter, are served in this friendly haven, where the interior dates from 1934 and is mentioned in CAMRA's National Inventory of Historic Pub Interiors.

16th February, Oxford

United, KO 1500

LAMB AND FLAG

12 St. Giles OX1 3JS

Classic city pub with no music, Wi-Fi or other distractions from friendly conversation. Beers from the South-West (Palmers, Skinner's) feature and the pub is believed to be the setting for the inn in Thomas Hardy's novel *Jude The Obscure*. Lunchtime food served.

MASONS ARMS

2 Quarry School Place OX3 8LH

Family-run community pub serving a wide range of guest ales as well as Hophead and Boltmaker, plus many bottled beers. Multiple local CAMRA City Pub of the Year winner. No lunchtime grub though.

ROSE AND CROWN

14 North Parade Avenue OX2 6LX

Popular Victorian free house, run by the same landlords for 30 years. Adnams, Hook Norton, Shotover plus guest. No intrusive music or mobile phones allowed – so be warned! Lunchtime food available.

9th March, Bradford City,

KO 1500

CORN DOLLY

110 Bolton Road BD1 4DE

Award-winning free house in the hands of the same family for 25 years and close to the city centre. Everards, Moorhouse's, Tim Taylor and five changing ales. Friendly atmosphere and popular before Bantams' home games. Lunchtime food.

FIGHTING COCK

21-23 Preston Street BD7 1JE

"A drinkers' paradise", no less, with twelve ales on offer. Ilkley, Theakston and Taylor's stand alongside seven changing ales 20 minutes' walk from the city centre. Good value lunches served on Saturdays.

SPARROW BIER CAFÉ

32 North Parade BD1 3HZ

This busy café-bar offers four changing ales plus two ciders and a varied selection of international bottled beers. Deli-style sandwiches and platters are available and – get this – "pies and peas are served free prior to Bradford City home games, when the pub can be extremely busy". Wonder why?

12th March, AFC

Wimbledon, KO 1500

HAND IN HAND

7 Crooked Billet SW19 4RQ

Celebrated ale house on the edge of Wimbledon Common with five changing ales complementing Courage and Young's. "A great place to eat".

30th March, Portsmouth,

KO 1500

HOLE IN THE WALL

36 Great Southsea Street PO5 3BY

Small but perfectly-formed genuine free house offering a wide range of ales, including Flowerpots Goodens Gold, and ciders. Open from noon for Pompey home games. Lunchtime nosh available.

LAWRENCE ARMS

63 Lawrence Road PO5 1NU

Five changing ales accompany Harvey's Sussex Best Bitter in this current CAMRA Pub and Cider Pub of the Year, which gets very busy for Pompey games. Good value toasties always available.

SIR LOIN OF BEEF

152 Highland Road PO4 9NH

Gale's HSB and Titanic Plum Porter vie for attention with six changing ales and an extensive range of bottled beers amid naval memorabilia in this friendly street-corner local. No lunchtime grub though as far as we know.

AI



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QUARTS & THOUGHTS

Is draught Bass making a comeback? Or perhaps it's never been away and I just go to the wrong pubs. In last month's Qs and Ts, I mentioned how much I'd enjoyed the Bass in the Castle Inn, Castle Bytham, and in early December I had a similar experience in another pub just outside our area, the Bluebell in Belmesthorpe (also on offer were two Oakhams and GK IPA). As I say, the Bass was exceptional, as one would expect from a recent Rutland CAMRA Pub of the Year. It's ironic, of course, that Bass is now brewed by their one-time rivals Marstons, who seem to have got the hang of it! The ale is a permanent fixture in the Five Horseshoes, Barholm, and the Lord Burghley, Stamford.

I misled you last month by saying that the landlord of the iconic Dove in Bury St. Edmunds was a former GK accountant. I had the great good fortune to visit again in November and this time was able to chat to him! Roger Waters (not that one) was actually a designer who numbered GK among his clients and that's how the connection, and ultimately the purchase of the pub, was engineered. Roger – born and bred in Oakham, would you believe – is pictured with barmaid Kitty. He's a busy man – he also serves on CAMRA's Planning Advisory Group. Incidentally, my pints in the Dove were two from Snetterton-based Elmtree – their Dark Horse Stout and Surprise Norwich Major – plus something you all too rarely see on draught, an Old Ale – this one from Adnams. But I did enjoy an Old Ale in the Bumble over Christmas, though – Green Jack Ole Cock.



There are worse ways of spending a gloomy afternoon than sampling free ale at a brewery open day! In late November a friend and I spent a couple of hours enjoying the hospitality at the home of Angles Ales in Orton Southgate. Pretty much the whole Angles range was available while Andy and Paul, who know their stuff, kept us entertained with

anecdotes from their former professions as microbiologist and exciseman respectively. I particularly enjoyed their Principia and felt compelled to take some home with me...



Mens sana in corpore sano

You're not often short of choice in a Wetherspoon's, but that was my experience at the Samuel Lloyd in Corby just before Christmas when I met workmates for a jar. I was driving, so needed to strike a balance between sense and thirst. Choosing wasn't difficult – nearly all the options involved Greene King in one form or another – but I waited patiently for a good five minutes to be served, only to be told that the Adnams Broadside wasn't on! Instead I had a Grainstore Three Kings, which was OK, and a Bodebrown Brazilian Pale Ale from the Adnams stable and brewed exclusively for 'Spoons, which was so hoppy I struggled to finish it. However, my colleagues were delighted to relieve me of my Wetherspoon vouchers.

Found myself in Redcar overnight in November. It was a filthy night but I walked up the road to the Lobster, a tidy Samuel Smith house. Hadn't had a pint of Old Brewery bitter for a long time and it was like meeting an old friend – you know what to expect but it's enjoyable just the same. At £2 a pint, the temptation was to keep 'em coming, but after a couple I crossed the car park to the Cleveland, a former hotel with a vast lobby-like main bar area plus lounge. It was easy to imagine this being a bustling hotel in Redcar's heyday, but sadly those days are gone and with the closure a couple of years ago of the steelworks the town is a bit of a depressed area. However, the locals are making the best of it – Tuesday night is free pool night and both tables were busy as my pints of Redscar Poison and Beach (brewed on the premises) went down. I was shocked to find the price had gone up to £2.30 a pint.

Didn't linger in the Coatham Social Club (no handpumps) but popped into the bookies opposite before my fish-and-chip supper. I was offered scraps and, when I mentioned that requests for scraps seemed to be a thing of the past, the proprietor memorably said he'd be lynched if he didn't offer them!

Spent a rainy evening in Balloch, near Loch Lomond, in late December, and first up was the Balloch House Hotel. This was in the 2018 GBG but didn't make it this time – I would discover why! I also checked it out on TripAdvisor, being informed by at least two posters that “They’ve got Peroni on tap!!” Wondering just how much pleasure a human being could take, I went in to find five handpumps. One boasted a label saying “Just Settling” (it was to be Edinburgh Brewery Back Jack), two advertised Doom Bar and the other two Caledonian Deuchars. Ordered a half of each but only drank the latter as the Doom Bar resolutely refused to calm down. This classic stone building has been a hotel since the 1700s, and got its first known review in the America Boston Journal in 1875! Who knew? And – even more impressively – Elton John played one of his first-ever gigs there at a wedding! These days the hotel is a Vintage Inn and the barman told me that “head office” tell them what ales they are getting – and occasionally they actually get what they were expecting! Recently they stocked a barrel of Loch Lomond stout which sold out in a matter of hours – but HO decided against re-ordering...

Crossed the road to the Doghouse, where in unlikely surroundings (deafening music and swears customers I could cope with, but not huge TV screens bombarding me with images of Jose Mourinho, who had just been sacked) I actually had a decent pint, Loch Lomond Bonnie ‘n’ Blonde. Moved on to the Tullie Inn – last time I was in there they had three LL ales on, but this time all three pumps were redundant, to the evident lack of interest of the tall youth in tartan trews behind the bar.

As the rain came down, I gave it best and headed back to base, where my mood brightened. I’d visited the Loch Lomond Brewery earlier in the afternoon and stocked up with bottles of their superb 6.4% Outlander (Christmas, you know), so I was able to enjoy a nightcap. Or two.

For years Tina and I have been talking about going away over Christmas and this time we finally made it, spending two nights at the Wiveton Bell near Holt in Norfolk, where the best steak I’ve had in a very long time was washed down with excellent Redwell Best Red Bitter from Trowse Millgate in Norwich. On Christmas Day morning we had a walk along Cromer promenade and popped into what seemed to be the only boozer open – the Albion (“This Is A Proper Pub Boi!”) – where I partook of a pint of St. Austell Proper Cracker. The pub’s notice board informed

us that “You Can’t Drink All Day If You Don’t Start In The Morning!”

I’m grateful to Rocket Ales for their continued sponsorship of our crossword. Our photograph shows Rocket’s Mike Blakesley presenting a three-pack of ale to David Weaver, winner of the competition in issue 203.



I’ll finish on a personal note – it’s taken what seems like an eternity to persuade John Knott of Bourne, who is sort of my son-in-law (it’s a long story) to eschew Eurofizz and Nitrokeg and join the elite real ale-drinking class. However, he informs me that he was recently in the Harp in Covent Garden and – of his own volition – ordered a pint of ale (he thought it might have been called Dark Knight). And – he really enjoyed it. As conversions go, it’s not (quite) on the Damascene scale – and it may be premature to advise the publicans of Bourne to brace themselves – but for me and for John (pictured) it’s a giant step in the right direction!

AI



Where BAE leads...

BAE August/September 2018

It's a dirty job, but someone's got to do it...

2018 has seen the arrival of the Peterborough Beer Festival Brewing Competition, which saw no fewer than 27 home-brewed beers in three categories judged by members of the Peterborough CAMRA Branch.

Competitors were asked to produce a litre of beer to be judged in one of three ABV categories: 3.0% - 3.9%, 4.0% - 4.9% and 5.0%+.



The prize for each winning brewer is to spend the day with a local brewery to produce a firkin of their beer to be put on the Singles Bar at this year's Peterborough Beer Festival.

The standard of beer entered was extremely high, with many members of the panel commenting that the beers would not be out of place behind a bar.

WINNERS:

3.0% - 3.9%

Ashley Carr, American Pale Ale, DUKE OF JARL – to be brewed with Rocket Ales.

4.0% - 4.9%

Piotr Mikucki, Belgian Peat Milk Stout, MY NAME IS MUD – to be brewed with Mile Tree Brewery.

5.0%+

Charlie Abbott/Jason Jones, American IPA, PIDLEY CHEEKS – to be brewed with Xtreme Ales.

Thanks to all who came and helped to judge the beers (why wasn't I invited? – Ed) and a special mention to our Branch Chairman, Matt Mace, who managed to judge every beer in every category!

Finally – a particular thankyou to Bram of the Hand and Heart for providing a venue for the judging and a never-ending supply of clean glasses!

Mark Wroe

Others follow!

Beer, Winter 2018

It's a rotten job, but someone's got to do it

Susan Nowak experiences some great tastes as a judge at the Guild of Fine Food

My table awaits. On it sits a spectacular gâteau, not so much Black Forest as Peruvian Jungle, a bronze turkey roasted to perfection, whole-crusted Stilton, a bowl of muesli, salted caramel popcorn, chilli jam and blackberry vinegar; and that's just for starters.

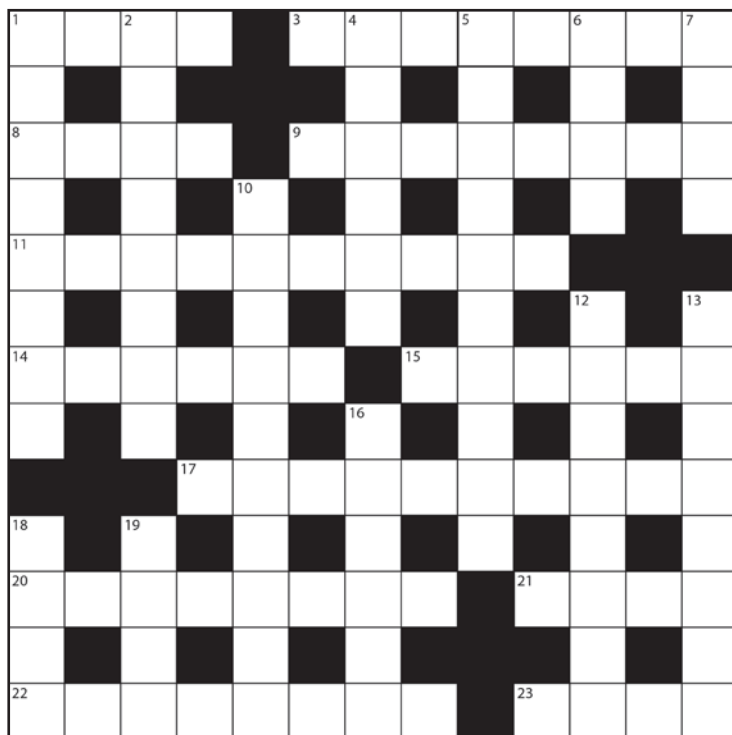
Enticing aromas waft from an open kitchen promising even more treats – and I've got to taste the lot. It's a rotten job, but someone has

Makle, Harry Kane and Victoria Beckham all rolled into one.

Moreover, everything is tasted by not just one table of four judges, but passed on: potential three-star goodies are sampled by up to 24 judges, each tasting around 50 products a day.

At 12,634, this year's total of food and drink entries was the highest ever. Both beer and





WIN A PACK OF ALE!

A Rocket Pack (a three-pack courtesy of Rocket Ales) will be awarded to the first three correct entries drawn at the Branch Meeting in March at the Sportsman, Elm, PE14 0AG. (Winners must be prepared to collect in person from an agreed point if necessary - we cover a vast area!)

Name _____

Address _____

Telephone _____

Email _____

Send entries to: Beer Around 'Ere, c/o 9 Waverley Gardens, Stamford, Lincs. PE9 1BH.

CROSSWORD CLUES

ROCKET ALES 

ACROSS

1. Atop Swift Nick in Derbyshire (4)
3. Only human? (8)
8. Suffolk's only bay? (4)
9. Floating on the Nene (8)
11. Traditional Werrington meal (10)
- 14/15. North-eastern equivalent of a green card (6,6)
17. Not in agreement (2,8)
20. Avian pen (8)
21. A maiden aunt? (4)
22. Lowestoft craft (8)
23. Of eternity from Kinver or Sandstone (4)

DOWN

1. Noel's feet in Peterborough? (4,4)
2. Means of perambulation after a skinful (3,5)
4. Davenports beer was this in the 1970s (2,4)
5. Causing loss of voice (10)
6. Strange or Curious (4)
7. Kelham Island horseman (4)
10. Selfish (10)
12. The late Jim Iley was one too, according to a terrace song (8)
13. Quivering (8)
16. Blandford brock (6)
18. Help out, criminally (4)
19. Rowton Brewery's 51 (4)

February

Monday 4th at 8.30pm

DUCK AND DRAKE, 34 MAIN STREET, YAXLEY PE7 3LY. Branch Monthly Meeting, all welcome, please bring membership card.

Saturday 9th

STAMFORD STAMPEDE, a tour of Stamford pubs. 1152 train from Peterborough or meet at the Stamford Post at 1215. All details on website.

Tuesday 19th –

Saturday 23rd

GREAT WINTER BEER FESTIVAL at The Halls, Norwich NR3 1AU. Further details: www.winter.gbbf.org.uk

Thursday 28th at 8pm

PUB OF THE YEAR PRESENTATION, The Frothblowers, 78 Storrington Way, Werrington PE4 6QP

March

Monday 4th at 8.30pm

SPORTSMAN, ELM, WISBECH PE14 0AG. Branch Monthly Meeting, all welcome, please bring membership card.

Wednesday 13th –

Saturday 16th

LEICESTER BEER FESTIVAL, Haymarket Theatre, 1 Garrick Walk LE1 3AF. 250 real ales, 35 ciders/perries plus key keg/craft beer options and Gin Bar.

Saturday 30th

MARCH IN MARCH IN MARCH. Sample, survey, sup! 1150 train from Peterborough. All details on website.



Branch Contacts

Branch Committee

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07852 772394

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07305 764604

Kings Cliffe Brewery: Don Rudd
07806 731765

Melbourn: Don Rudd
07806 731765

Mile Tree Brewery: Steve Williams
07756 066503

Nene Valley: Bill Taylor
07903 078340

Oakham Ales: Dave Allett
07966 344417

Rocket Ales: Don Rudd
07806 731765

Sneaky Peacock: Don Rudd
07806 731765

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07731 993896

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xtreme-blo@real-ale.org.uk

Trading Standards

08545 040506
www.consumerdirect.gov.uk

Check out our website at:
www.real-ale.org.uk

Pub Merit Awards & Gold Awards

Does your pub have excellent beer, friendly staff, a great atmosphere, community spirit, or have they introduced additional hand pumps? If so, nominate them for an award. Gold Awards are for pubs that make exceptional efforts to improve. The Merit Award is for pubs that continue to maintain high standards. If you know of a deserving pub within the branch area, please complete the form below indicating Gold or Merit and post to the secretary or email nominations to info@real-ale.org.uk.

Pub name:

Pub address/town/village:

Reason for award:

Your name:

Your phone number or e-mail address:

Your membership number:

The Farmers Yaxley

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MOTHERS DAY
(31ST MARCH)
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TAKEN



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