

CAMRA

CHELMSFORD & MID-ESSEX BRANCH

PUB NEWS

February 2009 – “The Valentine Edition”

by Nigel Sadler - Pub Liaison Officer

Well we've made it to the second edition!

I've visited a further 45 pubs since the January newsletter, it's a tough job but someone's got to do it!

The LocAle initiative, on which I've been working hard, has unfortunately produced little in the way of positive results. Are there now too many tied pubs? Are landlords themselves not interested in changing their beers as they “know” what their regulars like? Whatever the reason I've only had one possible take-up of the scheme so far. But with gritted teeth and determination I shall persevere.

Hopefully many of you will have seen the article and photograph of yours truly in the Essex Chronicle this week. (Autographed copies of the picture available on request..... Don't all rush at once!)

It's been decided that it's a good time to update our branch records. In coming weeks we will be revising the C&ME branch list of pubs, their owners and the beers available. I have been able to make a few notes on my travels so far but I would appreciate input from other branch members. If you fancy helping out in this task then please email or call me with any details of the pubs in your area so they can be updated. (If this overlaps with Derek Beaumont's work on the Essex guide then it's all grist to the mill so to speak and the info will be passed on.)

Now on to the events/promotions/news for February which, as you might expect, centre mainly round Valentine's night. So for all those romantically linked instead of treating your partner to the usual red roses, expensive chocolates or pint and bag of pork scratchings why not check out some of the following on offer in our area:

The Cock Inn – Boreham – Would like us to know that their sister pub, *Patricks*, in Heybridge (formerly known as “The Anchor”) is holding a special Valentine's evening buffet at £6 per head or £10 per couple with live entertainment. Call 01621 853448 for more info.

The Generals Arms – Little Baddow. This Shepherd Neame pub will be offering a Valentine's evening with dinner, available from 7-9pm and will be a set meal for £24.95. Courses will include starters of smoked salmon and asparagus salad or cheddar cheese soufflé. Mains will feature grilled sea bass and rib eye steak amongst others. There is of course a vegetarian option available. To make a reservation call 01245 222069. Following on from this they will be holding a beer festival from 23rd February for 1 week. Guest ales will include; Elgood's Black Dog, Woodforde's Nelsons Revenge, Oakham JHB. Of course there will be Shepherd Neame Cask Ales available such as Early Bird, Master Brew, Bishops Finger, Spitfire and Kent's Best. A chance to try a selection of guest ales from the east of

England!

The Oddfellows Arms – Springfield Road. Great news for us real ale fans – There are now 4 available at this venue, currently being Greene King IPA, Sharp's Doombar, Abbot Ale & Mighty Oak's Maldon Gold. Taken over back in November last year by Steve and Sarah this pub could quickly prove to be a new favourite. Steve is an old hand and might well be a familiar face having run The Sir Evelyn Wood and the Two Brewers amongst others over the past 15 years. Forthcoming events include a Rookie Poker night on the 12th February, at 7.30pm, where you can learn how to play the game. Following on from this each Thursday night, at 7.30pm, from 19th February there will be a regular "Texas Hold 'em" night. On Saturday 28th February Steve is hosting a charity "Olympics" night (with various challenges and or drinking games on offer) proceeds of which are going to the Little Haven Hospice. A new "Credit Crunch" menu is available with favourites such as Cod and Chips, Steak and Kidney Pudding, Steak and Chips etc. plus a vegetarian option. Prices range from a very reasonable £3.95 for one meal up to £10.75 for three or more. Steve would like to see a few of us from the local branch and has offered us the use of the pub for a branch meeting at a future date.

The Green Man – Howe Street. New landlady Sarah is keen to bring this historic pub more into the real ale. (Currently offering GK IPA and Ruddles Best). Though a Greene King pub she is determined to push for a wider range of ales or guest ales if possible. Sarah also has plans to open up the large garden as a possible venue for wedding receptions and maybe even a mini beer fest or two. In the meantime she would welcome branch members going in for a pint and a chat with her and her staff. (I understand a Steam Fair is planned for April – more on this to follow.)

The Kings Arms, Great Baddow – I've been told that there's a new landlord due to arrive by end of February as the lease has finally been sold. Watch this space for more news.

The Six Bells, Boreham - There were some "2 for 1" Vouchers handed out over the Christmas period and also available in the Essex Chronicle. These can still be used during the whole of February from Monday to Thursday lunchtimes/ evenings with the provision that between 2 - 6 people each have two courses. John (the licensee) also mentions a wine offer on their House Red/White - buy two large glasses and get the rest of the bottle free. They are also taking bookings for the Valentine's Weekend when Friday to Sunday they're offering their normal a la Carte Menu plus Valentine's Specials. Then in addition to this on the Sunday they will also be offering their usual Sunday roasts (Beef, Lamb and Vegetarian Nut Loaf).

Finally, special thanks to Dave at the **Horse & Groom, Galleywood** (5 real ales last week!) for letting me use his pub at such short notice for the picture in the Chronicle and thus ensuring he gets another mention here.

Keep your eyes open for the next issue in March!