



CAMRA

Chelmsford & Mid-Essex Branch

Pub News

June 2009 – The Ladies' Edition!

by Nigel Sadler - Pub Liaison Officer

Well here we are with issue number 6 of Pub News. Who'd have thought all those years months ago, when I were just a small lad in shorts, that we would have made it this far? So to celebrate I've decided to make this a special edition aimed at the ladies without whom dishes wouldn't be washed, clothes ironed, oil and filters changed and lawns mown. (Only joking girls, please don't hit me!)

But first.....

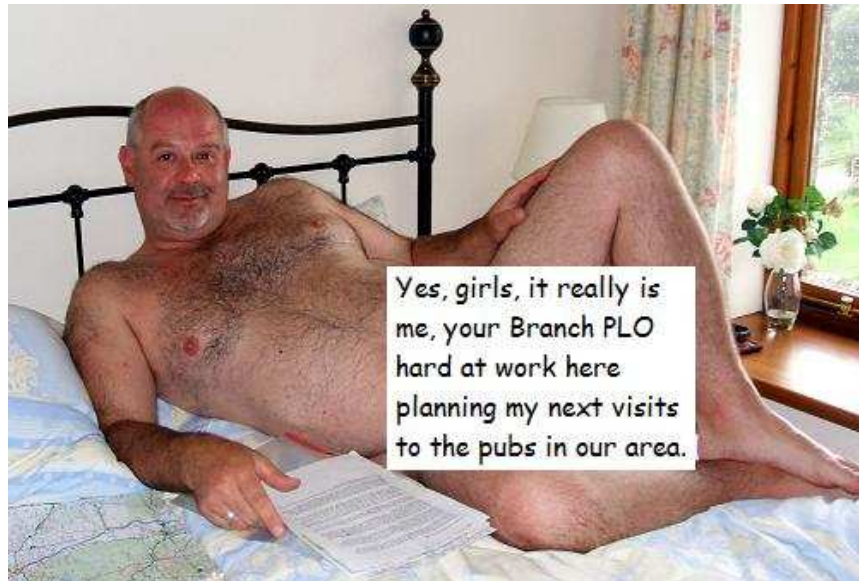
THE WHEATSHEAF WRITTLE IS CAMRA ESSEX PUB OF THE YEAR!

Congratulations from all of us in the Chelmsford & Mid-Essex Branch to Barbara and Tony O'Boyle on this fantastic achievement. This follows on from winning the branch's Local Pub of The Year Award last month.

The Wheatsheaf then went forward from the branch award to compete against 5 other branches winning pubs for the Essex title. A total of 70 CAMRA delegates went out to compare and mark the six contenders. Final scores were very tight and the competition was of a high standard. Amongst the other Local Pubs of The Year was The Swan at Little Totham, twice winner of the CAMRA National Pub of the Year title in 2002 and 2006 but this year came second for the Essex title.

A formal presentation of the Essex award will be made in due course, details to follow.

Moving on now, despite all the photos in last month's edition, I have literally been inundated with one phone call asking me what I look like. So what better way to start off this "Ladies' Edition" than with a photo of red hot Mr June himself! (Eat your hearts out Chelmsford Firemen!)



Disclaimer: Neither CAMRA nor the author can guarantee that drinking real ale will give you such a fine, toned, athletic etc. body as this.

(Shame I couldn't find another 11 volunteers for the 2010 Branch Calendar but it's all been done before.....Oooh er Missus, look at Mr September's big hand pump and hasn't Mr April got a large firkin etc. etc.)

And no Brentwood Brewing, this pic is not to be used as a pump clip for "Slap Head Stout", "Sad Git Ale", "Gut Bucket Bitter" or any other brew you might think of along these lines!

PS. Signed copies available on request girls – Only £10.

Ok so why the "Ladies' Edition" you may well ask? Or not as the case may be.

Approximately 25% of CAMRA members are female, that is 25,000 give or take a few hundred and the number is set to rise in coming years I am sure.

Some of you may have been aware that during Cask Ale Week there was "FemALE day" on the 8th April to help promote real ale as a drink for women and certain women only events were held across the country. Unfortunately I didn't hear of anything particular in our area.

Personally I would welcome more ladies at our branch meetings and also on our runabouts as sometimes a group of 10 – 12 guys walking into a quiet pub (though we do try and give prior notice admittedly) can be a little disconcerting when the only other clientele are one man and his dog or a canoodling couple in the corner.

We all know that the image of local "boozers" has changed in recent years. Many pubs have modernised, upgraded decor and become more female friendly than say even 10 years ago.

Also real ale, compared to wine, spirits and some alcopops, offers lower alcohol content in a longer drink. Perhaps, as it's not associated with some of the worst aspects of excess drinking, some therefore might feel it shows a more responsible/refined attitude. We've all seen the footage and photos of young lasses (and lads – I'm not being sexist here) emerging from bars and clubs a little the worse for wear and this combined with all the reports on binge drinking can create a very undesirable image something that real ale generally avoids somewhat successfully.

So come on all you girls in the branch, let's see you out and about a bit more. Leave the old man at home with the ironing and join us on the runabouts. Or at a push bring him along. It might just help attract a few more ladies to CAMRA membership and help even up the numbers.

COMPETITION RESULT

Yes folks we have a winner of last month's inaugural competition! Having been absolutely inundated with entries I am pleased to announce that our winner is David Gatheral. The answer was of course Wibblers. Well done, David and I hope you enjoy the copy of "Cider".

A special mention to John Surrey for his entry and accompanying photo.... I can't believe it's you in that dress and high heels John!

For this month's competition see below.

RECOMMENDED PUBS

Hopefully by now you will have all received a copy of the branch's "Recommended Pubs" booklet. Isn't it grand? Special thanks to BLO Bryan Grimshaw for organising the layout, obtaining all the relevant information on the pubs and then putting it together in such a great format. This booklet forms part of our newly launched Passport Scheme. (See below).

I am already looking forward to helping produce the 2010 edition which we hope will be bigger and better!

PASSPORT SCHEME

We have now launched our Passport scheme under the guidance of myself and Tim Adams, who along with partner Steve White, you might know as one of the faces behind the Hopleaf catering team, which provide some of the food at our festivals.

As mentioned above, this scheme has been designed to run in conjunction with the "Recommended Pubs" booklet. We hope this will encourage not just branch members to visit the listed pubs but also to get many non-members interested, particularly after the Summer Festival.

By visiting 10 pubs in the booklet and purchasing a pint of real ale in each a sticker is obtained. When the passport is completed it will entitle the holder to gain free entry to our Summer Festival, a Festival Glass and one free pint. Not bad eh? All branch members should have received a passport along with their booklet by the end of May so even if you don't use it why not encourage someone you know to give it a go?



Tony & Barbara of The Wheatsheaf, Writtle, with yours truly, promoting the Passport Scheme, Recommended Pubs Booklet & Plaque on the day the Essex POTY announcement was made. Big smiles all round! (Photo courtesy of Lensforhire@o2.co.uk)

NEW AWARDS

As mentioned back in April we are launching 2 new awards, “Local Best Food Pub of the Year” and “Local Best Family Pub of the Year”. As this is the first year it is really open to interpretation but to give a little guidance on what to look for I've put a couple of tables below showing the areas which I feel should be considered and marked accordingly.

- Voting closes on 27th August and the winners will be announced in the September issue of Pub News. (Please note that scores will be averaged out to obtain a fair result.)
- Voting is open to all CAMRA members.
- The pub/restaurant/ bar voted for must be in the C&ME CAMRA area.
- They must serve at least one real ale (either on gravity or handpump).

(A list of all real ale outlets in the branch area is on our website so please check this if you are uncertain about whether the venue you visit is covered.)

Remember even if you just visit one or two small pubs in the coming months and go for the traditional pub grub menu if it's well cooked, good value and you are pleased with the service and surroundings then that is as important as a 3 course dinner at one of our finer gastropubs or the larger chains.

For the family pub award those with children must feel welcome and relaxed. Good facilities, whether they be baby changing rooms or outdoor play equipment, could well be the important factor and this is reflected in the scoring categories.

Please keep record of your scores in the coming weeks and then send them to me by email or post on the closing date i.e.27th August 2009.

Below are the scoring categories:

Best Local Food Pub

Best Local Family Pub

Name of Pub:		Name of Pub:	
Quality of food (X 3)		Family friendly, nice welcome (X3)	
Use of local ingredients(X3)		Facilities for children (X3)	
Quality of beer (X2)		Quality of beer (X2)	
Service (X2)		Service (X2)	
Decor		Decor	
Value for money		Value for money	
TOTAL out of 120		Total out of 120	

- **Please give marks out of 10 in each category and then multiply accordingly.**
- **Email your marks, plus any additional comments on the venue, to me or by post to: 31 Moss Path, Galleywood, Chelmsford, Essex CM2 8YG**

BEER COMMENT

Following on from last month's issue on golden ales I thought perhaps I would comment on some of the many flavoured beers and ciders that seem to have gained in popularity in recent years and once again this being the "Ladies Edition" it does seem me that these are possibly a bigger hit with the fairer sex.

We all know from Podge's Belgian Beer stall that there are a number of bottled brews flavoured with peach, raspberry, cherry etc and these have been in production for many years but we must bear in mind that these are a lot stronger than many of the ales we have on tap.

Though not so refined as the Belgian offerings I am sure that we are all familiar with lager & lime, lager & blackcurrant etc. These involve the addition of fruit flavouring after the brewing process. (Bearing in mind the complete and utter tasteless fizz that passes as lager in some eyes I am sure that even the addition of orange squash would be a marked improvement!)

At last summer's festival even a honed athlete such as I couldn't keep up with the demand for "Rasputin"(raspberry), "Orange Wheat", "Cherry Bomb" and such like for the ladies.

Therefore it's obvious that in some cases the fruit flavours help mask and reduce the bitterness (hoppiness) and to some palates at least, make for a more pleasant and refreshing drink. Whilst in others they are more subtle in their effect and do indeed add something overall to the beer. Could these flavoured beers continue to grow like golden ales have done? In a couple of year's time will they be available regularly on tap in more mainstream pubs? Who knows but they do make pleasing changes from the usual hints of ginger, chocolate and coffee that we have seen in the past.

I wonder what delights will await us at this year's festival in the way of flavoured ales?

PUB NEWS

The White Hart, Margaretting Tye – The popular “Tiger's Island” beer festival is being held between 24th and 28th June. This venue is a firm favourite with CAMRA members from far and wide. There are usually 8 real ales on offer and all are on gravity served straight from the tap room.

As you no doubt already know this pub has been winner of our Local Pub of the Year Award twice (2007 & 2008) and then runner-up in 2009. Quite an achievement and certainly reflects the dedication of wonderful landlady Liz Haines and her team. (Can I have a free pint now, Liz? LOL)

An excellent selection of over 60 ales plus a good range of ciders is on offer for the festival and there will of course be food available (this pub is equally renowned for the high quality of its cooking) including a BBQ and Hog Roast plus the usual fare inside the pub.

Plenty of entertainment is on offer over the 5 days and for further info on this, the festival and other news relating to the pub go to www.thewhitehart.uk.com

Finally, I would mention it is the venue for our Essex CAMRA inter branch pub games day. This is to be held on Saturday 27th June. At time of writing it's envisaged the games will be put in place in the morning and made available for members of the public to enjoy when we are not using them. Doug Irons is our team captain and is looking forward to a positive result on the day. As he says “Its games of two halves and two halves make a pint”.

The Windmill Motor Inn, Chatham Green – Elaine has emailed a list of events they're holding in June. This free house just off the A131 has 3 ales on at any one time. When I called in last week there was Oscar Wilde, Windmill IPA (rebadged GK IPA) and Brentwood Best, all in very good condition.

Friday 19th June – Cockney sing along night with live duo. Traditional East End grub will be on offer. So if you fancy a knees up followed by pie and mash, fish & chips and jellied eels why not pop over?

Sunday 21st June – Father's Day Lunch – Go on, treat your dad. (Booking advisable)

Saturday 27th June – Chatham Green Open Gardens. Admission is just £2.50 per adult and children go free. As always profits will be donated to a nominated charity.

Sunday 28th June - Quiz Night in aid of various Chatham Green Open Gardens charities. 5pm start and tables/teams of up to 6 people can enter. Cost £2 per person entry fee.

If you're too tired to drive home or fancy a couple of extra beers then why not stay in one of the 7 en suite rooms available on B&B basis from just £65 per night? More info available at www.windmillmotorinn.co.uk

The Rose & Crown, Great Waltham – Landlord Richard is a keen horse racing fan and every Saturday racing is shown on the TV in the snug. Once a month there is an organised coach outing to a racecourse starting off the day with a breakfast at the pub and ending with a dinner, prices are a very reasonable £35 per person or £65 per couple. There are a number of special offers on meals and even a free lift home (within a certain radius) and that's a definite bonus! So if you're a lover of the turf why not check out the info on this and Richard's other events and menus at www.roseandcrowngreatwaltham.co.uk

The Cricketers, Mill Green, Nr. Ingatestone – Marion has the following events in June:

QUIZ NIGHT- Wednesday 3rd June. £2 per person. Maximum 6 per team. Starts at 7:30.

TRIBUTE NIGHT – Friday 26th June. In aid of the charity 'Sands' (Stillbirth & neonatal death charity) Tribute to Kylie, Madonna, & Abba by 'Abbalicious'. £15 per ticket which includes a buffet.

Barista, Duke St., Chelmsford – Despite the name implying a swish place for lattes and espressos this is a great bar with 3 real ales on gravity and I do mean gravity as the cellar is one floor up! Manageress Dawn is keen to develop the real ale side of the business which has been up and running for a few months now. It does make a nice, some would say refined, alternative to some of the other pubs in the area. May's ales included 6X, Maldon Gold, Mary's Ruby Mild. Dawn hopes to have the restaurant completed and ready to open by the end of May.

The Horse & Groom, Galleywood – Poor overworked landlord Dave had to have a long weekend off in May to count up his takings and left "The Heavenly Body" aka sweet, young and innocent barmaid Denise to run things in his absence. It's hoped that the mess, mayhem and destruction will have been cleared up by the time this newsletter reaches you and once again the place will revert to being a fine country pub with up to 5 real ales available.

Fortunately Denise's offer of 3 days free beer to the regulars ensured they remained loyal. Just don't tell Dave! ;-)

The Orange Tree, Chelmsford – Silent Mike goes musical with 2 bands appearing in June. On the Saturday 13th there's "Fat Bottomed Girls" and the following week on the 27th is the "Chuck Lewis Band". Excellent entertainment while you enjoy Mike's great range of ales.

The Duck Inn, Writtle – Further to the pub review in this newsletter (see below) anyone interested in going for the £15.00 three course jazz night dinner then here are the nights and entertainment listings for June:

Fri 5th: Ray Ward Jazz Trio / Sun 10th: Ray Ward Jazz Trio / Fri 12th: TBA Wed 15th: Dave Browning Trio / Fri: 19th: TBA / Fri 26th: The Carlton Jazz Trio Booking advisable.

Call 01245 421894 to make a reservation.

The Viper, Mill Green Nr. Ingatestone – Donna has lined up a tarot and palm reading night which should appeal to the ladies perhaps more than us gents. So come on girls if you fancy a giggle and free nibbles while you drink and have your palms read then it's all happening on 10th June. Meanwhile for the more manly amongst us there's the ever popular Chelmsford Morris Side prancing and dancing for our pleasure on Wednesday 3rd June at 8.30pm.

The Green Man, Howe Street – Sarah has emailed to say that she will be launching an authentic Thai Cuisine Night starting June 5th and then every Friday between 6 & 9.30pm. Some of examples of the dishes on offer include Thai Chicken Satay, Seafood & Vegetable Tempura, Thai Green Chicken Curry with Fragrant Thai Rice and Pak Choi, Thai Red Beef Curry with Egg Noodles and Bean Sprouts, Thai Vegetarian Curry in a Yellow Curry Sauce with either Egg Noodles or Fragrant Thai Rice. So if you fancy a taste of the orient in a 500 year old pub then pop over to Howe Street. There will also be a Father's Day barbecue and the regular carvery. For more information on this and Sarah's other menus and events go to www.greenmanhowestreet.com

Leather Bottle, Pleshey / The Ship, West Hanningfield / The Sportsman, Nounsley – I understand all that all these are currently on the market. As soon as I know more I will pass it on.

BREWERY BITS

My sincere apologies to John and all at **Mighty Oak** for listing their May mild as "Meltdown", it should of course have been "Memory Loss" - something I seem to be suffering from at such a young and tender age. For the month of June they have "Ask Jeeves" in the offing at 3.9% which is a golden ale made using American hops giving a citrusy hint with blackcurrant undertones.

Crouch Vale is brewing "The Golden Duck" at 3.8% which is again a golden ale. (In danger of upsetting a certain Mr Sherman here, sorry David!) I am told this is a light session beer with a fresh crisp taste that should appeal all.

Franco at **Felstar** is working hard on his bottled range. Latest offerings are: Jolly Rooster - 4.5% darkish bitter / Lazy Rooster - 5.2% amber bitter and Fruity Rooster - 4.6% raspberry beer. Could this last one be available on tap at our summer festival????

The White Horse Townfield St. is taking a 4.0% beer from him called Bottom Spanker (pub's choice of name, not Franco's!) and **Battesford Court. Witham** is also looking to have a draught beer from Felstar in the coming weeks.

PUB REVIEW

As it was my 25th birthday a couple of weeks ago I told my partner, Liz, that she could spend whatever I liked on my birthday meal and take me wherever I wanted.... How's that for being considerate? Therefore we have not one but two pub reviews this month.

Review No.1

My first treat was dinner at **The Duck Inn, Newney Green near Writtle**. Landlord Simon is also the chef at this Shepherd Neame house. We went on a Friday evening when there was a special Jazz Night menu on offer at £15 per person for 3 courses. The entertainment is provided as part of the evening and on the night we went the singer Bridget Metcalfe was performing with a pianist accompanying her. Coincidentally this pub has been reviewed in May by The Edge magazine and I am pleased to say they also approve!

The menu offered a very reasonable selection of 5 starters, 5 mains and 4 puddings. There are also vegetarian options available for the first 2 courses.

First of all I had to have an aperitif or in this case two.... A pint each of Spitfire and Master Brew. Both ales were in fine condition and a lovely way to kick off the evening.

We started dinner with chicken liver parfait, moules mariniere, deep fried brie and homemade broccoli and stilton soup. All were very good, the soup being delicate in flavour and the portion of mussels very generous.

The main courses were plain grilled 8oz steaks and lamb Wellington. Though there was also Grilled fillet of Sea Bass with Pernod sauce or Pan Fried Loin of Pork with sauteed mushrooms & Stilton cheese served with a port jus on offer.

The vegetarian option on offer that night was Vegetable Puff Pastry Parcel with mozzarella.

The meat was cooked perfectly, the steaks being a true medium rare and the lamb tender. The pastry covering the lamb Wellington was good, being neither overcooked and brown nor undercooked and soggy. All the mains were accompanied by a healthy selection of vegetables and new potatoes.

Our puddings were strawberry mille feuille, lemon cheesecake and a selection of ice cream. All of which were very satisfactory and nice "light" way to finish the meal.

We thought it an extremely enjoyable dinner and perhaps more importantly for such a night very good value. Judging by the number of other guests that night this seems to be is a very popular event.

We look forward to returning in a few weeks time and trying the a la carte menu which features dishes such as Fillet of Sea Bass, served with sautéed king prawns on spinach with a saffron sauce, Beef Stroganoff (strips of beef fillet dusted with Paprika pan fried with onions, mushrooms, garlic and herbs flambéed in brandy and finished with cream) served on rice and Smoked Haddock, wrapped in Parma ham sat on garlic mash with a white wine and chive sauce.

We feel this pub is certainly worth 8/10.

For more information visit: www.theduckinnwrittle.co.uk

Review No.2

My second outing was for Sunday lunch at **The Square and Compasses, Fuller Street** run by Victor and Susan. To quote from the pub website: *"The Square and Compasses is a delightful, traditional public house located at Fuller Street in the parish of Fairstead. Set in beautiful countryside the pub is believed to date from about 1652. Originally two farmer's cottages the building retains a wealth of original features with exposed beams throughout and inglenook fireplaces."*

Sounds perfect!

Again there were 5 in our party and we were seated on a large table near the front door which unfortunately meant, as head of the table, I was subject to constant comings and goings which were a distraction but that is by the by.

As with The Duck Inn all the food here is prepared to a very high standard and there is waitress service which, for me, makes it hard to define this wonderful place. Is it a traditional pub that serves food or a restaurant with a bar and good real ale?

I enjoyed a pint of Stokers Ale prior to lunch. This is a fine brew from Nethergate and reflects the nickname given to the pub some years ago; The Stokehole.

The menu is comprehensive with traditional pub classics such as homemade beef lasagne, local hand carved ham with free range eggs and beer battered fish and chips. There is a daily specials board which features both a fine selection of starters and mains including Grilled wing of skate with brown butter and capers, Fillet of salmon with spring onion and potato cake with saffron and mussel sauce, Rabbit and roast vegetable stew with rosemary roasted potatoes and Breast of chicken stuffed with apricots, redcurrants and fresh herbs with a red wine sauce.

Again there are vegetarian dishes on offer and on the Sunday we went Roast butternut squash and parmesan risotto featured on the menu.

To start with I chose local pigeon breast on black pudding. Liz had chicken liver and port pate and my children chose. I have to say that being a keen breast fan I thoroughly enjoyed mine: soft, warm and pink – perfect! Everyone else seemed equally happy with their choices and there were no complaints and plenty of clean plates!

For the main course, being a Sunday, four of us chose the roast beef and Liz went for the herb crusted lamb cutlets. The beef was again beautifully cooked, extremely generous in its portion and was accompanied by large Yorkshire puddings and nicely done roast potatoes. Liz's lamb was pink and tender. A selection of fresh vegetables was served on the side.

Puddings were chosen from an extremely tempting list! All sounded lovely and we weren't disappointed with our choices of strawberry crème brulee, banoffee pie and

To sum up; a thoroughly enjoyable, well prepared lunch spread over 3 hours in attractive surroundings.

Our mark: 8.5/10.

For more information visit: www.thesquareandcompasses.co.uk

NEWS FROM HQ

Unfortunately I had run out of space in the last issue to comment on the tax increases in the budget but Mike Benner, CAMRA Chief Executive, said:

"It is disappointing that the Chancellor has ignored widespread public concern about the plight of Britain's pubs and decided to press ahead with an increase which will result in yet more valued community pubs closing down. Well-run community pubs are already struggling as a result of last year's 18% increase in beer duty and the recession. This further beer duty increase will push more valued pubs over the edge resulting in job losses, reduced Government tax revenue and many more deprived of their favourite local pub."

"Well-run pubs provide an enjoyable and affordable night out in a safe and supervised environment and this duty increase will simply fuel irresponsible drinking of cheap discount alcohol in people's homes, public parks and on the streets."

In addition to this UK beer sales dropped by 8.2 per cent in the first quarter of 2009, compared to the same quarter in 2008, according to the latest UK Quarterly Beer Barometer, published today by the British Beer & Pub Association (BBPA). This is by far the highest first quarter fall since 1997, and comes just days after the Chancellor announced yet another increase in Beer Tax in the Budget.

The UK Quarterly Beer Barometer, the comprehensive guide to beer trends in Britain, shows that 1.7 million fewer pints were drunk every day from January to March, than in the same period in 2008. Compared with the first quarter ten years ago, 326 million fewer pints were sold across the country- a decline of 3.6 million pints a day.

Beer sales in pubs, bars and restaurants were down 6.3 per cent on the same quarter in 2008 - equating to 753,000 fewer pints every day. In total, 68 million fewer pints were sold in the on-trade during January to March 2009 compared with the same period in 2008.

So have we now entered the downward spiral of falling beers sales equals falling tax revenue so therefore tax on beer will keep rising to make up for the short fall.

MILD CRAWL

Those of us who met up 2nd May had a lovely stroll in the sun across the town starting off at The Endeavour in Springfield Road. Brian Debenham lined up a total of 10 pubs for us to visit. I have to admit that I called it a day after only 7 having other plans that night. It was a little disappointing that of those 10 pubs 3 didn't have a mild on and 3 only offered Oscar Wilde. However all provided us with a good pint. Highlight of the afternoon for me was the Nethergate's Mary's Ruby Mild at the Star & Garter in Moulsham Street. Special thanks to Steve at the Oddfellows Arms for the Greene King tankards which were gratefully received.

I gather the survivors of the crawl left the Orange Tree somewhere near 10.30pm!

PODGE'S BELGIAN BEER TOURS

I am sure that many of you know our branch Chairman, Podge, is very keen on Belgian beers and has set up a whole business based around them including writing books and organising some very popular tours. Here I have included the highlights from his latest newsletter for any non-members reading this who might be interested in going on a tour.

BRUSSELS & HERITAGE - FRI 28th to MON 31st AUGUST 2009

The itinerary is now complete on this Tour. We are booked in at the very central [Hotel Ibis Brussels off Grand Place](#). Again we have the excellent services of august historian and archaeologist Mr Dave Buckley. This year the price covers lots of extras, including meals, so you will need little more than pocket money whilst on this tour. Also included is a guided tour of the Hop Museum in Poperinge, followed by a Poperings Hommelbier and a visit, with cheese tasting, to the Cheese Museum at Passendale, which is accompanied by the exclusive beer made especially for the museum.

On the Saturday, we pay a visit to the amazing steam brewery [Vapeur](#). Here not only will we be present on one of their famous brewing days, when we can see the last steam brewery in the world in action, we will also experience the fantastic homemade food and beer extravaganza put on for us by Jean-Louis (included in price). Also included that day is a visit to the Coudenberg Palace in Brussels, one of the main residences of Charles V and a fascinating walk under the Royal palace to discover the relics of the past at the attached Museum.

Sunday sees us visiting the attractive [St Feuillien](#) brewery, home of the world class St Feuillien Triple (8.5%abv) followed by a three course Bier Cuisine meal at the Restaurant "La Cantine des Italiens" (included in price). After this, we see the magnificent huge boatlift at [Strep-Thieu](#), and have guided tours of both the huge modern engine rooms and historic workings together with a boat trip on the lift. We are also entertained with beer and sandwiches by our friends at the [Vanden Busshe beer warehouse](#) where we stock up with beer for home. The price of this tour including all the entrances and extras is £348 per person based on sharing a twin or double room. There is a single supplement of £84 if you would like a room of your own.

(This Tour is already filling up. Please contact Podge soon if you want to come along)

AALST - FRI 13th NOV to MON 16th NOV 2009 - *NOTE CHANGE OF DATE*

This Tour is still based at the ever-popular [Hotel Keizershof](#) but the date has been changed to take advantage of the superb [Third Bruges Beer Festival](#) that takes place over that weekend. The price of this tour is £278 per person based on sharing a twin or double room. There is a single supplement of £84 if you want your own room.

Please let Podge know now if you are interested in coming on this Tour.

CHRISTMAS IN BRUGES - THU 24th DEC to MON 28th DEC 2009

We are booked into the four star centrally located Hotel Academie for the four nights over Christmas. Start giving excuses to your family now or if all else fails bring them along with you! The price of this *extended five day* tour is £385 per person based on sharing a twin or double room. There is a single supplement of £112 if you want your own room.

Please let Podge know now if you are interested in coming on this Tour.

If you would like to join us on any of the above tours or if you need more information please contact Podge on 01245 354677 or email podgehome@blueyonder.co.uk. Places are limited to the number of rooms booked, so book early to avoid disappointment.

Please see www.podgebeer.co.uk for further information.

COMPETITION

Following on from the success of the first one last month I have yet another prize up for grabs! Those sterling chaps Roland & Dave and chapess Sophie, who does all the work ;-) of the Brentwood Brewing Company have offered a prize of a dozen bottles of their excellent Hope & Glory 4.5% traditional bitter and have set this month's question. Same rules apply as before, namely:

1. This is open to CAMRA members in the C&ME branch only.
2. Maximum one entry per member.
3. First correct answer drawn out of my lucky tankard is the winner.
4. My decision on the winner is final.

Competition question: How many soldiers are pictured on the Hope & Glory Pump Clip? (Handy hint: Look at www.brentwoodbrewing.co.uk)

Closing date is 20th June 2009. Email your answer to: nigsad@yahoo.co.uk or by snail mail to: 31 Moss Path, Galleywood, CM2 8YG.

Send me your answers with name, address, phone number and membership number.

GOOD LUCK!

QUOTE OF THE MONTH

Whilst enjoying a pint over at The Viper and chatting to Donna and Peter, a slightly older gentleman came to the bar and asked for "a pint of fizzy beer" as he had been brought up on the stuff and didn't drink real ale. Alas with no John Smith's in sight Peter managed to convert him "V.I.P.A". Another success story!

PS. It's OK Donna I won't mention the "£17.95 and you've got a screw" ;-)

SUMMER BEER FESTIVAL

For those who, in the past 4 months, have been living in a cave, stuck in an igloo at the North Pole or just plain missed it the Chelmsford Summer Beer Festival will be held again at Admirals Park from 7th to 11th July. Please check on the website for more details of beers and entertainment at: www.chelmsfordcamra.org.uk

We are looking for volunteers to help set up and staff the event so if you fancy joining us please contact Doug Irons, staffing manager for more details on 07743950382.

Keep your eyes open for the next “Summer Festival” issue in July

For further news on pubs and breweries why not visit: www.tap-room.com and for more news/programme on Chelmsford Morris visit www.chelmsford-morris.org.uk/programme.html

**Please email me with any news/items for inclusion in future issues.
(nigsad@yahoo.co.uk)**