



MALDON & DENGIE CAMRA

BRANCH NEWSLETTER DECEMBER 2022



**A VERY MERRY (AND BEERY) CHRISTMAS
TO ALL OUR MEMBERS!**



FESTIVE GREETINGS FROM YOUR COMMITTEE

A warm welcome to the first issue of our new MAD (that's Maldon & Dengie of course!) newsletter. We aim to produce one of these a month, to keep branch members up to date with everything beer related in our area. This will include articles on events we have been to, our two beer festivals, and the world of ale and cider across our pubs, clubs and breweries.

Those with long memories (anything before Covid?) may remember we used to feature in the Thirsty Times magazine, along with Chelmsford & Mid Essex, North West and South East Essex branches. We have decided, at least for now, to go it alone, with a new virtual newsletter, though we will be considering whether to go "hard copy" at some point in the future, along similar lines to national CAMRA.

We hope many of you will be visiting your local pub or club over the festive period. But it's not just your local pub or club that needs support this Christmas. As we look to the festive season and the thought that many will be busy, there will undoubtedly be some in remote areas of our branch that will need more support this Christmas. Whilst we all have our locals and favourite pubs, this Christmas why not visit a pub in the Maldon & Dengie Branch area that you have never visited before, or one that is a little outside your local area. Of course scoring the beer as you visit.

Please also feedback when chatting with the publicans anything you feel that the branch may be able to offer support. After all the challenges of the past few years many pubs face increases of 300-400% on their energy bills along with rising supplier costs for basic items, some may not survive. If we want our pubs and breweries to survive we can feed back urgent items to local government where support and lobbying can take place on CAMRA's behalf.

So we would welcome feedback from our branch members on what you would like to read about in these newsletters, what news you have from your locals, what you think of the beer you are drinking, any events that we can give publicity to, and what would attract you to come along to branch social events (free beer may be available but no guarantees!). We also welcome any photos of you at your local.

Remember, CAMRA is for life, not just for Christmas!



CHRISTMAS COMES BUT ONCE A YEAR – THE SAME AS THE MIGHTY OAK BEER TASTING DAY!

AN “ON THE SPOT” REPORT FROM MIKE STRINGER, BRANCH MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY

Back in the comforting surrounds of the Mighty Oak brewery at West Station Yard, that time of year came round again. A chance to sample the regular range of Mighty Oak beers plus their festive offerings. This year, the festive choice included Spruce Forsyth, Good Elf and Cat & Fiddle (a nice Winter



porter), as well as regular favourites Bingle Jells and Wonky Donkey. The beers were served to an accompaniment of festive food (burgers bacon and sausages).

And for the first time ever, an indoor performance by the visiting Morris Dancers. Chelmsford Morris is a bunch of people of all ages, who like to continue the English tradition of Morris dancing. The men's dances come from the Cotswolds and the areas near the Welsh border, and the women dance clog morris from the north-west of England. Chelmsford Morris cele-

brated their Golden Jubilee this year. It was certainly an intimate performance in the confines of the brewery's cool room, which housed the bar for the day!

The same day, the Queen Victoria pub on Spital Road Maldon launched their tap takeover programme, by amazing coincidence, starting with beers from Mighty Oak! As the photos show, a mix of the regular and festive were on offer, alongside the usual food menu and specials, including the now legendary Christmas pie!



THE LATEST FROM YOUR “MAD” BRANCH

At the AGM in October, a new branch committee was elected. These are the people now responsible for taking the branch forward with our local members, and in helping with CAMRA’s aims to have quality real ale (also referred to as “live beer”), cider and perry and thriving pubs and clubs in every community. CAMRA sees its mission to promote and advocate:

- The production, availability and consumption of quality real ale, cider and perry
- Pubs and clubs as social centres and part of the UK’s cultural heritage
- The benefits of responsible social drinking.

Your new committee are:

Chairman	James Burrell
Deputy Chairman	Jim Morton
Treasurer	Mike Cutler
Membership Secretary	Mike Stringer
Branch Secretary	Veronica Hayes/David Rundle
NBSS Pub Scores	Jim Morton
Pubs Promotion Coordinator	Chris Harvey
Website/Social Media	Ivan Lambert

Other roles currently filled are:

Brewery Liaison Officers (BLOs)

Mighty Oak	Mark Ellis
Crouch Vale	Martin Curtis
Wibblers/Neolithic	Jim Morton

We still have a number of vacancies to fill, and we are looking for volunteers. We would love you to come and join us, we are a very friendly bunch and you would get the chance to help further CAMRA’s aims, as well as enjoying a sociable pint or two! These are the roles we are looking to fill:

Cider liaison officer

Newsletter editor

Social secretary

Young members’ representative.

HOW TO GET IN TOUCH

You can contact your branch through our website, go to the “Contact Us” link, or by emailing us direct at

Camra.maldonanddengiebranch@outlook.com



MALDON AND DENGIE PUB NEWS

Following on the heels of the COVID pandemic, the current cost of living crisis is already hitting pubs hard. Things are going to get a lot worse before they get better this winter. So why not help our locals by visiting a few pubs over the next few weeks which you don't normally frequent or haven't been to before? We are going to offer support where we can to licensees. We've started a project where we will help pubs fill in the gaps in their Google business profiles – nearly half of our local pubs don't have complete or accurate information on Google at the present time.

Where pubs are under threat of closure, we will also aim to support local efforts to keep them going. One such case is the Mitre in Wickham Bishops. The pub has been closed for several weeks following the departure of Martin Buckley, the tenant. We understand there are moves to make it a tearoom, run by Mrs Salisbury's. Since this would mean the village would no longer have a pub, we are currently deciding our strategy to stop this happening if we can. If you live in Wickham Bishops and would like to help us with this, please contact me and let me know—please see details on how to contact us on page 4.

We're getting out and about as well, visiting local pubs to update the information on the CAM-RA WhatPub website. Chairman James (in his Christmas Elf attire) is seen standing outside the Green Man in Little Braxted. The new licensee at this country pub has only been there a few weeks, but she has ambitious plans; the pub was very neat and tidy, and busy for a Tuesday afternoon. She also intends to add a locally brewed ale to the bar (probably Mighty Oak Maldon Gold) very soon.

Chris Harvey



MAD SOCIAL EVENTS

It's not that long now until the Colchester Winter beer festival. The 14th Festival has been confirmed between Wednesday 25th January & Saturday 28th January 2023, open from 12noon to 10:30pm at Colchester Arts Centre. There will be 80+ beers available, plus a selection of real cider, Belgian beers, local Essex wines & soft drinks. We are planning on making a visit on the Wednesday, if you would like to join us, please contact Mike Cutler for more details, the visit usually starts in the Playhouse in Colchester for breakfast.



The most recent branch meeting took place at the Queen's Head at Tolleshunt D'Arcy in November. It was agreed that, going forward, branch meetings would alternative between the formal branch business and a more social type of event. These would run alongside a range of social activities, the most recent of which was a trip to visit the Pig's Ear beer festival, reported elsewhere in this newsletter.

So looking forward to 2023, we plan to hold Branch meetings every other month (i.e. January, March, May, July, September, November). In the alternate months, we'd like to hold pub social evenings instead, where we can have a convivial get-together, drink beer and support our local pubs! In February, we intend to visit the newly-reopened New Times 7 Spices in Tiptree for a curry and beer evening. Look out for details nearer the time. We also plan to reintroduce occasional pub walks in the area, as well as walks further afield in towns like London and Norwich. If you have any ideas for a branch social, however wild and wacky and unusual, please let us know.

AND DON'T FORGET TO SCORE YOUR BEER!

More on this topic on pages 11 & 12, but keep a look out for this poster in the pubs and clubs you visit this festive season!



NEWS FROM MIGHTY OAK BREWERY

Our intrepid reporter Mark Ellis updates us on developments from one of our local breweries.

I've recently been appointed as Brewery Liaison Officer (BLO) for one of the breweries located in our branch area, Mighty Oak. Mighty Oak themselves have been around for some years, following relocation from Brentwood, so need little introduction. They are successful and have been growing their business despite very difficult trading conditions and rising costs. This is, at least in part, a tribute to the consistent good quality of their real ales. We are lucky indeed to have a successful brewery on our patch who both produce excellent real ale but also support the aims and objectives of CAMRA at both national and local level.

More recently, they have taken on a new Head Brewer. We extend him a warm welcome in these cold times, especially as he was last working at Heineken in Lagos, and wish him well in his new job. It will be interesting to see what innovations he brings to the brewery.

The famous Mighty Oak Tasting Day took place on Saturday 3rd December, also reported elsewhere in this newsletter. Many of your committee attended and seemed to be enjoying the beer, company and good cheer. A great start to the festive celebrations. The beer was on top form. Our town Major and local MP both attended, so Mighty Oak are obviously doing something right! The Mayor quite rightly pointed out that Mighty Oak is an asset to the town and locality and deserves our support. Hear, hear to that!

Finally, I'd like to pay tribute to my predecessor in the BLO role, Robert Longley. He did a superb job and fostered a good solid working relationship with the managers and staff at Mighty Oak and I can only hope to emulate him.

Future musings will be entitled "Over the garden fence". For those of you who don't know, I share a garden fence with the owner of the brewery so I can't think of anything better than hearing the latest news hot off the presses "over the garden fence"!



WIBBLERS CHRISTMAS OPEN DAY 2022

On the 10th of December Wibblers held their open day. I arrived at around 12 noon to find 13 ales on offer. Six were in the Taproom with the rest racked up in the brewhouse.

Beers available were: Apprentice, Hop Harvest, Dengie Devil, Wobbly Rabbit, Crafty Stoat, Dengie IPA, Conkers Bonkers, Santa's Night Off, Chocolate and Vanilla Porter, Stoaty McMilshake, Festive Star, Light Fury and the Skull Banger.
So, plenty of choice for every palette.

Light Fury is a recent collaboration brew with Leigh on Sea brewery, extra pale ale with a full citrus flavour from Styrian Dragon Hops. However, for me it was the strong dark beers that shone on such a cold day with Stoaty McMilshake proving to be my favourite for the day.

A big thanks to everyone at Wibblers, especially those who bravely suffered the freezing temperatures in the brewhouse!

Jim Morton, Deputy Chairman



BEER FESTIVALS UPDATE

We are pleased to say that one of our two local beer festivals will return again in 2023.

The **MALDON BEER FESTIVAL** will take place on a new venue, the Cygnet Room, which is at the rear of the Swan Hotel on Maldon High Street. The festival will take place during the last week of April. As always, your festival needs you! We cannot run these festivals without our dedicated band of volunteers. Why not come and join them this time? You will meet a lovely bunch of people and get to converse with people from across the globe who have come to visit Maldon, and (hopefully) attend our beer festival. Well ok maybe they've not made the journey solely to see Maldon!

You can get in touch with us through our branch website, see contact details on page 4.

The **SOUTH WOODHAM BEER FESTIVAL** took place in early October at what has become its regular venue, the Village Hall. The festival was a great success, although a number of factors such as cost of living and rail strike on the Saturday had an impact. Numbers attending on Thursday night were down on last year by 20, however Saturday was attended by 30 more. The overall profit was just short of £1500, down from the £2950 at last years festival. From the Charity point of view, donations of £800, including £378 in unused beer to medical charity, kens, were donated to a Ukrainian

The festival featured an appearance by the Sea Shanty Singers on the Saturday evening plus an award to Mighty Oak for their Captain Bob, which won East Anglian Session Beer Gold



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Big thanks are due to all our volunteers, and Stephen Dearing for their hard work and what was a successful beer festival.

but especially to Robert Longley

A WHALE OF A TIME –OR MORE ACCURATELY PIG!

No sign of Pink Floyd but certainly plenty of beer on offer! Our latest social outing was a visit to the 38th Pig's Ear East London beer and cider festival, to give it the full title. Held in the amazing Round Chapel, Hackney.



We were there on the opening day and had the Deputy Speaker from Hackney Council (no I've no idea either!) formally open proceedings.

After some confusion at the entrance – how many people does it take to admit you to a festival, six in this case – our little band proceeded to enjoy the range of beer on offer. There were numerous stouts and porters available, from breweries as far away as Cornwall, Manchester and Leeds, and as close as Hackney and Walthamstow. With strengths up to 11%, not for the faint hearted!

The festival grew busier as the afternoon progressed, as might be expected, though many people had one eye on the clock, with the England v Wales match on in the evening.



You can't go to a Pig's Ear festival and not avail yourself of pork scratchings, so that's exactly what I did. As well as taking a few snaps of proceedings to give you a "flavour" of the event! A nice beer festival all round.



CHAMPION BEER OF EAST ANGLIA
JUDGING AT SOUTH WOODHAM BEER FESTIVAL

I was delighted when we were asked to judge two categories at the beer festival this year (2022).

Category 1: Session stouts and porters

Category 2: Strong stouts and porters

Dave Sherman, Tasting Panel Chair Essex, chaired the second session while I chaired the first.

We had six tasters on each panel. All scores were out of a maximum of 300.

The results were:

Session Stouts and Porters

1st Green Jack Lurcher Stout (182)

2nd New River Blind Poet (160)

3rd Chalk Hill Black Anna (159)

4th Buntingford Oatmeal Stout (147)

5th Mighty Oak Old Man and the Sea (132)

6th Red Fox Porter (129)

Strong Stouts and Porters

1st Three Blind Mice Milk Worm (216)

2nd Milton Nero (183)

3rd Elmtree Dark Horse Stout (156)

4th Grain Slate (150)

5th Colchester Old King Coel London Porter (142)

6th Green Jack Baltic Trader (127)

All who took part said they enjoyed the experience and I think they learned something too.

Jim Morton

Deputy Chairman



THE SCORES ON THE DOORS

All of you will probably be aware there is a process for rating our pubs and clubs, but you may not be familiar with exactly how this process works and where it leads to! So here's a guide recently issued by CAMRA HQ, with the odd local "tweak".

You are probably aware of the 'Good Beer Guide', CAMRA's flagship publication which lists the best pubs in the UK. But what you may not know is how those pubs are selected to appear in the Guide. The answer is that it is largely via beer scores submitted by CAMRA members from all over the country. So, if you are a CAMRA member you can send in beer scores.

If you've ever wondered why your favourite pub isn't in the Guide, this may well be because you, and others, haven't entered scores rating the quality of beer there. By beer scoring, you can contribute to the process of selection of pubs that go in the Good Beer Guide.

So how do you score the quality of the beer? You don't have to be an "expert" to begin scoring your beer. However, it is not about your personal favourite beer receiving the highest scores! You may try a beer that isn't to your normal taste, but what you need to consider is the quality of that beer, how well the pub has kept it and served it, and score it according to the general guide below. It is a simple 0 to 5 point system, with half points being used if your opinion of the beer falls between two categories.

This is the basis for allocating scores:

0. No cask ale available
1. Poor. Beer is anything from barely drinkable to drinkable with considerable resentment.
2. Average. Competently kept, drinkable pint but doesn't inspire in any way, not worth moving to another pub but you drink the beer without really noticing.
3. Good. Good beer in good form. You may cancel plans to move to the next pub. You want to stay for another pint and may seek out the beer again
4. Very Good. Excellent beer in excellent condition. You stay put!
5. Perfect. Probably the best you are ever likely to find. A seasoned drinker will award this score very rarely. But it's so good, you are there for life!



THE SCORES ON THE DOORS (CONT)

So how do you submit your scores? In order to submit your scores, you need to login to CAMRA's online pub guide www.whatpub.com either on a computer or by smart phone. Here you will find a list of over 55,000 pubs from all over the UK. In order to start submitting scores via What Pub you need to:

1. Login. To do this you need your membership number and your CAMRA password.
2. You can then search for your pub by name. Be careful here as there are many pubs in the country which share the same name (such as the White Horse or the King's Head). Our advice is to search by the pub name and the town or postcode. The What Pub smart phone web page also gives you the option to search for real ale pubs nearby, very useful if you are in an unfamiliar town.
3. Once you have found your pub a 'Submit Beer Scores' box will appear on the righthand side of the screen (or on the tab bar underneath the pub photo if you are using a smart phone).
4. Simply fill in the date and your score then as you begin typing the brewery name should automatically appear underneath where you are typing. You do not have to enter the name of the beer you are drinking but if you wish to do so once you have entered the brewery name you should be able to click on the arrow in the beer box and a dropdown list of that brewery's beers should appear. In some cases, the beer you are drinking may be new or a one off by the brewery so may not appear on the list, if this is the case you can simply type in the beer name. Select the correct one click 'submit score' and your score will be entered into the database.

It is as simple as that. An added bonus is that it will keep a record of your scores so you can look back to see what beers you have had and how you rated them if you want.

Walk It Local!

An exciting new initiative called **Walk It Local** has just been launched by Maldon District Council's Tourism Team. It is designed to promote local businesses and encourage custom, especially in the leisure and hospitality industry. Chris Harvey, our Pubs Promotions Coordinator, has worked closely with the Tourism Team to develop a series of short, accessible walks.



The walks are mainly around two or three miles long and designed to take in local places to eat, drink and stay. The walks are now available on the **Visit Maldon District website**, with an option to either download each walk on to a phone or to print out as a leaflet. There are currently eight walks to try out, and nearly all of them have at least one pub en route. More walks will be added in the near future.



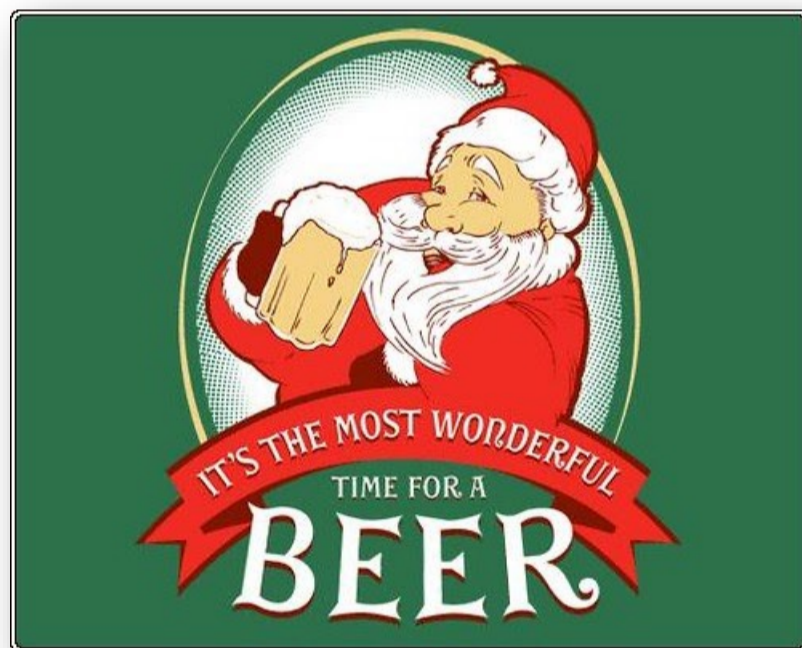
Why not give them a go? You'll be getting some good exercise and helping our local pubs and breweries at the same time!

<https://www.visitmaldondistrict.co.uk/things-to-do/walking/walk-it-local>



A VERY MERRY CHRISTMAS
AND A HOPPY NEW YEAR
TO ALL OUR MEMBERS
FROM YOUR COMMITTEE

HOPPY TO SEE YOU IN 2023



TREAT YOUR FAMILY AND FRIENDS TO THE PERFECT PRESENT, CAMRA GIFT MEMBERSHIP...

Give the gift of CAMRA Membership, a whole year's worth of enjoyment, for the beer or pub lover in your life. And while they're out enjoying good beer and great pubs, your gift will be helping us to protect the great British pub and everything that goes with it.

Membership includes:

- A welcome pack to help you make the most of your membership
- Award-winning BEER magazine and What's Brewing online news
- Discounts on CAMRA books including our best-selling Good Beer Guide
- Learning resources to help you discover more about beer and brewing
- Exclusive member discounts from retailers and other outlets
- Opportunity to campaign to save pubs under threat from closure
- Free or reduced entry to CAMRA beer festivals all over the UK
- £30* of CAMRA real ale, cider and perry vouchers (accepted at all participating pubs including JD Wetherspoons, Stonegate, Amber Taverns, S.A.Brains and more). *Joint Membership receives £40 worth of vouchers. The Real Ale Discount Scheme where you receive discounts on pints at over 3,500 participating pubs.

CAMRA Gift



Membership from just £30.50 (plus concessionary rate also available).

The perfect gift for any beer enthusiast or pub-goer!

Why not purchase CAMRA's Good Beer Guide with a CAMRA Gift Membership?

The Good Beer Guide is CAMRA's definitive bible to all things real ale – beer, pubs and breweries. Packed with 4,500 of the best real ale pubs in the UK and information on every real ale brewery currently operating and their key beers.

Visit CAMRA Shop after purchasing your Gift Membership.

