



MALDON & DENGIE CAMRA

Mad About Beer

JANUARY 2023

HOT NEWS

Coming soon to a hall near you! Yes it's back this year, the Maldon beer festival makes a welcome return to our calendar. And with a new venue and slightly different dates. But the usual convivial atmosphere and a nice range of beers to choose from!



Our usual venue, the Plume School, is no longer available. So for 2023, we are heading to a new venue, the Cygnet Room, which is behind the Swan Hotel on Maldon High Street. The festival opens its doors on Tuesday 25 April, with the last day on Saturday 29 April. The festival will be open from 12noon until 11pm every day.

Our opening day plans also include a social event for MAD branch members, come along on the opening day at 12noon and have a drink on us! So why not come along and take advantage of this offer?

We are hoping that our local breweries will produce something special for the Coronation, which is only a week after the festival, and is our theme for this year. To celebrate this, we are going to have our first "hat day" on the Thursday of the festival; more details of this will be in the next newsletter.

We expect to have 60 ales on offer, of which 25 will be local, and 15 ciders. Food will be available in the restaurant and there will be some snacks in the Cygnet Room itself. The Swan has also kindly allowed food from our high street shops/vendors to be brought into the hall should you wish.

More on the festival will follow in our next newsletter, including details of the "social" day and the "hat day". We are also seeking volunteers to help run the festival, if you have been involved before, watch out for the invitation coming round soon! If you haven't, why not come along and join us!



DAVID RUNDLE BRANCH SECRETARY



I have recently been appointed as CAMRA secretary for The Maldon and Dengie branch and whilst I have no previous knowledge of the hospitality industry, I have always had a passion for real ale and I joined The organisation at the Maldon beer Festival in 2019.

I retired from a 40 year career in banking for a major High Street bank in 2017 and have knowledge of the many city ale houses in the Square Mile! Shortly after retiring, my wife and I moved house from Rayleigh to Maldon and this was a move where we have not looked back. Our grown up family consists of 2 boys who now have their own families and we have 5 grandchildren!

Since moving to the area we have enjoyed exploring the many walks around the highways and byways of Maldon (not to mention the pubs) and surrounding areas and we have also discovered the joys of kayaking on the nearby canal that runs down towards Heybridge basin. This activity is a more leisurely pastime than the other passion I had for sailing in years gone by. I am also a keen motorsport enthusiast, particularly formula one and hope one day to visit the Singapore Grand Prix.

In the meantime I hope to expand my knowledge and experience to support James and his team to bring new life to the Maldon and Dengie aims and objectives for the CAMRA principles of raising the profile of real ale in this area.

SCORES ON THE DOORS PART 2

We covered this issue at some length in the December newsletter, so rather than go over old ground, this is a short reminder of how to score the beers you are drinking, and why it is important for you to keep this going, or for first timers, to start now! The scores you give all feed into the selection of pubs for entry into CAMRA's Good Beer Guide, and also are part of the process for selecting the branch Pub of the Year. If you are a CAMRA member, you can send in beer scores. Here's a reminder how to allocate these 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, if it's that good, you are there for life!



So please keep these scores coming in, the more the merrier (from several points - or should that be pints? - of view). Cheers!



THE CHRISTMAS PARTY

The Committee and members would like to thank Andy, Rosie and their team from the The Bell, Beckingham. The Branch Christmas meal was fantastic with lots of delicious food. Thank you for looking after us. It was a lovely evening with fine food and good ale on. Dare I say it we will be looking for this year's venue soon, I know its early but booking up for a large party can be problematic, so if you have any foodie favourites, had Christmas meals out, please let us know.

A HAPPY HACKNEY CHRISTMAS



About a dozen of us met up at Tap East in Stratford's Westfield Mall just three days before Christmas. No last-minute gift buying for us – we were totally focussed on finding good beer! Tap East didn't disappoint. Three good cask ales and thirteen other draft keg beers were available. Our next port of call was Mother Kelly's, in Stratford's East Village, which has been built since the 2012 Olympics. Again, an impressive array of craft keg beers (over 20 on tap), but we were the only punters.

We then strolled through the Olympic Park, past the imposing Aquatic Centre and the London Stadium (now the home of West Ham United). A walk along the Lee Navigation (past the moored narrowboats) took us into the quirky neighbourhood of Hackney Wick. We dived into the Howling Hops Brewery Tank Bar and Kitchen. This proudly boasts it is the UK's first dedicated tank bar. Once fermentation of their beers has finished, half of each brew flows directly into the ten 9-foot high serving tanks which dominate the bar. They had a very good imperial stout on draft during our visit. This was also a good lunch stop, as they serve some really tasty Sri Lankan street food.



The next port of call was the Beer Merchants Tap in Hackney Wick, which has arguably one of the widest selections of beer in any bar in the country. They usually have twenty craft keg beers on draft from all over the globe, and a couple of cask ales available. Their bottled beer selection is also a sight to behold. I sampled an interesting beer from Estonia and a rare Belgian gueuze here.



We then caught the Overground to Hackney Central, and we headed for the famous Pembury Tavern, now owned by Five Points Brewery. This pub is usually heaving with people, but it was eerily empty (everyone was out panic buying for Christmas perhaps?). Their beer choice was a bit disappointing, but the quality was very good. We enjoyed our next stop – the historic Cock Tavern on Mare Street. Some excellent cask ales were being served during our visit. Off to the Hackney Tap next; this is housed in the old Hackney town hall, built in the 19th century – this was a popular stop, as it had some good beers on.

The Hackney Church Brewery taproom, where we had planned to eat, was disconcertingly quiet. The service was not overly friendly and there was only a limited choice of beer available. So, we decided to head back to Hackney Wick, and enjoyed some tasty pizzas and decent beers at the Crate Brewery. After that, it was definitely time to start the journey home!



BRANCH MEETING AT THE NORTON

Our most recent meeting took place at The Norton, Cold Norton, on 24 January. We had a healthy 29 in attendance and a good time was had by all, as the photos show!



We heard the latest news about finances and memberships, what's going on in our pubs and breweries, which are facing hard times indeed these days, on our website, and on future branch activities. There was an update on beer scores and the Pub of the Year process, and we are looking for volunteers to help judge the "finalists" and to select the winner; this will involve a visit to each of the four shortlisted pubs.



We also had further news on the return of the Maldon beer festival, as reported on the front page.

Our chairman James also talked us through the new SharePoint site we will be using to keep our members up to date, but also to allow pubs to promote their events and update on things like opening hours. Our next branch meeting will be in March; the venue will be chosen from one of the Prince of Wales Great Totham, the Queens Head Burnham, the Village Hall South Woodham Ferrers, and the Wibblers Brewery Southminster.

COLCHESTER BEER FESTIVAL SOCIAL

A baker's dozen (give or take a slice or two!) made the journey out to Colchester for their Winter Beer Festival. Held at the Colchester Arts Centre - a converted church - it's certainly an atmospheric setting, though with the weather on the day also on the chilly side!



There was a good selection of ales on offer and these changed during the day, while we were there. The building also has an interesting set of facilities (those that go hand in hand with beer consumption!), "state of the art" for some and very odd for others! We also had the usual "spectacle" of



missing glasses to contend with - no names of course! A nice start to another year of festivals returning to normal is now underway!

FUTURE SOCIAL EVENTS

Our next social event will be a trip to the New Times in Tiptree on Wednesday 22 February, from 7pm onwards. This is a unique blend of pub and authentic Indian restaurant and is not to be missed! Please contact chair@maldonanddengie.camra.org.uk to book your place.

This will be followed by a visit to the Chappel Winter beer festival. This takes place at the beginning of March, and we are paying a visit on Thursday 2. This is a ticketed event as there is limited capacity, and anyone planning on going along will need to go to the festival website and purchase tickets. The website has details on travel arrangements to the festival site, as well as information on the beers available, food and so on. You can find all the details from this link:

<http://www.chappelbeerfestival.org.uk/winter/index.php>

And of course there is also the branch members social at the Maldon beer festival at the end of April, we hope to see many of you there during the week, but especially on opening day.



MALDON AND DENGIE PUB NEWS

In the last newsletter I mentioned the Mitre in Wickham Bishops was being converted into a tea-room. We have since raised this with Maldon District Council to ask whether this should be the subject of a planning application. To date, no response has been forthcoming. We will continue to press for an answer on this, as we feel it is important that local people should have a say in what happens to their village pubs. The Rose Inn in Southminster has been sold by Gray's – the buyer was the former tenant of the Queen's Head in the town, which was recently closed down for good. We understand he plans to reopen the Rose Inn in the spring.

The Farmers Yard, the micropub in Maldon High Street, has recently been renamed The Yard. It is currently open Thursdays to Sundays and is serving up to four real ales (usually Red Fox, Witham and Harwich beers) and real ciders. There is also a selection of Belgian and other bottled beers available. There will be an official relaunch of the pub under its new name in the spring.



King's Head

We're still getting out and about, visiting local pubs to update the information on the CAMRA WhatPub website. We recently visited Tiptree and Tollesbury, when we discovered that the Anchor in Tiptree no longer serves real ale. Thankfully, The King's Head in Tollesbury is doing well, providing

an invaluable meeting place for the locals. During our recent visit, there was a really good choice of ales being served, including beers from Mauldon's and Downton Brewery (Salisbury).



Sunny Sailor

The Sunny Sailor in Maldon (alongside the river Chelmer at Full-bridge) has recently been put on the market for £500,000. The Queen Victoria in Woodham Walter, which was offered for sale by Gray & Sons several months ago, does not appear to be attracting any interest.

UPDATE YOUR PREFERENCES

As a CAMRA member, you can decide what you want to receive, and how you want to receive it. Your membership allows you to choose your preferences, such as how you want the branch to contact you and how you will get the regular CAMRA newsletter. To check your preference, simply go to the CAMRA member login page, here:

<https://sso.camra.org.uk/login>

The login will take you to "My Membership". Click the My Membership box and this will allow you to edit your marketing preferences. Your options are email, post and SMS (or texts). The first on the list is how we at the branch can contact you and this goes on to include things such as festival & event and campaign information. Keeping these up to date ensures we at the branch and CAMRA at head office are able to contact you to suit your preferences as a member.

For your login, you need your CAMRA membership number and a password. The number will be on your membership card. You can always reset your password if you can't remember it.



LAST ORDERS?

While Christmas is a time for celebration, meeting friends, visiting your local pub and having a good time, the months that follow can be hard for many of our pubs and clubs. We have already seen the difficulty we are all facing with utility bills, even more so now the Government has announced it is cutting back financial support to them from April.

Now, more than ever, we will be faced with the risk of the closure of our favourite drinking establishments. This affects all our pubs and clubs, whether they are in the middle of town or out in the countryside. So in our newsletter, we are going to look back at pubs that many of us will have visited in the past, but for one reason or another, have ceased to provide a cosy haven for a convivial pint or two. This will include a "mystery pub" for you to identify.

We are starting our "graveyard" tour with these three gems from the past.



The Crown

The Crown in Heybridge. This pub was located in Broad Street Green. One of its regulars fondly recalls "Great nights in the 80's at the disco where no one was allowed to dance! Then walking back home to Heybridge in the pitch dark, running when a car went past so we could see in their headlights." It was sadly demolished in 1998.

The Chequers in Maldon. What an amazing photo of this old drinking haunt! It was located at 62 High Street. Yet again, long since demolished and replaced by Barclays Bank; ironically the bank itself has now closed. Historically, pubs called "Chequers" were places where money, tokens and goods were exchanged, as far back as Henry III! This pub is also associated with the **Blacksmith's Union.**



The Chequers



The Rose and Crown

The Rose & Crown in Southminster. This was once a popular Southminster pub located at 7 High Street. It is now in residential use. The Dozinghem military cemetery in Belgium lists a Gunner Wright, son of Charles Frederick and Kate Wright, of the Rose & Crown pub.

And finally. Do you recognise this old Maldon pub, shown here past and present? Did you drink in any of these pubs? What are your memories of visiting them? And do you have any favourites from the past no longer serving ale? And do you recognise the mystery pub? Please let us hear about your memories and if you have any photos, even better! You can contact the Newsletter Editors through our branch webpage.



Mystery pub—then....



And now

