

Celebrating the Real Ale Scene in Sussex

Sussex Drinker



Spring 2025

Free



11th CAMRA Spring Equinox Festival Horsham Drill Hall March 21st & 22nd 2025

(see pages 3 and 9)



Yapton 33rd Beerex 2025 9th-11th May 2025

**Yapton and Ford
Village Hall, Main
Road, Yapton**

(see pages 4 and 11)



Along with 10 ales and 18 ciders, we have a selection of wines, gins and soft drinks and award winning Scotch eggs and pork pies.

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(opposite the old Peace & Plenty) East Sussex TN31 7UL

www.ryewaterworks.co.uk

11th CAMRA Spring Equinox Festival

Horsham Drill Hall, March 21st & 22nd 2025



We are delighted to confirm that the 2025 CAMRA North Sussex Spring Equinox Beer & Cider Festival is able to go ahead again, with a new Friday afternoon session replacing the Saturday evening session, and a slightly earlier 11am start for the Saturday afternoon session.

The venue remains the Drill Hall, Denne Road, Horsham town centre, RH12 1JF, which is about 15 to 20 minutes' walk from the railway station and less from the bus station.

As in prior years, the beer list will have 50+ ales, with the usual balanced mix of light and dark ales, about 8 of which will be served from keykeg. All our excellent Branch brewers will again be featured, alongside other breweries from near and far. Sussex cider makers will feature on Stringer's Cider bar, with a mix of traditional and

flavoured ciders and perries. A selection of wine and low alcohol beer will also be available.

We aim to order sufficient beer and cider so that we run low but do not run out before the end of the festival, so that those attending the final session still have an interesting and exciting selection to the end. We also anticipate reducing beer and cider prices for the final hour on the Saturday afternoon.

Food and snacks will be available at all sessions.

Tickets for the Friday 11:30-4pm session are £10, Friday 6-10pm session are £9, and Saturday 11am-4pm session £7. Your entry fee includes a festival glass, which can be returned at the end of the event for a £2 refund if you wish. CAMRA members will receive £5 of beer tokens on presentation of their membership card.

As well as being able to purchase tickets in Horsham from the Malt Shovel, Beer Mine and the Anchor Tap, Crawley's Brewery Shades and East Grinstead's Engine Room they are also available online at

northsussex.camra.org.uk/equinox, or use the



QR code.

Postal applications (cheques payable to CAMRA North Sussex and please include a stamped addressed envelope) can be made to The Treasurer, 16 Cobbles Crescent, Crawley, West Sussex, RH10 8HA.

For more info, including a beer list in due course, contact: camra.equinox@gmail.com, or visit northsussex.camra.org.uk, or via X @CAMRAEquinox or northsussexcamrabranch on Facebook.

Mike Head
North Sussex CAMRA



Yapton 33rd Beerex 2025

Celebrating the 80th Anniversary of VE Day



The 33rd Yapton Beerex is returning to Yapton and Ford Village Hall, Main Road, Yapton on the 9th 10th and 11th of May 2025.

In addition to our varied range of ales, selected brewers have been invited to

come up with some unique ales to celebrate the 80th Anniversary of VE Day which falls on the 8th of May 2025.

The hall stands on Yapton Village Green which affords the opportunity for al fresco relaxation over a pint or two. The middle weekends in May have in recent years afforded some great weather, so fingers crossed.

In addition to even more (48) perfectly cooled real cask ales this year there will again be a Craft Beer bar, extra ciders and perries and the return of our excellent caterer Hey Amigo! In keeping with the VE Day theme, we are also reintroducing our world beer bottle fridge, Bières Sans Frontières. All ales and ciders will have been selected from both international, national and local sources by CAMRA volunteers who will be on hand to guide you through the various styles.

After considering feedback, our Friday session now starts at 1130am running right through to an earlier finish at 930pm. Session times are below with ticket prices which remain unchanged from last year. You don't need a ticket for Sunday but please bring ID if you are lucky enough to look under 25. Children and well-behaved dogs are welcome and free at all sessions.

Friday 9th May 1130am to 930pm - £8

Saturday 18th May 11am to 9pm - £8 all day; - £4 from 5pm

Sunday 19th May 12noon to 3pm - Free. (Drinks

choice likely to be more limited in this session)

Friday and all-day Saturday ticket holders will get a free half pint cask ale/cider voucher.

Card carrying CAMRA members additionally get a £2 voucher for the session they attend (NOT the free Sunday session). A souvenir programme is included. Glasses are again to borrow not to keep. Cash and cards will be accepted for everything with tokens for sale to buy drinks.

The 500 and 700 Stagecoach bus services operate regularly between Littlehampton and Chichester and beyond (500 from Barnham station) on all 3 days of the festival. Compass route 66 also serves Bognor and local villages on Friday and Saturday mornings and afternoons.



A link to the ticketing website can be found on QR code on our posters at various venues and in this publication. Any updates will be posted on

westernsussexcamra.org.uk

and this site will also link to an interactive beer list in the fullness of time.

You can also purchase tickets at the following venues: - Maypole Yapton, Wilkes Head Eastergate, New Inn Littlehampton, Chichester Inn Chichester, Fox And Finch West Worthing, Dog And Duck Bognor Regis.

Tickets MAY be available on the door but if they have all been presold then this won't happen so we would recommend purchasing in advance as numbers are limited.

If you want tickets by post or any further details or would like to volunteer to work serving and/or setting up and taking down please contact Paul on 07940 527045.

Cheers!

Tony Ashcroft and Paul Dunn
Festival Organisers

SUSSEX PUB SCRATCHINGS

News of new developments and updates on the Sussex pub scene will be gratefully received by the Editor for consideration in Scratchings. The standard disclaimer on page 30 applies to all items.

■ BEXHILL



The **Albatross Club**, (South East Sussex Club of the Year 2024), will be holding its Beer Festival from 2nd - 5th May 2025. 18 Cask Ales and 7 Ciders will be on-tap, with live music on the Friday, Saturday evenings and Sunday and Monday afternoons. Food will also be available. Non-members are welcome.



The **Brickmaker's Alehouse**, was voted Surrey and Sussex Pub of the Year 2024. Its popular Spring Beer and Cider Festival returns from 4th - 6th April 2025, with up to 12 Casks available.

The **Ruddy Duck** is now offering real ale across four pumps of which three are LocAles.

A gathering of local CAMRA members recently enjoyed a social event at the **Picture Playhouse**. Nine cask ales were available. The East London Quadrant, Titanic Plum Porter, and Brains Rev James were particularly appreciated! In November 2024 a Five Day Tap Takeover was held featuring ales from local Burning Sky Brewery. The pub encourages feedback from drinkers about the ales to inform the selection of further supplies from Burning Sky. This Wetherspoon's pub will hold a Spring Beer Festival from 5th - 16th March. Thirty cask ales will be available from local, national and international breweries.

■ BRACKLESHAM

Little Monster by the Bay is the latest venture of the troubled Chilgrove-based brewery. Open Wednesday to Sunday from 5pm, this welcoming bar serves its own brewery's keg beers as well as having a food offering.

■ BRAMBER

The **Castle Inn** was sold in December 2024, but we do not have any further information.

■ BURGESS HILL



At the **Six Gold Martlets**, there will be a tap takeover with returning brewery Firebird. This is likely to be the weekend of half term (21st - 23rd Feb). They also have a new promotion starting Monday 3rd Feb for CAMRA members. Each time a CAMRA voucher is used in the pub, you get the change to write down your name and number for our tombola box. At the end of each month winners will be picked at random from the box.

Latest events at the **Signalbox** include a quiz every Wednesday, a monthly Comedy Night starting on February 10 and then second Monday of every month thereafter and most importantly, a winter beer festival in between February (Weds 12th - Sun 23rd) and a spring beer festival (Weds April 30th to Sun May 11th).

■ CHAILEY GREEN



On a recent visit to the **Five Bells** the ales were Harveys Best and Old, although Mild is on next, plus Long Man Hopsteiner all in good condition. On Mondays, the guest ales are currently £3.60 a pint. There was also a box of cider on the bar which at the time of the visit was Rosie's Pig.

■ CHICHESTER

A new venture in North Street is **Ghost at the Feast**. Situated in a former haberdashers, and on two floors, the ground floor contains a number of assorted street food outlets. Upstairs, however, you will find a wine bar, and a beer bar run by Fauna of Arundel. Only keg beer, though.

The **Hole in the Wall** is under new management. Run by Big Smoke Brew Company, it continues to offer a range of well-kept beers from the parent company as well as guests.

The **Wickham Arms** is up for sale at £500,000

■ COCKING

The **Blue Bell** has had to close for the time being due to financial difficulties. While the pub business itself is viable, the Community Hub which owns it has a debt to service. In the short term they are trying to raise £30,000, and if that is successful, new tenants are waiting to reopen the pub. For more information, or if you want to help,

visit the pub website

(thebluebellatcocking.co.uk) or the Gofundme page: gofundme.com/f/the-blue-bell-community-hub.

■ CRAWLEY



The **Brewery Shades** had a successful Tap Takeover event with Vocation at the end of November, and their beers continue to feature on the bar.

The **White Hart** had Harvey's Sussex and Old in fine condition during a branch visit in December.

■ EASTBOURNE

Having delighted visitors with its nationally acclaimed Christmas decorations, the **Marine** can always be relied upon for excellent food and ales. Harvey's Sussex Best Bitter and Fuller's London Pride are usually available.

Three Harvey's tied pubs deserve mention. The **Victoria** in Latimer Road one block from the seafront, is worth seeking out for its traditional interior, and on a recent visit the Christmas Ale and the Old were excellent. The **Lamb** in Eastbourne Old Town continues to serve an excellent range of Harvey's ales, and a warm welcome from Natalie and her team is guaranteed! The **Hurst Arms** had a change of proprietor in November as Adrian and Annabelle retired. The new landlady, Annie, took over on 27th November. To begin with, the pub will be offering three Harvey's ales, Armada Ale, Sussex Best Bitter and Old Ale but Annie is looking at offering seasonal beers as well. She has also extended the opening hours so that the pub is open every afternoon.



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LONGMANBREWERY

■ EAST GRINSTEAD



The **Engine Room** collaboration with Flying Trunk has yielded two popular In Cahoots beers so far, with the third expected in February (see the Flying Trunk BLO report for details). The eclectic beer range on offer

continues to delight imbibers. Regular updates about beers, events, and other information are posted on social media.

Young's Winter Warmer was one of four ales on at the **Ship** in December, with all in good condition.

■ EAST PRESTON

The **SP Alehouse** closed and then re-opened in November 2024 under new owner ship and with a new name which is the **Great Dane**. It opens early as a cafe/coffee shop with the bar opening at midday. It still has a selection of local cask ales plus cider and keg.

■ FITTLEWORTH

The **Swan** re-opened in December 2024 after a period of closure.

■ Hastings

In Hastings Old Town, the **Dolphin Inn**, Rock-a-Nore Road, was recently presented with an award as Community Pub of the Year by local CAMRA South East Sussex Branch.

The **Jolly Fisherman**, East Beach Street, had a 'Dark Beer Festival' in early January.

The licence at the **Anchor Inn** in George Street has been transferred from Dennis and Sara to Isaac and Billie, keeping it in the family; the older generation will still be involved though.

In the High Street, two pubs are now up for sale: the **Wellington**, which has been empty for

months.



Management of the **Stag Inn** in All Saints Street has recently been taken over by Max and Dom.



The **Jenny Lind**, which is still trading, but a local community buyout appears to be on the cards for the Jenny, no doubt an update will be available for the next issue.

■ HENFIELD

The **Henfield Club** has had a good year for ale and has now installed a 3rd cask line. A minimum of two ales from Downlands are always on, Best and rotating guests. Card carrying CAMRA members can be signed in at the bar.

■ HORSHAM

The branch had another excellent day out in Horsham just after Christmas, with the Anchor Tap, Bear, Black Jug, Dog & Bacon, Kings Arms and Malt Shovel all getting high scores for their beer quality.

CAMRA NORTH SUSSEX BRANCH PRESENTS

SPRING EQUINOX BEER FESTIVAL

www.northsussex.camra.org.uk/equinox
camra.equinox@gmail.com

21-22 March 2025
Horsham Drill Hall
Denne Road
RH12 1JF

Tickets on sale from
Malt Shovel, Beer Mine
and Anchor Tap in Horsham,
Brewery Shades in Crawley and
Engine Room in East Grinstead,
or online via website
or email above

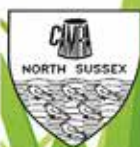
Friday 21 March
£10 open 11.30am-4.30pm
£9 open 6-10pm

Saturday 22 March
£7 open 11am-4pm

CAMRA members get £5 beer token*
Ticket includes a festival glass



**CAMPAIGN
FOR
REAL ALE**



 **SCAN ME**



■ HOVE



The **Watchmaker's Arms** will be celebrating 10 years on the 1st May, and are promising a beer-related event - watch this space.

■ ICKLESHAM



The **Robin Hood** was voted Country pub of the Year 2024 by the local CAMRA branch. In November, a large group of members visited the pub to see the award of the certificate to landlady Carly Darcy. This accolade follows being Cider Pub of the Year and being in the good Beer Guide 2025. In January, the pub held its annual Wassail Ceremony with the traditional warding off of evil spirits in the orchard, merry making, Morris Dancing, and drinking the cider for which the pub is famed. Generous support of local charities continues. The first prize in last year's Christmas raffle, a TV set, was won by a member of the pub's staff who then donated it to St. Michael's Hospice. Recent ales on handpump have included Tonbridge Old Chestnut and Romney

Marsh Plum Porter, both of which were in excellent condition.

■ LEWES



At the **Black Horse** there is a good selection of cask beer including Harvey's Best, one from Gun Brewery and two from Lakedown of which the American Stout was excellent.

■ LINDFIELD

The **Stand Up Inn** has Gun and Three Acre beers continuing to feature frequently into the spring whilst April 12th sees the latest Stand Up toad tournament.

■ NEWICK



The **Royal Oak** is still selling Harvey's Best and Long Man Blonde together with a guest ale that most recently has been Harveys Old. All three are were found to be in excellent condition.

- CASK ALES - CRAFT & WORLD BEERS - HOT FOOD - CIDERS & PERRIES -

33 RD

YAPTON
BEEREX

9TH-11TH MAY 25

PROUDLY SUPPORTING

THE VE DAY 80TH ANNIVERSARY

FRI

11.30-21.30

£8

SAT

11.00-21.00

£8*

SUN

12.00-15.00

FREE

FREE £2
BEER TOKEN
FOR ALL
CAMRA
MEMBERS
(NOT
SUNDAY)

FREE CASK/CIDER
HALF PINT
FOR FRIDAY &
ALL DAY
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48 REAL
ALES

CAMRA

CAMPAIGN
FOR
REAL ALE



SCAN FOR TICKETS

PURCHASE TICKETS FROM:

MAYPOLE (YAPTON), FOX AND FINCH (WEST WORTHING),
CHICHESTER INN (CHICHESTER), WILKES HEAD (EASTERGATE),
DOG AND DUCK (BOGNOR REGIS), NEW INN (LITTLEHAMPTON)

■ PEACEHAVEN

The **Dewdrop Inn** has been closed since December while the pub company (Stonegate) seeks a new landlord. It is hoped that a replacement landlord can be found as the Dewdrop is a two-star National Inventory heritage pub, so its loss would be significant.

■ PETT



The **Royal Oak** is a friendly country pub renowned for the quality of the ales it serves. Recent offerings have included Greene King Fireside, Harvey's Old and Kent Yule Log, all in fine form. Details of the beers available at any time can be found on the Real Ale Finder and Cask Finder apps. The pub's annual beer festival will be held in May. Further details will be in the summer edition of the Sussex Drinker. In the meantime, the pub continues its support of local charities including the Pett Level Rescue Boat and Pett Church Restoration Fund. A new venture is also to support the Army Benevolent Fund.

■ ST LEONARDS

We are pleased to report that pubs had a great Christmas and New Year. Let's hope the improved trade continues during January and February. The CAMRA Branch Christmas drink around St Leonards offered a choice of over 20 different beers in the Tower, Nag's Head, Horse and Groom, St Leonard and Piper.

The **Tower** is holding its Beer Festival on 20-23 February.

■ TURNERS HILL

A trip to the **Red Lion** to sample the Harvey's Christmas Ale was very much enjoyed.

■ WILLINGDON

Willingdon is an area just outside Eastbourne town that retains a village feel. It has two pubs within a few yards of each other. The **Red Lion** is a Hall and Woodhouse pub and on a recent visit the Tanglefoot was in excellent order.

At the **Wheatsheaf** a visit around Christmas time was enhanced by good pints of Harvey's Sussex Best Bitter and Long Man Old Man.

■ WORTHING



Worthing's newest micropub the **Foresters** opened in November 2024 and has quickly become popular. It is in the shopping parade directly opposite the main entrance to West Worthing railway station. It has typically four cask ales, four ciders and four keg beers. There is usually at least one dark ale, plus it had a pin of Boffle strong ale from Sunken Knave over Christmas. There is a fridge with a selection of cans and bottles to drink on the premises or take away.

The **Georgi Fin**, in the Goring Road shops, changed hands at the end of 2024, the new owners are a local couple Marc and Eloise who plan to make a few small changes, but keep the pub and its atmosphere much the same as it has always been. There is likely to be a change of name, but this is not known at the time of writing. The pub will continue to serve a selection of cask and keg beers, along with cider, wine and spirits.

The Crown

Family friendly community pub in the heart of Eastbourne Old Town.

Large enclosed rear garden,
Dog friendly, WiFi, Sports TV.

Open Mon-Thu noon-11pm,
Fri & Sat noon-midnight,
Sun 12 noon-11pm.

CAMRA award winning pub
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Community Pub of the Year 2016,
LocAle Pub of the Year 2015,
Community Pub of the Year 2020



22 Crown Street, Old Town, Eastbourne,
BN21 1PB, (01323) 724654

18



Easter Bank Holiday Beer Festival
Thursday 17th - Monday 21st April
20+ Ales & Ciders



Robin Hood Icklesham

For over 25 years the D'Arcy family have owned and operated the award winning Robin Hood public free house.

We offer up to four real ales (including at least one local real ale), 12 real ciders (from Kent and Sussex producers), and locally sourced home cooked food.

We have a log fire and a big function room. We are dog friendly.

South East Sussex Pub of the Year 2024, Sussex and South East Region Cider Pub of the Year 2025.

In the 2025 Good Beer Guide.

Main Road
Icklesham
TN36 4BD
01424 814277

Opening Times:
Mon & Tue closed;
Wed-Sat
11am-11pm; Sun
11am-9pm

Meal Times:
Mon & Tue no
service; Wed-Sat
11am-7.15pm;
Sun 11am-
5.30pm

www.robinhoodsussex.co.uk

A poster for "The Night Porter" beer festival. It features a large, dark bottle of beer with a white label that says "The Night Porter" and "RATED XXX". The bottle is anthropomorphized with arms and hands, standing with its hands on its hips. The background is a solid red color. At the top, a banner reads "Darkfest 2025 Presents". At the bottom, text reads "OUR MOST CONTROVERSIAL FESTIVAL EVER FEATURING STRONG DARK ALES 20TH-23RD FEBRUARY 2025 THE GARDENERS ARMS • 46 CLIFFE HIGH STREET • LEWES • 01273 474000".

Bru News

The Sussex Breweries Pages

Information here is generally supplied by the Brewery Liaison Officers (BLOs) named at the end of each report. BruNews is compiled by Roy Bray. A complete list of the breweries operating in Sussex, and their contact details, can be found on the [breweries](https://sussex.camra.org.uk/breweries) page on the Sussex branches website

<https://sussex.camra.org.uk/breweries>

1648

Brewery has been busy with a **Winter Solstice** 4.3% a dark ruby spicy brew from smoked barley with a hint of ginger being popular. **Triple Champion** 4.0%, **Signature** 4.4%, and **Laughing Frog** 5.2% are all available plus **Saint George** 4.5% and **Hop Pocket** to follow staying at 3.7% not enough body at 3.4% to take advantage of the lower duty rate.

BLO Barry Blewitt

360 Brewing

Ben Filtness, Head Brewer at 360 Brewing Co. has moved on to a new role at Burning Sky. Ben led the team of brewers at 360 for the last four years and has been pivotal in honing the skills of 360 brewers Jethro Koch and Dominic Feargrieve. "I'm proud of all we have achieved at 360 in the last few years, we've become a nationally recognised brewer of great cask and keg beer and



grown the business fourfold". He continued "We've won several awards and many fans and now Jethro and Dom are ready to take up the mantle at 360, there are many exciting beers to come, 360 is a champion of cask, I've made sure of that." Ben had previously brewed for Bedlam and Longman, but it was only at 360°, under the watch of brewing M.D. Robin Langton that Ben developed his skills and knowledge to become a Head Brewer of some renown. "Ben has become one of the best brewers in the country" Robin said. "I am proud of all we have achieved in the last few years and I only wish him the best". The excellent cask beers at 360° include CAMRA favourites **Volks ESB** and **Here comes the sun** elderflower ale along with an excellent best bitter called **Bluebell**. They have a great range of cask ale and the Taproom is always worth a visit for cask ale, hazy

pales and top quality handmade pizza. "Our cask program continues to develop, with a new stout **Back to Black** being released in the New Year, along with our new barrel aged Oenobeer. We welcome visitors to 360° and are excited to see what our new generation of brewers can bring to the table".

BLO Jason Phillips

ABYSS

We at Abyss are gearing up for an excellent year, with more beers than ever before. Over the last year we've brewed getting on for half a million pints worth of Abyss pales, IPAs, sours, stouts and lagers. We're very proud of our range of beers and continue to work hard to make tiny increments of improvements to everything we brew. To really push on in 2025 with the help of our investors we have ordered a new 25hl brewhouse supplied through Gravity Systems UK. This will introduce huge efficiencies into our working week and with a bit of jiggling we'll slot more fermentation capacity and upgraded chilling into place at the Abyss Brewery & Tap. If you haven't visited us yet, please scratch us in your calendar! Every Abyss beer is brewed in the same space as our taproom in Lewes. This year we intend to collaborate with more like-minded contemporaries in beer and beyond: bolder beer styles and even more engaging events at the taproom and again by the river in Newhaven this summer. Our beers will also travel further than ever before as we begin selling into selected

countries abroad.

BLO Graham Eaton

ALEWORKS

Aleworks Brewing Co. are expanding their operations. As well as introducing two new beers, **Parlour Stout** and **Tough Love**, a hazy IPA, they have expanded their retail offering. Five litre mini kegs can already be ordered from their website. Bottled beers will also be available on the website very soon, with courier delivery an option. Aleworks also supply on a wholesale basis, with local delivery, or courier for further afield. For wholesale orders, please contact the brewery.

BLO Ian McIntyre

ARUNDEL

Two new beers being launched including a plum & blackberry sour called **Chefs Tears** and a new crispy pale called **Service Please**. In addition **Uptown** and **Sussex Dark** (formerly Old Knucker) are being re-brewed with a rare cask of Sussex Dark going to the Worthing beer festival.

BLO Jon Purdom

BREWING BROTHERS

Brewing Brothers produced a green hop **Admiral** at 4.7%. This was in keg form and was tasted in the Piper in Norman Road, St Leonards-on-Sea.

BLO Peter Mitchell

BURNING SKY

The brewery was exceptionally busy throughout 2024 and expect that to continue this year. As usual, they have a wide range of releases in cask, keg, can and bottle - across clean and mixed fermentation beers.

Core beers are complimented by monthly specials, with an occasional extra. In 2024 they fermented an **Old Ale**, with a range of speciality malts, black strap molasses and Chinook hops which was rested on toasted American oak chips to compliment the flavours. Well worth checking out their web shop as some releases are only available there.

BLO Ian Hodge

FLYING TRUNK

Flying Trunk continue with their plans to move next door to a larger space to include their brewing kit and a small tap room. It has taken a bit longer than hoped, but work is progressing well. In the meantime they have carried on brewing the core range, sometimes with tweaks, and have also produced the first two of a regular series called **In Cahoots** in conjunction with the Engine Room (EG), one of whose regulars is chosen to select one or two hops for each brew. Both were well received; the first was a 4.5% Pale with East Kent Goldings and Olicana hops, and the second was a 4.2% Porter with Admiral and Amarillo. The third iteration, due sometime in February, will be a Cask IPL (look it up; I did!) around 4.8%. A very successful pre-Christmas open day at the brewery was well attended and featured a cask of **Silver Fox** (3.6%) specially dry-hopped with Citra, as well as a selection of bottles. Flying Trunk will keep everyone posted on progress with the tap room project.

BLO Jon Samways

GOLDMARK

Following the success at the Yapton Beerex, **Vanilla Black Porter** has once again been awarded gold for Beer Of The Festival, this time at Worthing beer festival. This has now been added to the permanent line-up of canned beers. A large investment has been made with the purchase of 2000L conical fermenters to increase brewing capacity to meet the increased demand for products.

BLO Jim Waterston

HAND BREW

After a busy Christmas period for the brewery and their two pubs Hand are excited to announce that **Otto** their delicious 4% dry stout has been added permanently to the core cask range as of Jan 2025. Hand is once again hosting their very popular International Women's Collaboration Brew Day Event on Friday 7 March at their Worthing Brewery. Open to everyone. See Hand Brew Co socials for sign-up with tickets via Eventbrite. Hand is pleased to announce Alcohol Free Shaka will be arriving in March 2025. Cloak and Dagger have ceased trading as of December 2024.

BLO Henry Kirk

HARVEY'S

The brewery was exceptionally busy in the lead-up to Christmas. Thirty-five years on from the publication of their Bicentenary Book and the original launch of the **Harvey Hop** a reunion is planned for July. The event will mark the end of the current Hoppers Club and the launch of a fresh

initiative - details to follow. Between April and October they operated an average of four brewery tours each week, using an online booking facility. In the last six weeks of 2024 a total of 600 brewery tour vouchers were sold for 2025. Tours will resume in April and will continue to be conducted by members of the brewing staff. Henry Kirk has joined their brewing team, having trained with them in 2012 while completing his brewing degree and was Head Brewer at Dark Star Brewery prior to its sad closure. The new canning facility has been commissioned. **Pells Pale, Sussex Bitter, Pilsner, Wharf IPA** and a new **Coastal Eclipse** black stout will all be appearing shortly in cans, while their commitment to cask beers remains as strong as ever. **Christmas Ale** was awarded Gold at both the 2024 British Bottlers Institute and World Beer challenge alongside a whole host of other Silver, Bronze, and Diploma awards in addition to a few other CAMRA awards. They remain steadfast in their commitment to CAMRA, who are grateful for their sponsorship in a number of areas.

BLO Ian Hodge

KISSINGATE

The brewery has been focusing on brewing some of their renowned stronger dark beers which have showcased at some of the most prestigious London winter beer festivals. The Wandsworth (Le Gothique) and Pigs Ear festival organisers were keen to secure early

orders for Kissingate's rarely brewed specials which accompanied their more familiar brews. Throughout the winter months **Undertakers Varnish** @ 7.0% and **Choc & Vanilla Oatmeal Stout** 4.8% have been available from the taproom alongside the core range. An **Old Ale** 5.0% due to be launched in late January will be available through February and March. As always, the brewery continues to balance brewing tasks with a busy social calendar. Information regarding all events can be found on brewery website. Kissingate's annual Spring Festival will be held on Saturday 17th May.

BLO Roy Bray

LANGHAM

They have been busy replacing their hot liquor tank at the start of January and preparing for events in the coming year, with their first ever festival of Food, Fizz & Firkins taking place on the 22nd of March - and a concert with Anouska in their 18th century barn on the 26th of April. For a full list of their events and brewery tour please see their website.

They continue to champion reusable takeaway containers with over 2000 refills done over the festive season. They always have 5-8 beers available for takeaway with many also being poured in their taproom.

LARRIKIN

This Spring, Larrikin celebrates its 9th year brewing on-site at the Urchin pub in Hove.

Practically all beer produced is served in the Urchin with zero

delivery miles via seven taps, including three regular brews (**ISO Hazy Pale, Oyster Stout, Larry Lager**) and four regularly changing specials. Current highlights include **Barrow's Brown Ale** on cask and the 2024 edition barrel aged **Imperial Stout** (8.5%).

Although they are already pretty small scale, this season the Larrikin team have been playing around on a mate's even smaller brew kit for some extra special, single keg editions. Pouring now in the Urchin is a toasty **Smoked Porter**. Expect very soon a **Smoked Märzen**, traditional cask ales, dry-hopped lager, a boozy Belgium blonde and whatever else they decide to have a go at.

BLO Graham Eaton

LAKEDOWN

In short, this year has been focused on quality, consistency and sustainability. Lakedown have added to their brew team, refined the recipes and updated all their processes to increase the quality of the beer, bringing all the beers in-line with the Lakedown vegan, gluten free ethos as well as adding solar and battery storage to the brewery that supplies 40% of their annual energy needs. The RO filtered spring water means all the Lakedown beers are incredibly fresh and clean tasting. In terms of new beers, they have continued their relationship with the local hop farm for the annual **Sussex Green Hop** that was solely brewed with Pilgrim this year. The brewery has also entered a hop development programme

with farms to put more focus on new UK hops. In November the brewery introduced **Marquee**, American stout - a 4.8%, rich and dark stout in cask. Also introduced **Extra Special**, a 5% ESB in cask. In December **Upside**, a hazy and juicy pale ale was introduced. At 4.8% it has a smooth mouthfeel and packs a real punch of tropical fruits. The biggest new release was the brewery's first Alcohol Free beer **Sound AF**, a juicy pale ale with a big aroma and easy drinking style. It's been flying out and the next batch is due in Jan. This beer was a year in development and the results have been pleasing to both customers and brewery.

BLO Graham Eaton

LONG MAN

Number Eight, the brewery's Six Nations themed amber ale, is back in February. This ever-popular 4.4% cask ale has been created to celebrate the two great national institutions of rugby and real ale. Full bodied, smooth and malty with a crisp bitterness and blackcurrant aroma from the locally grown hop, Bramling Cross. In March, a brand new cask ale will be launched: **Long Man Rye Red** (4%) has sweet notes of dark fruits and citrus on the nose, a vibrant fruity body, with balanced malt character and a resinous citrus aftertaste. Four new tanks have been delivered as production capacity expands. There will be new and exciting beers in keg and can throughout 2025. The first will be a single hop **Citra** available early spring. The Brewery Shop

and Tap Room is open seven days a week, with a range of cask and keg beers. With board games and playing cards on every table it's the perfect place to sit and watch the world go by or spend some quality time. Nationwide delivery is available via the brewery website with click and collect from Litlington (BN26 5RA) and the Cadence Cycle Club, Cocking, nr Midhurst (GU29 0HT).

BLO Richard Scullion

SUNKEN KNAVE

Sunken Knave had a great Christmas with **Boffle** our 10.5% barley wine being launched in cask to much acclaim alongside two great collaborations, a ruby mild from a 1950s recipe with Burton Bridge Brewery and a deliciously malty 80/ cofermented with Belgian and Scottish yeasts with Otherworld Brewery of Edinburgh. More collabs to come in the new year with an **Oatmeal Porter** with Mysterious Brew and the long-awaited release of Sunken Knave's 4.6% **Old Ale** on cask.

BLO Henry Kirk

THREE ACRE

In the run up to Christmas 2024, the brewery produced its largest ever batch of **Christmas Old Ale**, 130 casks, 1,000 bottles and 50 mini-casks, all of which was sold by early December. January 2025 sees the return of two old favourites: **Blood Orange Pale** (4.9%) and **Extra Special Best** (5.4%), both in cask, while February marks the return of **Azacca Haze** (3.3%), **Citra APA** (4.8%) and **Ruby Porter** (4.2%), again all in cask.

Also in February, the new **Polar IPA** (4.8%) will be launched, the brewery's first cold-fermented cask beer. Another new 5,000L fermentation vessel has been purchased, increasing the total fermentation capacity to 29,000L, and three new members of staff have been hired recently, two in brewing and production and one in sales. Although negotiations on several alternative venues for the proposed Uckfield Taproom were unsuccessful last year, talks are currently ongoing about an exciting new prospect. The brewery team hopes to share updates to this in the coming months.

BLO John Quick

UNBARRED

In 2025 we are introducing our alcohol-free range which started with **Lowkey Pale Ale** and recently releases **Coastin** our west coast IPA which will continue with AF specials throughout the year. You will also see returning favourites like **Granola**, **Dank Juice** along with plenty of new specials, something for everyone. This year we will be heading to our first international festivals, bringing back the Easter Beer Trail around Brighton with more events in the pipeline. Our taproom continues to be open Tuesday and Sunday with a wide selection of beers (keg and cask), takeaway cans and pizza.

BLO Graham Eaton

Spotlight on

BREWERIES

Kissinggate Brewery

The brewery began life in 2010 with their first beer (First Kiss 5.0%) donated as an amateur entry at the Sussex Beer & Cider Festival in Hove and raised £250.00 for the brain injury association Headway.

It all started as a weekend hobby for Gary brewing from the garage at their home address to the current 8bbl system located in a converted barn near Horsham.

Over the past 15 years there have been several fashions and fads within the industry that may have pulled the brewery in a different direction, but the focus has been on producing consistently high quality cask conditioned beers for the free house trade and for Kissinggate's taproom.

Beers such a Black Cherry Mild 4.2%, Six Crows 6.6%, Blackeyed Susan 6.8% and Raisin the Bar 14.0% are just a few of the beers that have attained awards at local and national level.

Due to it's rural location the brewery is a great venue for those looking for an escape to the country.

Dozens of events such as Open Days, Curry Evenings, Quiz Nights, Pizza Nights, Cream Tea Afternoons and private parties keep a dedicated team of local volunteers busy.

There is undoubtedly a relaxed and friendly feel about Kissinggate that has defined them over the years.

Although there have been many opportunities and resources to expand husband and wife team Gary and Bunny have chosen to contain the business to an easily manageable size.

However due to increasing demand on products and services the brewery is beginning to creak at the seams.



For those of us looking in this must be a good problem to have and long may the hidden gem that is Kissinggate Brewery continue.

Roy Bray
Brewery Liaison Officer





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South East Sussex Branch



Already the Branch and Sussex Cider Pub of the Year, branch members were pleased to vote the Robin Hood our Country Pub of 2024 and were delighted to make another visit to Icklesham to see Branch Cider Rep Angela (centre) present landlady Carly (in black) with the award.



Branch members gathered in Eastbourne's Hurst Arms to mark the retirement of proprietors of ten years, Adrian and Annabelle, (pictured to the left of the pub sign), with a presentation. Tied to Harvey's, they maintained at least six ales on their bar, including out of season seasonal beers; CAMRA members' beer scores regularly averaged 'Very Good'.

The family run Dolphin in Hastings Old Town is a welcoming pub with a full programme of evening events enjoyed by members of the local community and beyond.



Voted Branch Community Pub of 2024 by CAMRA branch members, Branch Vice Chair Roger gives the family the thumbs up.

Brighton & South Downs Branch

Brighton & South Downs branch has been presenting the final awards from the South Downs Beer & Cider Festival (SDBF), back in June. Many of the volunteers at the festival had a great day at Kissinggate's Beer Festival in October, where we took the opportunity to enjoy the excellent range of beers available, and present Gary with the award for best beer at the festival, namely Undertaker's Varnish. Hopefully, Gary and Bunny Lucas can find space on their crowded wall of CAMRA awards to include this one.



The presentation was made by Beer Festival Organiser, Paul Free (right).

Last, but by no means least, we met with Rich and Kate from Flying Trunk Brewery, whose ale Big Daddy had been voted joint runner-up. Seen presenting the award in the Evening Star, Brighton, is Jason Phillips, Branch Chairman, with Eamonn Costello, Committee Member (left).



That concludes all the awards for the 2024 festival. Looking ahead to later this year, this year's festival is being held on Fri 20th and Sat 21st June, at the Corn Exchange, Lewes. Save the date.

Graham Eaton

Brighton & South Downs Branch

Arun & Adur Branch

The 26th Worthing Beer Festival, organised by Arun & Adur branch took place on 25th and 26th October 2024. It was held at the same venue as the previous two years, Rooms Worthing, which is upstairs in the Guildbourne centre. This location is in the town centre with very good public transport links. The festival sponsor was HandBrewCo whose brewery is in Worthing, we would like to thank them for their support and for formally opening the festival. The festival charity was Care for Veterans, their volunteers raised £1134.67 at the festival, which included donated beer tokens of £206.40 from festival goers.

Around 780 people attended over the two days, with Friday evening and Saturday sessions sold out. There were 45 Cask ales, 12 Keg beers and 12 ciders, which sold very well, gaining some positive comments from those who attended the festival. The pies and savouries from Piglets Pantry were also enjoyed by many. Overall the festival was a success and dates (October 24/25 2025) have been put in the diary for next year already. The beer of the festival was Goldmark Vanilla Black, with Hammerton City of Cake and Hand Bird coming a close joint second.

Western Sussex Branch

Western Sussex 2025 Ale Trail. Coming soon we are launching a Ale Trail for 2025, running from May to September. We will be contacting likely venues at present, but if your local pub supports local brewers and cidemakers and would like to be on the trail, or if you want more info, please email social.media@westernsussex.camra.org.uk.

North Sussex Branch

After the success of our Anniversary Ale trail last year, we are launching a bigger and better Trail for 2025, running from March to May, with over 30 stickers to collect this year.

The Trail is open to all, members and non-CAMRA members, as the Trail is all about supporting our great local pubs.

The event starts with a trip to our current Pub of the Year, the Engine Room in East Grinstead, from 1pm on Saturday March 1st.

Ale Trailers will need to pick up the Trail Leaflet, which will detail all the Ale Trail venues to visit and collect a sticker at each. Leaflets will be available at each venue and also at our Spring Equinox beer festival on March 21st and 22nd where you will be able to collect the Festival sticker.

To receive a sticker, you need to spend money at each venue. We'd love it if that was a pint of the great local Ale or Cider available there, but we appreciate that might not always be practical.

The Branch will be running trips to some of the Ale Trail pubs during the three months, and will

conclude with the draw to choose the prize winners on Friday June 6th. Details of the events will be published on the Branch website and social media channels, along with our monthly emails to Members.

There will be six prize winners this year, who will receive a voucher to spend in the Ale Trail venue of their choice.

- Top prize is a voucher for £60, for those who have collected over 80% of the stickers
- Two second prizes of a voucher for £40, for those who have collected over 65% of the stickers
- Three third prizes of a voucher for £20, for those who have collected at least 50% of the stickers

We hope you enjoy the Trail.

If you want more info, please email secretary@northsussex.camra.org.uk.

Cheers
Mike Head

CAMRA North Sussex branch secretary

Bus to the Pub (Bttp)

Bus to the Pub (Bttp) is organised on a weekly basis. All trips are on Thursdays meeting at noon and usually visiting three pubs.

We mostly travel by train but also use buses as well. The majority of the locations visited are urban ones as town pubs usually have a better choice of beers.

If YOU would like to “join us on our weekly trips” then please contact me at whu@maxmalkin.plus.com to be added to the mailing list.



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Passionately independent - Worthing's fourth town-wide tap takeover - April 25-27 2025



The weekend of 25-27 April will see Worthing's fourth town wide tap takeover, where independent venues will each champion an independent brewery from across Sussex and the UK.

To qualify to take part the venue must pour at least 50% independent beer all year round. And as of the end of December 2024, there are 13 venues currently signed up to take part. So it's looking to be another successful event.

2024 was a turbulent year for Hospitality and we have unfortunately seen some closures and also others moving towards pouring macro beer rather than independent breweries. And because of our ongoing commitment to supporting independent breweries these venues are no longer included.

Gemma Clegg, co-owner of Worthing's award-winning craft Beer No Evil said: "Worthing is an important destination for the craft beer scene. It's been amazing to see it grow. We have seen some venues close in 2024, but we're also excited about new venues opening. The sentiment of use them or lose them is even more important right now."

"The last three year's tap takeovers have been a huge success. And that's down to Worthing's independent community - it has a great

collaborative spirit - and the tap takeover is one of the best examples of it." Gemma added.

This is the fourth year the event is taking place. And the team organising are again asking the participating venues to choose a different brewery to those who have been involved the last three years. The reason for this is to be able to keep on championing the less well-known alongside world-renowned breweries - all which must be independent. It challenges people to keep trying and supporting other breweries.

The nature of the tap takeover means each venue can showcase their own, unique style - or try something completely new.

Beer lovers will find new takes on old favourites, and those embracing the weird and wonderful will have plenty to try too - from rich barrel-aged stouts, to Belgian-inspired ales and mouth-watering sours.

For more about this fantastic weekend, visit worthingtaptakeover.co.uk or follow @worthingtto on Instagram or Worthing Tap Takeover on Facebook.

A Tap Takeover is traditionally where one venue hosts a particular brewery over a weekend or evening and said brewery is poured exclusively, or as close to it at that venue.

The team organising are Gemma and Gareth from Beer No Evil and Laurence from The Old Bike Store

Only independently owned venues are able to take part.

They must also pour independently owned breweries as part of their day-to-day business model. This must equate to at least 50% of their taps throughout the year.

Any brewery tied pubs have not been included.

Historic Pubs In Sussex

If you visit the Royal Sussex County Hospital in Brighton, when you leave the building, turn off Eastern Road on to Upper Sudeley Street. Walk down hill for about 50 metres and on the corner to the left you will find a pub called the St George's Inn. From the outside, the pub seems unremarkable. But inside, you will find remnants



of a type of pub which has all too frequently disappeared from our streets: a pub with three distinct

drinking areas, a nicely panelled counter, old fireplaces, and wooden wall panelling. True, modernity has crept in to some extent: the bar back is uncompromisingly modern, and plaster has been hacked off some of the walls to expose bare brick. But the pub has avoided becoming the anonymous opened-up space with wide-screen TVs that has nowadays become so typical of our high streets.

In fact, the area covered by the Brighton and South Downs branch is rich in heritage, and its pubs are no exception to this fact. CAMRA maintains a National Inventory of Historic Pub Interiors, pubs rich in historic fabric 50 or more years old, and no fewer than 30 of them are in our branch. The National Inventory is publicly available on the CAMRA website (camra.org.uk/heritage-pubs).

There are detailed criteria to determine whether a pub can be on the National Inventory and pubs are rigorously surveyed before they are selected for inclusion. But there are many pubs which, while not meeting the strict criteria for the National Inventory, do contain important traces of historic fabric.

In order to ensure that we have a full understanding of the rich heritage surviving in our diverse range of pubs, the branch, like others, is now compiling a Local Inventory in which we

intend to list all pubs in the branch containing historic fixtures and fittings.

There are several questions to be asked. Has the layout of the pub been altered or does a historic floor plan survive? Is the exterior architecture of the pub interesting or distinctive? Are the bar counter and bar back old or have the original furnishings been replaced or modified? Are there other fittings from the past, panelling, tiling, ceiling mouldings, old fixed seating, or wall mirrors?

The first edition of the Local Inventory has now been placed on the branch website (brighton.camra.org.uk/li) but survey work will continue until we have covered the whole branch area. Perhaps you know of a pub which we have not yet surveyed which contains historic fittings and which you feel is worth listing in our Inventory. If so, the branch would be pleased to hear from you. Any such suggestions should be emailed to

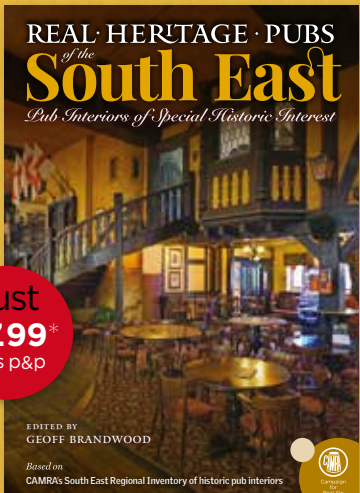
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PUB COMPANIES – WHO THEY ARE AND WHAT THEY DO

1. A POTTED HISTORY OF THE PUBCO

Fifty years ago, when CAMRA was formed, the pub landscape looked very different. For a start, there were many more of them – some 75000 against around 47500 now. The majority of pubs (52000 or so) were owned by breweries. The 89 small and regional breweries had 13800 of them and the rest were in the hands of the 'Big Six' – Bass Charrington, Allied, Whitbread, Scottish & Newcastle, Watney/Grand Metropolitan and Courage/Imperial.

Most of the other 23000 pubs were free houses (in name anyway – many tied their beer supplies to a big brewer in return for loans and discounts). Companies that just owned pubs were few and far between – the likes of Sir John Fitzgerald in the north-east and Heavitree in the south west (though they tied themselves to Bass).

Just about every pub-owning brewery rigorously imposed a supply tie on its own products. As late as the mid-1980s, I remember a Greene King Director recoiling in horror at my suggestion that they allow a few guest beers in their pubs. As a result, new breweries found outlets hard to come by and we customers were hardly spoilt for choice, as a glance at a Good Beer Guide of that era will reveal.

Then, in 1989, along came the Beer Orders. The story of this epochal legislation (for better or worse) is superbly told in Laura Hadland's recent *Fifty Years of CAMRA* book but, in essence, the government acknowledged the stranglehold on the industry exercised by the Big Six and, among other things, capped their pub ownership at 2000.

By now, because of closures and sell-offs, the Big Six owned fewer pubs between them but the Orders still meant around 11000 pubs coming onto the market. We, of course, dreamed of a new golden age of multi-handpumped free houses galore, but the reality was sadly different. Companies were quickly established, usually with close links to the Big Six, to Hoover up these

pubs in big batches then negotiate supply deals, invariably with the company who previously owned the place. Enterprise Inns, for instance, started off with the purchase of 368 pubs from Bass, and that's where they bought the beer from.

In the years that followed, wheeling and dealing saw companies variously grow, collapse, merge, acquire, dispose – it was very difficult to keep up with who owned what. Some companies concentrated on managed pubs, some on tenancies, a few on a mixed model. Behemoths emerged – by 2004, Punch Taverns and Enterprise each owned more than 8000 pubs, though both had accumulated so much debt that they ran into trouble come the financial crash and subsequently retrenched. We'll have a closer look at the current pub company scene in the next article.

A brief history of Punch Taverns illustrates the volatility surrounding pubcos from the 1990s onwards. Punch formed in 1997, purchasing a tranche of pubs from Bass. Two years later, they bought Inn Business (mostly former Whitbread pubs) and then the rump of the Allied estate. The managed pubs were spun off into a separate division called Spirit. In 2003, they acquired their 3100-strong rival Pubmaster plus a couple of smaller companies. Next, Scottish & Newcastle's managed pubs were snapped up and added to Spirit. By 2011 the impact of the crash was being felt, calling for a 'strategic review'. Spirit was demerged and, in 2015, sold to Greene King. Come 2016, a takeover bid totalling £403m (plus the taking on of a billion pounds of debt) was accepted; 1900 pubs went to Heineken with the remaining 1300 residing with Patron Capital, though the Punch brand has been retained.

In the meantime, the treatment of their tenants by many of the Pubcos had become a major issue and, after years of campaigning, the Government was persuaded, in 2014, to announce a statutory Pubs Code aimed at regulating their practices and ensuring fair treatment for tenants. We'll return to the Code in a future article. In this context, though, it needs

mentioning that the currently accepted definition of a pub company embraces breweries that own pubs – and nowadays most such companies have separate management structures for their pub and brewing operations.

Final comments. Pub companies are here to stay. There is nothing wrong with the basic model and, indeed, there are some excellent companies (mostly smaller ones) who treat their licensees well and clearly see their pubs as more than just property assets. It would, though, be difficult to argue that the ways in which some companies operate raise many issues around their custodianship of what aren't just piles of bricks-and-mortar but, in most cases, precious and valued community assets.

2. THE CURRENT PUB COMPANY SCENE

A pub company is simply a company that owns pubs and there are literally hundreds of them, many with only a handful or even just one pub. We'll concentrate here, though, on the bigger companies who, between them, own over half the country's pubs.

Stonegate

Founded in 2010 with the purchase of 333 pubs from Mitchells & Butlers, Stonegate grew quite slowly over the next ten years, making a series of acquisitions including brands like Slug & Lettuce, Walkabout and Be At One, until its pub numbers totalled 765. All the pubs were managed houses. A seismic change came in 2020 when Ei Group was bought for £1.27bn, making Stonegate the largest pub company in the UK with 1,270 managed pubs and, as a result of the Ei purchase, 3,200 leased and tenanted businesses.

Ei itself had been founded, as Enterprise Inns, in 1991, initially with 333 pubs from Bass. The company built up its estate, gaining 2,200 pubs in batches by buying them from other companies or taking them over. In 2002, 1,864 pubs were bought from Whitbread and in 2004, 4,054 from Unique. By this time, it owned nearly 10,000 pubs and was in the FTSE 100 list of top companies. However, it was loaded with debt

and the 2008 financial crash required a good deal of retrenchment. Ei also started building up its managed estate, including pubs on retail agreements under the Craft Union brand (we'll look at this operating model in the next article). By the time of the sale, it was down to fewer than 4,000 pubs.

Punch Taverns

The first article included a brief history of Punch to illustrate the volatility around pubco development. In summary, it grew quickly to around 8,000 pubs, suffered under the crash, sold a lot of pubs including its managed division and was taken over in 2016. 1,900 pubs went to Heineken and 1,300 to Patron Capital, who retain the Punch brand. At takeover time, all pubs were leased or tenanted but it's also now pushing retail agreements (which it calls Management Partnerships). Some pubs were sold but in June 2021 it announced the purchase of Youngs' tenanted division, bringing the current total to 1,282.

Admiral Taverns

Admiral was founded in 2003 by two families and grew quickly to 2,300 pubs by 2007. Many of these were 'bottom end' houses disposed of by other pub companies. The financial crash had the usual consequences for over-extended businesses and numbers were down to 1,700 by 2011 and continued to fall. By 2017 it was in the hands of Cerberus Capital Management who sold up to a joint venture by Magners cider-makers C&C Group and estate investor Proprium Capital Partners, by which time there were 845 pubs. The acquisition trail was hit in 2019 with 137 pubs coming from Marstons and 150 from Heineken. The big one arrived in July 2021 when Admiral bought 674 Hawthorn pubs from property firm New River taking the estate to over 1,500.

Admiral's pubs are all tenanted or leased and tend to be wet-led community operations. It has a relatively good reputation in the trade though there's certainly no aversion to flogging off pubs as 'development opportunities'.

Star Pubs & Bars

In 1995, Scottish & Newcastle, one of the original 'Big Six' breweries, bought another of them, Courage, making the combined group Britain's biggest brewer. By 2011, the pub arm, then known as S&N Pub Co, had 1,500 tenanted pubs and 600 in management. Come 2008, Scottish Courage was gobbled up by international brewer Heineken and the pub business rebranded as Star Pubs & Bars. Many pubs were sold but then, in 2017, as previously mentioned, 1,900 were snapped up from Punch. Again there were disposals and the estate currently stands at 2,500.

Star vigorously promote their retail agreement scheme, JustAdd Talent. In 2020, it was fined £2m for breaches of the Pubs Code (which we'll cover in a later article)

Greene King

In 1995, Greene King was a long-established family brewer with 900 pubs, nearly all in East Anglia and the South-East. It then embarked on a ferocious acquisition trail, swallowing up many breweries (the likes of Morlands, Belhaven, Morrells and Hardy & Hanson) and other pub companies. GK itself is now owned by a billionaire Hong Kong property developer. It has some 3,100 pubs, restaurants and hotels, of which 1,200 are tenanted or leased. Its strategy seems to be to move in the managed direction and the 'Pub Ready' retail agreements are pushed hard. GK was once renowned for not letting other people's beers in its pubs but now have a more enlightened attitude.

Marston's

The company was known as Wolverhampton & Dudley until 2007 when it rebranded as Marston's, one of the many breweries it had taken over in recent years. At that time, 2,500 pubs were owned but the total is now down to 1,400. The tenanted estate, in particular, has been reduced through sales such as 200 to New River in 2013 and 137 to Admiral in 2019. In late 2020, the company took on the running of 156 Brains pubs in Wales. Also that year, Marston's

merged its brewing operations with Carlsberg but this does not directly affect the pub business.

Mitchells and Butlers

Formed originally out of the old Bass estate, M&B have 1,650 pubs and restaurants. The multitudinous brands include Ember Inns, Toby Carveries, Nicholsons and All Bar One – as can be seen, the emphasis is on food. Pubs are mostly managed though around 50 are on a lease arrangement.

J D Wetherspoon

Since opening its first pub in 1979, 'Spoons has expanded to 925 pubs and 50 hotels, all managed. Plans for 18 new pubs are in the pipeline,

Wellington

Owned by the billionaire Reuben Brothers, the company leases all its 850 pubs on a free of tie basis.



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BEER FESTIVALS AND OTHER DELICENTS

CAMRA EVENTS IN BOLD. For FREE inclusion in this column and on the Sussex Branches website, contact the Editor; for PAID advertisements contact Neil Richards. Copy-by date and contact details on the contacts page 30. For up to date information on beer festivals and other beer and cider related events in Sussex, and often more details than appear here in print, please visit the Beer Festivals page on the Sussex Branches website, sussex.camra.org.uk/festivals.

7-9 Feb Watchmaker's Arms, Hove, will be holding its annual Dark Beer Showcase from Friday the 7th February, through that weekend, until the beers run out. As always, there will be a selection of mostly cask beers from local and renowned independent breweries around the UK.

12-23 Feb The Signalbox, Burgess Hill, is holding a winter beer festival

20-23 Feb Gardeners Arms, Lewes, Darkfest 2025. Sub-titled The Night Porter - Our most controversial festival ever featuring strong dark ales.

21-22 Mar **Spring Equinox Beer & Cider Festival** Horsham Drill Hall (see pages 3 and 9).

22 Mar Food, Fizz & Firkins @ Langhams

26 Apr A concert with Anouska @ Langhams

2-4 May Albatross Beer Festival, Albatross Club (RAFA), Bexhill on Sea

9-11 May **Yapton 33rd Beerex** Yapton and Ford Village Hall, Main Road, Yapton (see pages 4 and 11).

16-18 May **Beer and Cider by the Sea, Eastbourne.** This is one of the largest Festivals in Sussex. Located on Eastbourne's seafront. 100 Casks, Keg Ales, and range of thirst-quenching Ciders. Music across all sessions. Food available. Book your ticket early, last year's Friday and Saturday evening sessions sold out. Tickets from www.visit-eastbourne.com

30 May-1 Jun Glastonwick Real Ale and Music Festival, Church Farm Coombes BN15 0RS. Free shuttle bus. 70 interesting casks. www.glastonwick.uk and on Facebook.

Branch Diaries

The following are the details of planned meetings and socials of the six Sussex CAMRA branches for Feb-Apr.

Arun & Adur

11 Mar Branch Meeting, TBC

13 May Branch Meeting (AGM), TBC
See aaa.camra.org.uk/events.html.

Brighton & South Downs

See brighton.camra.org.uk/diary.

North Sussex

Branch events are on the second Tuesday of the month, starting 7.30pm

25 Feb GBG Selection Meeting, Frog & Nightgown, Faygate

1 Mar North Sussex 2025 Ale Trail (see page 21) - launch event Engine Room, EG

11 Mar POTY and CPOTY announcement
White Hart, Crawley

8 Apr Branch Social, TBC

15 May AGM, TBC

See northsussex.camra.org.uk/diary.

North East Sussex

See northeastsussex.camra.org.uk/diary.

South East Sussex

8 Feb Cider PotY Tour

11 Feb White Horse Inn & The Bull's Head

18 Feb Bexhill Gathering, Ruddy Duck Bexhill

25 Feb Branch Meeting London & County
Eastbourne

4 Mar Bexhill Gathering, Brickmakers Alehouse
Bexhill

11 Mar Robertsbridge & Salehurst Social

15 Mar Marden & Tonbridge trip

18 Mar Eastbourne Gathering Bohemian

25 Mar Hastings Gathering, Jenny Lind

8 Apr Hurst Arms, Eastbourne

15 Apr St Leonards Gathering, the Tower

22 Apr Branch Meeting AGM Albatross Club
Bexhill

6 May Bibendum Eastbourne

See southeastsussex.camra.org.uk/diary.

Western Sussex

See westernsussexcamra.org.uk/events.

Be part of the **CAMRA** story

Real ale is just the start...

Our story is your story.
So join us in supporting
everything from pubs, clubs
and drinkers' rights, to licensees
and breweries, uniting us in the
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As a thank you for being a hero
in our story, you receive great
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Campaign
for
Real Ale

Real stories, real people, **real ale**



Sussex Branches of CAMRA

South East Regional Director:

Paul Sanders, 07778 035971

rd.southeast@camra.org.uk

Sussex Area Organiser:

To be appointed

area.organiser@sussex.camra.org.uk

Website: sussex.camra.org.uk

*PotY: Brickmaker's Alehouse, Bexhill,

*CotY: Albatross Club (RAFA), Bexhill on Sea,

*CPotY: Robin Hood, Icklesham

Arun & Adur

Malcolm Barnes,

branch.contact@aaa.camra.org.uk,

www.aaa.camra.org.uk

Beer Festival: Worthing, October 2025

PotY: Five Bells, West Chiltington

CPotY: Green Man Ale & Cider House Worthing;

COTY: none

Brighton & South Downs

Jason Phillips

chair@brighton.camra.org.uk

www.brighton.camra.org.uk

Beer Festival: South Downs June 2025

PotY: Foghorn, Hove;

CPotY: Watchmaker's Arms, Hove.;

CotY: Keymer and Hassocks Sports & Social Club

North Sussex

James Thornton

chair@northsussex.camra.org.uk

www.northsussex.camra.org.uk

Beer Festival: Spring Equinox, 21-22 March 2025

PotY: Engine Room, East Grinstead;

CPotY: Brewery Shades, Crawley; CotY: none

North East Sussex sub branch

Richard Saunders, 07773013063,

richard@msaunders.plus.com

www.northeastsussex.camra.org.uk

PotY: King's Arms, Rotherfield;

CPotY: King's Head, East Hoathly; CotY: none

South East Sussex

Howard Millichap 07599 257522

contact@southeastsussex.camra.org.uk

www.southeastsussex.camra.org.uk

Beer Festivals: Eastbourne Beer Festival,
October 2025

PotY: Brickmaker's Alehouse, Bexhill;

CPotY: Robin Hood, Icklesham;

CotY: Albatross Club (RAFA), Bexhill on Sea

Western Sussex

Max Malkin, 01243 828394

whu@maxmalkin.plus.com

www.westernsussexcamra.org.uk

Beer Festival: Yapton May 2025

PotY: Inglenook Hotel, Pagham;

CPotY: Hopp Inn, Selsey CotY: none

*PotY: Pub of the Year; CPotY: Cider Pub of the Year; CotY:
Club of the Year



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Visit the Citizens Advice Website

www.citizensadvice.org.uk/consumer/

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