



CAMPAIGN
FOR
REAL ALE

THE ONLY WAY IS BEER



North West Essex Branch of CAMRA Issue 003
The Campaign for Real Ale Summer 2013

The Bell, Wendens Ambo, North West Essex CAMRA
Pub Of The Year 2013



Informing Beer & Cider Drinkers
of North West Essex

Events and Socials

Branch Meeting, Monday 3rd June 2013 8:00 pm, Green Man, 3 Church Lane, Toppesfield, Essex. CO9 4DR. Tel: 01787 237418 Web: www.thegreenmantoppesfield.co.uk

Braintree Real Ale Festival (BRAf), Thursday 13th—Saturday 15th June 2013 Bocking Arts Theatre (formally Braintree Institute), Bocking End, Braintree, Essex, CM7 9AE. Web: www.braintreebeerfestival.co.uk

"Come and Meet Us" Lunchtime Social at BRAf (Jun13) Saturday 15th June 2013 12:00 pm, Bocking Arts Theatre (formally Braintree Institute), Bocking End, Braintree, Essex, CM7 9AE. Web: www.braintreebeerfestival.co.uk

Branch Meeting, Monday 1st July 2013 8:00 pm, Kings Arms, 10 Market Hill, Saffron Walden, Essex, CB10 1HQ. Tel: 01799 522768 Web: www.thekingsarmssaffronwalden.co.uk

Branch visit to Growler Brewery, Tuesday 16th July 2013, contact pubsofficer@northwestessexcamra.org.uk for details

Branch Meeting, Monday 5th August 2013 8:00 pm, Plough, The Street, Birdbrook, Essex, CO9 4BJ. Tel: 01440 788066

Great British Beer Festival (GBBF), Tuesday 13th—Saturday 17th August 2013 Olympia, London. Web: www.gbbf.org.uk

"Come and Meet Us" Social, Tuesday 20th August 2013 8:30 pm. Rose & Crown, 31 Bentfield Green, Stansted Mountfitchet, CM24 8HX Tel: 01279 812107

Branch Meeting, Monday 2nd September 2013 8:00 pm, Fleur de Lys, High Street, Widdington, Saffron Walden, Essex, CB11 3SG. Tel: 01799 543280 Web: thefleurdelys.co.uk

"Come and Meet Us" Social, Thursday 12th September 2013 8:30 pm, The Kings Head, The Street, Gosfield, Halstead, Essex, CO9 1TP Tel: 01787 474016 Web: www.thekingsheadgosfield.co.uk

Branch Meeting, Monday 7th October 2013 8:00 pm, Victory Inn, The Green, Wickham St.Pauls, Essex, CO9 2PT Tel: 01787 269364 Web: www.thevictoryinn.com

Branch Meeting, Monday 4th November 2013 8:00 pm, Cricketers, 22 Beaumont Hill, Great Dunmow, Essex, CM6 2AP. Tel: 01371 873359 Web: www.cricketersgreatdunmow.co.uk

Branch Meeting, Monday 2nd December 2013 8:00 pm, Axe, 60 Ashdon Road, Saffron Walden, CB10 2AT. Tel: 01799 522235

The Only Way Is Beer

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Editor: Richard Williams, 01799 550534 (h), 07717 470058 (m), Email: newsletter@northwestessexcamra.org.uk

Deputy Editor: Chris Rouse, 01799 531582 (h), 07824 726108 (m), Email: webmaster@northwestessexcamra.org.uk
10 Bartholomew Close, Great Chesterford, Saffron Walden, Essex, CB10 1QH.

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Neil Richards: 01536 358670 or N.Richards@btinternet.com

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Deadline for Autumn 2013 issue (004) is Friday 12th August 2013.

Who To Contact

Chairman: Peter Stanley, chairman@northwestessexcamra.org.uk

Contact & Secretary: Tom Bogie, contact@northwestessexcamra.org.uk

Membership Secretary, Cider Rep & Webmaster: Chris Rouse (see above)

Pubs Officer: Richard Williams (see above)

For other contacts see www.northwestessexcamra.org.uk

Essex Trading Standards: Tel: 08454 040506 Web: www.essex.gov.uk/Business-Partners/Trading-Standards/Pages/Trading-Standards.aspx Email: trading_standards@essexcc.gov.uk

An Irish view of our local beers

As CAMRA members, could you imagine a world where every pub is a Free House? A somewhat utopian existence you might think. The fact is there is such a place and it is on our doorstep; Ireland and yes, there is a catch. Whilst every pub is a free House there are generally only four products a pub will serve; Guinness, Harp Lager, Heineken and Smithwick's which is a keg bitter in the tradition of everything CAMRA was founded to oppose. Such is the grip these products have, if a publican fails to telephone an order by a pre-determined time no delivery is possible that week. Guinness may not have any tie on the pubs ownership but they control the cellar completely. All chillers and dispense equipment is owned by them and only their products can be served through them. They even clean the lines, about twice a month on average, which may explain why people think Guinness tastes different 'over there'.

Things are changing, the small brewer is on the rise and I have been lucky enough to become involved with a publican in Sligo who is working towards setting up his own brewery. James Ward is a man with a vision to break away from the dominance of the mega-brand products usually provided to both his countrymen and tourists alike. On paper one would think this is the easiest business plan to write; build a brewery, sell beer to Free Houses. In reality it is a much bigger and expensive challenge. Brewing the beer is one thing but to enable a pub to sell it he will have to provide each pub with its own dispense equipment. Not only that, in a country with no Real Ale heritage, converting the masses to hand pulled beer presents its own unique challenge. Craft keg beers in the new American style are the most likely answers to this.

After a day brewing here in Saffron Walden I took James for a taste of English hospital-

ity and headed to Cambridge. Not far from the station is the renowned Cambridge Blue which was taking delivery of 'Oakham 3K', a beer specially brewed to mark the 3,000th beer Jethro has served in his tenure as Landlord. James was amazed at the huge array of different beers on the bar. We opted for the locally brewed 'Ison' from Moonshine Brewery named after the comet due to pass earth this year. Keep an eye out for this beer; at 8% ABV it is well balanced and deceptively drinkable.

After spending time chatting with Jethro and sampling a number of the beers on the bar we headed off to The Mill in Mill Lane. This pub has been transformed by Lauren into one of the best real ale and craft beer pubs in Cambridge and is part of the group behind the Cambridge Brew House on Kings St. One of the unique beers James had to try was Umbel Ale by Nethergate/Growler Brewery; brewed with coriander, it is unlike most beers he would experience. Onwards from here to The Maypole in Portugal Place which has been run by the same family since 1982. Vincent Castiglione was on fine form and their winter beer festival was just underway. There were two beers that stood out, both Imperial Russian Stouts at 8.7% and 10.5% ABV, one from Elgood's and the other, Greenjack in Lowestoft. James soon learned that in England it's best to look and see the ABV of a beer before you order a pint!

We took the train back to Audley End and added a visit to The Bell in Wendens Ambo, North West Essex CAMRA pub of the year, to order a taxi. James's head was not just buzzing with new ideas for pubs in his native Ireland.

Julian Hales

Indian Summer Brewing Co.

Brewery News

Saffron Brewery has new owners, a team of three Stuart Strickland, James and Edward Hoskins are now running this brewery. The sale included a period of support hand-over from Dave the previous owner which is still ongoing and there are no major changes to brewery operation or beers yet.



Having three staff rather than just one will enable a much stronger sales and marketing effort to supply many more pubs. We hope to visit this brewery in the autumn for a social evening. Check the next issue.

Growler Brewery have invested in their first local public house which is on the wrong side of the road to be in our branch! The Fox & Hounds at High Garrett between Braintree and Gosfield is now theirs. It was closed over the Bank holiday weekend but is now open serving both Growler and guest beers. Hopefully they will 'find' another pub within our branch too!

Indian Summer Brewery are now regularly brewing both a Porter and a Mild as well as the Amber which are all available at the Axe 'brewery tap' in Saffron Walden and other free houses and festivals. Their beers at the Axe cost £2.50 or £2.60 a pint which apart from the Temeraire, a Wetherspoons, provides the cheapest pub beers in our branch. Julian will continue to experiment with other beers and we look forward to trying them when they appear.

Shalford Brewery hosted the branch for a very pleasant social meeting. Although there was a brief deluge the day was warm and everyone enjoyed the beers which are not readily available in many branch pubs.



The brewery is a compact five barrel plant on one level which required care-

ful engineering to set up and operate as pumps are needed move between vessels. Nigel the brewer also produces the same beers conditioned as real ale in the bottle. These may be found in some of the East of England Cooperative stores that exist in Sible Hedingham and East Essex, Suffolk and Norfolk. The beers we drank ranged from 3.7% to 6.5% and were 1319 Mild, Stoneley Bitter, Barnfield Pale Ale and Rotten End all in perfect condition served from metal pins (4.5 gallons).

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Changing the Axe



I caught up with Chris Stringer to see how things were progressing with his pub. 'Owning my own pub has been an ambition of mine for quite a while' Chris said. 'I've been driving past

The Axe on my way to work for some time and when I found out it was on the market it was an opportunity I couldn't miss'. Chris is also a co-owner of Indian Summer Brewery situated just half a mile from the pub. 'Obviously having a share in the brewery provides a perfect fit with the pub. We are able to provide locally produced ale and with no wholesalers to deal with we can pass on the cost savings directly to our customers' Chris added. As we spoke I was enjoying a pint of Hop & Soul Amber at £2.50 a pint. 'There is a lot of hard work needed on the pub, the previous owners hadn't spent anything on the building for about 30 years and it was looking rather tired'.

Already the interior had been decorated and the next phase of refurbishment was underway. A new entrance to the cellar had been dug allowing the old hatch entrance in the main bar area to be filled in. Chris began to elaborate on his plans. 'I want to have one long bar with ten hand pumps serving our own beers along with a wide selection of others from both small East Anglian brewers and others from further afield. We plan to achieve this by doing swaps from our own brewery which allows us to source beers that would not usually reach this area'.

Real Ale isn't the only thing that interests Chris 'I've always been a big fan of real

cider and The Axe is the only pub in Walden that will always provide a choice of at least three real ciders from producers such as Weston's and Thatcher's along with a Perry option'. Chris added 'I also believe that a pub should serve good quality wine'.

I asked Chris about his plans for the future. 'I want The Axe to be at the heart of the local community, we already have a number of sports teams that have adopted the pub as their clubhouse. Not only this, the dance class visit on a Thursday evening for refreshments and the local book club has renamed themselves 'The Axe Book Club' and hold their meetings here', Chris said. 'I am looking forward to the next major development which will be the reintroduction of home cooked food in the pub; a new kitchen is at the forefront of my plans. In the meantime we will be holding Barbeques with live music in our large garden with the aim of attracting families'.

As I was leaving I noticed there was a Mild available at the bar. I asked Chris if this was for Mild Month. Chris replied 'every month is Mild Month at The Axe, it's great to see drinkers of all ages enjoying a beer style that CAMRA is so keen to see reintroduced.'

I left knowing that The Axe was in very enthusiastic and capable hands and the pub will remain a key feature of The Ashdon Road area of Saffron Walden.



List Your Local

If you love your local pub and think it adds lots of value to your community you now have the opportunity to give it extra protection from developers and can list it with the Council as an Asset of Community Value. Under the Localism Act 2011 people living in England can nominate a pub to be listed as an Asset of Community Value (ACV). Listing your local as an ACV provides communities with the power to stop the clock when faced with a pub going up for sale, earning valuable time to explore options for saving the pub.

Please download our ACV Guide from www.camra.org.uk/listyourlocal for more detailed information and where to find advice and support.

If you know about a pub in your area which has been listed or are involved in a campaign to save your local pub please contact campaigns@camra.org.uk and let us know.

Why List Your Local?

Increasing numbers of local councils are taking into account Assets of Community Value when considering new planning applications against the pub. Listing a pub shows the value it has to the community.

Listing your local means property developers who are keen for a hassle free purchase are less likely to show interest.

If a listed pub goes up for sale, its ACV status has the power to postpone the sale for up to six months. That's just enough time for pub campaigners to gather together a suitable bid to buy the pub and run as community-owned.

Since the Asset of Community Value scheme started in 2012, pub activists have used their new powers to halt the sale of their beloved locals. The Ivy House in London was the first pub to be listed as an ACV and the first which has led to a successful buy-out from the community. In our branch we have the Green Man in Toppesfield which is owned by the village. The Plunkett foundation helped this pub at www.plunkett.co.uk phone 01993 810730

How do I List my local?

1. First you'll need to pay a visit to your local council's website and search for their section on 'Assets of Community Value' or 'Right to Bid'. Once you've found it, download a nomination form. (If your local authority does not have a nomination form available to download, you can use CAMRA's Template Nomination Form from www.camra.org.uk/listyourlocal)

2. We strongly recommend you nominate a pub as an Unincorporated Group. This is where 21 local people on the electoral register nominate an Asset as any member of the public. This should be done *not* in connection with CAMRA. This is because CAMRA is an incorporated body.

3. Complete the nomination form with as much information as you can think of regarding why your local should be listed as an asset to the community. For advice and draft text please go to CAMRA's Community Value Guide on website.

4. Gather the support of 21 people from the community in favour of listing the pub as an asset of community value. You can download CAMRA's 21 Nominee Form (in pdf and word versions) from the website to help gather this. Each name must be registered to vote in your local authority (on the electoral register) and from a different address.

5. Submit the completed form to your local council - you can check your council's website for guidance explaining how they are accepting nominations.

CAMRA has Information about this is here: <http://www.camra.org.uk/listyourlocal> For Government help contact 0845 345 4564 or <http://mycommunityrights.org.uk>

or email CAMRA's Campaigns Team on campaigns@camra.org.uk

Each council has its own form which is easily found by searching for 'community assets'

Fair Deal For Your Local

Time for Pubco Reform

We've launched the Fair Deal For Your Local Campaign - a major campaign which aims to persuade the Government to finally implement far-reaching reforms to the tied pubco model. The Government is proposing to introduce a series of measures to ensure tied licensees can make a fair living - resulting in better pubs, fairer prices and fewer pub closures.

We now have a very real opportunity to save the Great British Pub and we need you to get involved. The Government backed beer and pubs in the recent Budget by abandoning plans for a beer duty hike and instead cutting beer duty for the first time in over 50 years. They are now building on their support for pubs by taking on the large pub companies who are exploiting pub licensees and putting the future of thousands of pubs at risk.

The fundamental problem is that the large pub companies are taking more than is reasonable from the profits of each pub – so licensees and pub goers alike suffer. A fair deal will result in the average tied pub being £4,000 better off annually.

The Pubco Model

Around a third of pubs in the UK are owned by large Pub Companies – property companies who lease pubs out to tenants to run as their own business. These pubs are contractually obliged to buy their beer only from the Pubco preventing pub licensees buying on the open market – this is known as the beer tie.

Pubcos make huge excess profits by using the beer tie to force licensees and ultimately the consumer to pay high prices. Licensees can pay at least 50% more for beer than a free-of-tie publican. Alongside this pubco licensees often find themselves paying above market value rents and have no inde-

pendent adjudicator to settle disputes.

Time for Reform

The Government is now proposing a package of measures to deliver a fair deal for local pubs, with:

- A powerful new Code and a Watchdog to stop abuses by big pub companies;
- A new choice for licensees to opt out of restrictive tied agreements and just pay a fair market rent to their pubco; and
- Fair rents and beer prices for tied publicans, allowing them to thrive.

Pub companies with fewer than 500 pubs will be exempt from these proposals but must abide by a separate voluntary code.

If we succeed with this campaign we can expect better pubs, fairer prices and fewer pub closures.

Get Involved

Your support in getting us this far really has made all the difference. However, the battle isn't won yet and we now need to ensure the Government sees its plans through. To make the most of this opportunity there are three things you can do right now:

1. Ensure your voice is heard by taking five minutes to take part in the Government's pubco reform survey;
2. Help build the case for reform by sending in your own submission to the consultation. There's ideas on what you could say on the campaign's website;
3. Sign up to be a Fair Deal for Your Local Campaign Supporter to hear more about the campaign and how you can get involved.

Visit www.fairdealforyourlocal.com to take part - you have until 14th June to respond to the survey and consultation. You can also follow the campaign on Twitter by following [@FairDeal4Locals](https://twitter.com/FairDeal4Locals).

Campaigning Round-Up

Braintree Real Ale Festival

Braintree Real Ale Festival will run from Thursday 13th to Saturday 15th June, and takes place at the Bocking Arts Theatre (formally Braintree Institute), Bocking End, Braintree, Essex, CM7 9AE. The festival is jointly organised by Braintree Lions and North West Essex CAMRA, and will be the 9th Braintree Real Ale Festival. The 2013 opening times are:

Thursday 13th June 4.30pm-11pm

Friday 14th June 12noon-11pm (Free admission before 4pm)

Saturday 15th June 11am-10pm

FREE entry to CAMRA and LIONS members at all times.

We will have about 60 beers and 10 ciders & perries. There will be an Essex Bar and a South Coast Bar, along with cider & perry. Hot food will be available at all sessions. See www.braintreebeerfestival.co.uk for more details. The primary charity for the 2013 Festival will be Macmillan Cancer Support and we will also be supporting other local charities. Running beer and cider festivals is one of the ways CAMRA campaigns for Real Ale and Real Cider by bringing you a wider range of ales and cider than you would find in local pubs.

Great British Beer Festival

Our flagship beer festival will take place between 13th – 17th August at London Olympia. With over 800 real ales, ciders, perries and foreign beers to choose from we are sure there will be plenty of choice to suit everybody's taste buds! It is not all about the beer though. There is also plenty of food, live music and pub games to enjoy. Tickets can be bought by calling 0844 412 4640 or visiting www.gbbf.org.uk/tickets. If you are feeling lucky then visit www.gbbf.org.uk/competitions where there are plenty of great prizes to win.

The Campaign is won!

After a year-long fightback against the beer duty escalator, the Chancellor has announced that the tax will be axed. This decision is a triumph for all the fantastic CAMRA members who have worked hard to spread the message of the campaign - by gathering support, signing the petition, attending the mass lobby and meeting with their MP. Beer duty will no longer rise automatically every year 2% above inflation, in turn keeping down the cost of your pint down the pub.

Since the escalator was introduced in 2008, beer tax has increased by 42%, driving up the cost of a pint and driving consumers away from their local pubs. In that time, 5800 pubs have closed for good. On the back of last year's Budget, CAMRA launched its support for the e-petition calling an end to the tax and dedicated volunteers threw their wholehearted support behind it. Eight months' later, we reached the golden number of 100,000 signatures.

CAMRA's beer festivals were invaluable to this effort. At the annual Great British Beer Festival, CAMRA gathered 10,000 signatures alone. Once we reached the 100,000 mark, we lobbied hard to get a debate in the main chamber of Parliament, where MPs unanimously agreed the escalator should be scrapped.

The campaign continued with the Save Your Pint Mass Lobby on 12th December, a fantastic day where 1,200 CAMRA members met with over 180 members of parliament. CAMRA members have continued this campaigning by meeting and writing with their MPs right up to the day of the Budget. The decision was made concrete in the following words of the Chancellor's speech:

"Mr Deputy Speaker, there's another duty escalator – the annual two percent above

Campaigning Round-Up

inflation increases in alcohol. We're looking at plans to stop the biggest discounts of cheap alcohol at retailers. But responsible drinkers – and our pubs - should not pay the price for the problems caused by others. The sad fact is that we've lost 10,000 pubs in the UK over the last decade. Many MP's have raised their concerns with me like my MP for Bristol North West. My Honourable Friend for Burton and Uttoxeter in particular has been a committed champion of the famous brewing industry that employs many of his constituents. I intend to maintain the planned rise for all alcohol duties – with the exception of beer. We will now scrap the beer duty escalator altogether. And instead of the 3p rise in beer duty tax planned for this year I am cancelling it altogether. That's the freeze people have been campaigning for. But I'm going to go one step further and I am going to cut beer duty by 1p. We're

taking a penny off a pint. The cut will take effect this Sunday night and I expect it to be passed on in full to customers."

A great success for CAMRA's biggest campaign, made possible by the effort and support from both our members and the general public. Congratulations!



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Pub News

The branch has awarded the **Bell** in



Wendens Ambo Pub of the Year 2013. This pub was chosen out of all the pubs in the

branch for many good reasons. It is the community focus of the village serving an excellent quality and selection of both beers and ciders providing good food and has a large garden with facilities for children. It also runs many events including an August Bank holiday Beer and music festival called the Bell Bash. During the presentation Anne the landord sold her first brew of a beer that was christened Wenden Parva, the old name of half of this village. The cover shows a photograph of this presentation.



The **Red Cow** at Chrishall has been awarded Les Routiers pub of the year 2013 in recogni-

tion of the excellent food and service they provide. Congratulations on receiving this award which has unusually been given to a village community pub.



The **Axe** in Saffron Walden within its first month of new ownership arranged an excellent well attended Easter Beer festival serving Indian Summer

beers always sold here at a low price. Other beers from other local Essex brewers were on sale too and were also very popular. Steak and Ale pies were eaten and enjoyed too. This is a great success for Saffron Wal-

den to regain a popular local pub on the Ashdon Road again.



The **White Lion** in Sible Hedingham has new tenants Geoff & Sarah who used to run the Cross Keys in Hatfield Peverel.

Some changes may start to happen but the pub will continue to serve real ales as before in this only remaining pub left here.

The **Stag** at Little Easton has been bought



from Greene King and will now serve other beers. The landlord remains as tenant and the first Local real ale served was Red Diesel from Colchester brewery. Many more will follow.

The **Red Lion** has reopened in Finching-



field. A new tenant has been found who runs a successful pub in Walthamstow. Unfortunately so far the phone fails to work here as there was an un-

paid bill from the previous tenant. This does not help the B&B side of this business that requires Internet access. This means that the tenant is unhappy and may be considering leaving. In the meantime there have been very successful pub events.

The **Queens Head** in Littlebury lost its tenants again. The brave village residents who took on the job are confounded by several issues and a very high rent. Not all the B&B rooms were serviceable either. Ceilings came down in the pub in two places and the heating system for hot water never worked properly. Initially it did not work at all but later started overheating with the cold water tank being filled up with hot water. This was a scalding risk and increased costs. Greene



Pub News

King have now found another tenant with a lower rent.

The **Green Man** at Mill End Green have discovered why their real ales were being super chilled. The pipes to the handpumps are run in the same python as all the chilled lager. The pipe run is of significant length and results in very cold cask beers. They have not yet found a cellar company to sort this issue out yet but are working on fixing it.

The **Star** at Thaxted is temporarily closed until Adnams brewery find a new tenant as the current tenant is leaving.

The **Rose & Crown** in Ashdon has been extensively refurbished and redecorated and is now open serving five real ales. These vary but normally include Doom Bar, Wherry and Black Sheep. This pub is becoming very popular with locals and has a large garden with very comfortable decoration and a good atmosphere. The Cromwell room with it walls covered in 400 year old graffiti has one wall with panels which are removable for viewing.

The **Plough** in Radwinter is actively now being restored now the Rose and Crown is completed by the same owners. Hopefully this pub may reopen later this year but this will depend upon completion of the large amount of work still required.

The **Green Man** in Gosfield a Greene King pub now has a new tenant who has employed a chef who has cooked for the Queen to entice diners with his new exotic dishes. This pub has a happy hour from 6 until 7 and has a specially low priced Bar Menu all day and evening.



The **Dial** in Elmdon has now closed and we do not know whether or when it will reopen. The

pub closed due to lack of local support from the village, people not using the pub enough to keep it running as a viable business. We in CAMRA hope that somehow it will be able to be reopened. In the past this pub was saved with assistance from CAMRA when a director of the pub company that owned it wanted to convert it from a pub into being his house. It is still the last pub in both the village and the parish.

The **Plough** in Great Chesterford is now serving more interesting beers from the Greene King guest list. Recently offered were Okells from the Isle of Man and Hydes from Manchester. The pub is planning a beer festival on October 5th to correspond with a local Steam Engine rally.



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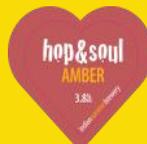


Indian Summer Brewing

Available at The Axe, Ashdon Road.
Saffron Walden's newest Freehouse.

Hop & Soul Amber

Brewed with Amber malt and First Gold hops. A refreshing 3.8% session Pale Ale with gentle bitterness and biscuit malt character.



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Good Beer Guide 2013

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