



This year's Farnham Beerex is the 40th of its kind and a cause for celebration!

We raise a glass to the event, which starts on 21st April, and trace its source...

In 1975 two members of Farnham Lions, who were also members of CAMRA, had the idea of running a one-off charity beer festival. They spent two years planning the event. With the equally enthusiastic support of the Farnham Maltings, the three organisations opened the doors to the first Farnham Beer Exhibition in 1977.

Despite the trepidation of the organisers, that first event proved to be a great success. Well-behaved revellers created what was described as a 'carnival' atmosphere; there was impromptu singing as well as entertainment provided by local musicians and a band called Peter, Paul and Mary's Brother.

It quickly became clear another Farnham Beer Exhibition needed to follow in 1978 and so organisers set about planning another. It would be bigger, over three days rather than two, and with more beers and more tickets. Demand for tickets exceeded supply and they were sold out several weeks before the first beers were served. Speaking at the end of the '78 event, Ralph Carter, the

exhibition organiser and one of the original founders, was quoted in the local newspaper as saying: "We seem to have hit on the right formula for the event, and we are already planning a similar event for next year." And so it has continued. Each and every year since, the planning has commenced in October for an event the following spring, the format of which has remained largely unchanged. In 1979 the cartoonist and TV/radio personality Bill Tidy pencilled a cartoon for the programme cover. He has continued to do so every year since.

Entertainment has always been a key feature, with some bands and groups having appeared over many years. Among them are the Yetties, The Gambit Jazzmen who have filled the Saturday lunchtime slot for the last 10 years and the aforementioned Peter, Paul and Mary's Brother, who, after appearing at the first event, appeared at more than 20 more.

Beerex is still organised by a committee representing The Farnham Lions, CAMRA and the Maltings, and is the longest-running beer festival in the same venue. It continues to be organised and staffed by about