

Opening Times

Huntingdonshire branch of CAMRA

ISSUE 174
SUMMER 2018

hunts.camra.org.uk



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FOR
REAL ALE

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EDITORIAL

Welcome to the summer issue of *Opening Times*, the magazine from the Huntingdonshire branch of CAMRA (the Campaign for Real Ale). As noted in the previous issue (Spring 2018), Thinklocal St Neots was appointed for that issue and we have been pleased to receive many encouraging comments about the new design and content. We trust that all readers found it to be a great improvement over recent issues, which had included fewer pages than we had hoped for. Our thanks go to those who have supported us by placing adverts in *Opening Times*, which with Joanne and Lorraine from Thinklocal, should be much better value.

We have also received several ideas about the content of future editions, which we hope to be able to implement in the near future. An obvious change is an increase in the number of pages. This has allowed us to include more of the articles and photos that have been submitted to us.

In the last issue we featured the Revitalisation Project and the proposed changes to CAMRA's remit. The resolutions were voted on at CAMRA's recent AGM in Coventry and the results are now known. The vast majority of members, who voted, demonstrated their support for change by approving all but one of a package of measures which were designed to make CAMRA more relevant, inclusive and welcoming. Please see the article on Page 8 for more details on what the changes mean. Further information and reports on motions discussed in Coventry, together with the results from the election for CAMRA's National Executive, can be found on the national website at www.camra.org.uk.

With Winter well behind us, many local pubs and organisations will be holding beer festivals over the coming months. Details of those that we know of are given later in this issue. Our website is also a good source of information regarding forthcoming events and is updated frequently (we only get to hear of some local pub festivals at short notice). One of our branch objectives is to "Assist other organisations in the promotion of real ale and cider to those who don't normally drink it"; the promotion of other organisations festivals is part of this objective. We are also happy to put out a call for volunteers to help at such festivals and to pass on contact details for local breweries and cider producers who can supply their high quality products to festivals. We are also able to provide

CAMRA campaigning and promotional materials, such as posters, membership forms and beer mats.

Finally, if you have any pub, brewery or festival news or would like to submit a relevant article for publication in *Opening Times*, please email to news@hunts.camra.org.uk (or forward them to a member of the branch committee; contact details are shown on our website or see below).

Richard Harrison, Chairman of Hunts CAMRA on behalf of the Branch Committee, May 2018



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HUNTS PUB NEWS

The **Victoria Inn** on Ouse Walk in Huntingdon, closed in January 2018. This community pub tucked away in a quiet residential area behind the fire station was popular with customers who visited for the live sports TV and music nights. It had lost some business after its kitchen closed a few years ago. We understand it has been sold, but its future remains uncertain.

January also saw the closure of Great Stukeley pub, the **Three Horseshoes**, owned by a small Yorkshire-based pub company. It had not sold real ale for some time and was still closed as we went to press. Hopefully this is not another pub that has closed permanently.



Three Horseshoes

The George in Somersham has been the subject of a planning application for conversion of the ground floor pub area to two residential flats. The proposal also includes conversion of the first floor area to two one-bed apartments. In April, a sign on the pub indicated that it had been sold. Although it was free of tie, it hardly ever served real ale over the past 30 years. However, we believe that in the right entrepreneurial hands, with an imaginative stocking policy for real ales and ciders, the George could provide a valuable community asset. Following the conversion of the Black Bull to a Tesco convenience store a few years ago, Somersham effectively has only one other pub, the **Rose and Crown**, with the **Windmill** just outside the village being more of a destination for diners.



Rose & Crown

Whilst we're talking about Somersham, it's Carnival week from 9-17 June. Deb & Nick Payne, the publicans of the **Rose and Crown** are very involved in the local community, with the carnival procession passing by the pub on 16 June, making the courtyard garden the ideal place to sit with a drink and watch it go by. Every year the carnival is themed and the businesses along the High Street decorate their windows; won last year by the **Rose and Crown!** After the carnival, the pub will continue the celebrations with a BBQ & live music from a local band. Outside of the carnival, the pub is open from 9 am every day (except Sunday and Monday when it opens at noon), serving breakfast, lunch and evening meals. There is also a tea room within the pub serving scones & clotted cream cake & coffee. At least 3 real ales are usually available, together with a selection of other beers, 13 gins and a wine menu.

Following the permanent closure of the Merchant House in St Ives last year, another pub on Ramsey Road, **The Seven Wives**, was closed in early February 2018. Fortunately, the closure was only temporary, with EI Group PLC reopening the pub in late February. The licensee of the Lord Protector in Huntingdon was appointed temporary manager by the pub company.

The “Keep Wistow Flowing” steering group continues its fight to keep the **Three Horseshoes** in Wistow open, following its closure in October 2017 and registration by the group as an “Asset of Community Value” (ACV). Their aim was to raise pledges totalling £206,000 to enable a bid to be made to purchase the pub and this target was reached in mid-March. They have been running a regular pop-up pub in the village hall at weekends (Friday-Saturday) and these are continuing. Under the ACV rules, the group was due to mount a bid to buy the pub in April. Further details can be found at www.keepwistowflowing.pub and if you can help, the steering group can be contacted at info@keepwistowflowing.pub

Another similarly named pub, the **Three Horseshoes** in Gravelly, has also closed. We believe there have been some interested parties, but its future is uncertain as we went to press.

In Guilden Morden, the **Three Tuns** Community Group (TTCG) has been busy raising funds to purchase the **Three Tuns**. By mid-January, 220 people had made pledges; this included a quarter of households in the village. Details of how to donate can be found at www.crowdfunder.co.uk/save-the-three-tuns-guilden-morden.

In St Ives, Wetherspoons pub the **Swan & Angel** has received LocAle accreditation. It has been stocking Riverport Bitter from local brewery **Rocket Ales** for some time, with other beers from Rocket also making appearances. Recently, beers from Cambridge-based Turpin’s have been on sale, with Cambridge Black being followed by Dragon’s Den. Beer from another local brewery, Crooked Hooker from B&T brewery, was on offer in early March.

Also in St Ives, the **Dolphin Hotel**, which was sold last year, is now operating as part of the international Best Western Hotels chain.

In early April the **Samuel Pepys** in Huntingdon was serving a house beer, Pepys Pint (3.6%), brewed by Marston’s.

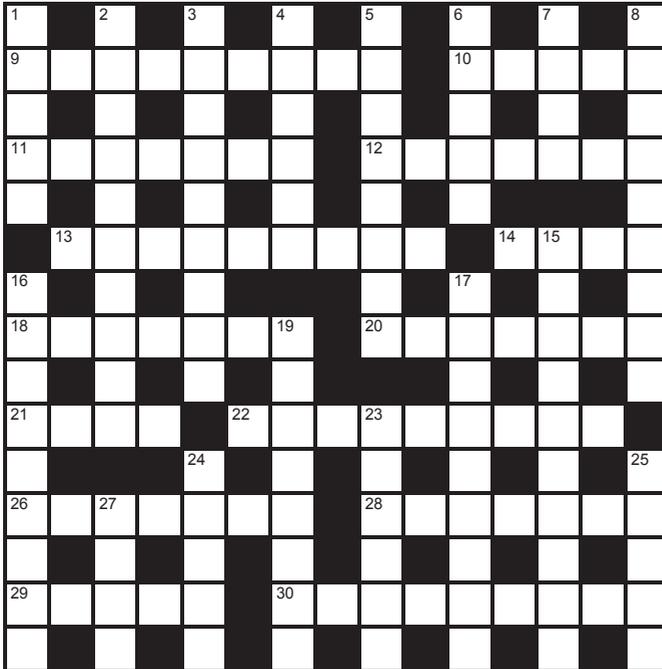
A pub not often reported on in these pages is **The Exhibition** in Godmanchester. Two real ales were on sale in March; Sharps Sea Fury and Otter Bitter, both in good condition.

Other news from around the branch area

In St Neots, a new family run independent bottle shop, **Shumë**, located in Cross Keys Mews, opened in April. It was founded by Luan Saraqi who was born in Kosovo and the name means many in his native language. Amongst its UK beers, it has been reported to be selling a good selection of local real ales in bottle, including some from Draycott and Papworth. A range of international bottled and canned beers from Europe and the USA is stocked, and there are bottled ciders from Saxbys and Simon’s Cider. As well as beer and cider, they also sell a range of cheese, coffee and gin.

See www.shume.co.uk for more details and opening times.





Across

- 9 Playwright (9)
- 10 Moor (3,2)
- 11 Space surrounding an altar (7)
- 12 Quickly (7)
- 13 Runner (9)
- 14 Cougar (4)
- 18 Distinct sort or kind (7)
- 20 Surgical knife (7)
- 21 A great deal (4)
- 22 Herald (9)
- 26 Hedge (7)
- 28 Books of maps (7)
- 29 Young hooter (5)
- 30 Abbreviated (9)

Down

- 1 Decree (5)
- 2 Executives (10)
- 3 Biting (9)
- 4 Fiddle (6)
- 5 Old liners (8)
- 6 The Roman Empire's home country (5)
- 7 Large mass of floating ice (4)
- 8 As thumbs are (9)
- 15 Disagreeable (10)
- 16 Psalter (5,4)
- 17 Moon (9)
- 19 Astonishment (8)
- 23 Lea (6)
- 24 Threescore (5)
- 25 Stage whisper (5)
- 27 Depend (4)

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CAMRA DECIDES ON ITS FUTURE

Agrees to Change but not to Represent All Beer Drinkers

At the end of the Revitalisation Project, CAMRA's national membership has agreed five out of six proposals to update its remit, but dismissed a call to promote types of beer other than real ale.

The changes will see CAMRA put increased focus on education about all types of beer, cider and perry, not just real ale, but CAMRA will not seek to represent all pub-goers or all beer, cider and perry drinkers. It has also been agreed that CAMRA will continue to campaign for protection of pubs and clubs, responsible drinking and real cider and perry, as well as real ale.

Nearly 18,000 members voted on six special resolutions at its members' weekend at Coventry in April. The vote was the culmination of CAMRA's "Revitalisation Project", which took account of the views of around 25,000 members in a two-year consultation aimed at making CAMRA more inclusive and relevant to drinkers of all types amid a changing scene in the beer and pub trade.

The successful resolutions added five new objectives to CAMRA's Articles of Association:

- "To secure the long-term future of real ale, real cider and real perry by increasing their quality, availability and popularity"
- "To promote and protect pubs and clubs as social centres as part of the UK's cultural heritage"
- "To increase recognition of the benefits of responsible, moderate social drinking"
- "To play a leading role in the provision of information, education and training to all those with an interest in beer, cider and perry of any type"
- "To ensure, where possible, that producers and retailers of beer, cider and perry act in the best interests of the customer"

The sixth proposed new objective, which was narrowly rejected, was: "To act as the voice and represent the interests of all pub goers and beer, cider and perry drinkers".

This represents the scrapping of a bid for CAMRA to promote craft keg and other types of beer that are not classed as real ale. But successful motions at CAMRA's Conference during the members' weekend agreed that, as a part of the strategy to provide education on all types of beer, CAMRA's beer festivals will not be limited to stocking just real ale.

Out-going CAMRA chair, Colin Valentine, said "The membership has made its views clear. We need to do all we can to reassure all members that our core campaigning objectives remain focussed on real ale, cider and perry as ever. Those who called for more far reaching changes, which has not been supported in the vote, and those who disagreed with any change, can be confident that their contribution to the Campaign remains as valued as ever – and that all members can continue to work together to achieve common objectives."

PUBS BY BUS

Reporter: Ian Baptist

Earlier in the year, several Hunts CAMRA committee members spent a week visiting many pubs in the branch area. The main reason was to survey the pubs for possible inclusion in the 2019 Good Beer Guide and for our 2018 pub awards.

Even though some were in rural areas, almost all are accessible using public transport. Most of the pubs visited are open all day, but some close in the afternoon. The WhatPub website, www.whatpub.com, is a useful source of information about the pubs visited. We would encourage readers to get out and about, explore pubs they are unfamiliar with and enjoy the range of great beers and ciders available.

Day 1

The first day saw us in Huntingdon (Stagecoach services from St Ives, St Neots and the north). Wetherspoon's **Sandford House** was first on our list. A good selection of beers was on tap, with regulars Greene King IPA, Ruddles Best Bitter and Sharps Doom Bar alongside beers from guest listings, including many from smaller breweries. Beers from local brewery **Rocket Ales** can often be found here.

The **Old Bridge Hotel**, situated off the ring road by the River Ouse, is always popular with diners, and the comfortable hotel bar is open to non-residents. Three real ales are usually from Adnams, Nene Valley, and Hart Family Brewers, for which it is a rare local outlet.

The **Samuel Pepys** on the High Street is an open-plan bar. The hand pumps serve a selection of rotating beers from owner Admiral Taverns' guest beer list. These normally come from brewers from outside our region such as Timothy Taylor, Black Sheep, and Butcombe. The restrictions of the owning pub company apparently prevent the stocking of beers from local brewers; come on, Admiral Taverns - permit your pubs to sell the beers that your customers want!

At the historic **Falcon** on Market Hill, the number of real ales is now slightly reduced. They include several from the owners' Olde England brewery located at a sister pub, and beers from Marstons, Wychwood, Potbelly and Digfield. A visit at a later date found that the pub was installing Sky Sports in the upstairs bar.

While in Huntingdon, a quick visit to **Cromwells** on the High Street found that Hobgoblin was still available. On another date, the **Market Tavern** had regular beer Robinson's Trooper in good condition.

Day 2

The following day, pubs in the north of our branch area were reached using the hourly Stagecoach service from St Ives and Huntingdon to Sawtry, now operating via Stilton and continuing on to Peterborough. HACT

service 46a from Huntingdon to Stilton also operates albeit infrequently and also calls at Alconbury, Sawtry and Glatton. Neither service operates on Sunday.

The **Addison Arms** in Glatton is a regular Good Beer Guide entry. Ask the bus driver and he might drop you off and pick you up outside the pub. New owners Ruth and Ray Groves took over this multi-award winning Grade II listed pub in 2017. There have been very few changes; four real ales with house beer Addison Ale coming from local brewers Digfield. There is usually a second local beer. This time it was also from Digfield, but is often from Angles Ales, Nene Valley or Oakham. There are two changing guest beers but, unfortunately, traditional cider is no longer available. The pub is popular with diners who visit for the excellent freshly-cooked food in the pub's restaurant.



Addison Arms Sign

Back in Sawtry, first stop was **Greystones**, which has only been a pub since 1981, having previously been a private house. This is another Grade II listed building. Sharps Doom Bar is permanently available alongside a changing guest real ale - Fullers London Pride on this occasion but sometimes a beer from Oakham. Food is available.

Sawtry's other pub is the **Bell**, where two real ales, Sharps Doom Bar and Hobgoblin Gold, are usually available. Although quiet at the time of this visit, the Bell is generally popular with customers in the younger age group.

On the way home, the **King of the Belgians** in Hartford provided a convenient stop. An excellent community pub which always seems to be busy, the beer choice and quality mean that it is a regular winner of CAMRA awards. Of the four real ales, one is usually from a local brewery, and there is also local Cromwell cider. Also in Hartford, Charles Wells pub the **Barley Mow** has Charles Wells and Youngs cask beers. Following the sale of Wells's Bedford brewery to Marston's, beers brewed by them in Burton on Trent have been spotted here, including Marston's 61 Deep.

Day 3

A trip to pubs to the west of St Neots used HACT service 151 (St Neots Market Square to Tilbrook); again the driver will usually drop you off outside the pub. The first stop was Great Staughton, where the **Snooty Tavern** normally has two real ales, which change occasionally. They were Sharps Doom Bar and Adnams Lighthouse on this occasion.



Snooty Tavern

The other pub in the village, the **White Hart**, is a Batemans house with three of the brewery's beers regularly on tap alongside a changing guest beer.



White Hart

Back on the 151 bus and we were soon in Hail Weston. The village pub is the **Royal Oak**, which had reopened after a short break for redecoration. This pub was revived as a community-owned pub early in 2017 after several years of closure. Primarily operated as a food-led establishment, there are three real ales - two beers from Adnams alongside Sharps Doom Bar.

The 151 timetable meant a walk back in the direction of St Neots via Charles Wells pub the **Eaton Oak**. Three real ales from the Wells/Youngs range were on offer. We were the only customers late on Wednesday afternoon, but it is busy with diners in the evening and at weekends.



Eaton Oak

Nearer to St Neots, Greene King pub the **Barley Mow** was serving IPA and Abbot as well as several guest beers from the Greene King list. The pub was busy and the beer quality good.



Barley Mow

We crossed the River Ouse into St Neots aiming for the **Pig 'n' Falcon**, but this was the last day of a short closure for minor redecoration, so our final pub of the day was the **Ale Taster** tucked away on Russell Street. The real ales here are served by gravity from a cooled cabinet behind the bar. The ever-changing range is usually from smaller breweries, which can include local ales together with beers from anywhere in the country. The pub also sells a range of cider and perry, including products from the **Cambridge Cider Company**. Several cabinets at the rear of the pub contain a comprehensive range of bottled beers from the UK and around the world that are sold at keen prices.

Day 5

An outing to the **Chequers** in Little Gransden was undertaken a few days later. Unfortunately, this excellent community pub, recently crowned Hunts CAMRA's 2018 Pub of the Year, is not accessible by public transport. The Son of Sid Brewery, based at the pub, provided three real ales, Fine Furlong, Beesting Bitter and English Ale. Their award-winning Muckcart Mild is also often available there. The pub used to be a regular outlet for local Pickled Pig ciders, but since they ceased commercial production these have been replaced by products of Barbourne Cider from Cheltenham.



Chequers Bar

Reluctantly, we dragged ourselves away and returned to St Neots, with a visit to the **Pig 'n' Falcon**. Six real ales included Beowulf Stout and Titanic Plum Porter Reserve; both in excellent condition. Three Blind Mice brewery beer dispensed from KeyKegs are also stocked. Unfortunately, no local ciders were available and Village Green Norfolk Dry was the only traditional cider on sale.

The last pub of the day was the **Olde Sun** in New Street. Several beers from Adnams were available, including the superb Tally Ho strong old ale (7%) - a perfect end to the day. The landlord proudly showed us the pump clips of the guest beers that he had been selling recently.

Day 6

Another outing by bus visited Alconbury and Great Stukeley, both served by HACT service 46a and the guided bus (although the latter requires a short walk into Alconbury village). The **Manor House** in Alconbury village sells three regularly-changing real ales. On the day, these were Elgoods Golden Newt, St Austell Trelawney and Northern Whisper Yammerhouse. It was surprisingly busy for the time of day. The new housing developments at nearby Alconbury Weald should benefit this pub.

In Great Stukeley, the **Stukeleys Country Hotel** offers Greene King IPA and a changing guest beer; on this occasion from Rat Brewery. Unfortunately, as mentioned earlier in this issue the **Three Horseshoes** was closed and its future is uncertain.



Stukeleys Country Hotel

If you have visited a pub after reading about it in this magazine, please mention this to the staff. Reports from pubs in our branch are always welcome. Please send them to news@hunts.camra.org.uk.

HUNTINGDONSHIRE PUB AWARDS

The **Chequers** at Little Gransden is Huntingdonshire CAMRA's 2018 "**Pub of the Year**". The award was one of a number of awards that the branch presented at its "Booze on the Ouse" beer and cider festival in St Neots in March.



Booze on the Ouse Real Ale Bar Manager, Kathy Hadfield-Moorhouse, and Mayor of St Neots, Derek Giles, present the Pub of the Year award to Roy Endersby, CAMRA's liaison officer for the Son of Sid brewery at the Chequers

The awards aim to draw attention to businesses that operate in ways that CAMRA seeks to encourage - providing atmosphere, style, service, community focus, good value and well-presented ranges of real ales in a wide variety of styles.

The following awards were presented:

Huntingdonshire Overall Pub of the Year and Rural Pub of the Year: Chequers, Little Gransden

This village pub has been owned and run by the same family for 67 years. The unspoilt middle bar, with its wooden bench seating and roaring fire, is a favourite spot to pick up on the local gossip, along with a collection of decoy birds that seems to be gathering on the beam over the bar. The pub's "Son of Sid" brew house has supplied real ales for the pub and local beer festivals for the past ten years. Fish and chips are a highlight on Friday night (booking essential). Barbourne Worcestershire Cider is nearly always available. Winner of numerous CAMRA awards

Urban Pub of the Year and Cider & Perry Pub of the Year: Ale Taster, St Neots



Brewery consultant Gary Gooch, formerly of Oldershaw's brewery, and St Neots mayor Councillor Derek Giles present the Urban Pub of the Year award to Ale Taster licensees Paul Greenwood (second left) and Karen Conolly

The **Ale Taster** is a small back-street pub operated in the style of a micro-pub. Renamed by the enthusiastic new owners, it was previously the Hog and Partridge and before that the Lord John Russell. It features up to four changing cask beers, served from stillage behind the bar, five real ciders and a perry. The owners source much of their beer and cider from local producers. Five large fridges display a wide selection of bottled beers from around the world available to drink in or to take out (at a discount!).



Booze on the Ouse Cider Bar Deputy Manager, Clive Parcell, and Mayor of St Neots, Councillor Derek Giles, presents the Cider and Perry Pub of the Year award to Ale Taster licensee Paul Greenwood (left)

The owners are happy to chat about their beers. The pub encourages conversation, with quiet background music, traditional bar games and no electronic machines.

Community Pub of the Year: King of the Belgians, Hartford

Dating from the 16th century, formerly the King of the Prussians and the Traitors' Arms, and located in a picturesque village setting, the **King of the Belgians** is a genuine community pub. It offers an ever-changing selection of real ales, cider and good value food every day including takeaway pizza and a traditional Sunday roast until 8pm. Solid oak beams and a copper-topped bar are features of the public bar and there's a separate dining area.

The range of community activities includes a monthly quiz night, pub games nights and open mic-style music nights on the first and third Monday of each month. Every second Thursday is BYO cheese night.

Look out for a mini beer festival over August Bank Holiday weekend.



The Community Pub of the Year award was presented to King of the Belgians licensees Matt and Jane Spicer by branch chairman Richard Harrison (right) and Mayor of St Neots, Councillor Derek Giles

Amongst numerous previous CAMRA awards, the **King of the Belgians** won through to claim the overall Cambridgeshire CAMRA Pub of the Year for 2014, 2015 and 2017 and it was also awarded Hunts CAMRA Community Pub of the Year for 2013.

Club of the Year: Buckden Village Club

Buckden Village Club has something for everyone. There are two big screens showing sports, and quiz, race, karaoke, bingo and MP3 nights (Friday nights - play your own music for your friends). Monday is crib night, Thursday is darts night for men's and ladies' darts teams and there are numerous teams for football, played on the Buckden Field. These include senior and reserve adult teams, over-35s Vets, mini-soccer, colts and youth football.



The Club of the Year award was presented to Buckden Village Club by branch founder members, George Cotham (right) and Mayor of St Neots, Councillor Derek Giles

Champion Beer of East Anglia, Strong Bitter Category: Papworth Brewery – Robin Goodfellow

An additional award was presented to **Papworth Brewery** for a gold medal in the Champion Beers of East Anglia strong bitters category, judged at CAMRA's Luton beer festival in February 2017.



The gold medal award for Robin Goodfellow was presented to Richard Harrison, Director, Papworth Brewery by Champion Beer of East Anglia organiser Kathy Hadfield-Moorhouse and Mayor of St Neots, Councillor Derek Giles

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Saturday 23rd June - Live music from Kara Lumley - starts at 8.30pm

Starting on Friday 29th June - we are having monthly Beer & BBQ nights. Bargain drink offers, BBQ and live music on the last Friday of the month (Weather permitting)

Saturday 28th July - Family fun day in the garden from 12pm Bouncy castle, face painting & bbq.

? QUIZ NIGHT

We also hold a quiz night every 2nd Thursday - 28/6, 12/7, 26/7, 9/8

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CIDER SECTION



Local cider news

As noted above, the **Ale Taster** in St Neots is Huntingdonshire CAMRA's Cider Pub of the Year 2018. It was serving Face Rub, a new dry cider from the **Cambridge Cider Company**, in late January. Three ciders from the **Cambridge Cider Company** are always available here alongside five others. Also in St Neots, three ciders from local producer Simons Cider have been on sale at the **Pig 'n' Falcon**.

The **Oliver Cromwell** in St Ives continues to offer ciders not usually seen in our area. Gwatkins Farmhouse Perry and Circle Cider Butchers Boy were the latest. It is hoped that they will increase the number of ciders for the summer months.

At the **Falcon** in Huntingdon, three ciders from Millwhites were on sale in April. These were Hedgelayar, Rum Cask and Apples & Pears.

The Drayman's Son in Ely was recently crowned the overall winner of the Cambridgeshire Cider Pub of the Year 2018. This micro-pub stocks many ciders and perries, including several from Cambridgeshire producers. A number of flavoured ciders are also sold here.

In addition to the **Ale Taster**, the other Cambridgeshire CAMRA branch Cider Pubs of the Year, were the Plough, Shepreth (Cambridge branch), and the Frothblowers micropub (Peterborough branch). A short walk from Shepreth station, the Plough had eight ciders in early April, all from local producers (**Cambridge Cider Company**, Simons Cider and Ermines Treat). The Frothblowers, in North Peterborough, is served by the Stagecoach Citi 1 bus. In April, this micro-pub included two ciders from local maker Hubz Cider amongst an amazing range of 27 ciders; many of these were flavoured, although there were a number of traditional examples.

The Drayman's Son joined the following county winners in the East Anglia Region competition:

- Bedfordshire - Engineers Arms, Henlow
- Essex - Woodbine Inn, Waltham Abbey
- Hertfordshire - Garden City Brewery Bar, Letchworth Garden City
- Norfolk - White Lion, Norwich
- Suffolk - Dove, Bury St Edmunds

Some of these pubs serve ranges of over 20 ciders and perries, with around 30 at the Woodbine Inn. Quantity can sometimes result in a loss of quality, but this does depend on turnover. Many of the ciders will be modern flavoured versions as opposed to traditional ciders and perries made from just apple or pear juice.

Judges from the region have been visiting all the pubs to decide on the overall winner. The results for CAMBRIDGESHIRE PUB OF THE YEAR is The **Chequers** in Little Gransden. Our best wishes go to all the pubs involved. It will certainly be a difficult decision for the judges.

Of interest to cider and perry drinkers will be the 3rd Swavesey Cider Festival at Swavesey Community Pavilion from 19-22 July. This was a great event last year and is a must visit if you are a cider and perry lover. The products of most Cambridgeshire cider and perry producers should be available.

Finally thanks to everyone who visited the cider bar at the recent "Booze on the Ouse" in St Neots. We hope that you all enjoyed the range of ciders and perry that we had on offer. The fruit ciders from Wise Owl were again very popular. Potton Press Trip Hazard was judged to be the cider of the festival.

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PUBS OF ST IVES

No. 4 – The Nelsons Head



Nelsons Head

One of the historic pubs of St Ives, the Nelson Head was originally known as the **Three Tuns**, one of several pubs in the town to bear this name. A tun being a barrel which at one time was frequently used for beer and contained 216 gallons, the **Three Tuns** was the logo of the Worshipful Company of Brewers (one of the oldest of the Livery Companies in the City

of London) and is a common pub name, especially in Cambridgeshire, where there are more than four other pubs with this name. The pub's name was changed to the **Nelsons Head** as a reference to the maritime hero who died on HMS Victory.

Nelsons Head sign

The pub has been owned by brewers Greene King of Bury St Edmunds for many years. It was originally a tied house of Hudsons Brewery who had breweries in Magdalene Street, Cambridge and in Pampisford. There is a report that from 1902, the **Nelsons Head** was leased to Jenkins & Jones Brewery of Huntingdon for seven years. However, the lease may have been extended as there are reports that Jenkins & Jones still operated the pub until the early 1930's, although their beers were brewed by Marshall Brothers by that time.

In 1931, Hudson's ceased trading and the **Nelsons Head** was one of 68 pubs sold to Wells & Winch Ltd of Biggleswade. Then in 1961, Wells & Winch and its 287 pubs were acquired by Greene King. The brewery in Biggleswade was closed in 1997 when all brewing was transferred to Greene King's Bury St Edmunds site. Greene King remains the owner of the **Nelsons Head**.

Over the years it has been sympathetically revamped, leaving us with today's open plan front bar area that contains several alcove seating areas, and a more secluded area at the back of the pub. There is a large paved patio at the rear. It was the pub of choice for airmen based at nearby RAF Wyton before the base was run down.



Nelsons Head bar

The cask beer range includes three from Greene King which are normally IPA, Abbot and a changing beer - often Old Golden Hen. As with several other Greene King pubs, guest beers come from local breweries, which deliver directly to the pub. These include Angles Ales, Grainstore, Moonshine, Nene Valley and Oakham, whose JHB is ever-present. The final hand pump is used to serve Cromwell Choice cider, produced a few miles from the pub.

The **Nelsons Head** serves food every lunch time with a specials board. Additionally a range of stone-baked pizza is available at lunchtime and in the evenings.

Credit is given to Tim Holt and the Brewery History Society for permission to use information relating to the history of the ownership of the pub contained in their Journal Number 147.

BREWERY UPDATES

Draycott Brewery

Brewery Liaison Officer – Andy Blagbrough

The brewery has produced a special bottled beer for the Mayor of St Neots. Profits from sales went to four local charities and the beer was available at our “Booze on the Ouse” beer festival. A new outlet is the Shumë bottle shop.

An IPA was test-brewed and a few bottles were provided to us. The 7.2% brew was sampled by branch members who thought that it was an excellent beer. Unfortunately Jon Draycott doesn't plan to put it into full production, although one local licensee expressed interest in stocking it.

Papworth Brewery

Brewery Liaison Officer – Juliet Ferris

Papworth Brewery has been busy getting their beers into a number of local pubs. Half Nelson is a regular at the **Green Man** in Colne and has recently been seen in the **Golden Lion** in St Ives. Several Papworth beers have been on sale at the **King of the Belgians** in Hartford, including Crystal Ship and Papillon, and been well received by pub regulars. Papworth beers have also been seen at the **Ale Taster** and **Pig 'N' Falcon** in St Neots and the Crown in Broughton. A new micro-pub was opened recently at the Courtyard in Papworth Everard. Papworth beers are always available here served directly from the cask and also bottle conditioned.

A Bitter Wot U Fancy, a new 3.8% one-off brew, appeared at our “Booze on the Ouse” festival in March and at a festival in Yelling in May. Outside of our branch area, Crystal Ship was seen at the Bumble Inn in Peterborough. The brewery will be organising another beer festival in Papworth Village Hall that will be held from 12-14 July.

As well as local pubs, the bottle-conditioned beers are now available at local off-licences including J. Wadsworth in St Ives, and Shumë and the Smiling Grape Company in St Neots. Several local convenience stores have also been stocking the beers, including the NISA in

Papworth Everard, and beers can also be found in Johnsons of Old Hurst farm shop.

Bottle-conditioned beers are currently available for sale direct from the brewery in Earith (please call 01487 842442 to check they're open before travelling) and in the near future it is planned to open a bar in the brewery. Chris and Richard are looking for further outlets for their beers. If you know of pubs and other businesses that may be interested in stocking beers from Papworth, they would be interested to hear from you.

Rocket Ales

Brewery Liaison Officer – Don Rudd

A number of new beers have appeared, with Maverick Golden Honey Ale, 4.0%, (brewed for the Royal Wedding) and Black Arrow Smoked London Porter, 4.0%, both on at our “Booze on the Ouse” beer festival in March. Another new beer from Rocket is Sidewinder, a hoppy session ale, also 4% ABV. Bottles and mini casks of Rocket beers can be purchased by ordering on-line from their website.

The brewery features in the spring edition of Wetherspoon News which has articles on both the Swan & Angel in St Ives and **Sandford House** in Huntingdon. Both pubs sell beers from Rocket, with the Swan & Angel selling Bloodhound Bitter as “Riverport Bitter” with a distinctive pump clip depicting St Ives's historic bridge.

Finally, **Rocket Ales** sponsored the crossword in the 200th edition of “Beer Around 'Ere”, the newsletter of our neighbouring Peterborough CAMRA branch.

Son of Sid Brewery

Brewery Liaison Officer – Roy Endersby

No doubt helped by the on-site brewery, the **Chequers** at Little Gransden is this year's Huntingdonshire CAMRA Pub of the Year. A beer festival was held at the Chequers over the May Day bank holiday weekend, where many Son of Sid beers were available.



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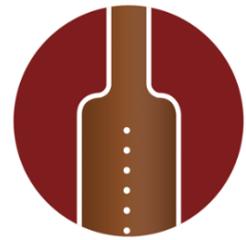
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EAST COAST RAIL JOURNEYS - LEEDS

Reporter: Ian Baptist



Earlier in the year I travelled up the East Coast rail line and spent a day in the city of Leeds. Famous as the home of Tetley Bitter, the brewery was closed by Carlsberg in 2011 and Tetley beers are now brewed by Marston's in Wolverhampton. Nowadays, though, there are a number of breweries located in the city, including Leeds Brewery (who are rumoured to be soon brewing Tetley Bitter again in the city), whose beers are available at their seven pubs as well as many free houses, and Northern Monk, based in a former mill in the south of the city.

Arriving at lunchtime, I made the short walk to the Hop, Granary Wharf, owned by Ossett Brewery and situated in railway arches under Leeds Station (exit by the rear entrance by Platform 17). There were four Ossett cask beers on sale together with six guest cask beers, several of which were from Yorkshire breweries (Rat, Fernandes and Roosters). My first choice was Ossett Big Red which was a fine red ale. Fernandes Little Darlings, 4.3%, had been brewed to celebrate the brewery's 25th anniversary. There is always a dark beer here - on this occasion Lacons Extra Stout. Four real ciders were also available. Their lunchtime pie meal and a pint of Ossett beer for a fiver is great value. Ossett Brewery own two more bars on Granary Wharf (Archies Bar and Candlehouse).

Another short walk under the station brought me to the Brewery Tap, a Leeds Brewery pub with four of their cask beers available. Several guest beers included Roosters By 'Eck Clementine IPA; a 6.8% beer made in collaboration with Beavertown. This was for Roosters 25th anniversary (seems to be a theme going on here). A nice beer, although I

wasn't convinced it was good value at £3 a half pint!



Brewery Tap

I soon moved up the road to the Friends of Ham, one of my favourite bars in Leeds. It sells four cask beers, one of which is usually from Kirkstall Brewery, and other local breweries are often featured. One of the beers will be a dark beer and on this occasion I enjoyed Wilde Child Hedonistic Existence Stout, 6.3%. Also available were Kirkstall Pale Ale, Illkley Tribus Lupulus and Track Sonoma Pale Ale. Two ciders and a perry from Hogans were available. This bar also includes a craft beer shop which sells a small but interesting selection of bottles and cans for sale on site and for takeaway.

I decided to head a bit further out of the centre of Leeds, to the Templar Hotel. Named after Leeds's connections with the Knights Templar, this pub is on CAMRA's list of pubs with historic pub interiors. Outside, Melbourne Brewery signage remains, together with that of more recent owners, Tetley's. Now owned by Greene King, it offers a range of eight cask beers with some from smaller Yorkshire breweries, including Kirkstall.



Templar Hotel

A short walk from here is Social, a small bar where two cask beers were on sale, Revolutions Life In A Northern Town, a blackcurrant liquorice mild, 4.5%, and Kirkstall Pale Ale.

I had planned to visit Foleys Tap House (which usually sells around 12 beers and many ciders) but as it was nearly 7pm on Friday this pub, which is connected with York Brewery, was rather busy. I continued to my final pub of the day, the Town Hall Tavern, a Timothy Taylor tied pub selling six of their beers.

The next morning I paid a quick visit to Wetherspoons in Leeds railway station. A good selection of beers from Yorkshire breweries can generally be found here. With their beer festival taking place at the time, I expected these to have been replaced by festival beers, but Leeds Midnight Bell and the highly enjoyable Saltaire Onyx Black Stout were both available.

With most pubs in Leeds selling at least one locally brewed real ale, often from Leeds Brewery, the city has gained a reputation as a destination for real ales and craft beers. The current CAMRA Good Beer Guide details some of the many excellent pubs and bars in the town, many of which are close to the station. The Royal Armouries Museum and other attractions make Leeds a popular destination. With a number of hotels in Leeds city centre, good value accommodation can usually be found if planning a weekend visit.

The next issue will feature the pubs of Darlington.

A Look Back In Time

10 YEARS AGO

Scottish and Newcastle bought the Caledonian brewery company in Edinburgh on the eve of the takeover of S&N's own UK operations by Dutch brewers Heineken. This followed the joint buyout of the S&N group by Heineken and Danish brewer Carlsberg. S&N had owned the Caledonian brewing site since 2004, along with a 30% share of the brewing business. CAMRA was seeking assurances from Heineken over the future of Caledonian brewery and its award-winning cask brands. As a part of the new deal, the Harviestoun brewery, another past winner of CAMRA awards, and part of Caledonian since 2006, regained its independence as its shares were bought by former shareholders.

After Chancellor Alistair Darling announced a 4p a pint increase in beer duty, the biggest increase ever in a single budget, CAMRA launched a multi-pronged attack to attempt to reverse the increase. CAMRA set about lobbying politicians nationally and through CAMRA branches, and stepping up work with brewers and pub companies to highlight the threat of continuing beer tax rises to community pubs and local brewers. Licensees were being urged by a social media campaign to bar the Chancellor from their pubs, as a protest at the duty increase.

A campaign group led by CAMRA to save the famous former Bass brewery museum in Burton-on-Trent won the backing of government minister Margaret Hodge, who pledged to lobby brewers for their support. US brewers Coors, owners of the former Bass brewing group, had announced the closure of the Coors Museum from June 2008.

Two initiatives by major players were seen by CAMRA as a significant boost for the fortunes of real ale in bottle. Bottled versions of Youngs real ales were launched by Wells and Youngs, the Bedford-based producer of the Youngs brands. This closely followed an earlier move by Marks and Spencer, which introduced its own range of bottled real ales from brewers including

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Woodfordes, Cropton and Black Isle, with St Austell added later.

In summer 2008, CAMRA was encouraging more of its branches to introduce their own LocAle schemes to encourage pubs to stock local-brewed real ales, following the successful first LocAle scheme launched by Nottingham branch the previous year.

25 YEARS AGO

CAMRA attacked national brewer Whitbread as it announced its 13th brewery closure in a decade with the axing of its Exchange brewery in Sheffield. Whitbread said the closures were so that it could “continue to be efficient” but CAMRA denounced Whitbread for “another attack on local choice” and “the end of some famous names in brewing”, a reference to cask brands including Higsons, Chesters and Bentleys, produced at Exchange since earlier brewery closures by Whitbread.

Trading Standards officers said that the term “draught beer” was inappropriate for canned versions of cask ale brands. This followed complaints from CAMRA in response to a growing trend for big brewers to market “draught beer” in cans – keg beers marketed under the same brand as cask-conditioned draught beer brands.

Big brewer Greenalls was prosecuted for demolishing its Manchester Pub Tommy Ducks during the night. A planning application to replace the pub by offices had attracted objections from a number of bodies and individuals, but Greenalls ordered its demolition before the application had been considered by the local authority. CAMRA hit out at the “absurd” level of a £1500 fine imposed on Greenalls.

CAMRA accused giant UK brewers of watering their brands as they dropped the ABV of a number of national real ale brands. The move was in response to the government’s new “factory gate” system for beer duty charges, based on final alcoholic strength, replacing the old method that levied duty based on gravity level before fermentation. Customs and Excise said that the new system should benefit brewers, as they would not be penalised for

the time taken to condition beers. “Factory gate” beer duty was welcomed by the Small Independent Brewers Association.

The UK’s small brewers urged the government to introduce a sliding scale of duty to help small brewers survive a price war with larger brewers that were discounting wholesale beer prices by up to 50%. The Small Independent Brewers Association accused the big brewers of using discounting to “squeeze out” small brewers, claiming that small brewers were unable to deliver their beers at the prices the major brewers were charging.

Compiled by Paul Moorhouse

HUNTS SOCIAL DIARY

Sat 7 July, from 2 pm

Summer Social Tour around the pubs of St Ives

Opening times

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