

## HUNTS CAMRA SUMMER SOCIAL - CAMBRIDGE PUB CRAWL

A Saturday at the end of July was the day of the recent Hunts branch pub crawl around Cambridge. The turnout was really good with the group meeting up at the first official pub of the day the Cambridge Blue. With everyone making their own way to Cambridge several groups had already visited one or more pubs on their way to the 'Blue'. The St Ives party began at the Maypole before we visited the Cambridge Brew House, where we tried Kings Parade, Misty River IPA and Night Porter all from their own brewery. A visit was made to the St Radegund where we tried beers from Colchester and Fullers before meeting up with the main group.

At the Cambridge Blue Jethro had a good range of beer and cider available for us to try including four really good beers from Dark Star brewery that included Hophead 3.8%, The Original 5.0% and Tropical K O 6.2%. Other beers included Nene Valley Manhattan Project and Humpty Dumpty Little Sharpie amongst others. A couple of the group tried some of the Belgian bottled beers from the excellent selection contained in the pubs well stocked cabinets that I noticed also contained several canned beers. There was also a particularly good selection of ciders including one each from Turners and Gibbet Oak that I hadn't seen here before.

As it was starting to rain the next pub was The Alexandra Arms which was fortunately just a short walk up the road. This is a Greene King pub which has a fairly free choice on which real ales it sells. Three were available here including Ripple Steam Best Bitter 4.1% which most of our group tried. The other beers were from Oakham Endless Summer 3.4% and one from Wolf. We were made welcome here and they really appreciated our visit on what was turning out to be a wet afternoon.

A short gap in the showers allowed the group to move on to our next venue. Calverleys Brewery is located in Hooper Street and on Thursday, Friday and Saturday open the brewery doors where there is a small bar. There was also a van outside selling a small selection of food. The beers were mainly 'craft keg' with two cask beers also available. A lot of the group decided to try the keg beers with a few of us sticking to cask. A number of the group commented on the pricing of the 'craft keg' beers compared to those from the traditional cask beers. It is purely my personal view but the now common practice of selling 'craft keg' beers in two third of a pint measures and cask in pint measures appears to be a deliberate policy to hide the higher price of these beers. The 'craft keg' beers here were £4 for two thirds the equivalent to £6 for a pint which puts me off trying these new beers. Cask here was only £3.80 a pint.

The showers had now turned into much heavier persistent rain so our group quickly made the short walk to The Kingston where again we filled the pub with some spreading out into the covered beer garden. There was a really good choice of beers here and a really good pricing policy with some beers on sale at £3/pint which for Cambridge is pretty good. Amongst the regular beers were Crouch Vale Brewers Gold and Mighty Oak Oscar Wilde Mild, there were also several guest beers that include Great heck Dave. Two ciders were also available.

It had stopped raining and a few of us left the group at the Kingston as we had planned to call in at Swavesey Cider Festival on the way back to St Ives. Most of the group continued on to the last official stop of the day. This was the Live & Let Live on Mawson Road where Nethergate Umble Ale and Yorkshire Porter were tried.

A small group of hardcore drinkers then ventured back towards the town centre visiting a few more pubs on the way. At the Grain & Hop Store Wolf Lavender as tried. Then the Elm Tree was visited for the excellent B&T Shefford Dark Mild. Finally the last few visited the Free Press and had St Austell Liquid Sunshine before catching the 10:30 X5 back to St Neots.

I would like to thank all those who came out for the day with very few familiar faces missing. Also thanks go to Juliet our Social Secretary for arranging the day. Although the weather tried to spoil the day every one appeared to enjoy themselves and the excellent beers on offer. Hopefully you all made it home safely. The large turnout showed that we should hold these events more often.

Our next social trip will be a coach tour of pubs in the south of our branch area in September.

IAN BAPTIST 22 AUGUST 2017