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ST. NEOTS & DISTRICT

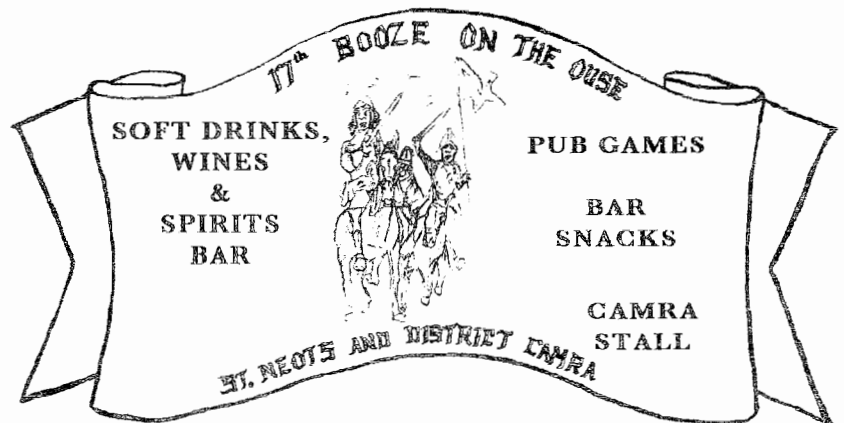
# OPENING TIMES



Issue No 93 Aug/Sept 1997

BRANCH NEWSLETTER  
BI-MONTHLY CIRCULATION 1,500 COPIES

**17th**  
**'BOOZE ON**  
**THE OUSE'**  
**September**  
**18th - 21st**



Not long to go now before it is 'Booze on The Ouse' time again.

Our new date proved so popular last year that we have stuck with it and we are well advanced with our beer order of almost 30 kils, consisting of 59 real ales from some of our best independent brewers, some traditional cider and perry, plus last years innovation of a foreign beer stand returning by popular request with Eric once again imparting his expert knowledge on the subject at the stand.

We have a good selection of beers from different categories i.e. Mild, Bitter, Best Bitter, Strong Bitter, Old Ales.

## Opening Times:

Thursday 18 <sup>th</sup>		7.00 - 10.45*
Friday 19 <sup>th</sup>	12.00 - 3.00	6.00 - 10.45*
Saturday 20 <sup>th</sup>	All Day from	11.00 - 10.45*
Sunday 21 <sup>st</sup>	12.00 - 3.00	

\*Entry £1.00 Thursday and Friday nights

\*£1.50 Saturday Night (from 5.30)

- Free Entry all other sessions

- CAMRA Members -

Free Entry All Sessions

Families Welcome Until 9.00pm

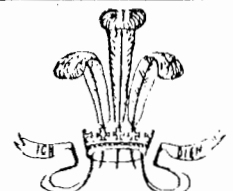
Strong Milds, Stouts, Porters, Speciality Beers and Barley Wines that should suit every real ale drinkers tastebuds somewhere along the line. As usual we will be featuring some beers at our festival for the first time. Amongst them will be some



## The Prince of Wales

*'That nice pub at Hilton'*

(01480) 830257



ADNAMS BEST BITTER HIGHGATE DARK MILD GUEST BEERS GOOD FOOD ACCOMMODATION

winners from the Champion Beer of Britain contest held at CAMRA's recent Great British Beer Festival at Olympia, giving you a chance to try the beers that won the awards.

The overall winner - Mordue Workie Ticket will be there and others on order featuring some newcomers and the return of some fast sellers from previous festivals are Hambleton Nightmare, Orkney Dark Island, Dent Kamikaze, Concertina Bengal Tiger, Church End Weat-a-bix, Cottage Norman Conquest and the popular Cheriton Diggers Gold and Daleside Morocco to name but a few.

A full range of tasty bar snacks will be on offer and there will be a soft drinks and spirits bar.

If you plan to bring the family, children will be allowed in the main hall until 9.00pm

There will be Jazz on the Saturday night from Amadeus Bold Wickets Red Hot Peppers and a Folk Spot on the Sunday lunchtime, with Friday evening a music free night.

There will be traditional pub games to amuse you and to try your skills at and of course our regular Tombola Stall.

Last year so much ale was consumed that we had to put in a re-order, to ensure we had enough beer for the duration of the Festival, we would be delighted if that happened again.

See you at St. Ives

## **GREENE KING Close the Blue Ball despite CAMRA protest - others to follow?**

Greene King recently closed one of its most homely locals, the Blue Ball in St. Neots because the pub failed to reach the breweries barrellage figures. Despite pleas from CAMRA for the pub to be sold off as a licensed property, the pub has been closed and a 'change of use' to a private property applied for.

It is known that with Greene King having a brief to close about 100 pubs from their tied estate other small houses are under threat with at least one pub locally on borrowed time. Certainly within the constraints of being a tied house some of these smaller pubs can be viewed as uneconomical, but if they were offered on the open market as a free house, then they would be batting on a much more even wicket, able to buy in their ales at the much better discounts available.

In the case of the Blue Ball, it was not a sole pub in a village but it was still a pub 'on its own' as regards its ambience in an area of town that caters more for the younger clientele. It catered for the more mature customer, apart from the fact that it served a fairly unique draught mild.

The only consolation is that the former landlords at the pub Martin Spencer and Linda Knowles have taken over at the Bulls Head in Cambridge Street, St. Neots and have immediately installed real ale including XX Mild in the pub which until then had sold its beers under top pressure. However, it is certain other closures will follow in a town where there is an increasing population with an ongoing housing development ensuring it stays as Cambridgeshire's biggest town.

If you wish to oppose the change of use of the Blue Ball then write now to The Planning Department at Huntingdon District Council, Pathfinder House, St. Mary's Street, Huntingdon PE18 6TN. Remember it could be your local next!

## **BRANCH DIARY**

All are welcome to attend our socials and meetings, which are held usually every other Tuesday at different pubs throughout our branch area.

Tuesday 9th September - Open Committee Meeting - **Prince of Wales, Hilton** 8.30pm

Thursday 25th September - Social - **Trip to North Herts Beer Festival, Letchworth** -By train to Letchworth

Friday 3rd October - \*\*Mini Bus **Trip to B & T Brewery Shefford** ( To be confirmed)

Wednesday 8th or Thursday 9th October - \*\*Trip to Bedford Beer Festival by Mini Bus from St. Ives/Huntingdon/ St. Neots

\*\*For more information or to book on these trips contact Social Secretary, Kathy Hadfield on 01480 496247

For further details contact:

Roy Endersby (Chairman) on 01480 473364

## PIG AND ABBOT TO BE SAVED?

Local drinkers at the Pig and Abbot, Abington Pigotts a Good Beer Guide listed pub are fighting to save their village local, which closed in May after the previous owner sold it due to ill health.

Before it was sold, two villagers had separately asked for the opportunity to purchase the place and continue to run it as a pub. However, an incomer bought the building, putting in a change of use application for a private dwelling.

Villager Guy Slater has led the fight to save the pub, with South Cambridgeshire planning officials more or less assuring him that a change of use application would not be granted, as the pub appeared viable and the council's draft structure plan included a policy of protecting rural amenities.

He said the new owner had already refused an offer of £170,000 but might be persuaded to change his mind if his application was refused.

Meanwhile the villagers were now seeking to raise money to buy the pub with one or two people in the village seeing it as a useful investment if it was let out at around £10-11,000 and the security of the building remaining.

### BOOST FOR REAL ALE IN A BOTTLE

A statutory Order allowing national brewery tenants to stock a guest bottle-conditioned beer is working its way through Parliament and should become law by April next year.

## STRONGER POUND AFFECTING BREWING INDUSTRY

As the pound continues to soar in value against foreign currency, causing glee among British holiday makers travelling abroad it was having an adverse effect on the brewing industry at home.

With the exchange rate rising more than 10 French Francs to the pound it made the appeal of bringing in crateloads of beer even stronger.

Allied to this, Chancellor Gordon Brown has announced that beer duty would be indexed from January, leading to an estimated 2p a pint price increase.

This double-hit of even cheaper duty paid imports and more expensive beer in Britain was causing great concern with Tom Wells speaking for local brewers Charles Wells saying, "We desperately need a weaker pound".

## CAMRA winning fight over price rises

This year's CAMRA price survey shows that prices have in general kept pace with inflation, but regional variations are narrowing too.


The national average pint of real ale is £1.64, 2.5 per cent up on last year.

In East Anglia prices rose by a mere 0.6 per cent with the average pint of real ale costing £1.71

If you're looking for the cheapest pint, it's still to be found in the North-West, where even a 2.1 per cent increase only took the price up to £1.43.

The survey also investigated national opening hours, and found 67 per cent of urban pubs and 33 per cent of country pubs were opening all day during the week.

On Saturdays the figures rose to 82 and 55 per cent respectively and on Sunday it calmed down to 62 and 49 per cent.



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# LOCAL NEWS

## SPECIAL AWARD FOR PRINCE OF WALES

The Campaign for Real Ale recently presented a special award to Robin and Judith Doughty, licencees at the Prince of Wales, Hilton in recognition of their commitment to real draught mild ale.

Many pubs in the local area have reinstated real draught cask bitters in recent years, but the Prince of Wales is one of only five pubs in Huntingdonshire to serve real draught cask mild, the old style British draught beer which predates the industrial revolution.

Robin and Judith served a different mild ale every week in May, CAMRA's annual Make May a Mild month, but have kept at least one draught mild on sale continuously

since then. At the presentation of the award a treat was provided for local real ale drinkers with mild ales from Highgate Brewery of Walsall and Ridleys of Chelmsford.

Other pubs in Huntingdonshire known by CAMRA to serve real draught mild on a regular basis are the Mad Cat - Pidley, The Millers

Arms - Eaton Socon, The Wheatsheaf - St. Neots and the Bulls Head, St. Neots with one recent loss being the Blue Ball, St. Neots, the subject of a local protest against closure by owners Greene King and which still served the rare Greene King XX Mild Ale until its closure.



*Prince of Wales licencees Robin and Judith Doughty with their special award certificate.*

### JOIN CAMRA NOW

Just fill in the form below and send your remittance (Payable to CAMRA) to  
 The Membership Secretary, CAMRA,  
 230, Hatfield Road, St.Albans, Herts, AL1 4LW  
 Rates are Single £14, Joint £17 (at same address)  
 Student/OAP/Unemployed/Disabled £8  
 Joint OAP £11 (at same address)  
 For Life/Overseas rates please ask for details

NAME.....  
 ADDRESS.....  
 .....POSTCODE .....

I/We wish to join the Campaign for Real Ale, and agree to abide by the Memorandum and Articles of Association.

I enclose a cheque for .....

Signed..... Opening Times 93  
 Date..... St.Neots

### SILVER MEDAL FOR FENLAND BREWERY

First of all our thanks go to Rob Thomas at the Fenland Brewery for his hospitality at the brewery when the Branch visited recently.

We are pleased to hear that Fenland have been awarded a prestigious silver medal at the Great British Wheat beer challenge organised by the International Brewers Guild and the Society of Independent Brewers. Fenland's 'Sparkling Wit' was judged second in a stiff competition from large and small brewers by a panel of publicans, brewers and experts.

The beer is brewed with wheat and oat malts, flavoured with coriander, grains of paradise and local honey. A rich aromatic pale beer with a light haze, typical of Belgian "wit" beers it is available at local free houses and "Booze on The Ouse" in September.