

OPENING TIMES



Issue No 95 Dec 1997

BRANCH NEWSLETTER
BI-MONTHLY CIRCULATION 2,000 COPIES

WINTER ALE FESTIVAL

January 22-23-24
at St. Neots Town
Football Club,
Cambridge Street, St.
Neots

Thursday 22nd
7.00 - 11.00pm

Friday 23rd
7.00 - 11.00pm

Saturday 24th
12.00 - 5.30pm

Admission 50p

Our next major event is the Winter Ale Festival to be held at St. Neots Town Football Club

from Thursday January 22nd - 24th just five minutes walk from St. Neots railway station.

There will be old ales, strong milds, stouts, porters, barley wines and a few drinking beers.

CHAMPION BEERS

There will be ales that figured prominently in CAMRA's Champion Winter Beer of Britain awards held in Glasgow including the overall winner Nethergate Old Growler, brewed not too far away in Clare, Suffolk and named after the head brewer's dog.

Silver prize went to Shepherd Neame's Original Porter. This will come as excellent news to the Kent family Brewery that faces stiff competition from cross channel bootlegged beer.

The bronze was awarded to Yorkshire's Daleside Brewery for its intriguingly named Monkey Wrench. Among the

other beers are hoped to be Sarah Hughes Dark Ruby Mild, King and Barnes Old, Gales Festival Mild, Adnams Old, Fenland Rudolph's Rocket Fuel, Hopback Entire Stout, Hanby Shropshire Stout, Batemans Salem Porter, Lees Moonraker, Robinsons Old Tom and Marstons Owd Rodger.

Drinking beers are Elgoods Black Dog, Oakham JHB and City of Cambridge Hobsons Choice.

Enough there to keep you happy, so make a date in your diary now.

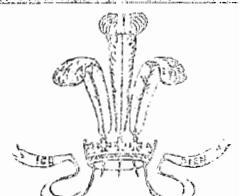
Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year to all our readers from the committee and members of St. Neots CAMRA Branch.



The Prince of Wales

'That nice pub at Hilton'

(01480) 830257



ADNAMS BEST BITTER ELGOOD'S BLACK DOG MILD GUEST BEERS GOOD FOOD ACCOMMODATION

DISCUSSIONS ON FRIDAY AND SATURDAY NIGHT EXTENDED OPENING

George Howarth, the Home Office Minister for liquor licensing has met with a Campaign for Real Ale delegation to discuss extending permitted hours on Friday and Saturday evenings to midnight.

However, public opinion on this is unknown so if you wish to express a view to him, write to:

George Howarth MP
Parliamentary Under Secretary of State, Home Office,
50 Queen Anne's Gate,
London SW1H 9AT

Enough of a response and Mr Howarth would be obliged to move the matter up the agenda.

There is a strong consumer demand for more flexible hours and staggered closing times are beneficial to public order as people will leave pubs at different times.

Longer opening times do not mean increased drinking. There was no significant increase following all day opening in 1988 and Sunday afternoon opening in 1995.

More flexible hours may encourage people to drink in pubs rather than at home. Pubs are a controlled environment and a key factor in promoting responsible drinking.

It will be fairer on drinkers who want to drink later but do not like the ambiance of discos and nightclubs.

Existing licensing law is unfair, archaic and has little relevance to life in the 1990's. Extending Friday and Saturday hours would be a move towards deregulation.

SHORT-PINT LAW CHANGE?

Wolverhampton MP Dennis Turner is trying to push through a law change on short measure on pints served in pubs. However, Government time will probably preclude this from becoming law in the near future.

Being 20th on the priority list, the legislation may never go through. Also those against the use of oversized glasses say that the purchase of new stock would add 10p to a pint, but with turnover of glasses being about 18 months maximum there could be a 'phasing in process' so that old style brim measure glasses could be replaced gradually at no major cost.

At present it is estimated that the problem of getting a full pint is worsening with one in four of all sales being a short measure.

SHEP'S SAY "CUT BEER TAX"

Industry support is growing for Kent brewer Shepherd Neame's bid to force the Government to halt the flood of bootleg beer crossing the Channel.

Fellow members of the Family Brewers of Britain have vowed to help finance Shep's legal struggle to force the Government to honour its Treaty of Rome obligations and start harmonising duty.

BIG BREWERS TO BLAME FOR CASK ALE DECLINE

Bass has announced the closure of its Cardiff and Sheffield breweries and given as the reason the steep decline in sales of cask conditioned real ale. Yet it is Bass and the other national giants who are to blame for the fall in consumption of real ale. They account for around 86% of all the beer brewed in Britain and have the power to determine the shape and style of the beer market.

CAMRA's membership, close to 51,000, has never been higher and the Campaign's beer festivals continue to attract large crowds, anxious to taste a wide variety of ales. There has never been in the past 30 years so much choice in the real ale sector. It is not falling consumer demand for real ale that is to blame, but the big brewers rush to promote nitro-keg that is fuelling a fall estimated at 14 per cent a year.

Once again the big brewers are attempting to consign draught beer to the dustbin and it remains the task of CAMRA to rescue it.

The Jolly Sailor

Great Whyte, Ramsey
Tel: 01487 813388

Michael and Joan
extend Christmas Greetings
to one and all and
hope to meet new customers
to try their:

Flowers Original
Ind Coope Burton Ale
Tetley Bitter + Guest Beer

TIGHT SPARKLERS - THE DEBATE GOES ON

First of all a letter from one of our readers, Mr P.Hackett of Eaton Socon.

"As an ex CAMRA member, though one who still supports the broad aims of the organisation, I offer a few thoughts on the direction of the campaign locally.

November's Opening Times used the experiment of offering an East Anglian Micro Brewers Ale with and without the use of a sparkler to assert that all cask beer tastes better without such a device. I would suggest that those who make this assertion put it to the drinkers in the many Good Beer Guide listed pubs of Manchester and Leeds, where a sparkler will almost certainly be employed. Such a decision should surely be left to the Brewers and drinkers in an individual area or pub.

On the subject of the GBG I turned in eagerness to the St. Neots entry in my 1998 edition only to find the Blue Ball as the entry. It must surely have been known at least at the proof reading stage of the compilation of the guide that this pub was likely to close. I know there was a CAMRA campaign, but this was always likely to fail as the tenants saw their future in their new pub. I visualise visitors to our town in the Summer wasting time wandering up and down Huntingdon Street trying to find a now closed pub when only five yards down Church Street they would be able to sample the best Green King Mild for miles, though I realise dogma* precludes inclusion of the Wheatsheaf.

Real ale is in serious decline, and if local branches of the campaign spend all their time worrying about every last detail of dispense methods the future of the cask beer drunk by the

vast majority of pub users will be decided by forces away from CAMRA".

*The Wheatsheaf serves its Mild with a cask breather device fitted.

Paul Moorhouse of St. Neots CAMRA offers a reply.

"If the Huntingdonshire area were a part of Lancashire, Yorkshire or even part of the Midlands, then there might be some confusion. The St Neots branch of CAMRA are well aware that traditionally some northern beers are over-hopped which means that they taste OK when the condition has been knocked out of them by a tight sparkler. We do not believe that this significantly affects the local area, particularly as much northern ale on sale locally is brands which have been blandified since becoming national brands.

The tight sparkler issue as it affects the local area is a simple one - tight sparklers are not traditional for draught beer in the local area and most local people do not want them. If all our local pubs used tight sparklers there would be no point in CAMRA campaigning for distinctive beers, only to have much of the flavour knocked out at the point of dispense.

The Blue Ball closure was only allowed by planning permission granted by Huntingdonshire District Council in October, but in any case news of its possible closure only

became known to the branch in July. The copy deadline for the Good Beer Guide is March with final proofs being returned in May. The local branch believed that the obvious potential viability of the Blue Ball as a free house, something which St Neots badly needs, would have been grounds for refusal of planning permission to prevent the loss of this community amenity. And if Greene King no longer wish to operate small community pubs they should allow others to do so. CAMRA policy is not to list in the Good Beer Guide any beers which are dispensed under a blanket of gas, even if a cask breather is in use to limit the pressure of the applied gas to atmospheric pressure.

CAMRA's policy is to encourage cask beer turnover within three days, so that the beer is in peak condition and these are the beers which are recommended by CAMRA in the Good Beer Guide.

Turnover time can be reduced by limiting cask size and by limiting the number of beers on sale - and there is no need for prolonging shelf life of casks which will result in beer with less than optimum freshness and flavour, with or without a gas blanket. And if the beers do turn over within three days then there is no need for any gas. If a gas blanket is in use then CAMRA must assume that the beer may not be fresh. Volatile short lived flavour components, particularly from hops, may then be lost".

SPARKLER TEST AT CROWN COME AND TRY FOR YOURSELF

Following on from the survey carried out at the 'Booze on the Ouse' Beer Festival in September CAMRA are conducting another survey. This will be held at the Crown Inn, Eaton Socon, on Tuesday January 13th when drinkers will be asked to try two halves of the same beer - probably Fullers London Pride - one served with a tight sparkler and one served with the sparkler removed. The beer will be from the same barrel and to encourage drinkers to try it, will be on sale at just £1.00 a pint for which drinkers will have to answer a few questions put by the local CAMRA branch. So landlords and drinkers, come along and find out which you really prefer.

.... BEER QUALITY....

Real ale sales have fallen by 14 per cent over the past 12 months and if real ale is to survive as a mainstream style then the only way forward is through quality.

A bad pint of cask ale is its own worst advertisement. Who could blame anyone turning to other beer styles after drinking a pint of warm brown liquid which has more in common with vinegar than beer?

Quality is fundamental to the future of real ale. A study in 1,000 pubs nationwide earlier this year, found 23 per cent of pints to be well below an acceptable standard. Many of them were too warm, showing that publicans had ignored lessons of the hot Summers of 1995 and 1996.

A disproportionate number of bad pints were served in pubs with five real ales or more. Real ale sales are now in a downward spiral: low turnover leads to poor quality, which creates a demand for nitro-keg, which reduces the turnover of real ales further.

Quality initiatives are vital to restore public confidence in real ale. For the consumer it reduces the risk you run when you try real ale in a pub you don't know.

.... BEER QUALITY

Britain's brewers are to launch Cask Marque, an initiative aimed at boosting real ale quality.

It is the brainchild of Paul Nunny, until recently trading director of Adnams, but Marston's, Morland and Greene King were quick to join in, with Whitbread, Carlsberg-Tetley, Vaux, Mansfield, Fullers and McMullen also agreeing to take part.

A measure of the unease about quality in the industry is that Mr Nunny has had to turn down requests from many firms wishing to join in the pilot.

The Cask Marque scheme consists of an award of plaques to publicans who apply to take part. Each applicant will be visited twice in three months by a Cask Marque inspector - drawn from an army of former brewing staff and quality control managers - and if their beer measures up on condition, appearance, taste, temperature and character a plaque will be awarded.

The award is made to the publican rather than the pub in recognition of the fact that skill and care are more important than facilities, but a publican who moves pubs will have to be retested.

1,000 pubs are hoped to be involved in the pilot scheme to be run between January and April.

Britain's regional brewers are adopting a new and more aggressive attitude towards cask ale quality in the face of the threat from nitro-keg.

ADNAMS have unveiled plans to install new cooling pythons throughout its tied estate after finding that its ales were often above the recommended 54F at the point of sale even with cellar cooling. Beer lines - the plastic tubes that carry beer to the bar - and pipes filled with ice-cold water are wrapped together inside an insulated tube. Meanwhile Shepherd Neame are launching a quality initiative based on cellar card systems, Fullers are trying to correct quality problems with some wholesalers and Mansfield are launching a Cellarmen of the Year competition among 100 of their free trade accounts.

FOR QUALITY
THE HAPPY BREWER
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BREWING AT HOME

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01234 353856

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GREENE KING INTRODUCE 'BREW CARE'

Meanwhile East Anglian brewer Greene King has launched its own pilot scheme to improve ale quality in its pubs.

Ale quality at the point of dispense is their top priority with head brewer Alistair Healy saying "it's no good pouring resources into quality control at the brewery, if we don't take as much trouble at our pubs". Unfortunately, this new initiative does not mean any change in the Greene King policy on cask breathers!

THE BREWING INDUSTRY TODAY

As the end of another year approaches it would seem an appropriate time to have a general look at the current make-up of who controls what in the UK brewing industry. Iain Loe CAMRA's Research Manager recently wrote an article on this, which has been used to make up the basis of our article and in turn saved the editor writing it himself:

The structure of the brewing industry has changed remarkably over the last eight years since the publication of the Mergers and Monopolies Commission report into the Supply of Beer.

In 1989 six national brewers controlled almost 80% of the beer market: today four (Scottish Courage, Bass, Whitbread and Carlsberg-Tetley) have at least 82%.

National Brewers

Bass hold 23% of the market and

have six working breweries. they have two breweries scheduled for closure - Welsh Brewers, Cardiff and Cannon Brewery, Sheffield.

Bass own 4,200 pubs of which 1,100 are tenanted

Carlsberg-Tetley controls 14% of the UK market and has only two breweries. It is closing Alloa and Wrexham however, the Burton Brewery has been sold to Bass subject to approval by the regulatory authorities. this includes the site, not the brands.

Carlsberg Tetley now has no pubs of its own but has a ten year supply agreement with Allied Domecq.

Scottish Courage has 30% of the beer market and seven breweries. It also owns about 2,600 pubs.

Finally Whitbread with 15% market share, five breweries and about 3,850 pubs.

The Regional and Family Brewers

These are companies who have been established for a long time. The outputs of these companies range from the smallest (4,000 barrels or less) to the largest (500,000 barrels). In total they own about 12,000 pubs

The Microbrewing Sector

This includes several hundred microbrewers and pub breweries with a total output of 1.5 - 2.0% of the beer market, however their share of the real ale market may be as high as 10%. They probably own no more than a couple of hundred pubs. There were no less than 48 new independent breweries

and brew pubs started in 1998, two in our own county of Cambridgeshire - City of Cambridge Brewery in Cambridge itself and Fenland Brewery in Chatteris.

There have been losses as well though, with numerous breweries sadly departing in the last twelve months but thankfully still more breweries opening up than closing down.

Pubs

The biggest pub owner is now Grand Pub Co. owned by the Japanese investment bank Nomura with about 4,700 pubs.

The big event in the past year was the rejection of the merger of Bass and Carlsberg-Tetley by the President of the Board of Trade, Margaret Beckett. The merger would have created Britain's largest brewer, with 40% of all beer production and would have had serious consequences for jobs, beer brands and beer prices.

However, rejection of the merger does not mean all is well. Carlsberg Tetley faces an uncertain future, with Allied Domecq known to be keen to dispose of its share of the company, to concentrate on pub retailing. we could still see brewery closures (management buyouts would be clearly preferable) and brand rationalisation - Ind Coope Burton Ale, *Champion Beer of Britain 1990*, is believed to be heading for extinction.

Even though 2,000 real ales are now brewed in the UK, big breweries are still seeking to concentrate production into fewer hands and dictate what people drink and in what sort of places they can drink it, proving that the Campaign for Real Ale with its 200 local branches is still needed as much as ever 26 years on.

The Cock

25 Church Street, Gamlingay

Tel: 01767 650255

Roger & Tina

wish all CAMRA members
and all customers old & new
a very Merry Christmas

Greene King Ales

Abbot IPA Winter Ale

LOCAL NEWS

The Nelsons Head in St Ives reopened in December as a prototype 'Pub Partners' branded pub being developed as part of Greene King's managed house chain. Four partitioned areas have been created and the traditional bar billiards has thankfully been retained in a games area at the rear.

A slick food operation has also been installed. Beers are Greene King IPA and Abbot with several guest cask beers. Taylors Landlord, Ringwood Old Thumper, Fullers London Pride and Morland Old Speckled Hen have been on offer. Landlord is Charlie Marigold, formerly of the Millers Arms in Eaton Socon.

Three beers are dispensed from the cellar and others are dispensed direct from casks set up at the rear of the bar with a cask cooling system in use. First impressions are favourable, but of course the novelty may wear off if identical clones start to spring up everywhere in place of distinctive pubs each run by the landlord in his individual way.

The Pig and Abbot at Abingdon Piggotts re-opened with a packed house on 30th November. A consortium of 24 villagers bought the pub from a new owner who had wished to convert the property to a house. Justin Haslam has been installed as tenant and the pub has been spruced up but no structural changes have occurred. Beers are supplied by Carlsberg-Tetley and Mitchells Lancaster Bomber was also available on the opening day. The pub made the Anglia News when it re-opened, with CAMRA Regional Director Paul Ainsworth also featured.

The Golden Miller, Longstowe is now serving Hobsons Choice from the City of Cambridge Brewery.

The Chequers, Little Gransden has the following beers lined up over Christmas and New Year: Exmoor Gold, Exmoor Beast - which will be served by gravity, Woodforde's Wherry and Fenland Best Bitter.

The Swan, Old Weston will be open

on Christmas Day, Evening session.

We are pleased to welcome Chris and Barbara Clark back to the **Crown and Cushion, Great Gransden**. They left the pub 3 1/2 years ago and have been doing relief work since then. They are currently serving Youngs Winter Warmer to compliment the usual Morland Old Speckled Hen and Wells Eagle.

The Cock at Gamlingay is serving Greene King Winter Ale over the Christmas period.

The Millers Arms, Eaton Socon has Captain Christmas,, the current Greene King seasonal ale.

Just over the border in Northampton, the **Abington Park**, run by Scottish and Newcastle Retail has stopped production at its in-house brewery.

The Bulls Head in St. Neots now offers a regular guest beer as well as its usual Greene King ales.

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)
 OAP/Unemployed/Disabled £8
 Joint OAP £11 (at same address)
 Under 26 £8
 For Life/Overseas rates please contact CAMRA HQ
 (Tel: 01727 867201)

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.....

Date.....

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 St. Neots

CAMA launches new under 26 category for membership.

CAMRA is offering young people the opportunity to join the Campaign for Real Ale at a reduced rate of £8.00 as from 12th January 1998. So if you fall into that category now could be the right time for you to join.

CAMRA is a non-profit making consumer organisation, run by volunteers and is completely independent of any commercial enterprise.

It campaigns for consumers' rights and is fun and sociable.

At the heart of what CAMRA stands for is full flavoured and distinctive beer, that is why we promote and support real ale.

If you share that concern for good ale then join CAMRA now.

GOOD BEER GUIDE: 25 YEARS ON

The 1998 Good Beer Guide is the 25th produced by the Campaign for Real Ale and within those there are only 18 pubs that have achieved the distinction of appearing in every guide. Unfortunately none from our branch area have managed that. Many factors go into pubs being taken out of the GBG ; Landlord changes, pub sale, method of dispense, quality of beer deteriorating etc. We thought you may be interested to know of the select band of pubs that have been included, in case your pass nearby one of them on your travels . How many have you been to?

Bedfordshire	Cock - Broom, Fleur de Lis - Bedford Rose & Crown, Ridgemont Sow & Pigs - Toddington	Wales Gwent	Cherry Tree - Tintern
Cambridgeshire	Queens Head - Newton	Scotland	Fishermans' Tavern*
Cheshire	Rising Sun - Taporley	Tayside	Broughty Ferry
Cornwall	Blue Anchor - Helston	*24 editions only: Scotland was not included in the First Good Beer Guide	
Devon	New Inn - Kilmington Ship Inn - Axmouth	Our own entries in the 1998 guide are:	
Dorset	Square & Compass - Worth Matravers	Arrington	Hardwicke Arms
Hertfordshire	Farriers Arms - St. Albans	Gamlingay	Cock
Kent	Jolly Draymen - Gravesend	Hilton	Prince of Wales
Lancashire	Empress Hotel - Blackpool	Huntingdon	Old Bridge
Greater London	Buckingham Arms - SW1 Fox & Hounds - SW1 Star Tavern - SW1	Leighton Bromswold	Green Man
Merseyside	Roscoe Head - Liverpool	Little Gransden	Chequers
Northumberland	Star - Netherton	Longstowe	Golden Miller
Oxfordshire	Crown & Tuns - Deddington	Needingworth	Queens Head
Shropshire	All Nations - Madely, Telford	Old Weston	Swan
Suffolk	Butt & Oyster - Pin Mill	Ramsey	Jolly Sailor
		St. Ives	Nelsons Head
		Spaldwick	George

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 6th January - Open Committee Meeting - **Ye Old Sun, St. Neots** - 8.30pm.

Friday 16th January - CAMRA Christmas Social - **Green Man, Leighton Bromswold** - 8.30pm. Contact Kathy Hadfield 01480 496247 for details of mini-bus.

Thursday 22nd January - Saturday 24th January - **WINTER ALE FESTIVAL** - St. Neots Town Football Club.

Friday 30th January - Eaton Socon Crawl - Commencing **Wheatsheaf, Eaton Socon** - 8.30pm.

Tuesday 10th February - Open Committee Meeting - **White Hart, St. Ives** - 8.30pm.

For further details contact:
Roy Endersby (Chairman) on 01480 473364

The Chequers

Little Gransden
Tel: 01767 677348

Bob and Wendy
wish everybody

a

Merry Christmas
and a

Happy New Year

Visit this unique village local

Adnams Bitter
plus a regular
Guest Ale

Country Pub Closures - is The Tide Slowing?

EVIDENCE is emerging from other parts of East Anglia that the closure rate of country pubs in the region is beginning to slowdown. Greene King - generally known as something of a butcher of country pubs - has sold one of its tenancies as a going concern, with talks in progress on a second, a third on the market, and a fourth which was turned round by an ex-USAF tenant to be relet when he leaves.

The Three Horseshoes at Cockfield, near Bury St Edmunds, has been bought by tenants John and Susan Boyce. The Boyces have built up the catering operation at the 600-year-old thatched pub and plan to stock a wide selection of guest ales alongside Greene King IPA and Abbot.

The brewery is also in talks with the tenants of the Bush Inn, Shimpling, while the Red House, Stanningfield, will be sold as a going concern. Also available is the Good Beer Guide-listed Metcalfe Arms at Hawstead, where ex-airman Nigel Chadwick is

leaving after three years. Instead of closing the pub and selling it as a private house, Greene King is to relet it.

Greene King says that pub closures are slowing because a sustainable density of one for every two villages has been reached. But it's also true that local people - and, increasingly, their elected representatives on local councils - are simply getting fed up of having their last remaining community facilities sold off as expensive private houses.

* The Pig & Abbot at Abington Piggot reopened on schedule after being bought by villagers. The privately-owned pub was to have been turned into a house, but planning permission was not forthcoming.

* A local farmer saved the 17th-century Fox & Hounds at Groton, Suffolk, from closure by buying it. Greene King planned to sell it as a private house when the farmer stepped in. He said he was not a drinking man, but he and his wife frequently ate out there and used it to entertain visitors.

* The Drovers at Steppingley, Bedfordshire, has reopened with new owners three years after Charles Wells sold it to a builder who wanted to live there. The local council repeatedly refused to grant change of use permission, and the eventually

the builder - who had bought the pub in perfectly good faith - gave up and sold it.

These are only early signs of a recovery, and we all know of pubs - the Blue Ball in St Neots, the Red House at Longstowe - which have only recently pulled their last pint.

Abbotsley, which until recently had three pubs, is now down to one, and the moral is: use them or lose them. One practical way supporters of country pubs can help is to go on regular crawls, taking it in turns to drive and stay dry (I suggest the driver goes free, and the others stand him his Lowes).

Around Gamlingay, my own little corner of the St Neots branch area, there are still plenty of country pubs well worth a visit:

The Chequers and the Crown & Cushion in the Gransdens; the wonderful Golden Miller at Longstowe; the Queen Adelaide at Croydon; the Hardwicke Arms at Arrington - a great place to eat, and with Old Hooky usually in splendid nick; the Pig & Abbot, of course (support those brave villagers!); and my own much-cherished local, the splendid Cock in Gamlingay itself.

Further afield there are many country pubs which I have yet to visit, but plan to. I just hope it's not my turn to drive when we hit Elstow!

The Swan Old Weston
 Tel: 01832 293400
 Jim & Tony send seasons greetings

Lunchtimes:
 Now Open 11.30 - 3.00 every day
 Normal Sunday hours
 Open Christmas Evening

Adnams Bitter Adnams Broadside
 Morland Old Speckled Hen

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Paulines "Home-made Specialities"
 Served Every Lunchtime And Evening - Bookings Taken
 PAULINE AND DAVE HARBER WELCOME YOU
 AND WISH A N MERRY CHRISTMAS TO ALL