

OPENING TIMES



HUNTINGDONSHIRE BRANCH NEWSLETTER

**Issue 117
Winter 2003**

HUNTINGDONSHIRE CAMRA PUB OF THE YEAR

The Cock pub at Hemingford Grey has been selected as Pub of the Year by the Campaign for Real Ale (CAMRA)'s Huntingdonshire branch. A presentation of a framed certificate to licensee Oliver Thain was made on Friday 24 October.

The Cock used to be a very ordinary village pub, but since its purchase a few years ago it has been transformed into something really special, with a stunningly well presented range of locally produced real ales, unprecedented in Huntingdonshire.

Part of the pub is a fine restaurant with the unusual combination of excellent beer and food. The bar is in complete contrast, and was refurbished to provide a simple but stylish setting and a relaxing atmosphere.

The choice of real cask ales at the Cock includes Elgoods Black Dog from Wisbech, Oakham JHB from Peterborough, Woodforde's Wherry Bitter from Norfolk and Adnams Bitter

from Suffolk. The Cock is now a regular entry in CAMRA's Good Beer Guide.

Real ale is a perishable product and needs to be handled correctly to be in the best form. The Cock never fails to impress with the standard of its beers, and has come to be regarded by CAMRA as one of the most highly regarded pubs in the area. And Oliver's business has just opened another pub, the Crown and Punchbowl at Horningsea, so we are hoping for similar great things there.



The presentation was combined with a Branch social and large numbers of local CAMRA members turned out to celebrate Oliver's success and sample his excellent beers (see Pinks Sunk for a more detailed report).

WHAT'S INSIDE

Page	Page
2 - Branch Diary	10-11 - 25/10 Years Ago
2 - Beer Festival	13-15 - Shaws Stroll
3-4 - Pints Sunk	18 - Pubs Week
6-7 - Pub News	19 - Membership Offer
8-9 - Real Cider	20 - Eldridge Pope
	21 - Yuletide Tipples
	23 - Wells Award

BRANCH DIARY

- **Tuesday 2nd December**, Open Meeting, **Oliver Cromwell, St Ives** (Free)
- **Friday 12th December**, Social, Real Ale Ramble of **Eaton Socon**, starting at the **Bell** (Charles Wells) (8.30), **White Horse** (Enterprise) (9.00), **Millers Arms** (Greene King) (9.30), and **Rivermill Tavern** (Free) (10.00)
- **Friday 9th January**, Christmas Social, **Chequers, Little Gransden** (Free). Buffet will be provided.
- **Tuesday 13th January**, Open meeting, **Rivermill, Eaton Socon** (Free) (8.30pm)
- **Saturday 24th January**, **Salisbury** rail trip and tour of CAMRA **Heritage Pubs** Inventory pubs. Check web site and What's Brewing for more details.
- **Tuesday 10th February**, Open meeting, **Grange, Brampton** (Free) (8.30pm)
- **Friday 27th February**, **Belgian Beer Tasting** Evening - at a venue in St Neots. Contact the Social Secretary for more details.
- **Tuesday 9th March**, Open meeting, **Prince of Wales, Hilton** (Free) (8.30pm)
- **Friday 19th March**, Social, **Cock, Hemingford Grey** (Free) (8.30pm)

All meetings start at 8:30pm unless otherwise stated. Further information: Kathy Hadfield, Social Secretary, tel 01480 496247, e-mail socials@huntscamra.org.uk.

BOOZE ON THE OUSE

The 23rd 'BOOZE ON THE OUSE' Beer Festival, held at the Burgess Hall, St. Ivo Centre, St. Ives in September was another success. 1,280 people attend the event and they supped just under 4,000 pints of real ale, plus real cider, perry and assorted Belgian and foreign beers.



Beers of the Festival

- =1st Harviestoun, Bitter and Twisted
 - =1st Hydes, Firkin Fruity
 - 3rd Crouch Vale, Brewers Gold
- Congratulations to all breweries.



Make a note in your diary for next year **Thursday 23rd - Saturday 25th of September 2004.**

OPENING TIMES

Opening Times is published by the Huntingdonshire Branch of CAMRA, the Campaign for Real Ale (Copyright 2002). Views or comments expressed in this publication may not necessarily be those of the Editor or of CAMRA.

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Contact Andy Shaw, on (01480) 355893, or news@huntscamra.org.uk.

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PINTS SUNK

So, now winter is upon us and as we sit by our warm firesides, we can reflect upon those last few happy days of summer. Or we can go down the pub! Well, I'll tell you what, we'll do both. You can read my tales of pubs visited and then you can go and find out about them for yourselves.

Our newsletter distribution tasks took us out to the **Pike and Eel** at **Needingworth**. A lovely riverside setting for sunny days, it still has a watery charm on a dusky August evening. There we sampled **Greene King IPA** and **Ruddles Best Bitter**, both definitely being worth the drive.

Our next ramble found us in Fenstanton for a branch social. Easily reached by bus or on foot from St. Ives, this village offers three quite different hostels.



We began our evening in the **Crown and Cushion**, a Charles Wells

pub that keeps a very good pint of Eagle IPA and often a guest beer, too. It has a good friendly, neighbourly feel and it isn't unusual to find yourself falling into conversation with one of the locals.

Next was the **George**, a short stroll down the hill. A large open plan pub, although once two-bar at least, was on this occasion serving only **Greene King IPA**. After taking back the first pint, a new cask was put on and the resultant pint was excellent.

Our final port of call was the **King William IV** (or King Bill to us). A fairly smart Greene King pub, its tubs and



baskets of flowers suggest an attention to detail and a desire to attract thirsty passers-by. We sampled **IPA** and the not-often-found **Abbot**; and both were good. Our final treat of the evening, however, was the **Everards Tiger**, which was greatly enjoyed.

The run-up to the beer festival saw us weary workers rounding off our set-up evenings with a pint or two in the **Oliver Cromwell (Adnams Bitter, Oakham JHB and Woodforde's Wherry)** on one night and the **Floods Tavern** on the next. I must say that the **Elgoods Black Dog** did slip down very easily. Well, shifting beer makes you thirsty and has its reward!

The Friday after our own St Ives Beer Festival, some diligent members of the branch visited the **Letchworth Beer Festival**, and had an excellent evening.

Next we found ourselves at the **Green Man in Colne**, and their excellent German beer festival. There we tried **Youngs Special**, an occasional but very welcome visitor to these parts, and an even more foreign traveller,

St. Austell Tribute, which reminded me of my last Cornish holiday! Also sampled by members of the CAMRA trip



were the Oktoberfest Beers from Ayinger, Hacker Pschorr, Paulaner, and Spaten. Sadly host Phil Beer had been let down by his supplier, and the Oktoberfest Beers were in bottle and not draught as planned, but the atmosphere and the food was authentic and very enjoyable, and we hope that he will organise this event again in 2004.

Two weeks after the beer festival saw us out on our new members social. Thanks to Margaret, our membership secretary, we signed up quite a few new members this year.

PINTS SUNK

On this evening, it was good to see a couple of new members and other not-so-new members who hadn't been out with us before.

The ramble around **St Ives** started at the **Aviator**, where some excellent **Oakham JHB** was enjoyed.

Then onto the **Floods Tavern**, where the **Elgoods** seasonal **Barleymead** was available alongside the regular **Cambridge Bitter**, and **Black Dog**.

I joined at the **Oliver Cromwell** and such was



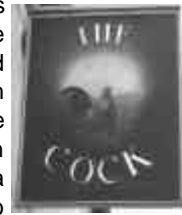
the weather that we sat outside. The beer was as good as ever, with pints of **Oakham JHB** and **Woodforde's Wherry** slipping

down a treat. It was good to sit and mull over the success that had been our beer festival. It does wonders for morale and spurs us on towards the planning of next years' event.

Next we visited the **Bedford Beer Festival** - since Autumn is the season for Beer Festivals! A great evening out, and always a joy to drink Rauch Beer - the smoked beer of Bamberg in Germany, that is twinned with Bedford.

And finally to our favourite event of the year - the presentation to the winner of the branch Pub of the Year. This means

that we have to spend the whole evening in the pub and drink the beer! What a tough job, I hear you cry. Well come and join us and help lighten the load. Seriously, it is a great pleasure to be able to



present this award to a local pub because it recognises that one of our locals has achieved a level of service and beer quality that other pubs can aspire to. We had a great night. As

usual the beer at the **Cock** at **Hemingford Grey** was fantastic. To show willing, I tried all the beers.



I started on the **Elgoods Black Dog** which is just about my favourite mild - so dark and nutty with such liquorice flavours. Mmmmm. Then it had to be the **Adnams Bitter** and from its aroma, it couldn't have been anything else, it's so distinctive. From there to **Woodforde's Wherry**. This beer is rather more readily available in these parts of late but you won't hear me complaining. Being a Norfolk girl, I'm rather partial to the orangey hop aroma and dry finish. That only left **Oakham Bishops Farewell** as the parting shot. What can I say; by this time, my palate was only able to discern that it was very good. As usual Oliver had done us proud. We had reciprocated by turning out in numbers (double figures is good for such a small branch). A good time was had by all, even our new regional director for whom it was a first visit. The prompt arrival of our taxi saved me from myself and just one more beer! The article on the Pub of the Year competition shows a good picture of Oliver and our branch chairman, Roy, looking remarkably sober!

The next issue will hopefully see tales of a pub-crawl around Huntingdon and a ramble around Eaton Socon. If you fancy joining us, just turn to the branch diary page and see what's happening near you. Happy supping!



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PUB NEWS

- The **Crown at Broughton** is “under new management”, as of early October. The new management team is Tim Prior and Simon Cadge – Tim looks after the bar while Simon is the Chef. Neither of them is new to the Huntingdonshire pub scene, and both have served time in such notable establishments as the Old Bridge Hotel, Huntingdon and the Pheasant, Keyston. Tim and Simon have already made changes – the bar area, previously dominated by tables for diners, now has a layout more appropriate to drinkers. As Tim said, “we have to cater for all needs – someone calling in for a couple of lunchtime pints may be a customer returning for dinner in the evening”. Real ales currently on handpump are Greene King IPA and Adnams Bitter, but Tim, a real ale drinker himself, is keen to offer a broader range in the future, including beers from local micros such as Potton, Fenland, and City of Cambridge.
- Local pubs are involved in a district council scheme to provide public access to computers. The HeLP project (Huntingdonshire Electronic Learning Project) provides 8 computer access points in public places around the council area, plus two at the council's headquarters at Pathfinder House, Huntingdon. Five of the access points are in local pubs: **Offord D'Arcy Horseshoe**, **Upwood Cross Keys**, **Alconbury Weston White Hart**, **Bluntisham White Swan** and **Hail Weston Royal Oak**. The aim of the project is to provide equal opportunities for all to learn about and use computers. Tutors are available to guide those new to computers through whatever learning programme they choose. It is good to see our local pubs getting involved in community schemes such as this. Multiple uses for rural pubs can be a key towards viability and long term survival, as they encourage the local community to use their pubs.
- The **Lakeside Lodge at Pidley** stocks an interesting selection of cask ales, City of Cambridge Rutherford IPA and Buckley's Best Bitter being noted there recently.
- Pub Groups Wetherspoons and SFI have both pulled out of proposals to open outlets in Huntingdon. The two groups had each planned to occupy part of the former Tesco site in Huntingdon High Street. Marks and Spencer will open a 'Simply Food' store in half of the former store in December.
- Wizard Inns have opened **Cromwells Café Bar in Huntingdon** High Street, on the site of the former Warehouse Clearance store. The format is similar to Wizard's new St Neots pub, the Priory. Real ales at Cromwells are Greene King IPA plus one other, recently Ridleys IPA.
- In **Buckden**, the **George** is closed for refurbishment following its sale by Greene King. Charles Wells's **Spread Eagle** in the village has been closed and sold to a development association. This means that Charles Wells have now closed both of their pubs in Buckden, the Falcon having closed several years ago.
- Charles Wells have also disposed of the **George at Spaldwick** but this much-boasted and thriving pub was sold as a going concern to Scottish & Newcastle, who have apparently been acquiring pubs whilst in the process of selling their entire pubs estate. Meanwhile leases are available on Wells pubs the **Territorial in Huntingdon** and the **Golden Ball in St Neots**, following its recent closure.
- The lease of the **Horseshoe at Offord** has been sold.

PUB NEWS

- In **St Ives** the **Golden Lion Hotel** has reopened after a two-month closure for a major refurbishment.



- While brewers Scottish Courage have been busy selling the Theakstons brewery and brands back to the Theakston family, the group's pubs arm Scottish & Newcastle has sold its remaining 1400 managed pubs to Spirit Group (previously the managed house part of Punch Taverns). A local result is that Spirit now control three **St Ives** pubs – the **Robin Hood**, the **Royal Oak** and the **Haywain** in the Burleigh Centre. The latter remains badged as an 'Ansells pub' in a throwback to the 1980's revival of this famous Birmingham brewery name by former owners Allied Breweries, who later sold their managed estate to Punch Taverns.

- Dave Mumford, licensee of Greene King pub, Good Beer Guide entry and real draught mild outlet the **Waggon & Horseshoes, Steeple Morden** moved on in early November.



- The **Oliver Cromwell, St Ives** – an extension of the bar is expected to be completed soon. A separate no-smoking area will be created in the new space. The existing bar counter is to be replaced and extended into the new area.
- The **Bulls Head, St Neots** has undergone a major "face lift", with a light oak wooden bar, light oak wood panelled floor and walls, with a bright colour scheme, creating a light airy modern atmosphere. Brewer Greene King's refurbishments extend to the toilets, which are a bright lemon colour.

- Welcome to new tenants Dave and Tracey O'Driscoll who have recently taken over the Charles Wells pub, the **Bell, Eaton**



Socon. Dave wants to run the Bell as a friendly community pub, a place for good beer, good food and conversation. Next year he plans to develop the extensive garden at the rear, and introduce children's games. On the real ale front, 1-2 regular guest beers will be offered alongside the regular Charles Wells Eagle.

- Four real beers were on offer recently at the **Queen Adelaide, Croydon**: Potton Shannon, Adnams Broadside, Draught Bass and Greene King IPA.
- The **Bridge House, St Neots** was acquired from Whitbread over the summer by Valley Hill, a property company that has acquired a number of pubs. Whilst the pub has been debranded from being a Beafeater, little else has so far changed, but a refurbishment may take place in the new year.
- The **Grange, Brampton** plans to stock more local microbrewer beers than previously.
- Over the border in Bedfordshire, the **Engineers Arms at Henlow** is CAMRA's East Anglia Pub of the Year and will now be judged in the final round for the national award. Also in Bedfordshire, Greene King pubs the **Red Cow at Langford** and the **Three Fyshes at Turvey** have both closed. In Turvey a group of villagers have got together to buy the Three Fyshes. Hopefully, if successful, they will be able to operate this former brewpub free of tie to stock a range of interesting beers to draw back lost trade, although a recent television report suggested a possible loan from Greene King.

REAL CIDER



First time visit to a cider farm? Not sure what to expect? Neil Parker and Victoria Gorman recollect some of their first trips....

Hunting out small-time cider and perry farms

can be fun and challenging. Our first real experience of this was searching out a farm producer in Devon, just outside the seaside town of Sidmouth. We had just finished a week's holiday and our large estate car was weighed down with the waste from a week's camping and with 2 bicycles hanging off the back. The CAMRA Good Cider Guide had provided us with the location of the farm but had not prepared us for the length and narrowness of the country lanes we had to navigate to get there. And there was an element of rural car-chase about it too. The Guide had given a closing time for farm sales and we had only minutes to spare, the car's wing mirrors brushed past hedges and we expected the protruding cycle wheels at the rear to snag and cause untold damage.

But we got there to a friendly welcome from a sleepy black dog and it's owner. After some well earned tastings we were rewarded with a gallon or two of the dry and medium-dry for the princely sum of about £1-a-pint. We took the precious cargo back home to London. It was truly the best cider we had ever tasted and since then we always have our copy of the Cider Guide safely stowed in the car. We not only make detours to collect cider to and from holiday locations, we have been known to pop into farms on our way back from job interviews! It's amazing how you can weave cider-collecting detours into all kinds of journey.

Our first trip to Cornwall was in a 35-year old VW Beetle in mid-October on a day with torrential rain and very high winds - there were several lorries blown over on our route during the course of the day, and we even saw one of them. The car was managing only 40 mph on of the level sections of road, because of the strength of the headwinds.

We still managed to bag supplies of cider from two Devon producers on the way. We had targeted four but one supplier had sadly ceased production owing to bereavement, and another looked to have shut up shop for the winter. During the course of our holiday we looked up (successfully) 2 further Cornish suppliers both of whom still press their cider through straw. All the farms we visited were welcoming and the farmers more than happy to chat around a few glasses of cider. We made a detour on the way home and obtained supplies from the farm we thought had gone into hibernation returning to London with a fantastic variety.

The producers all told us that cider keeps for "about 10 days, and you mustn't let the air get to it" but we have found that with care it will stay very drinkable for much longer periods than this. Only a few days ago we found an unopened container, which must have been months old - we have no idea where it came from. The contents were very drinkable, but very dry. Very, very dry!

So as well as your copy of the CAMRA Cider Guide, you would be wised to be well armed with a few empty containers although most producers will provide their own if you don't have any. It can be tremendously good fun following narrow country back roads to remote farms, taking wrong turnings and misreading road signs but a local map is also a useful thing to carry as many of the farms are marked.

Recently we were fortunate enough to be able to scrounge 2 beer polybins - the remnants of

REAL CIDER

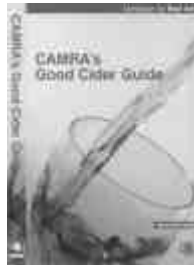
a friend's retirement party, which had to be removed from the hall. These have kept cider good for weeks because the air does not have to pass into the containers to let the cider out. Just take care if you are going to re-use this type of container, as it should be thoroughly sterilised first. As one producer told us - "You don't want your cider mousy!" Incidentally, the last poly-pin we had filled on a farm cost us £6.75, or less than 20p per pint!

Of course, you don't have to go round the countryside spraying carbon solids and gases everywhere from the back of a car. There is plenty of scope for cider-collecting trips on foot or by using rail and bicycle. Maybe you could work out a waterways route?

There are an estimated 300 or so cider and perry producers (perry being the pear equivalent of cider) in the UK. Not all of them are large

enough to advertise their wares, so there is scope for some real detective work. We have been directed to producers through meeting people in pubs whilst on holiday or even from other producers. The cider bar at beer festivals can also be a good source of information (and of course cider!).

The last CAMRA Good Cider Guide was published a couple of years ago and although still extremely useful Vicky is currently working on a new edition due for publication in an updated form in 2004. If you have any information, which you think could be included in the Guide, feel free to send it to vicky@applesandpears.co.uk or contact CAMRA HQ at 230 Hatfield Road, St. Albans.



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A LOOK BACK IN TIME

25 YEARS AGO

- CAMRA clearly hit home at the Annual General Meeting of Allied Breweries. After criticising Allied's plans to take over the J.Lyons food and teashops group, they were busy rebuffing smears by Allied Chairman Keith Showering who wrongly believed that CAMRA had become a left wing organisation and its company secretary to be a member of the International Socialists.
- There were fears in the autumn of 1978 for the future of famous draught mild, Hock, brewed by Fullers in London, as they announced the possibility of discontinuing cask Hock because of falling sales. A keg version of the beer was to be retained.
- National brewers Courage refused to meet CAMRA to discuss its policies on real ale and brewery closures after a CAMRA protest march in Tadcaster bemoaning the lack of any real ale from Courage's John Smiths brewery in the town. York branch of CAMRA produced badges displaying the Courage cockerel trade mark and the slogan 'John Smiths - its fowl'.
- In November 1978 CAMRA announced a 'pint sized ale boom' as the number home brew pubs in Britain reached 18, up from just 4 in 1974. And a number of the new breweries had been set up by former big brewery executives, including Simon Whitmore, formerly Managing Director of Courage (Western), who had begun brewing Butcombe bitter at his home.
- The revival of an extinct beer style, draught porter, was celebrated by CAMRA after the success of new draught porters from Timothy Taylor of Keighley, West Yorkshire and Penhros Court in Herefordshire, a tiny brewery set up by Terry Jones of television's Monty Python's Flying Circus.

- Licensees' groups claimed that a government proposal to enforce the use of oversized, lined glasses to ensure full pints would increase beer prices by 3p a pint. CAMRA reaffirmed its support for lined glasses and believed that publicans' organisations were over-reacting, as around two years would be allowed for replacement of existing glasses over their usual lifetime.
- Greene King were under fire from CAMRA for a plan to drop Rayments AK Mild. Sales of the cask pale mild, brewed at their tiny subsidiary brewery in Hertfordshire, were down to 10 barrels a week and it would be replaced by Greene King KK mild - described by CAMRA as 'nondescript' and 'unable to begin to match the delicate flavour of AK'.
- The St Neots branch of CAMRA met at the Royal Oak, Hail Weston in November 1978 and later in the month joined North Hertfordshire branch in a social at the Crown, Litlington
- Bedford brewers Charles Wells were struggling to keep production levels high enough to meet demand, two years after moving into their new Havelock Street brewery. Production had risen by 15% since summer 1977, spearheaded by sales of their draught IPA bitter and the new Kellerbrau lager.

10 YEARS AGO

- CAMRA launched a 'guerrilla war' against short measure as it accused Trade Secretary Michael Heseltine of 'the climb down of all climb downs'. Heseltine had reneged on a promised move to enforce full measure after the brewers had warned of high costs even with the promised two-year period to change pub glasses. And there was criticism of the U-turn from within the government as former Consumer Affairs Minister Edward Leigh blamed the government for 'caving in to the brewers'.

A LOOK BACK IN TIME

- CAMRA's St Neots branch presented its 'pub of the autumn' award to the Queen Adelaide, Croydon. The branch's December social was held at the Chequers, Little Gransden.
- Later in the year the Prince of Wales at Hilton was offering a range of cask winter ales over the festive season, including Highgate Old, Mansfield Christmas Ale, Lloyds Vixen Velvet Porter, Mitchells Single Malt, Adnams Tally Ho and Everards Daredevil.
- CAMRA urged Tory Chancellor Kenneth Clarke to cut duty in his November 1993 budget, and his eventual decision to freeze duty was seen as a considerable victory. The supermarket group Tesco was an unusual ally for CAMRA, claiming that British shops were losing up to £500 million annual drink sales because of cheap imports.
- Scottish & Newcastle acquired the 'Chef and Brewer' chain of 1654 managed houses from Grand Metropolitan. This gave S&N its first pubs in St Ives, the Robin Hood and the Seven Wives, the latter later sold to Labatts. By 1996 Labatts had sold its UK pubs, including the Seven Wives, to Enterprise Inns.
- Ted Bruning became Assistant Editor of CAMRA's members' newspaper 'What's Brewing', in a move from the Morning Advertiser, where he had been News Editor. In 2003 Ted remains as editor of What's Brewing and lives locally in Gamlingay.
- East Anglian brewers Adnams won praise from CAMRA as they axed fake handpumps in its pubs for dispense of the keg cider Scrumpy Jack. CAMRA had mounted a vigorous a campaign against the misleading use of fake handpumps for keg cider. Adnams promised to supply a real cider as an alternative to Scrumpy Jack.
- CAMRA stepped up its campaign for pubs to be allowed to open between 3pm and 7pm on Sundays. CAMRA research had shown that half of pubs would remain open if allowed to do so.
- Essex brewers Ridleys launched its new cask beer brand 'SX' claiming that the use of the letter X had 'connotations with the strength of the 4.3% beer and demonstrates Ridleys' commitment to Essex'. Later the name was changed to 'ESX' after complaints from Wiltshire brewers Wadworths that the name 'SX' was too similar to '6X'.
- Campaigning villagers at Steppingley, Bedfordshire celebrated a victory as the council refused permission for conversion to housing of their local, the Drovers Arms. The campaign committee had raised money to buy the pub, but Charles Wells had already sold it for conversion to housing.

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SHAW'S STROLLS

Broughton, Kings Ripton and Abbots Ripton

Introduction: The walk starts and ends at the Crown, Broughton, makes visits to the villages of Kings Ripton and Abbots Ripton, and allows for a possible break in a pub along the way.

In the 12th century Broughton Castle was where the Abbots of Ramsay held their Courts of Justice. The castle was demolished at the time of the Reformation, and now only a moat remains.

Kings Ripton was mentioned in the Domesday book, and has a 13th century church.

Abbots Ripton was also mentioned in Domesday. In the 14th century the village was controlled by the Bishop of Ely who had hunting rights and a manor house in the area.

This walk is also a tale of three village pubs:

The Crown, Broughton was a Watney-Mann pub. Fifteen years ago they sold it to pub company Blezards, part of Control Securities plc, who took over Scottish brewery Belhaven in 1988. The pub chain became Ascot Holdings and when the Crown closed in 2000 it was part of Mayfair Taverns, who bought the Ascot chain in 1996.. Following a well-supported public meeting, around 40 village residents joined together to raise the £180,000 necessary to purchase, revamp and renovate the pub after it had been put up for sale. There were 200 shares each valued at £1000 and a board of five directors. Their bid was the only one that offered to keep the pub as a licensed premise, and thankfully succeeded. The pub reopened in March 2001, and is still run by a tenant, leased from the company Interaspect, owned by village residents. The pub had begun to evolve from being a pub into a restaurant, but new tenants have recently reversed that process (see Pub News).

The Unicorn, Kings Ripton - once a free house, with a single bar, and in the early 90's was extensively renovated and with a separate restaurant area. It sold real ales Greene King

IPA and Abbot for some years before being closed in 1992. The building remained unused for some time, and was then converted into a private house. Kings Ripton has no village pub.



The Three Horseshoes, Abbots Ripton was a Watney-Manns pub and later operated by Intrepreneur and then owned by Nomura from 1997 until 1999, when it was closed. Since that time the pub has remained closed but some months ago, some "development" activity was observed. Initially it was not clear if the work would lead to conversion to a private dwelling, or reopening of the pub. When a large car park was laid out, the plans of the new owners become clearer. At the time when this pub walk was being researched in late October, a new pub sign had been erected, declaring that the Three Horseshoes was to be a "free house". We do not know who the owner or the operator of this pub is - pubs like the Three Horseshoes have been played with much like pawns in a chess game since the break up of the old national breweries, but the important thing is that like Broughton, the residents of Abbots Ripton will have a pub again. Sadly, the same cannot be said of Kings Ripton.

This tale of three village pubs highlights some important messages. Firstly, the residents of any village must understand that their pub will always be under threat from closure unless the pub receives local support - the phrase "use it or lose it!" is very relevant. Secondly, however, in small villages the trade from residents alone will rarely be sufficient to keep the pub economically viable, and the promise of food trade from outside the village may cause the village to lose a pub and gain a restaurant, as nearly happened at Broughton.



Image produced from the Ordnance Survey Get-a-map service. Image reproduced with kind permission of Ordnance Survey.

Distance: 12 km (7.5 miles).

How to get there: From Huntingdon take the A141 towards Chatteris and after passing the Wyton Airfield on your right, take a left turn signposted Broughton. The Crown is in the centre of the village, opposite the church.

Parking: The Crown has a large car park (next to an equally large garden) at the side of the pub.

This walk starts by following the Pathfinders long distance walk along the line of a stream to Kings Ripton. The route continues along the tree lined stream to Abbots Ripton, then climbs to higher ground with good views, and skirts old woods before returning to Broughton.

The Walk

From the pub car park, cross the road and go down School Lane opposite, beside the 11th century church. School Lane contains many old and interesting buildings, including the old rectory (an Elizabethan building) and the old library.



After 200m, turn left on to the well-marked public footpath - part of the Pathfinder walk. Passing between houses, traverse the field next to

a playing field and negotiate an unusual double stile. Crossing the centre of the next field and two more stiles, you'll reach another stile with a way-marker at the corner of the field. Follow the left edge of the field, which winds past a hedgerow of hawthorn and sloe, and leads to a ditch with a way marked bridge.

Turn left and follow the field edge, turning right at the field corner, then following a broad winding stream. Soon you will see Kings Ripton church in the distance - our first destination. Continue past a concrete bridge over the stream, and pass between a hedge gap. Ignore the way-marked bridge and continue alongside the stream to the road.

Our route will later continue over the road, by the road bridge, and over the footbridge, but take the opportunity to explore Kings Ripton.

Passing over the bridge and keeping to the left side of the road, you first pass St Peter's church, which dates from the 13th century, with 19th century restoration. Further on the same side of the road is Unicorn House, once a village pub.

Continue back over the bridge and alongside the stream, which is initially lined with a fine range of poplar trees. Later the path passes through an avenue of oak, ash and maple.

Where the way markers offer a choice, continue straight, over the wooden footbridge.

Follow the way mark, through the tree line, over a footbridge across the stream and along the right edge of the field. At the road, turn right, and follow the road past Abbots Ripton Hall on your right. Beyond Grove Farm and the garage sign, turn right on to the side road (Rookes Close) and, after passing some cottages and entering a wood, turn left to cross a pair of



The Three Horseshoes

wooden gate and turn left into Moat Lane. At the end of Moat Lane you will find the Three Horseshoes and, turning right and climbing the hill, the rest of Abbots Ripton, which is well worth exploring for the fine collection of thatched cottages and the 13th century St Andrews church.

Retrace your steps down Moat Lane, across the field and footbridges, and continue through a way marked gate across the lane. Follow the path that leads through a wood. Passing through another gate, turn left and follow the edge of a paddock, turning right at the corner, and continue to a drive, which you cross and pass through another way-marked gate. Cross the field to another gate and follow a path to the Abbots Ripton Hall drive.



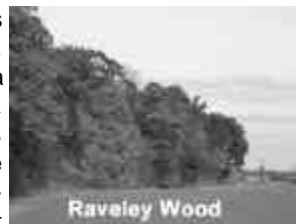
Abbots Ripton Hall

and has very fine gardens.

Turn left pass the hall and the green gate and follow the tree-lined drive. Continue past Hall Farm on the right and go straight towards the distant woods, taking the left fork after 200m. Approaching the woods, the drive has another

green gate. At the way markers, go straight on with the woods on your left.

Passing farm buildings, cross the field to your right, and follow the path, leaving the wood behind and heading towards farm buildings. The path joins a track, and then a drive. At this point continue along the tree-lined drive past the farm on your right and on towards the road. At the road, turn right. Follow the road across the crossroads, and continue to the village of Broughton.



Raveley Wood

The Pub Crown, Broughton

Bridge Road, Broughton, PE28 3AY

Tel: (01480) 824428

Opening times: Closed Mon-Tue; 12-3, 6-11 Wed-Fri; 11.30-11 Sat; 12-10.30 Sun

Beers: Greene King IPA, Guest Beers

The Crown is an idyllic village pub in a picturesque setting next to the village church. In 2000 the new owners realised the need to adapt the pub to attract visitors from a wider area to ensure its survival. They revamped it with modern décor, doubled capacity for diners to provide 40 covers but, importantly, retained a sociable drinking area with an expanded range of real ales. No meals are offered on Sat and Sun afternoons.

Car Park, Garden, Meals Lunchtime, Meals Evening.



The Crown

Calling All Beer Lovers

Love beer? Want to help protect it as well as drink it? Want to make sure you can continue to enjoy your favourite pint of real ale in your local pub? Well, you may be interested to know that's what the Campaign for Real Ale, CAMRA, is trying to ensure.

We are one of the most successful consumer organisations in the country. We campaign to help protect consumer rights, promote quality, choice and value for money as well as campaigning to save local pubs and independent breweries.

So why not help support us and join today!

How? Just fill in the CAMRA application form or join online at www.camra.org.uk

Membership costs just £16 a year and for this you receive:

- Our lively monthly publication What's Brewing, giving hard news from the world of pubs and beer as well as providing information about festivals and special events.
- **Free or substantially reduced** entry to all CAMRA beer festivals throughout the UK, including the Great British Beer Festival.
- **Discounts** on many CAMRA publications, including our best-selling Good Beer Guide.

There are over 180 branches and 66,000 members Nationwide. Between campaigning, beer festivals, brewery trips and pub visits there is plenty going on. So find out more about what's going on in your local area and **join online** at

www.camra.org.uk

Membership Application

Please fill in your details below.

Title Surname

Forename (s) D.O.B

Partner Title / Surname (If applicable)

Forename (s) D.O.B

Address

Postcode
 Tel No.
 Email

Please indicate below (circle amount) which category applies to the recipient:

Single.....£16

Joint.....£19

Under 26.....£9

Under 26 Joint.....£12

Retired.....£9

Retired Joint.....£12

I enclose a cheque, payable to **CAMRA**, for £_____.

Send to: CAMRA, Membership Secretary, 230 Hatfield Road, St Albans, Herts, AL1 4LW

Signed.....Date.....

Or join online at
www.camra.org.uk



CATWORTH

**The Fox, Fox Road, Catworth,
PE28 0PW**

Tel: 01832 710363

The RAF Molesworth / Kimbolton exit of the A14, off the B660

The Fox at Catworth

invites you to come and enjoy the relaxed, friendly atmosphere of this cosy family run establishment, as recommended in the CAMRA Good Beer Guide.

We offer an ever changing list of guest ales, and we have a good selection of fine wines.

This year we have a wide variety of Christmas fayre, with vegetarians amply catered for.

**From 26th November – 23rd December,
4 Course Meal for 16.50**

Opening times:

Mon to Sat: 11.00am – 11.00pm

Sunday: 12:00am – 10.30pm

**Food served all day every day,
from opening until 9.00pm.**

Phone 01832 710363 now to book.

NATIONAL PUBS WEEK!

Help CAMRA celebrate the Great British Pub 21st-28th February 2004

CAMRA's second National Pubs Week kicks off on 21st February 2004, and tens of thousands of pubs are set to support this important event, which aims to encourage people to visit pubs more often.

The objective of the week is to celebrate pubs and help boost the British pub trade at a quiet time of the year for the industry. Organising events and displaying promotional material will encourage more people to visit pubs more regularly throughout the week. We believe that many licensees will see the benefit of organising events and marketing their pubs and it will encourage them to continue doing this throughout the year.

FREE PROMOTIONAL PACKS FOR PUBS

CAMRA is offering FREE promotional packs to licensees for NPW 2004. These will include

Posters, beer mats, advice & briefing sheets and sample press releases.

Encourage your local pub to order their National Pubs Week 2004 material NOW! Ordering direct from CAMRA couldn't be any easier! Licensees can order by phone (01727 867201) or on-line (www.camra.org.uk/pubsweek)

Tony Jerome, CAMRA's Press Manager said, "Over 15,000 pubs came on board last year and we hope to increase this amount in 2004."

Jerome continued, "It should be stressed to licensees that the pub doesn't have to organise anything too imaginative - themed party nights, food and beer promos, local comedians, magicians, pub quizzes and pub crawls organised with other local pubs can all be very successful and increase pub going figures!"

If you are reading this in a pub why not ask the landlord if they're joining in National Pubs Week!

THE OLIVER CROMWELL

Wellington Street, St. Ives, Cambs.

Tel: 01480 465601

Serving five real ales:

Adnams Bitter plus four

regularly changing guest beers

New no smoking bar



**Enjoy a good pint of traditional ale
in traditional surroundings**

**Reasonably Priced Lunchtime Bar Snacks
available Monday to Saturday**

CAMRA MEMBERSHIP CHRISTMAS GIFT

Ideal gifts for anyone who loves real ale

Membership Christmas bundles. Save up to 35%*

Just complete the form below and send, with a cheque (payable to CAMRA) to Membership Secretary, CAMRA, 230 Hatfield Road, St Albans, Herts, AL1 4LW.

EXCLUSIVE OFFER: With any of the gift packs just add £1 and get a Real Ale Almanac!

Single Membership +

Gift Pack 1 = Good Beer Guide 2004 + Christmas Card. = £25 inc. P&P

Gift Pack 2 = Good Bottled Beer Guide 2004 + Christmas Card = £20 inc. P&P

Gift Pack 3 = Calendar + Christmas Card = £20 inc. P&P

Gift Pack 4 = Good Beer Guide 2004 + Good Bottled Beer Guide
+ Calendar + Christmas Card = £34 inc. P&P

Add £1 for Real Ale Almanac = £1

Add £3 for Joint Membership = £3

Total =

Title..... Surname.....

Forename (s).....Date of Birth.....

Partner Title.....Surname (If applicable).....

Forename(s).....Date of Birth.....

Address.....

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Tel No(s).....

E-mail Address.....

Delivery Address. If you wish to present the gift yourself and the address is not the same as above please give the delivery details below.

Name:.....

Address.....

.....Post Code.....

Telephone No.....



Applications will be processed within 21 days and should be with us to distribute by at the latest by December 12th.

* All savings are based on an individual purchasing Membership + a gift pack. A 35% saving is based on purchasing a Single membership and Gift Pack 4 with all books featured at their RRP at the time of print. Offer only valid until December 2003

2004 GOOD BEER GUIDE

The 2004 edition of CAMRA's best-selling guide to Britain's 4,500 top real ale pubs was launched in September 2003.

- * 31st Anniversary of the best guide to British pubs.
- * Descriptions of the top 4,500 pubs in Britain.
- * All entries are surveyed on a regular basis by CAMRA members. Other guides may only send a questionnaire and are never visited. There is no charge for entry into the Good Beer Guide.
- * Information about pub facilities for families and the disabled, history, architecture, food, accommodation, local places of interest...and, of course, the beer: the best pubs serving the finest real ale in the country.
- * Full list of CAMRA's National Inventory of Pubs - pubs with interiors of outstanding historic interest. Helping to save these pubs for posterity.

Special features on:

- * Beer is back! - Editor of the Good Beer Guide 2004, Roger Protz, hails the real ale revival as smaller brewers cast off the shackles of the global giants
- * Pass the porter - Fiona Beckett says it's time to put beer on the dining table as the perfect companion for food.
- * Beer's greasy pole - Martyn Cornell says statistics - and the big brewers - distort real ale's true market share.

Plus: The Brewers Section - Unique to the Guide - a list of every brewery in the country, large and small, with details of all the cask-conditioned and bottle conditioned beers they brew, with professional tasting notes.

The 2003 Good Beer Guide is on sale online at www.camra.org.uk/gbg, priced £10.00 to CAMRA members and £11.99 to non-members.



CAN ELDRIDGE POPE RIDE OUT THE STORM?

The new chief executive of Dorset pub company Eldridge Pope, Susan Barratt, revealed some refreshing aspirations for her 175 pubs in an interview published in the Daily Telegraph recently when she was just 2 months into her new job. 'We need to be training our people and making sure customers get what they want, rather than the cheapest thing we can buy from the markets', she said. 'Instead of one menu for 25 pubs, we should put out the right menu for each pub. In the past people have said, "This pub isn't working so we will spend £250,000." But in reality, it was not working because we did not have the right menu, the right beers, the right people.'

In the light of Ms Barratt's views it could be in the interests of the consumer if Eldridge Pope

adopt her strategies and ride out the current blip in their fortunes

Eldridge Pope sold their Dorchester brewery in 1996 and some of their famous brands are now produced by Devon microbrewer O'Hanlons. The fortunes of the Eldridge Pope pub chain have slumped in the past year with a dramatic fall in profits and share price. Companies interested in a take-over have been reported to include Greene King and Wolverhampton & Dudley. Pubs entrepreneur Michael Cannon has also stepped in with a bid to increase his stake to 29.9%. Cannon made a small fortune by buying and selling pub chains including Devenish, Magic Pub Company and Morrells of Oxford.

YULETIDE TIPPLES



The long dark midwinter nights are the perfect time for celebrations with special winter ales, in keeping with the tradition at this time for feasting, dancing and wassailing with strong ale that dates back to pre-history. The tradition for brewers to produce draught winter

ales largely died out with the take-over and closure mania that gathered pace in the 1950's and 1960's. Joyfully, the tradition was eventually restored along with the real ale revival sparked by CAMRA.



Hopefully our enterprising local pubs will be sourcing such beers for our enjoyment over the coming season, but one wonders whether this task is becoming more difficult. Ten years ago, the situation was typified

by Burton-on-Trent brewers Marstons, who produced three different draught seasonal ales over December and January with a change every fortnight. Now CAMRA's Good Beer Guide lists none for them or their parent company Wolverhampton & Dudley, nor for Greene King who produced regular seasonal beers a few years ago.



In recent years the guest beer trade seems to have focussed increasingly on mid strength bitters. It is to be hoped that suppliers can be encouraged to keep up the momentum of the revival of beers such as old ales, por-

ters, stouts and barley wines to provide pub-goers with interesting options to round off a winter night.

Certainly our local brewers are flying the flag for winter ales. Elgoods of Wisbech offer the porter-style Old Black Shuck (4.5% alcohol by volume) from November, with the pale strong Reinbeer (5.9%) and dark barley wine Wenceslas (7.5%) in December. Look out for Mammon (7.0%), a dark ale from Milton Brew-

ery. And Fenland brewery at Chatteris produces Rudolph's Rocket Fuel and Winter Warmer, a traditional 5.5% wassail beer flavoured with ginger. One of the favoured 'imports' is always Adnams Tally Ho (7%), a black barley wine with a terrific complex rounded flavour. Adnams Tally Ho is rumoured to be available at the Chequers, Little Gransden over the festive season. Tolly Old Strong (5.5%), now produced by Ridleys of Essex, is another East Anglian favourite to look out for. Charles Wells are producing a 5.5% beer called Winter Cheer, which the brewery describes as a "smooth winter warmer with a stunning aroma reminiscent of sultana fruit and spicy hops".

If any pubs are planning to stock a seasonal beer, please send details to the editor (01480 355893 or news@huntscamra.org.uk) and the information will be put on the Hunts CAMRA website (www.huntscamra.org.uk).



PIG AND ABBOT "FREEHOUSE"



High Street
Abington Pigotts
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Tel: 01763 853515

REAL ALE & GOOD FOOD
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Fullers London Pride, Adnams Bitter
and two other guest ales including

Woodforde's Wherry, beers from Pottton Brewery,
Adnams, City of Cambridge, Nethergate
and many more.....

Food served

Mon-Fri 12.00 - 2.00 7.00pm - 9.00 pm

Sat-Sun 12.00 - 2.30 6.30pm - 9.00 pm

Traditional Sunday Lunches

Open all day Saturday & Sunday

Christmas Bookings now being taken

Spaces available for Christmas Day Lunch

CHARLES WELLS MINI-CASK AWARD

Charles Wells Brewery's Bombardier Mini-Cask has won CAMRA's Dan Kane award for innovations in the brewing industry. The Mini-Cask was created to allow beer fans the chance to enjoy fresh real ale at home, in the same way as they would in a pub. The Mini-Cask contains 8.8 pints and beer is dispensed through a tap on the side of the cask.



Paul Wells, Charles Wells's Managing Director, called on other brewers to use the same technology to encourage more beer drinkers to enjoy the delights of real ale in the home.

Although at first sight resembling (for those of us old enough to wince at the thought) a Watney's Party Seven, the Bombardier Mini Cask has two clever devices suitable for dispensing real ale – a pull-out tap like a wine box and a simple venting valve on the top.

Each Mini-Cask contains five litres (8.8 pints) of real Bombardier, making it convenient for a shared session at home.

Our personal research confirmed that the beer remains consistent and holds its condition right to the end of the Mini Cask.

BRANCH CONTACTS

Chairman: Roy Endersby, (01480) 473364, chairman@huntscamra.org.uk

Secretary & Publicity Officer: Paul Moorhouse, (01480) 496247 (h), secretary@huntscamra.org.uk

Treasurer & Newsletter Editor: Andy Shaw, (01480) 355893 (h), (07802) 485449 (m), treasurer@huntscamra.org.uk

Membership Secretary: Margaret Eames, (01480) 385333 (h)

Social Secretary: Kathy Moorhouse-Hadfield, (01480) 496247 (h), socials@huntscamra.org.uk

Visit CAMRA online:

CAMRA's Home Page
<http://www.camra.org.uk>

Huntingdonshire Branch Home Page
<http://www.huntscamra.org.uk>

(Note the name change!)

For updates on our Diary check on-line at
<http://www.huntscamra.org.uk> (select News from the menu).

TRADING STANDARDS

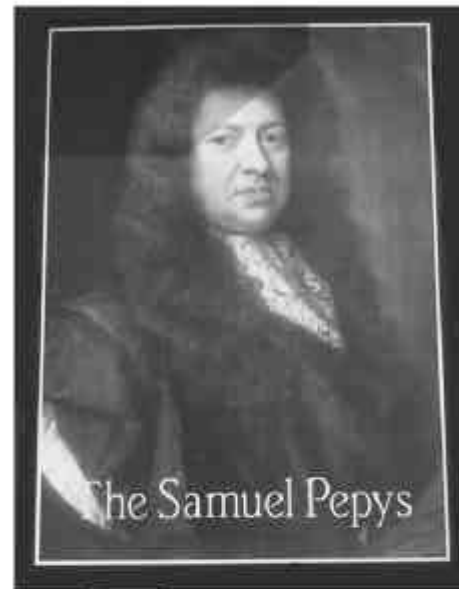
Your local Trading Standards organisation is Cambridgeshire County Council Trading Standards at Hinchingsbrooke Cottage, Brampton Road, Huntingdon PE29 6NA.

If you have any complaints about trading standards issues at local pubs please contact them.

Cambridgeshire Trading Standards have a role to protect consumers from errors or frauds concerned with quality, description or price of goods, services or facilities and to detect and rectify unfair advertising practices.

If you wish to contact them about any such matters you can telephone the **Cambridgeshire Trading Standards** helpdesk on 0845 3030666. The trading standards web site is www.tradingstandards.gov.uk

THE SAMUEL PEPYS



A GENUINE FREE HOUSE

146 High Street
Huntingdon
Tel: 01480 459708

www.thesamuelpepys.com

Constantly changing beers including offerings from:

Nethergate, Woodfordes, Greene King, Slaters,
Fullers, Wychwoods, Ridleys and others.
Also Belgian Fruit Beers for the Ladies.

Full Menu from

12.00 to 3.00pm - 6.00 to 9.00pm Mon - Thurs
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Air Conditioning, Beer Garden
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