



**CAMPAIGN
FOR
REAL ALE**

opening times

**Huntingdonshire Branch of CAMRA,
the Campaign for Real Ale**

**Issue 129
Winter 2006**

Pub Watch Survey

UK's pubs are under threat

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March 1-3 2007**

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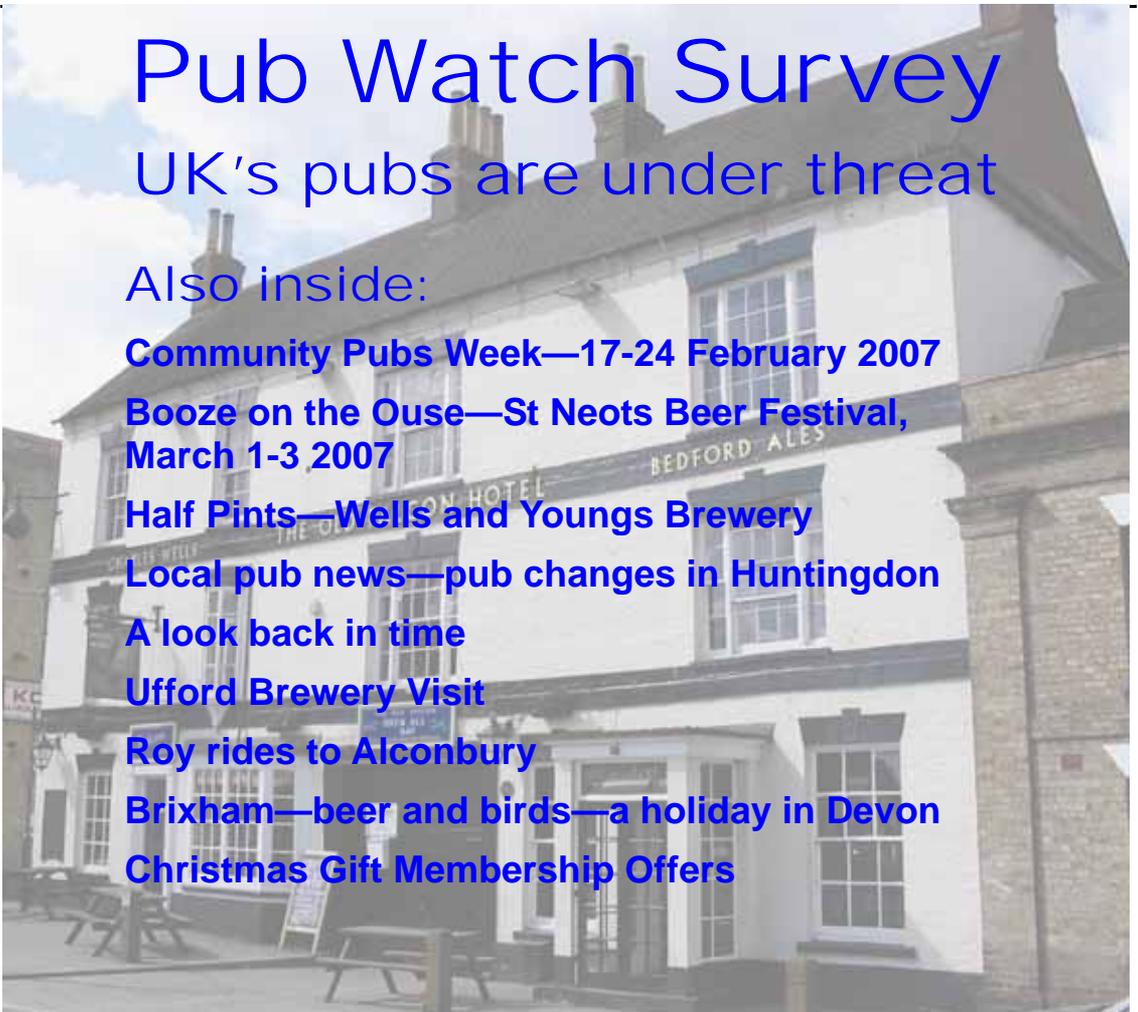
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Christmas Gift Membership Offers



THE CHEQUERS

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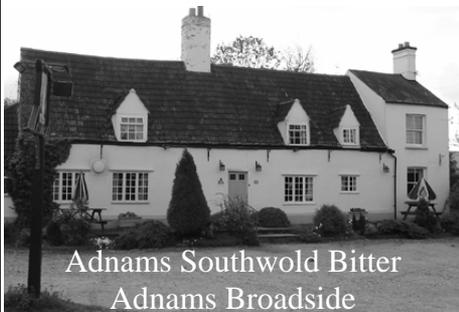


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2 Support your local pub - don't give them an excuse to close it!

PUB WATCH SURVEY

Each year CAMRA branches conduct a Pub Watch Survey, to determine how many pubs have closed and how many new pubs have opened during the preceding year.

This years survey revealed some very disturbing facts and trends. To start with the survey indicated that over 650 of the UK's estimated 50,000 pubs closed permanently during 2005—that's 12.5 pubs every week!

CAMRA Branches were also asked to report on pubs which closed during 2005 but where their future was uncertain (i.e. they might or might not reopen), and pubs which had closed before 1 January 2005 but which might yet reopen. This revealed that an additional 1,000 pubs are currently closed and face an uncertain future. We can be fairly sure that quite a number of these "temporary" closures will become permanent.

A total of 1650 pubs, over 3% of the UK's pubs, closed in a single year!

What is especially noticeable from the figures is the extent to which pub closures have become an urban problem - those who live in towns and cities will very much recognise this. Many planning authorities now have policies to protect rural pubs, especially where they are the last in a village. Policies to protect urban pubs are much rarer, though these are often every bit as much the centre for a local community as their rural equivalents. CAMRA will be campaigning to persuade urban authorities to include suitable policies in their new Local Development Frameworks. The Huntingdonshire Branch of CAMRA has

had several consultations with Huntingdonshire District Council on this topic.

Locally we have seen large numbers of community pubs being converted into restaurants, a change of use that does not require any planning permission. Indeed, local authority statistics reporting on changes in the licensed trade ignore conversions of pubs into restaurants entirely.

But from the point of view of the social amenities offered to the local community, a pub and a restaurant are very different animals!

Other problems for pubs are looming on the horizon. No-smoking legislation will be introduced in England and Wales during 2007, with the exact schedule still to be announced. The experiences of Ireland and Scotland suggest that whilst many pubs will suffer from a short-term loss of trade, most pubs will recover as non-smokers, who had previously given up going to the pub, start to become pub-users again. But for many publicans even the short-term loss of trade may result in their business becoming unviable, particularly since it appears that pub-owning breweries and pub chains are not prepared to temporarily reduce rents to help their tenants and lessees "weather the storm".

2007 will be a critical year for UK pubs! Their future is in our hands!

If over 3% of UK pubs were closed in 2005, what percentage will close in 2007? The answer is in our hands. Never was the phrase "use it or lose it" more relevant.

COMMUNITY PUBS WEEK

CAMRA launches Community Pubs Week - 17th – 24th February 2007
A new beginning for CAMRA's popular National Pubs Week

It's a frightening reality that at least 26 pubs are closing in Britain each month and early indications of new research being carried out by CAMRA suggest that this figure could actually be significantly higher. Worse still, the majority of these pubs are not high street chain bars or theme pubs, but community pubs, recognised by most people these days, as important community amenities. The local pub, after all, is often the heart of the community.

CAMRA has successfully run National Pubs Week for four years in an attempt to convince more people to visit more pubs more of the time. CAMRA members across the country have worked hard to promote pub-going in response to the growth in home drinking. Despite low supermarket prices, nothing can match the British pub for its service and atmosphere.

In light of the increased threats to community pubs CAMRA is changing the focus of its week of action to help raise the profile and importance of pubs in the community

and encourage people of all ages and backgrounds to use community pubs more.

The new Community Pubs Week will complement a range of CAMRA-led initiatives including the Community Pubs Foundation, launched in 2005 to support campaigns to save local public houses by offering assistance to community groups, as well as a whole range of local campaigns by CAMRA to save and promote community pubs.

Community Pubs Week will celebrate and promote all community pubs – not just village locals, but urban gems too. More news of activities during Community Pubs Week in this area will appear in the next edition of Opening Times, which will be distributed in early February, and also on our web site at www.huntscamra.org.uk.

If you run a pub and want to get involved in CAMRA's Community Pubs Week contact the Huntingdonshire CAMRA branch on (01480) 355893.



4 Support your local pub - don't give them an excuse to close it!

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TRADITIONAL ALES

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Huntingdonshire CAMRA Pub of the Year 2006

A LOOK BACK IN TIME

25 YEARS AGO

St Neots-brewed Paines XXX went into Bass's Charrington pubs in parts of Cambridgeshire, Hertfordshire and Bedfordshire, replacing cask Charrington Crown bitter in return for Paines taking bottled beers and lagers brewed by Bass.

Paines were also in the news for their dispute with national brewers Allied over the use of the John Bull brand name. Allied had launched a keg beer of that name and sought a court injunction to stop Paines from using the name on their beer brewing kits. Paines claimed to have had rights to the name since 1897, but since an earlier dispute in 1936 had not used the brand name for beer.

Yet again CAMRA hit out at Whitbread for closing a local brewery, the Ely brewery in Cardiff. Its closure was announced in the autumn of 1981, following other Whitbread breweries at Romsey in Hampshire, Watlington in Kent and Tiverton in Devon.

Whitbread were also under fire from CAMRA for dropping cask Wessex Mild from the portfolio of its Portsmouth brewery. It was replaced by keg Whitbread Best Mild.

In November 1981, St Neots CAMRA met at the Black Bull in St Ives and there were socials at the Waterloo in Huntingdon and the Darby and Joan at Abington Pigotts. In early 1982 there were meetings at the White Horse in Eaton Socon and the Green Man at Leighton Bromswold. A joint social with Northampton branch visited Tilbrook.

Black Country brewery Simpkins dropped its cask mild and replaced it with North Country's keg Hull Mild.

Crouch Vale brewery was launched in Essex in late 1981 by CAMRA members Rob Walster and Colin Boeking. Colin said he 'hoped to satisfy a growing demand for locally produced beers'. In view of CAMRA's Champion Beer of Britain awards to Crouch Vale in 2005 and 2006, this prophecy seems rather understated.

A new cask beer, Trumans Bitter was launched into 400 pubs of the Truman estate, a part of the Watney Mann and Truman empire.

CAMRA trumpeted a boom in take home real ale a year after the launch in 1980 of its campaign known as CART, Campaign for Real Take-home, boosted by 'staggering' sales of the then new plastic container with the unfortunate name of 'Carrykeg'.

Cornwall's St Austell brewery launched their cask beer, Tinnors Bitter, into its own pubs, served without gas pressure.

CAMRA reported a comeback for wooden casks as Britain's last remaining commercial coopers, Buckleys of Dukinfield in Cheshire, saw a boost to their trade. Established brewers such as Hook Norton and Wadworths accounted for some of the increase, but a significant number of microbrewers were also opting for beer from the wood.

CAMRA reported on 'poor value' and 'misleading advertising' for UK lagers, the conclusion of an industry survey by a trading standards officer following public complaints. The report also criticised differences between British brewed lagers and Continental beers carrying the same names.

A LOOK BACK IN TIME

10 YEARS AGO

There were more losses of East Anglian village pubs. The owner of the Greyhound at Hetherset, Norfolk won planning permission to turn the pub into a home. And in Essex Braintree council granted permission for the Cock and Blackbird at Bulmer to be converted to housing. The more enlightened South Cambridgeshire council refused permission to turn the Black Horse at Fowlmere into a studio.

CAMRA's national day of action on beer quality generated plenty of media coverage. Branch events included award presentations to brewers for quality initiatives and quality audits of pubs, including a tour of Bristol pubs led by Courage's head brewer.

CAMRA's Technical Committee arranged a successful conference on 'Real Ale Quality'. The one-day event at Church House, Westminster, featured speakers Chris Whitworth of Bass, Mike Powell-Evans of Adnams, Simon Whitmore of Butcombe brewery, Chris Holmes of the Tynemill pub company and Roger Protz of CAMRA, and explored ways of encouraging more distinctiveness and flavour in cask beers.

Pointing to declining national sales of real ale, Chris Whitworth of Bass said that there were too many cask beers and a big demand for nitro keg beers. He believed that quality would improve with a reduced number of cask brands.

St Neots CAMRA branch member Paul Moorhouse retired as chairman of CAMRA's Technical Committee after 8 years at the helm. Paul continued as a member of the committee and was succeeded as chairman by Jim Fox from

Portsmouth, newly elected to CAMRA's national executive.

East Bedfordshire CAMRA was seeking a spot listing for the Cock at Broom. Owners Greene King were planning to open out the interior of the pub, famous for its unusual layout of rooms and its lack of a bar counter.

National brewers Allied Domecq were under fire from CAMRA for its 'insensitive' plans to 'firkinise' historic pubs. The Running Horse at Leatherhead was to become the Fetlock and Firkin and the 16th century Grade II listed Barley Mow in Warrington was to be the Furrow and Firkin. Work was reported to have commenced here without planning permission. Campaigns of opposition were backed by MPs, former cabinet minister Kenneth Baker, all members of a local authority and 3500 signatories to a petition.

St Neots CAMRA held a meeting at he Market Inn, Huntingdon, and a social visited the Cock at Gamlingay and the Chequers at Little Gransden.

The European Commission was deciding whether to outlaw Britain's real ale only guest beer rule as an unfair restraint on trade. Meanwhile, CAMRA was pointing to European cask conditioned beers such as Franconian Kellerbier, and looking forward to their availability in UK pubs.

The Labour Party promised a 'close examination' of Britain's licensing laws if it won the forthcoming general election. There were hints of a new Licensing Act from sources in the party. This was to finally come to fruition in the new Act implemented in 2005.

HALF PINTS



In Bedford, the newly formed Wells & Young's brewing company was due for official launch in early October, to become the third largest regional brewer in the UK behind Greene King and Wolverhampton & Dudley breweries. Young's merged its brewing operation with Charles Wells to allow the sale of its Wandsworth brewery site for residential and retail use. The company is to install a new cask racking line and build a new distribution centre close to Bedford. Matching trials of the Young's beers at Charles Wells has been under way for around five months, and the company is confident of a good match for all the Young's brands.

Hertford brewers McMullens have sold their Victorian brewery and surrounding land to Sainsbury's for a supermarket development. McMullens beers will continue to be brewed in their new brewery adjacent to the old brewery site.

Greene King has dropped the strength of its Old Speckled Hen cask beer from 5.2% to 4.5% alcohol by volume. The Bury St Edmunds brewers have tried a succession of cask brands in the mid strength range, including Rayments Special Bitter and Triumph bitter, to fit between their IPA bitter at 3.6% and Abbot Ale at 5.0%. And the strength of Ruddles County was dropped to 4.3% to attempt to fill this gap.

Theakstons of Masham is to launch new advertising and promotions for its cask Theakston's Mild. Over 300 outlets will receive point of sale material and chances to win pub games.

Brewers InBev UK have urged British pub companies to charge higher prices for beer. InBev, the Belgian and Brazilian owned company who run former Bass and Whitbread breweries in the UK, take the view that prices should be based more on what consumers are prepared to pay than the traditional way of charging to recoup a specified margin.

A 12-day beer festival in Wetherspoon pubs during October was set to feature a million pints and a choice of 35 cask beers. The 'Full Moon' beer festival, from October 20 to October 31 promised beers including two from overseas, Ecaussinnes Fruit Beer from Belgium and Herold Black Chalice from the Czech Republic. UK cask beers include Bateman's Strawberry Fields, a fruit beer, Marston's Wicked Witch, Highgate Lone Wolf, Moorhouses Broomstick and JW Lees Ruddy Glow.

Kent brewer Shepherd Neame has uncovered evidence that its Faversham home was the oldest British working brewery site, dating from 1573 or earlier - even before the closure of Youngs' Wandsworth site, previously thought to be the oldest, having been used for brewing since 1581.

The hot dry summer has led to a poor hop harvest across Europe, with shortages of some varieties and low levels alpha acids, which produce bitterness, in others.

Everards' Pitch Black, the 4.3 per cent cask-conditioned stout is to be produced for this November's rugby internationals following its earlier success during the Six Nations championship.

A VISIT TO UFFORD BREWERY



In June the Huntingdonshire branch of CAMRA paid a visit to the Ufford Ales Brewery. We met at Peterborough station and then took black cabs through the pleasant

countryside north-west of Peterborough to the picturesque village of Ufford. We were warmly greeted by the owner of Ufford Ales, Simon Raines, in The White Hart Inn which is richly decorated with railway memorabilia, with a fine array of chamber pots hanging from the ceiling.

Simon took us on the tour of the brewery, which is located in the grounds of the Inn. The brewery plant is installed in a converted cattle shelter and has an open fronted window to allow visitors to the Inn to see the brewing process day and night. Simon explained the history of the brewery equipment used on the site and how it has been adapted to improve production and quality. He then discussed his team's beer selection process, the naming of the beers after a local poet and distribution to the local area.

Then it was on to the eagerly awaited tasting session in the White Hart. The Ufford Ales available on tap were: White Hart, Red Clover and Idle Hour with each being served to perfection. We were served several hearty trays of delicious sandwiches and chunky chips. Several members of the party set to recounting stories of ales past and present whilst

others set about playing various bar games. Many hours flowed past - as gentle as the warm breeze wafting in from the fields outside - almost as fast as the beers flowed! There was talk of the approaching beer festival at the end of July and Simon's keenness to promote beer sales within the local area.

Soon the early evening was upon us and time to leave the White Hart and head back to Peterborough - not to finish but to pay a visit to the outstanding pubs within the city. First stop was the Palmerston Arms where we were given an outstanding choice of 12 beers - too many for one stop, surely! Then onto Charters floating pub on the river and serving some very fine ales - whilst the local Morris dancers were paying a visit for a well-earned rest after local competitions. Finally time for the city centre - the Wortley Almshouses for a "quick" half and the Brewery Tap for just one more. After an hour or two, it was decided enough was enough as we glided smoothly to the station for the rail journey home.

The hospitality shown by Simon and the assortment of fine ales tasted led to a very relaxing and enjoyable day for all.



LOCAL PUB NEWS



In **Huntingdon** the **Samuel Pepys** on the High Street is under new management. The new lessee Trevor Fowler

knows the pub well—his father was the landlord of this pub when it was the Waterloo (1967-1980). The pub has been given a stylish refurbishment, the TV screens have been removed and there is a relaxed atmosphere with an improved food operation and longer opening times. Four real ales are on offer.

Also in **Huntingdon** Phil Beer is now at the helm of the re-vamped **Victoria** with partner Teresa. The refurbishment has created more space and there



have been reports of good food and an interesting ever-changing range of cask beers.

In **St Ives** the **Royal Oak** is to be converted from a managed house to leasehold. Part of the Spirit Group estate sold to Punch Taverns last December, 750 managed houses in the chain are being offered for lease, the preferred mode of operation for Punch. The asking price for the Royal Oak lease is £43,000.

Brewers Greene King are selling leases for the **King William IV** at **Fenstanton** and the **Cock** at **Gamlingay**.

Charles Wells are in the process of changing all their managed pubs to tenancy or leasehold. Locally, this affects the **Eaton Oak**, **Eaton Ford**, the **Cambridgeshire Hunter**, **Eynesbury**, and the **Barley**

Mow, Hartford.

New tenants have taken over the Charles Wells' **Royal Oak** at **Hail Weston**. The real ale range is unchanged with Wells Eagle, Bombardier and Marston Pedigree.

Meanwhile in **St Neots** there are new licensees at the **Bridge House** and the **Woolpack**, where guest beers have been retained as a major feature.

New managers are in place at the **George** in **Spaldwick** and the **Robin Hood** in **St Ives**. Three cask beers are on offer at the refurbished Robin Hood.

The **Horseshoe** at **Offord Darcy** is under new ownership. Real ale remains a feature, and chef-proprietor Richard Kennedy sources local ingredients including seasonal vegetables for the restaurant and bar meals.

The **Old Falcon** on **St Neots** Market Square has apparently been sold by Charles Wells. It is understood that the building will be redeveloped with residential flats on the upper floors, and a restaurant replacing the previous downstairs bar. By converting the bar into a restaurant, the developers would avoid a planning application for change of use.

The Good Beer Guide listed **Grange** in **Brampton** is for sale. The estate agents leaflet explicitly highlights the opportunities for change of use to residential or offices, and suggests that Huntingdon District Council have advised the current owners that such a conversion would be consistent with their development plan policies.

Alf Barrett and Julie Brewer are leaving

LOCAL PUB NEWS

the **Three Horseshoes** at **Graveley**, the pub that famously went no-smoking 2 years ago—the first to do so in this area. It is understood that the new lessee plans to make no major changes to the Three Horseshoes operation, including the no smoking policy.

New tenants Jane and Chas have taken over **St Neots's Lord John Russell**, a pub that has seen a succession of temporary managers for some time, and as a result was "failing to achieve it's full potential". That has all changed, as Jane and Chas are totally committed to making this Batemans pub a thriving community pub once again. Jane has introduced a new menu, focussed on good value pub food, and daily specials. The LJR is offering

Batemans XB, either Dark Mild or Salem Porter, plus a seasonal guest beer.

A tenancy change has also occurred at Batemans other local pub, the **White Hart** at **Great Staughton**. New tenant Phil Watson is in the process of making a number of changes at the White Hart, with the previous games room being converted into a restaurant. A food service is expected to start in late November, with the focus on traditional pub food. At that time the opening hours of the White Hart are likely to be extended (currently the pub only opens in the evening during the week). The real ales currently on offer are Greene King IPA, Batemans XB, and a Batemans guest beer.

The White Horse Inn

1 Market Street, Swavesey

Warren and Pat welcome you to their 17th century traditional village Inn in Swavesey

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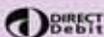
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12 Join 80,000 members of CAMRA and fight for Britain's beer heritage

BRIXHAM – Beer and Birds

This is an account of a holiday in Devon. We began with an overnight stop at the Waldegrave Arms in Chewton Mendip, Somerset, chosen from the Good Beer Guide because of its location and its Butcombe Bitter. On arrival after five hours travelling in need of refreshment, we were aghast—no Butcombe Bitter! However I settled for an excellent pint of London Pride, and after a very fine meal the Butcombe arrived to send me to bed happy.

Next day off to our destination, Brixham, Devon, which was bereft of pubs listed in the Good Beer Guide. An e-mail to the local branch chairman had brought no welcoming news on the beer front, so our own practical research was the order of the day. It was the day of England's fateful match against Portugal, so two tasks lay ahead - find a decent pub with decent beer and a big screen. After a quick check of the harbour and High Street we decided on the harbour and the Sprat and Mackerel which provided Otter Bitter in very good condition. Four pints and a bad result later we trudged back up the hill to our chalet.

The evening saw a variety of entertainment. We were very lucky in that 2006 marked the 50th Anniversary Tall Ships Race, a repeat of the 1956 race from Torbay to Lisbon, this time with over 70 ships competing from over 20 countries. Two magnificent ships from the Tall Ships Youth Trust were moored alongside the New Fish Quay in Brixham, manned by new trainees from the Trust. A superb Irish folk band performed their drinking songs outside on the quay and the evening finished with a bang - a fantastic firework display. It was this night that the birds really made their mark, on my car in par-

ticular, as hundreds of Herring Gulls flew around, screeching eternally.

Sunday saw us venture into Torquay on a real scorcher of a day and I'm afraid we gave up the search for Good Beer Guide listed Hole in The Wall and settled for the air-conditioned and aptly named London Inn, a Wetherspoon's in the Strand and supped excellent Scattor Rock, Scatty Bitter. Days later we spotted the Hole in The Wall when driving through Torquay (100 yards from the Wetherspoons).

Monday saw us off to Princetown on Dartmoor. We lunched on the best fish and chips I've had for ages, sitting on a sunlit park bench. Then we went into the Prince of Wales, brewery tap for Princetown Brewery where I fought off the urge for Jail Ale 4.8% and tried the Dartmoor IPA 4.0% - which was excellent - and 'enjoyed' views of the prison. There are two Good Beer Guide pubs here within 200 yards, so we took a short walk up to the Plume of Feathers, which again featured Princetown but I tried the St. Austell Bitter, which I had not found for a while apart from at beer festivals. This is a good pub for kids, walkers and campers with bunkhouses at the rear.

The evening saw us find the best pub in Brixham centre, the delightful Maritime Inn, run by a lively Liverpoolian lady called Pat. Watch out for the parrot (especially if you're in open toed sandals) and a mad dog called George. The pub is situated up a hill—stand on the quayside and look up. The beer that night was Otter Bitter but from the range of clips there was obviously a regularly changing guest beer.

Tuesday saw us off to Totnes where we walked to the top of the steep High Street

BRIXHAM – Beer and Birds

and found a pub serving O'Hanlons Yellow Hammer brewed locally in Whimble. Williams Butchers, in Totnes High Street is recommended for their pies and sausages - gorgeous. After Totnes it was off to the Good Beer Guide listed Cherub in lovely Dartmouth for a house ale brewed by Summerskills of Plymouth and Sharps Doom Bar from Cornwall to delight the palate. A three tiered pub but with a fairly small bar and parking in Dartmouth sure ain't easy.

Wednesday and we were off to Dawlish where just outside the town on Teignmouth Road is another Good Beer Guide pub, the spacious Smugglers Inn, with a lovely patio, good coastal views and good food. The local brewery—Teignmouth, supplied us with Reel Ale, another good brew.

You may wonder what we did when we weren't in the pub? Suffice to say that Devon is the home of Cripple Cock Cider with flagons available everywhere. Devotees of the long gone St. Neots Riverside Festival will remember Dixie bringing along a barrel or two, which we had to 'water' down so that it wasn't too strong to drink. Fresh fish from the harbour and sea food all washed down a treat. Those sea gulls bouncing around on the roof weren't going to wake me up!

Thursday and we went to revisit a pub I had been to many years ago, the partly thatched, 13th Century Church House Inn in Torbryan, near Ipplepen, set in classic Devon country lanes, and situated next to Devon's most uniformly attractive village church, a 15th century building of white beer stone. The grade 2 star listed building had changed on the inside but externally it retained its quaintness. It had been

extended into two former cottages on either side of the original pub to provide 16-bedroom accommodation and an eatery, but the pub still retains its charm and its oak beams and wood panels taken from a Spanish Armada ship. The beer was Skinner's Betty Stogs, with Cornish Knocker also available.

Come evening and it was back to the Maritime Inn where Teignmouth Spring-tide had replaced the Otter and the dog George was playing ball with any new unsuspecting drinkers.

On our last day, Friday, we decided to drive into Kingswear, which is just across the River Dart but a 20-mile drive. There is a ferry across the River Dart and you can also get there by steam railway. By road, the hills here are mentally steep, so it is best to park near the Station and walk to The Ship (Good Beer Guide listed) in Higher Street. Here I tried Otter Ale, a bit stronger than the ordinary bitter. The view from the outside patio across the River Dart shows Dartmouth in all its glory with the Royal Naval College a pronounced feature. It was back to relative flat land to Churston and the Good Beer Guide listed Weary Ploughman, a large free road-house with good food and multifarious real ales. I settled for my third Otter beer of the week and definitely the best – Otter Bright, a very more-ish beer. The Ship is next to the station for the preserved Dart Valley steam-railway, which runs from Paignton to Kingswear. Weighing everything up, looking at all aspects, the Ship was probably the best pub, luckily saved until last!! Oh yes, and the weather was good as well!

Mike Birch and Angie Sutton



The Dyke's End

Fair Green, Reach, Near Burwell

Telephone 01638 743816

Open every day (except Monday lunch) from 12-3 and 6-11pm.

Really good award winning food served 12-2 and 7-9pm
(bar snacks from 6pm).

Always 3 real ales and real cider on hand pump
and all the other usuals.

Enjoy our lovely pub for yourself. Good Pub Guide 2007 and Good Beer Guide listed and voted "Best Village Pub" and "Best Country Pub" by local guides in the past 2 years.

COMING SOON (subject to planning, Revenue and Customs, bureaucratic bungling):

The Dyke's End Microbrewery serving our own brewed on the premises ales.

Watch this space!



North Brink Brewery, Wisbech,
Cambridgeshire Tel: 01945 583160

Available all year round



SEASONAL ALES

Thin Ice 4.7% Jan/Feb Old Wagg 4.0% March/April
Double Swan 4.5% May/June Mad Dog 4.4% July/Aug
Barleymeal 4.8% Sept/Oct Old Black Shuck 4.5% Nov
Snickalmas 5.0% Wenceslas Winter Warmer 7.5% Dec

ROY RIDES—ALCONBURY

Introduction: On a (very) windy Sunday in September this ride took us to the northern part of the branch's area.

Distance: 18.5 miles. A round trip starting and ending at Huntingdon railway station. The ride should take around 4 hours, depending on how many pubs you visit and how long you stay in each.

The Ride: Setting off from the railway station, head towards the ring road and turn left, following the ring road round to Stukeley Road, opposite the Territorial pub, and turn left into Stukeley Road.

Note the old Coach & Horses Hotel on the right-hand side, which is now an Indian restaurant. At the traffic lights just before the railway bridge, turn right up St Peter's Road.

Carry on up St Peter's Road, past Cineworld and Tescos, until you reach the roundabout on Spittals Way. Go straight across and take the Abbot's Ripton and Kings Ripton exit. Follow this road for about 3 miles to Abbots Ripton.

The first pub is the **Three Horseshoes, Abbots Ripton** (4.45 miles), a splendid thatched pub and part of the De Ramsey estate. The pub was closed for a number of years, but thankfully it has been re-

stored to what is now an excellent pub, offering good food and excellent choice of beers. We sampled Oakham JHB and White Dwarf, Adnams Bitter and Broadside. Note that the pub does close on some Saturdays for special events, especially in the summer for weddings.

Continue up the hill through the village and just after the church turn right into the road signposted to Wennington. Wennington is a tiny hamlet on the De Ramsey estate, and very picturesque with its thatched cottages and village pond. At the T-junction, if you go right for about 200 metres, you will find what used to be the Royal Oak, closed in the early 1980's and featured in one edition of the Cambridge-shire local real ale guide in 1980 selling Watney's Stag bitter. Watney's Stag was one of Watney's early attempts at re-introducing real ale. Dispense was usually by electric pub and it was widely available in the area and throughout East Anglia. It was a beer that I would rather forget, but it did start the revolution, introducing real ale into a large number of pubs that otherwise would not have sold it.

Back at the T-junction, turn left, and continue along a quiet country lane up a gentle incline. After passing Wennington Lodge farm, and crossing over the railway line, you come to a T-junction, where you turn right. After about a mile, a sharp left will find you riding atop the escarpment overlooking the fens to the north. On our ride, shelter from the Monks Wood research centre gave us some respite from the head wind, which was by then blowing a gale. Continue westward until you reach the A1—ignore the right turn (which joins the A1), and go up and over the bridge.



Three Horseshoes, Abbots Ripton

ROY RIDES—ALCONBURY

It's now down hill into **Alconbury Weston**, and the **White Hart** (10.5 miles) on



the left, is an excellent village local which typically offers four beers. On our visit these were Adnams Bitter, Nethergate Suffolk County, Milestones Lion Pride and Courage Directors. This pub is popular for Sunday lunches and there were many diners partaking on our visit.

On leaving the White Hart turn left and continue towards Alconbury village for about a mile. At the crossroads (11.25 miles) is **Alconbury Mill**, a modern building with a bistro type feel inside. A pool table and a wall of shame offer some entertainment. A couple of real ales were on sale - Adnams Bitter and Greene King IPA.

From the Alconbury Mill turn left down Mill Road, and into the village of Alconbury. Go over the brook and turn left alongside the brook into the High Street. The road then bears right into Chapel Street.

In contrast to the Alconbury Mill, the **Alconbury Manor Hotel** (12 miles) is one of the oldest buildings in Alconbury. This 16th Century former manor house was converted into a pub in the 1970's. There is a 300-year-old oak tree in the grounds.



It has an la carte restaurant as well as a bar snacks. Accommodation is available - 5 rooms, all with en suite facilities. The pub is open all day on Saturday and Sunday. Beers on offer on our visit were Greene King IPA and Moorhouses Blond Witch.

Continue up Chapel Street, and turn right into Manor Lane which leads to Rusts Lane, where you should turn left—go under the motorway bridge to a roundabout. Go straight over and up a steep hill until you reach another roundabout. Go straight over again and continue over the A14. You will now be in front of the main gate of Alconbury airbase, now a shadow of its former glory when it was one of the largest American airbases in the country. Turn right onto Ermine Street, an old Roman Road, and head towards Great Stukeley for a mile or so, until you get to the next pub.

The **Country Manor House, Great Stukeley** (15.2 miles) is a large free house with a restaurant. The pub has two handpumps, which on our visit were dispensing Shepherd Neame Spitfire and yet more Greene King IPA. After a swift replenishment we were back on the road.

There is another large pub on the oppo-

ROY RIDES—ALCONBURY

site side of the road, the Three Horse-shoes, but we didn't call in, as the only real ale available here is John Smith's bitter. Feel free to drop in, but we had a better idea - to continue into Huntingdon.

So continue along Ermine Street towards Huntingdon until you end up where we started, back in Stukeley Road. At this point you can either go round the ring road and back to the station or carry on down the High Street, stopping off at either the George Hotel, the Market Inn or the recently refurbished Samuel Pepys, not forgetting the Victoria in Ouse Walk which now back in good form after a lengthy closure for alterations.

The Pubs:

Abbots Ripton, Three Horseshoes

Moat Lane, Abbots Ripton, Huntingdon, PE28 2PA

(01487) 773440

www.thethreehorseshoes.com

11.30-3pm, 6-11pm Tue-Sat; closed Mon, 12-5pm Sun

Adnams Bitter, Broadside; Oakham JHB; guest and seasonal beers [H]

Part of the De Ramsey estate, this is a picturesque pub in a village of thatched cottages. This small, listed thatched pub has been carefully refurbished and extended. The quarry tiled original oak-beamed pub area has been sensitively retained as a family room. The extensions include a comfortable large lounge bar, a restaurant, and accommodation. Menu offers a varied modern cuisine.



Alconbury Weston, White Hart

2 Vinegar Hill, PE28 4JA

(01480) 890331

12am-2.30pm, 5.30pm-11pm Mon-Fri;
12am-4pm, 6.30pm-11pm Sat, 12-5.30pm
Sun

Adnams Bitter, Courage Directors, two guest beers [H]

Old coaching inn on the old Great North Road dating from the mid 1700's. Whilst being open plan the pub retains a cosy atmosphere with several distinct drinking areas, including a pub games area. The pub is well used by village residents, local businesses, and passing trade in summer. As there is no village hall, the pub serves that role for a variety of functions.



THE WHITE HART

Alconbury Weston

TEL: 01480 890331

- Four Real Ales - including two alternating guest ales.
- Good Food - Served daily lunch times and evenings.
- Outside Bar Facilities - Available for any occasion, draught beers and reasonable rates.



Jaq Pearce & Kim Sewell
welcome you to a
traditional country pub .

ENJOY LOCALLY BREWED BEER!

SIBA, the Society of Independent Brewers, launched their **Direct Delivery Scheme** in December 2003, with the objective of enabling local delivery and local consumption of local beers, particularly in the pubs of large pub companies. SIBA have been providing updates, in CAMRA's What's Brewing, of the pubs that can take advantage of this scheme.

In the Huntingdonshire area, the following pubs can order locally brewed beers:

- Black Bull, **Brampton**
- White Hart, **Godmanchester**
- Axe & Compass, **Hemingford Abbots**
- Three Horseshoes, **Houghton**
- Market Inn, **Huntingdon**

- Aviator, **St Ives**
- Seven Wives, **St Ives**

If any of these pubs are local to you, why not have a chat with the landlord, and recommend your favourite local beer for him to order.

Beers you might want to consider include:

- Black Dog, Golden Newt, Greyhound Strong Bitter, and Pageant Ale from **Elgoods**
- Osier Cutter, Sparkling Wit and St Audreys Ale from **Fenland**
- JHB, Bishops Farewell, Helter Skelter, and White Dwarf from **Oakham**
- Shambles Bitter, and Village Bike and Gold from **Potton**

The Pig and Abbot



The Pig and Abbot is a traditional old country pub and restaurant with a warm and friendly atmosphere.

4 real cask ales served including Adnams Bitter, Fullers London Pride plus 2 guest ales. Bar Meals are available every day. A la carte menu is served in our restaurant Monday to Saturday. The menu caters for all tastes including vegetarian and any special dietary needs.

Traditional Sunday Lunch. Children's menu available.

Open all day Saturday and Sunday.

High Street, Abington Pigotts, Nr. Royston, Hertfordshire, SG8 0SD

Wells & Young's Brewing Company Ltd Advertisement

On the 24th May 2006 Charles Wells Brewery based in Bedford made a historic announcement to its employees and media - the announcement being a merger of breweries between Charles Wells and England's oldest brewery - Young's & Co's Brewery Plc based at The Ram Brewery in Wandsworth, London.

From the merger a new company has been formed - Wells & Young's Brewing Company Ltd.

This new company is based on the Charles Wells site in Bedford and heralds good news for the economy and employment for this region. By merging with Young's Charles Wells have secured the future of brewing in Bedford. We become one of the country's biggest brewers and as the company is fiercely independent of the City we are secure from any threat of takeover or sale. Subsequently we anticipate continuing to brew beer in Bedford for decades and centuries to follow.

Wells & Young's is the No. 1 national brewer of speciality beers. Our beer portfolio is unrivalled elsewhere as we have a wonderful balance between speciality cask ale and speciality lagers.

Our cask ale range was recently showcased at the popular Bedford CAMRA Beer festival where stocks of Young's Bitter and Young's Special sold out in record time. Since May our brewers have been working hard to 'match' the beers. We are using exactly the same ingredients as the brewing team in Wandsworth, the only difference being that we use natural mineral water drawn from our well in the centre of town as opposed to water used in Wandsworth from the local River. Gratifyingly the drinkers at the festival couldn't notice the difference at all and remarked the beer is tasting the very best it has ever tasted.

Ken Don, Master Brewer from Young's & Co has been integral to the whole brew matching process. Ken has been a passionate brewer for Young's for many years and would not let any beer bearing the Young's

name leave the Bedford site unless he himself was personally proud of that brew. To date there have been no negative response to the Bedford brewed beer. The beers brewed in Bedford have been out in pubs since mid September and are being enjoyed by drinkers across London and the rest of the UK.

It was with great pride that Wells & Young's announced that only 3 beers would be discontinued and this was for commercial reasons, in that these beers just didn't sell well. These include Dirty Dick's which was for the export markets, Young's Pilsner lager and Golden Zest. Everything else will be brewed with care and passion from Bedford.

Throughout this whole process we have been at pains to ensure this merger is about expansion of our beer portfolio and not restriction. Our Bedford based brewers are particularly excited at the prospect of learning all the magic and mystery of bottle conditioned beers from the Wandsworth brewers who have joined the new company. The line that Young's used to brew and package their famous bottle conditioned range is being installed into the Bedford brewery during October and from there we hope to further extend the bottle conditioned range.

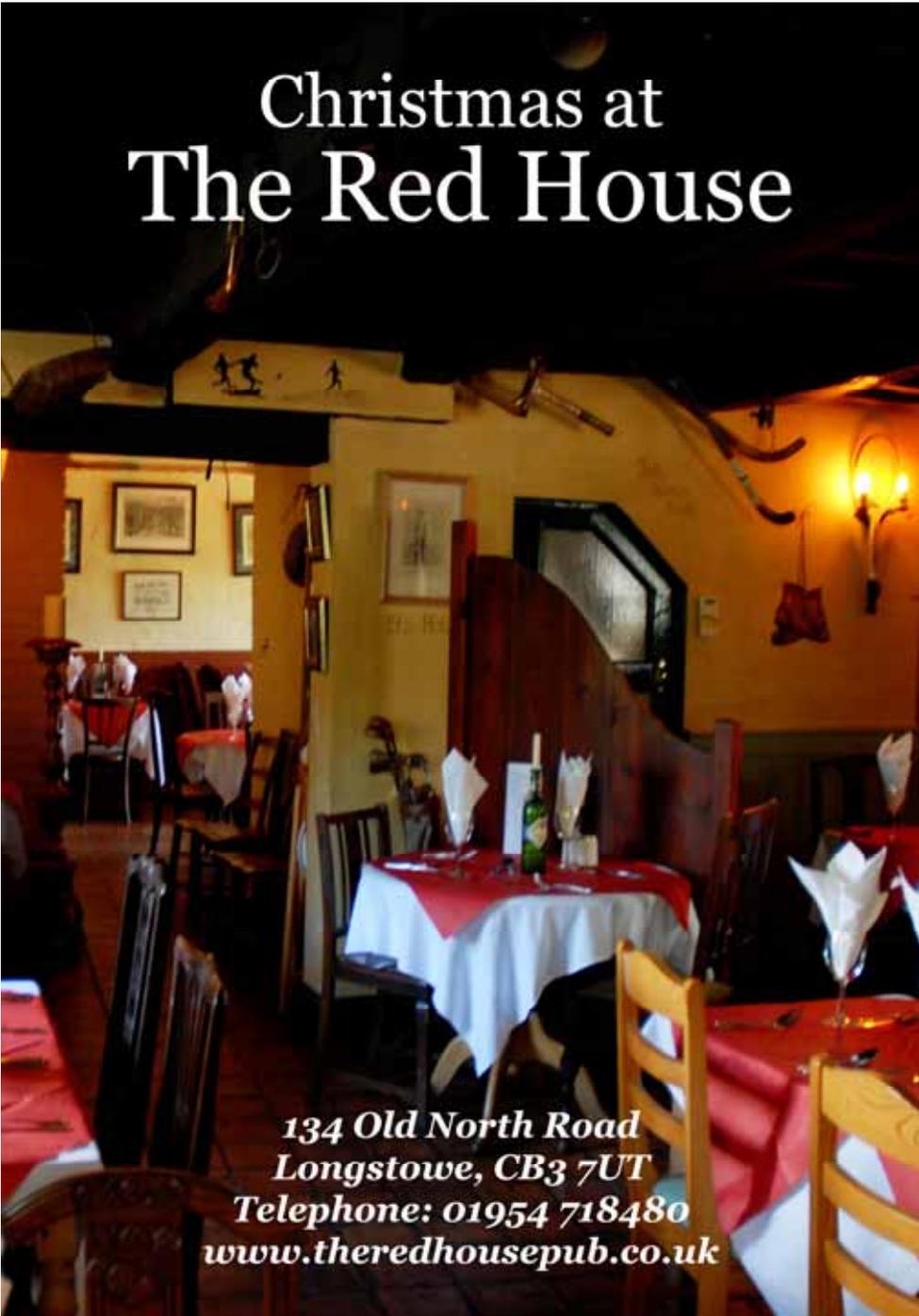
To cope with the additional brewing and distribution demands Wells & Young's are currently developing a £10 million distribution centre on Cambridge Road to ensure greater efficiency with regards to customer service and there will be a 'sister' distribution centre in Croydon from the middle of next year to manage the London, South and South West distribution for the new company.

We hope you enjoy a pint or two of Young's beers in your local very soon.

If you have any questions about Wells & Young's please do contact the PR department at the brewery and we will be delighted to help out.

For any beer or company news please log onto www.wellsandyoungs.co.uk.

Christmas at The Red House

The photograph shows the interior of a pub, likely The Red House, decorated for Christmas. The room is dimly lit with warm, yellow light from wall sconces. Several tables are set with white tablecloths and red runners. In the foreground, a table is set with a white tablecloth, a red runner, a bottle of beer, and a glass. The background shows more tables and chairs, some with white napkins. The walls are decorated with framed pictures and a small sign. The overall atmosphere is cozy and festive.

**134 Old North Road
Longstowe, CB3 7UT
Telephone: 01954 718480
www.theredhousepub.co.uk**

CAMRA Slams Greene King for Killing off Brewing in Kimberley

The Campaign for Real Ale (CAMRA) has condemned the announcement by Greene King that Hardys & Hansons brewery in Nottinghamshire will be closed by the end of the year

Despite thousands of Hardys & Hansons drinkers signing a petition to keep the 174 year old brewery in Kimberley, Greene King announced today that brewing will cease by Christmas and be moved to Bury St Edmunds. The Kimberley site will be retained, but as little more than a distribution centre for Greene King in the midlands and the north.

CAMRA members in Nottingham have reacted with anger at the news. Andrew Ludlow, of the Save Hardys & Hansons Brewery Group said, "Only weeks after acquiring this remarkable Victorian brewery, Greene King has ignored calls from beer drinkers across the UK to keep brewing in Kimberley. We have not given up and we will continue our campaign until Greene King reverses its decision."

CAMRA is calling on beer lovers and its 84,000 members to support its campaign to keep the brewery open by sending postcards which condemn the closure to Greene King, or by signing its petition at www.camra.org.uk.

Mike Benner, CAMRA's Chief Executive said, "We regard this as an unnecessary loss. Despite a history of brewery closures, Greene King has shown with its acquisition of Belhaven that it can integrate other breweries into a growing empire. We urge them to follow this approach with the Kimberley Brewery.

"Britain's brewing heritage is being slowly eroded by a seemingly endless string of closures through consolidation and drinkers across the UK need to join us in opposing this destruction."

"We'll be calling on Greene King to maintain the Hardys & Hansons real ales including the bitter. We don't want to see Hardys & Hansons beers being replaced by Greene King beers in the pubs of Nottingham because they are no longer available. Loss of consumer choice is almost always the end result of consolidation."

"Greene King is a major brewer and promoter of real ale, but it has to listen to real ale drinkers, reverse its decision, invest in the Hardys & Hansons brewery and promote genuine Hardys & Hansons beers for future generations."

Greene King announced the takeover of Hardys and Hansons in June 2006 for a price of £271 million (£10.59 a share).

Over the last ten years Greene King acquisitions have included the following companies:

Magic Pub Company 1996 (This pub group included the Hungry Horse concept which is now one of the Greene King's pub brands). Morlands Brewery 1999 (Closed the brewery - Ruddles beer brands acquired at the same time). Old English Inns 2001: The pub estate integrated into the GK pub estate Morrel's Pub Company 2002: Pubs integrated with the GK pub estate Laurel Pub Company 2004. Riddleys Brewery 2005: Brewery closed. Belhaven Brewery 2005: Brewery still open.



**CAMPAIGN
FOR
REAL ALE**

HUNTINGDONSHIRE BRANCH

BEER FESTIVAL

Booze on the Ouse

**Thu 1st—Sat 3rd
March 2007
Priory Centre
St Neots**

40+ REAL ALES
(over the duration of the festival)
**CIDER AND
BOTTLED
FOREIGN BEERS**

**Opening Times: Thu 6pm-10.45pm, Fri 12am-3pm
& 5pm-10.45pm, Sat all day from 12am-10.45pm**

Entry (including programme):

Free Friday lunchtime

£2.00 Thursday & Friday evening (from 7pm)

£1.00 All other sessions, incl. Saturday evening

Happy Hour Thursday 6-7pm and Friday 5-7pm:

Entrance £1.00 and reduced price draught beer

Families welcome until 9pm No smoking area

**CAMRA Soft drinks, Free soft drinks Bar snacks
stall and wines and for designated at all
tombola spirits bar drivers sessions**

www.huntscamra.org.uk/festivals for more details

Christmas Gift Membership Offers

It is always difficult to decide what to buy family and friends at Christmas. Look no further! CAMRA is offering a variety of Gift Membership packages that can be enjoyed by Dad, Mum, Brother and even Aunt Flo!

Single membership with Tie and Bottle Opener Key-ring £30 – over 10% discount! (usually retails at £33.45 including postage)

This package offers CAMRA membership for a year, a nicely designed blue silk CAMRA tie and bottle opener key-ring. This is the ideal gift for any male in the family.

Single membership with a Good Bottled Beer Guide 6th Edition and Bottle Opener Key-ring £25 – 33% discount (usually retails at £33.44 including postage)

The second package is aimed at members of the family or friends that enjoy bottled real ale whether it be in a pub or in the comfort of his / her own home. A year's CAMRA membership and the new Good Bottled Beer Guide, which is the bible for all aficionados of real ale in a bottle and profiles nearly 800 bottle-conditioned beers is a great match. The Bottle Opener key-ring finishes off this ideal gift package!

Single membership with Good Beer Guide 2007 £28 – over 20% discount! (usually retail at £34.49 including postage)

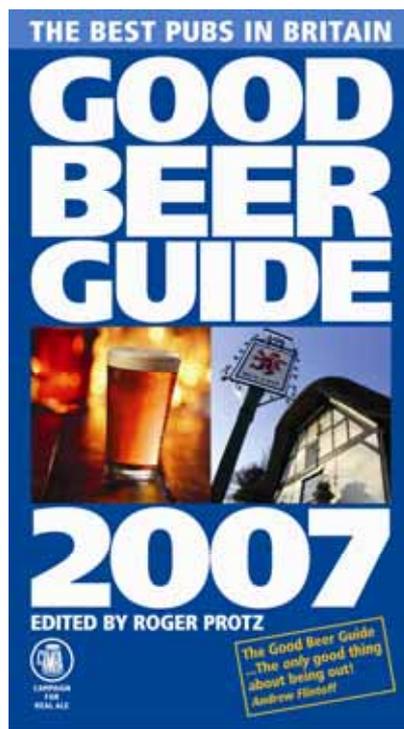
Ever beer lover's idea gift for Christmas! A years CAMRA membership and a copy of CAMRA's best selling Good Beer Guide which profiles the best 4,500 pubs in Britain.

Single membership with Big Book of Beer £28 – over 20% discount! (usually retails at £34.49 including postage)

The final gift package offers a years CAMRA membership and a copy of the fantastic Big Book of Beer. This book includes everything you need to know about beer including its history and traditions and explains in depth who brews the beer and the breweries that produce it from the UK to Europe and beyond!

If you are interested in purchasing a Christmas Gift Offer then please call 01727 867201 or visit www.camra.org.uk/shop.

Please note that postage is free for these promotional offers.



Real Ale Revolution Goes On!

CONSUMER demand for real ale has led to the birth of 84 new breweries in the UK that are listed in the Good Beer Guide 2007. The boom in new British breweries shows no sign of abating as the Good Beer Guide 2007 lists the total number of small craft or micro breweries in Britain as more than 600. Good Beer Guide 2007 Editor Roger Protz said: "There has never been greater choice and diversity for real ale. CAMRA is celebrating 35 years of active campaigning to save British beer, pubs and breweries and the surge in new craft breweries underscores everything CAMRA has done to provide better choice for drinkers." "But the real driving force is consumer demand. The global brewers have turned their backs on cask beer to focus on lager and 'smoothflow' biters but beer lovers want real ale. Protz added that the boom in new breweries has been aided by the government's introduction of Progressive Beer Duty.

QUALITYBEERS.CO.UK
FINE ALES & LAGERS DELIVERED TO YOUR DOOR



**BOTTLE
CONDITIONED
BEERS**

**5 LITRE MINI-KEGS
IMPORTED BEERS**

FREE DELIVERY TO
MAINLAND ENGLAND, WALES
AND CENTRAL SCOTLAND



Cambridgeshire Dining Pub of the Year
for the last TWO years - 2005, 2006

The Cock *at Hemingford Grey*

Real ales include:

- **Woodfordes Wherry** • **Earl Soham Victoria Bitter** •
and two guest ales from the local area

Non-smoking throughout. Woodburning Stove Fires.
Attached restaurant you can find in the Good Food Guide.
Set in a beautiful village, on the Ouse river,
between Huntingdon and Cambridge,
2 minutes from the A14.
47 High Street, (01480) 463609

EVENTS AND SOCIALS

November 2006 – *Music Quiz*

Sat 18th Music Quiz Night, **Rivermill Tavern, Eaton Socon**. Whether you know a lot about music or just wish to come along for a good evening's entertainment, the quiz will last about 1 ½ hrs with plenty of time for beer. (7.30 pm).

December 2006—Huntingdon Real Ale Ramble

Tue 5th Open Committee Meeting, **The Cock, Hemingford Grey**. (8.30 pm).

Fri 15th Social around **Huntingdon** pubs, starting at the **Market Inn** at 8:30pm, moving onto the **Victoria** at 9:15pm, and finishing at the **Samuel Pepys** at 10pm.

January 2007-Christmas Social / Cambridge Beer Festival

Tue 9th Open Committee Meeting, **The Victoria, Huntingdon**. (8.30 pm).

Fri 19th Christmas Social with buffet at **The Chequers, Little Gransden** (8:30pm).

Sat 27th Trip to the **Cambridge Winter Ale** festival. Bus services available from St Neots and Huntingdon.

February 2007-Black Sheep and Theakston Brewery Visits

Tue 6th **Pre-festival meeting, Woolpack, St Neots** (8.30 pm) for all those helping with the St Neots Beer festival. If you would like to help at the festival, please contact Andy Shaw, on 01480 355893.

Sat 10th **The Breweries of Masham**. First a trip round the Black Sheep at 11:30am and a bit to eat before on to the tour of the Theakston brewery at 2:30pm. Several members will be going up on the Friday and staying locally.

March 2007-St Neots Beer Festival

1st to 3rd **St Neots Beer Festival** – Priory Centre, St Neots. Opening Times: Thu: 6-10.45 pm; Fri 12-3 pm & 5-10.45 pm; Sat 12-10.45 pm.

For further information please contact Pete Godfrey, Social Secretary, on 01480 212849 or e-mail: socials@huntscamra.org.uk.

WHO TO CONTACT

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Campaigning: Kathy Hadfield-Moorhouse, (01480) 496247 (h).

TRADING STANDARDS

Your local Trading Standards organisation is Cambridgeshire County Council Trading Standards. If you have any complaints about trading standards issues at local pubs please contact them.

They 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.

Contact **Cambridgeshire Trading Standards** helpdesk on 08454 040 506, or at Trading Standards Division, Sackville House, Sackville Way, Great Cambourne, Cambridgeshire, CB3 6HD. The local trading standards web site is www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/business/trading/. The national trading standards web site is www.tradingstandards.gov.uk.

OPENING TIMES

Opening Times is published by the Huntingdonshire Branch of CAMRA, the Campaign for Real Ale (Copyright 2006) All rights reserved.

Views or comments expressed in this publication may not necessarily be those of the Editor or of CAMRA.

Contact the Editor Andy Shaw, on:

(01480) 355893, or

news@hunts.camra.org.uk, or

13a Peppercorns Lane, Eaton Socon, St Neots, PE19 8HL.

To Advertise

To place an advert or enquire about our rates please contact:

Neil Richards—01536 358670

N.Richards@btinternet.com

The Queens Head

30 High Street

Needingworth

PE27 4SA

01480 463946

Open: Monday-Thursday

12-2.30 : 5-11pm

12-2.30 : 5-12.30 Friday

12-12.30 Saturday

12-10.30pm Sunday

Real ales: Greene King IPA,
Morland Speckled Hen, Oak-
ham JHB and guest beers

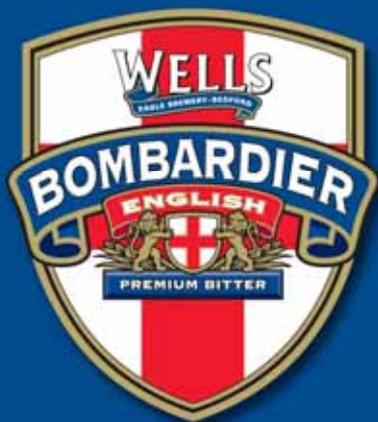
*Home cooked pub food
available daily.*

*Traditional Sunday Lunch.
(no food Sunday evening)*

Wells Young's

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www.wellsandyoungs.co.uk