



**CAMPAIGN
FOR
REAL ALE**

opening times

Huntingdonshire Branch of CAMRA,
the Campaign for Real Ale

Issue 130
Spring 2007

St Neots
Beer
Festival

Pub of the
Year

Also inside:

Half Pints

Local pub and brewery news

A look back in time

THE CHEQUERS

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Tel: 01767 677348



**Hunts
CAMRA
Pub of the
Year 2005,
2006 &
2007**

**Bob and Wendy Mitchell
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own special atmosphere**

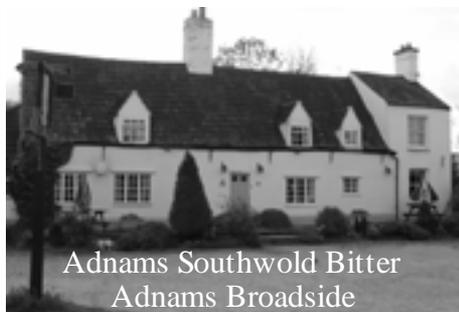
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Adnams Broadside

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CAMBS

TEL: 01480459516

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

Pub of the Year

Chequers, Little Gransden

The Huntingdonshire Branch of CAMRA has this year selected the Chequers, Little Gransden to be awarded Pub of the Year 2007. This means a hat trick for the Chequers, having won the award three years in a row.

CAMRA gives this annual award to the pub that it judges to provide the widest appeal for its combination of good beer, atmosphere, style, service and value.

Bob and Wendy Mitchell have owned and run the Chequers, Little Gransden for 13 years and the pub has been in the Mitchell family since 1950.

Bob has a passion for real ale. Check out all the beer festival glasses - a sign of a true enthusiast. As well as the house beer Oakham JHB, at least one unusual guest beer is always available (on special occasions as many as 6 real ales are available).

Bob also has a passion for good food. Friday night is fish night at the Chequers, and on a recent visit, Bob had organised a home made Cornish pasty competition

which he, numerous pub regulars and CAMRA visitors took part in

The cosy public bar with its plain wooden seating and open fire is an unaltered gem and there is a choice of two other rooms. There is always a warm welcome at this family run pub, from Bob and Wendy and the village regulars.

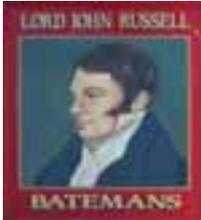
The Chequers truly is a community pub, and the heart and soul of this Cambridgeshire village. Many of the regulars are country people who work in agriculture.

The Chequers is also very much a family business. As well as Bob and Wendy, their son's Andy and David, and David's partner Nicola are all involved in running the pub. Bob hopes that he will one day pass this pub onto the next generation.

Bob plans to open a brewery at the Chequers. This would be the first operating brewery within the branch area since James Paine closed in the 1990's. Much of the infrastructure work has been completed, and the next critical step is for Bob to acquire the brewing equipment. He's not in any hurry—he knows what he's looking for and will bide his time until the right kit comes available, but given Bob's commitment to quality real ale, it will undoubtedly be worth waiting for.

There was a presentation of a framed certificate to licensees Wendy and Bob Mitchell on the occasion of the branch's post Christmas party in January. Pictured are Wendy and Nicola, with Branch Chairman Andy Shaw.

Most Improved Pub of the Year Lord John Russell, St Neots



This year the Huntingdonshire Branch of CAMRA has introduced a new annual award, "Most Improved Pub of the Year". The branch had no hesitation in selecting the Lord John Russell in St Neots.

The contrast between this pub now and five months ago is huge. Then the Lord John Russell was being run by a temporary manager put in place by the pub's owners Batemans. They were having difficulty finding a permanent tenant and it was clear to the regulars that the pub needed a landlord who would put the Lord John Russell back on track. There was no food, availability of real ale was inconsistent, interest in the darts and other pub games teams had declined and most of the regulars had moved "down the road".

Within weeks of the arrival of Chas and Jane Smith in late summer, major changes had taken place. Chas had a regular range of Batemans Dark Mild and XB sorted out and the beer was in good condition. Jane had worked out an interesting good value menu, with specials targeted at the residents of the retired peoples home next door.

Neither Chas nor Jane has any previous experience in the pub trade. Jane was the manager of a clothing store and Chas had just retired after thirty years in the police force. But they both attended a Batemans training course, and are committed to providing a quality service to customers.

Since September the Lord John Russell has gone from strength to strength. Chas now offers 4-5 real ales, 3 on handpump, and 2 direct from the cask in the cellar, and because he carefully chooses the right cask size (and Batemans offer many of their beers in 4.5 gallon "pins"), the beer is always superb. As well as Batemans standards Mild, XB and Salem Porter, there is usually a Batemans seasonal beer, and a constantly changing guest beer.

The pub games teams are all active again, and the pub positively hums with the conversation of the regulars most evenings. The "Lord John" is first and foremost a community pub, used by local people on a regular basis, where people feel as comfortable as they do in their own living rooms. This all requires the right sort of publicans - the sort who regard the pub as their home as well. The Lord John Russell is certainly home to Chas and Jane, who recently got married in October.

Pictured at the presentation of a framed certificate are, from left, Chas, Jane and Pete Godfrey, Branch Social Secretary.

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

Tony & Tee welcome you to
THE VICTORIA

Opening hours :
11am-12pm Monday to Saturday
11am-11pm Sunday

Restaurant Opening Hours
with our resident Chef Scott Martin
12pm-2.30pm & 6pm till late

A warm, friendly face will always
be happy to see you

Bed & Breakfast available



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Lord John Russell

25 Russell Street, St Neots
01480 406330

Hunts
CAMRA
Most
Improved
Pub 2007



5 Real Ales including Batemans
Mild, XB and Salem Porter,
plus 2 guest beers.

Food served daily,
weekly specials and
Sunday Roast.

THE OLIVER CROMWELL

Wellington Street, St. Ives, Cambs.

Tel: 01480 465601

Serving six real ales:
Adnams Bitter plus
regularly changing guest beers
No smoking bar



Enjoy a good pint of traditional ale in traditional surroundings.
Reasonably priced lunchtime bar snacks available Mon to Sat

A LOOK BACK IN TIME

25 YEARS AGO

CAMRA set up campaigns against the policies of a number of large UK brewers, most of which no longer brew in 2007. Greenall Whitley were targeted for their expansionist ambitions following their takeover of the Shipstones brewery in Nottingham. Whitbread were to be the subject of campaigns against their high prices, brewery closures and pub closures, and Courage were criticised for stopping real ale production at their London and Reading plants. Meanwhile Manchester brewers Boddingtons were under fire for their takeover of the neighbouring Oldham Brewery.

St Neots branch of CAMRA met at the Kings Head in St Neots and the Royal Oak in St Ives. There were socials at the Black Bull, Godmanchester and the Axe



Axe and Compass

and Compass in Hemingford Abbots. The branch Annual General Meeting was held in April 1982 at the

Cannon in St Neots.

Trumans, part of the Watney, Mann and Truman brewing empire, launched two more real ales alongside Truman Bitter, which had already replaced their first re-entry into the real ale scene, Tap Bitter. The new beers were Truman Prize Mild and Best Bitter.

CAMRA reported on two microbreweries making inroads in and around the then Whitbread dominated brewing town of Luton. The larger of the two, at Lilley was

Mickles, named after the two partners who had originally set up the venture, Mick Birch (later to become a long standing stalwart of St Neots CAMRA, and still involved at the Booze on the Ouse festivals), and Les Kent. Birch Bitter was its main product. Another brewery, Coney Hall, had been set up in Luton by the secretary of the students' union at Luton College, and supplied the union bar and two other outlets in town with Coney Hall Bitter.

In a report that CAMRA insisted was not an April fool's joke, in April 1982 the Milk Marketing Board was said to be launching draught milk in thirty pubs in the south Midlands. Newly developed milk dispensers were used to serve milk at 40p a pint, then about double the price of cartons of milk in shops.

Wolverhampton and Dudley, the Banks's brewing company was building up a stake in Birmingham brewers Davenports. But finance director Robert Houle attempted to reassure CAMRA that this was 'purely defensive', adding 'We would not like them to be taken over by someone else'. The move did not save Davenports, but Greenall Whitley of Warrington were the eventual successful predators and closed the brewery.

Another eventual victim of Greenall's takeover ambitions was Simpkins in the Black Country. In 1982 CAMRA reported that Simpkins was determined to remain 'fiercely independent'. They had replaced their cask mild with keg mild from North Country Brewery in Hull, but announced that they would brew their cask Old Ale all the year round.

A LOOK BACK IN TIME

10 YEARS AGO

A CAMRA survey found that nearly two thirds of local councils had no policy in their local plan to prevent pub closures. Chelmsford was held up as a model with its policy that changes of use of rural pubs would not be permitted unless non-viability could be demonstrated. Huntingdonshire District Council subsequently adopted a policy to protect rural pubs.

Fenland Brewery was started up in February 1997 at Chatteris by research chemist Rob Thomas. The Three Horseshoes at Ramsey was one of the first outlets for Fenland Brewery Bitter and Doctor's Orders. Meanwhile Deeping Ales was set up at Market Deeping by CAMRA members Keith and Jay ne Emmerson.

CAMRA launched its manifesto for the impending general election with calls for full pints, to keep tied houses and restrict pub closures and theming, and to reject more brewery mergers and any change to the guest beer law to include lagers.

Seventeen winter ales were on sale at the third St Neots winter ales festival, including Harveys Christmas Ale (8.1%abv), Elgoods Wenceslas Archers Marley's Ghost (both 7.5%), and hot mulled ale.

In February 1997 CAMRA declared 'official' tasting results showing that tight sparklers knock the flavour out of your pint. A panel of twelve tasters in Warwick, including the mayor and his official beer taster, tasted Woodforde's Wherry and Rooster Special served with and without the offending nozzle. Ten correctly identified the sparkler-served beer and most agreed that the beer was better without the sparkler.

St Neots CAMRA met at the Old Sun in St Neots and the Nelson's Head in St Ives. Socials visited pubs in Kimbolton, Arrington and Croydon. There was also a joint social with Peterborough branch at the Bell, Stilton.

Campaigners in Leatherhead and Warrington, backed by CAMRA, won battles to prevent national brewers Allied Domecq from converting historic pubs the Running Horse at Leatherhead and the Barley Mow in Warrington into 'Firkin' theme pubs. Both proposals were rejected by council planners.

The White Hart in St Ives reopened after refurbishment. CAMRA applauded the retention of its character and historic layout.



CAMRA Chairman John Cryne was named by the licensee newspaper alongside chairmen and chief executives of major British brewers as one of thirteen 'trade titans' who would be the most influential players in the drinks trade in 1997.

The Crown at Eaton Socon was on the market for £280,000 freehold.

Norfolk community locals were given a shot in the arm by South Norfolk council in a new proposal to include village pubs in a network of council advice shops, staffed for two hours a week by council officials.

HALF PINTS



Bedford brewers Wells and Youngs have acquired the Courage brands from Scottish and Newcastle, including cask Directors and Best Bitter. The annual production of Wells and Youngs, set up

after the amalgamation of the brewing interests of Bedford's Charles Wells and London brewer Youngs, is expected to reach half a million barrels following the deal. The Courage brands will contribute 100,000 barrels to this. S&N's Tadcaster brewery, which has produced Courage ales since the closure of the Courage Bristol brewery, will now concentrate on S&N's core brands, with John Smiths being the only cask brand produced there.



London brewers Fullers are looking at further possible acquisitions of family brewing companies, following their £83 million takeover of Hampshire brewers Gales and

closure of their brewery last year. Gales contributed to a 35% increase in 6-monthly turnover last year for the brewers of London Pride.

Regional brewers are lobbying the government to change beer duty rules. A group of twenty brewers are asking for a review of progressive beer duty, introduced in 2002 to encourage competition and small brewers by giving tax relief to brewers producing less than 5000 hectolitres a year. The regionals believe this unfairly penalises small and medium sized brewers producing more than this, and are looking for a more level playing field.

Brewer Coors is launching a new wheat beer in the UK under its Grolsch brand name. Grolsch Weizen is a 5.3% wheat beer, brewed in Holland in the German weiss beer style. Coors expect this difference to provide a boost in competition with rival InBev's leading Hoegaarden wheat beer brand, which is in the Belgian white beer style. Grolsch Weizen will be sold in swing top bottles and on draught with a matching branded glass. And like Hoegaarden, it contains a yeast sediment with pouring instructions for the bottled version to provide the vital cloudy appearance, characteristic of wheat beer.



Answers: 1. Heartbreak Hotel; 2. Love Me Do; 3. Come On; 4. Seven Seas of Rhye; 5. Reason to Believe; 6. Do You Really Want to Hurt Me? 7. Holiday; 8. Fire; 9. Bring It All Back; 10. Careless Whispers.

The Woolpack

35 Church Street, St Neots



**Eagle IPA and Youngs Bitter
plus 4 regularly changing guest ales.**

Home cooked food served Monday - Saturday 12 till 8, Sunday Lunch served 12 - 3

Live Entertainment monthly

Quiz every Sunday night

Children and Dogs welcome

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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.



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welcome you to a
traditional country pub .



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www.huntsbridge.co.uk*

LOCAL PUB & BREWERY NEWS

Impending changes of licensee have been reported for the **Vine** at **Buckden** and Greene King leased pubs the **Bell** at **Great Paxton** and the **Cock** in **Gamlingay**.

Two local pubs that have been closed for some time are The **Tavern on the Green** at **Abbotsley** and the **Horse and Groom** at **Thrift**, near Royston.

Two other pubs remaining closed are the **Bell** at **Eaton Socon**, where Charles Wells have been looking for an entrepreneur to take over the lease, and the **Old Falcon** in **St Neots**, set to be redeveloped and expected not to remain as a pub, although a restaurant could be a part of the new facilities there.

The **Mad Cat** at **Pidley** has been reported to be for sale freehold.

Batemans pub the **White Hart** at **Great Staughton** has undergone some alterations and introduced a new food operation. The old games room at the back of the pub has been converted into a restaurant with a modern decorative theme, and the front bar has been converted into a small games room.

The **Wheatsheaf** at **Gamlingay** is among a number of pubs being sold by Greene King.

A leasing company has been running the **George and Dragon**, **Eaton Socon** for some months whilst Greene King has been looking for a long term tenant.

The **Chequers**, **Eynesbury** has been leased by the owners, and the range of real ales has been reduced to one hand-pump.

A year after a major extension at the **Windmill**, **Somersham**, this increasingly popular pub has re-opened after a short closure to provide a further enlargement of the accommodation for diners.

Tony Ogle and Marie Ward have leased the **Victoria**, **Huntingdon**. Tony is a local man, and the Victoria was his local for many years, and he is looking to get the pub back to being a community pub.

Previous leaseholders, Phil Beer and his partner Teresa are running the Cherry Tree at Haddenham, where they are retaining the lease, and are planning to move to run a golf club in the "West Country".

A correction to a report on the **George Spaldwick** in the last edition. This pub is no longer part of the Spirit Group, but has been sold to Punch Taverns, and leased to the George Partnership, which comprises Louise and Mark Smith with Nick Thoday (chef). The pub is now being run more as a village pub, with events like quiz nights.

A fire recently caused serious damage to the interior of the **Bridge House**, **St Neots**, while it was closed for refurbishment. The fire started in the boathouse, but soon spread to all parts of the pub.

Chris Watson, who used to run the Bridge House, has recently taken over operations at the **Eaton Oak**, **Eaton Ford**.

The **Ufford Brewery** at the White Hart, Ufford, near Peterborough is planning to expand brewing operations. With an increasing number of regular free trade accounts, they are running out of capacity.

CUT PRICED LAGER

The Campaign for Real Ale (CAMRA) is calling for a stop to irresponsible alcohol promotion as supermarkets sell lager for just 5p more than a pint of bottled water.

A survey by CAMRA revealed that in some supermarkets Fosters and Carlsberg was available for the equivalent of just 54p a pint – or 16p before tax. CAMRA, members of parliament, trade press and pub industry chiefs are calling for urgent action to prevent promotions that serve to exacerbate the problem of binge drinking.

CAMRA Chief Executive Mike Benner said: “The ridiculous practice of the major supermarkets selling alcohol below cost to out-price each other is reckless, irresponsible and dangerous. To put it in perspective some bottled water in the supermarket costs 49p a pint and water is not subject to excise duty as alcohol is.”

CAMRA believes that irresponsible drinks promotions in the off trade are a major cause of binge-drinking incidents, yet it is licensed premises that suffer the fallout while supermarkets continue with impunity.

Mike Benner continued: “Pubs often come under unjustified attack for encouraging binge-drinking, yet the industry has committed itself to curb irresponsible drinking and cheap alcohol promotions in recent years. This hard work is undermined by supermarkets selling enormous quantities of alcohol at prices that simply cannot be justified.

“An 18-year-old is free to take advantage of these ludicrous beer prices, walk out

the supermarket door and then drink in a completely unsupervised and unsafe environment. They can give beer to under-age drinkers who do not know their limits but pour premium-strength lager down their throats all night. This is in stark contrast to adults enjoying a drink in a pub which is regulated by law as to who they can and cannot serve.”

“Something has to be done now to make supermarkets realise the damage these promotions can cause.”

MP John Grogan of the All Party Parliamentary Beer Group has tabled an Early Day Motion urging supermarkets and off-licences to follow the example of pubs, act to end irresponsible drinks promotions, and not to use alcohol as a loss leader on their premises. CAMRA is urging consumers to lobby their MP to sign Early Day Motion 495 and make supermarkets take their social responsibilities more seriously. 41 MP's have signed the motion so far.

Mike Benner concluded: “These promotions are unsustainable, but while they are allowed to continue unchecked they are doing irreparable damage to the licensed trade. A pub is still the best place to enjoy a sociable and sensible drink with friends.”

Before Christmas 2006 CAMRA carried out a survey of drinks promotions in major supermarkets. Examples:

- Sainsbury's selling Carling for 54p a pint (£9.99 for 24x440ml cans). The excise duty on a 4% beer is around 30p, and VAT is 8p.
- Morrison's: Selling Grolsch £16 for 40x300ml (76p a pint).
- Tesco: Selling Budweiser £9.98 for 20x300ml (95p a pint).

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

I enclose a cheque for

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Applications will be processed within 21 days



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- This Guarantee is offered by all Banks and Building Societies that take part in the Direct Debit Scheme. The efficiency and security of the Scheme is monitored and protected by your own Bank or Building Society.
- If the amount to be paid or the payment date change, CAMRA will notify you 10 working days in advance of your account being debited or as otherwise agreed.
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- You can cancel a Direct Debit at any time by writing to your Bank or Building Society. Please also send a copy of your letter to us.

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

Join CAMRA today...

Do you think it is right that at least 26 pubs are closing every month?
Join CAMRA today to help make a difference!

At least 26 pubs close every month.

CAMRA is acting through initiatives such as the Community Pubs Foundation – www.communitypubs.org - and Pub is the Hub – www.pubisthehub.org.uk – to stop unnecessary pub closures.

9 out of 10 pints served contain less than 100% liquid.

Consumers lose over a million pounds a day due to short measure! We are lobbying the Government to change the law so you get what you pay for – a full pint every time.

6 out of 10 pubs are prevented from serving a guest beer of their choice.

Most pubs can only stock beers brought from the brewery or pub company to which they are tied. CAMRA is campaigning for the introduction of a guest beer law, which will give all licensees the right to serve a guest beer of their choice.

CAMRA has over 84,000 discerning members and there are now more than 600 real ale breweries brewing over 2,500 different varieties of real ale in Britain.

CAMRA achievements:

- We have had many successes over the years which include:
- Being instrumental in allowing pubs to open longer to suit the local community.
- Running a powerful campaign that helped the introduction of small brewers' relief which enabled many small breweries to invest money into their operations

To join today, complete the necessary information on page 12 of this CAMRA newsletter, visit www.camra.org.uk/joinus or call our HQ on 01727 867201.

and become more viable.

- Working with many local communities to save hundreds of community pubs from closure.
- Organising over 150 beer festivals a year including the Great British Beer Festival, which saw over 66,000 people visit this year at Earls Court.
- Having over 5,000 volunteers who give up their time to survey pubs, work at beer festivals and actively campaign for real ale and pubs.

To read about more of CAMRA's successes please visit www.camra.org.uk

If you care about these issues and would like to help make a difference then join CAMRA today! For less than £1.70 a month you can help to campaign for quality real ale and good pubs. As a member you will also receive the following:

- A monthly colour newspaper informing you on beer and pub news and detailing events and beer festival around the country
- Reduced entry prices to over 150 beer festivals, including the Great British Beer Festival.
- Chance to join CAMRA / Brewery Complimentary Clubs that are exclusive to CAMRA members. These clubs offer members a variety of promotions including free pint vouchers, brewery trips, competitions and merchandise offers.
- Discounts on CAMRA books including the Good Beer Guide
- Plus much more – see www.camra.org.uk/joinus

CIDER: THE BEST IN THE EAST PART II: BOTTLED CIDER

Following on from the successful launch of CAMRA's East Anglian Cider Competition at Norwich Beer Festival last year, the search is now on for the best bottled cider in East Anglia.

All producers within CAMRA's East Anglian region (Norfolk, Suffolk, Essex, Cambridgeshire, Hertfordshire or Bedfordshire) are eligible to enter. As with the East Anglian Cider competition, entries must be produced in a traditional way (i.e. made from freshly pressed apples and not micro-filtered, pasteurised or artificially carbonated). Producers can enter two of their products.

The judging will take place on Tuesday 22nd May 2007 at Cambridge Beer Festival on Jesus Green.

Plans are also underway for the East Anglian Cider Competition 2007 for draught products. Watch out for more information later in the year.

Andrea Briers—Regional Cider Co-ordinator – East Anglia



East Anglian Bottled Cider Competition

East Anglian Cider Producers are invited to enter our inaugural East Anglian Bottled Cider Competition. Judging will take place at CAMRA's Cambridge Beer Festival at Jesus Green on Tuesday 22nd May 2007. Producers can enter 2 ciders into the competition. Please indicate below the name of the products you would like to enter

Cider (1) Cider (2).....

Producers Name:-

Address:-.....

.....

Phone No.:- E-Mail (if available):-

- All cider must be produced in CAMRA's East Anglian region.
- All products must be real, i.e. made from freshly pressed apples and **not artificially carbonated, micro-filtered or pasteurised**.
- A minimum of 3 pints of each product must be provided for competition purposes. Producers are responsible for delivery of their own cider.

If you have any queries please contact:-

Andrea Briers (Norfolk) 01553 766904

Susan Brook (Hertfordshire) 01462 630663

Forms should be returned to Andrea Briers, 7 George Street, King's Lynn, Norfolk, PE30 2AQ by the 1st April 2007.

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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Tel: 01954 232 470 for enquiries and bookings

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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
Barleymead 4.8% Sept/Oct Old Black Shuck 4.5% Nov
Snickalmas 5.0% Wenceslas Winter Warmer 7.5% Dec

Champion Winter Beer of Britain

“Ripper” from Green Jack Brewery in Suffolk voted best winter beer in the land!

Green Jack Brewery’s Ripper was named as the supreme Champion Winter Beer of Britain 2007 by a panel of judges at CAMRA’s National Winter Ales Festival in Manchester.

The 8.5% abv barley wine was described as “A light coloured beer brewed as a homage to Belgian trappist ales, with sweet notes and a strong hoppy flavour.”

At the announcement, Steve Prescott, Organiser of the National Winter Ales Festival congratulated Green Jack on its victory. He said, “It’s great to see a barley wine win the competition yet again. I sincerely hope people will be inspired to try this fantastic beer style on the back of Green Jack’s victory.”

On hearing the news, Green Jack Head Brewer Tim Durford said: “This is absolutely incredible. All my life it has been my ambition to win a national award for my beers and I can’t believe it has happened.”

The Silver award went to Fuller’s London Porter and the Bronze to Orkney Skullsplitter.

Descriptions taken from CAMRA’s ‘Dictionary of Beer’:

Stout - One of the classic types of ale, a successor in fashion to ‘porter’. Usually a very dark, heavy, bitter ale, with a dry palate, thick creamy head, and a good grainy taste.

Porter - A dark, slightly sweetish but hoppy ale; the successor of ‘entire’ and predecessor of stout. Porter originated in London around 1730, and by the end of the 18th century was probably the most popular beer in England.

Old Ale - Now virtually synonymous with ‘winter ale’. Most ‘old ales’ are produced and sold for a limited time of the year, usually between November and the end of February. Usually a rich, dark, high-gravity draught ale of considerable body.

Barley Wine - a strong, rich and sweetish ale, usually over 1060 OG, with high condition and a high hop rate.

SUPREME CHAMPIONS

- Gold – Green Jack, Ripper
- Silver – Fuller’s, London Porter
- Bronze – Orkney, Skullsplitter

CATEGORY WINNERS

Old Ales & Strong Mild Category

- Gold – B&T, Black Dragon Mild
- Silver – Orkney, Dark Island
- Bronze – Rudgate, Ruby Mild

Stouts & Porters

- Gold – Fuller’s, London Porter
- Silver – Cairngorm, Black Gold
- Bronze – St Peter’s, Old Style Porter

Barley Wines

- Gold – Orkney, Skullsplitter
- Silver – Green Jack, Ripper
- Bronze – Durham, Benedictus

Green Jack “Ripper” and many other of these award winners will be available at the St Neots Beer Festival 1st-3rd of March.

THE RED HOUSE

Old North Road Longstowe, Cambs - Tel: 01954 718480

A Genuine FREE House

Real Ales feature local breweries including Potton
Ever-changing guests

Bar Snacks and Full Menu available 7 days a week

Referred to as **"A NATIONAL TREASURE"**

by *Saturday Times* - *Food and Drink Critic* - Richard Brass

FANCY A GUEST BEER?

Whilst Greene King beers may be the most popular beers in local tied and “free” houses (*are you sure about this? - Ed*), Greene King have been creating a stom down on the south coast. Some years ago, Greene King took over a small pub chain called Beards, all of whose pubs sold the revered Sussex Best Bitter from Harveys of Lewes. Such was the popularity of this fine ale (runner up in the 2006 Champion Beer of Britain contest) that the pubs were allowed to keep selling it.



Over the years however, Greene King have resolved an “inconsistency”, and “persuaded” ex-Beards licensees to remove the Harveys, the last bastion

being the renowned Lewes Arms in Lewes itself, a stones throw from the Harveys brewery. This is a fantastic community pub, home to dozens of clubs and societies and all kinds of eccentric events such as the World Pea Throwing Championships. The regulars love their Harveys, so Greene King’s recent decision that supplies must cease has resulted in a furious protest, including a petition signed by the local MP and over a thousand others. The increasingly-monopolistic Greene King (see article on pub signs) were, at the time of writing, refusing to back down. Some locals are now staging a boycott and there are amusing stories surrounding events at the pub at <http://www.lewesarms.org.uk/>.

The root issue of this David and Goliath battle in Lewes is familiar to pub users in Cambridgeshire, namely Greene King’s reluctance to allow their tenanted and

managed pubs to offer a guest beer, other than from a very restricted list—a list that often comprises no more than beers from the breweries of Ruddles, Morlands, and Riddleys. And where are these “guest” beers brewed? Oh yes, Bury St Edmunds—because these are brews “adopted” in Greene King takeovers over the last 10 years. Your local pub might soon be stocking Hardys and Hansors beers—the latest Greene King takeover. Then again, it might not, because availability of these beers in a given area is down to Greene King’s control.



the Saddle

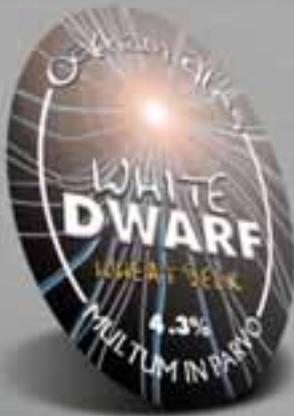


Sunday Lunch 12:00 - 2:30

2 course meal	£9.95
3 course meal	£12.95

Please book in advance
tel: 01480 860408

The Saddle, 26 High St, Kimbolton
www.arncliffeisure.com



oakham ales

www.oakhamales.com

Tel 01733 370500

**A traditional old country
pub and
restaurant with a warm
and friendly atmosphere.
Traditional Sunday Lunch.
Children's menu available.
Open all day Saturday and
Sunday.**



**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.**

The Pig and Abbot

**High Street, Abington Pigotts, Nr. Royston, Hertfordshire, SG8 0SD
Telephone: 01763 853515**

NOT 'ALF POP PICKERS

A small but perfectly formed band of mods, rockers, folkies, hippies, beatniks and beardos gathered at the Rivermill Tavern on November 18th last year to test their knowledge of all things musical.

Quizmaster "DJ Keith" bombarded the teams with fifty years of musical trivia, faces, rock, opera, classical, intros, endings and plenty of bits in the middle. Something for everyone we thought, but without a round of questions about Baroque Gregorian chants, some people were struggling from the beginning. Andy Shaw and Sonia Clarke battled bravely into the wooden spoon position in the face of an onslaught from Roy Enderby's hand picked squad which had the perfect blend of trendy youth, Woodstock veterans and classically trained pianists and they came out as "Top of the Eaton Socon Pops".

Everyone had an enjoyable evening with plenty of beer breaks between the rounds.

Thanks to Keith Lawson for organising the event and to the Rivermill Tavern for the use of their family room for the evening. Hopefully we can repeat the event in the future when more members will turn out.

Fancy an argument in the pub? Try these brainteasers for your very own pop quiz (Answers on page 8). With which songs did these recording artists have their first UK hit singles?

- | | |
|-----------------------|--------------------|
| 1. Elvis Presley | 6. Culture Club |
| 2. The Beatles | 7. Madonna |
| 3. The Rolling Stones | 8. U2 |
| 4. Queen | 9. S Club 7 |
| 5. Rod Stewart | 10. George Michael |

SIGN OF THE TIMES



We sadly live in an age where the blandly corporate increasingly triumphs over the individualistic. A small but significant exam-

ple of this can be found outside an increasing number of Greene King pubs, where the original pub sign, usually a picture related to the name of the pub, and often of significance to local history, has been replaced by the deeply boring standardised GK sign comprising just the brewery logo and the pub name.

CAMRA will be taking this up with the local planning authorities. For listed buildings, consent is required to change signs and we'll be checking that this has been obtained. With other buildings, the controls are less stringent but action using the Advertisement Consent Regulations may be possible, especially if the local council is sympathetic.

Something we can all do, if we hate these signs, is write to Greene King and tell them, so we urge our readers to do so. Please share your views with Rooney Anand, Chief Executive, Greene King plc, Westgate Brewery, Bury St Edmunds, IP33 1QT.

Community Pubs Week 17-24 February

Join us on Saturday 17th February
for a tour of community pubs!



To celebrate Community Pubs Week, we have organised a trip round 7 rural community pubs in south west Cambridgeshire on the afternoon of Saturday 17th February. The coach trip will pick up from St Ives, Huntingdon and St Neots, and is free to CAMRA members with a £5 charge to non-members. To book your place, contact Pete Godfrey, Social Secretary, on 01480 212849 or e-mail: socials@huntscamra.org.uk. Check what events are going on in your pub!

1:30 St Ives - White Hart, Market Hill
1:45 Huntingdon - lay-by next to Walden Grove, Huntingdon ring road
2:00 St Neots - Corner House, Market Square
2:15-2:45 Cock, Gamlingay
3:00-3:30 Waggon and Horses, Steeple Morden
3:35-4:05 Pig and Abbot, Abington Pigotts
4:15-4:45 Queen Adelaide, Croydon
4:50-5:20 Hardwick Arms, Arrington
5:25-5:55 Red House, Longstowe
6:00-6:45 Chequers, Little Gransden
7:00 drop off at St Neots
7:15 drop off at Huntingdon
7:30 drop off at St Ives

A promotional advertisement for Cambridge Bitter. The background is blue with a sunburst pattern. At the top left is the Floods logo featuring a black dog. The word 'CAMBRIDGE' is written in large, white, serif letters. Below it, 'BITTER' is in a red oval, and '3.8% abv' is in black. 'GOLD AWARD' is written in large, yellow, serif letters. Below that is the CAMRA logo (a red circle with 'CAMRA' and 'FOR REAL ALE'). At the bottom, 'Champion Bitter of Britain 2006' is written in white, serif letters. On the left side, there is a black beer tap with a circular handle featuring the Cambridge Bitter logo. At the very bottom, a green banner contains the text 'OPENING TIMES 130', 'SPRING 2007', and '21'.

28th BOOZE ON THE OUSE



OPENING TIMES

Thursday 6pm–10.45pm

Friday 12 noon–3pm; 5pm–10.45pm

Saturday All day; 12 noon–10.45pm.

Entrance including programme:

Thursday - £1 6-7pm; £2 after 7pm

Friday - 12noon-3pm - **free** entrance!

Friday - £1 5-7pm; £2 after 7pm

Saturday - £1 12noon-10.30pm.

Happy Hour

Thursday 6-7pm & Friday 5-7pm: Entrance £1 & reduced price draught beer.

Families welcome until 9pm.

Please note: No entry or re-admission after 10.30pm.

Free entrance to CAMRA members at all sessions - a good reason to join CAMRA!

No smoking in main hall.

BEERS

REAL ALES

We hope to serve over the course of the festival around 48 real ales from all over the UK, both from the well-established

independent breweries and the newer, smaller micro-breweries. These will include a number of award winning “winter” ales (see page xx).

FOREIGN BEER

The popular foreign beer bar will be selling a range of Belgian, Dutch, German, and Czech bottled beers including examples of the most distinctive individualistic beer styles in the world, such as Trappist, lambic and wheat beers.

CIDER AND PERRY

The traditional cider bar will be serving a wide selection of tasty traditional cider & perry.

FEATURES

VENUE

The festival is being held at the Priory Centre, close to the Market Square, in the centre of St Neots.

FOOD AND DRINK

A variety of hot and cold food will be available at all sessions. Free soft drinks will be available from the real ale bar for the designated driver of your party.

CAMRA PRODUCTS STAND

Come along and chat to our staff to learn about CAMRA, beer brewing and pubs. CAMRA and brewery products will be on sale, including sweatshirts, t-shirts and polo shirts, as well as books, pens, badges and beer mats. Adjacent will be the fabulous 'Every One's A Winner' tombola stall.

CHILDREN AT THE FESTIVAL

Whilst lunchtime is the ideal time to bring the family to the festival, we do allow children into the hall up to 9pm in the eve-

ST NEOTS BEER FESTIVAL

ning.

MILDS

- Buntingford Par-
geter
- Castle Rock Black
Gold
- Robinsons Hatters
Dark Mild
- Taylors Dark Mild

BITTERS

- Fenland Rabbit
Poacher
- Hydes 1863 Clas-
sic
- Marston Moor
Rupert's Rout
- Milton Neptune
- Okells Bitter
- Ossett Black Bull
Bitter

BEST BITTERS

- Breconshire Breck-
nock Best
- Bushys Old Bushy
Tail
- Cambridge Moon-
shine Mulberry
Whale Bitter
- Copper Drag on
Challenger IPA
- Dark Star Best
Bitter
- Elgood's Pageant
Ale
- Inveralmond Thrap-
pledouser
- Sharp's Atlantic
IPA

GOLDEN ALES

- Arran Blonde 5%
- Buntingford Silence
5.2%
- Crouch Vale
Brewer's Gold 4%
- Hook Norton Hooky
Gold 4.1%
- Hopback Summer
Lightning 5%
- Kelham Island
Kelham Gold 3.8%

- Old Bear Goldi-
locks 4.5%
- Potton Gold 4.1%
- Roosters Special
3.9%
- Ufford White Hart
3.8%
- STRONG BITTERS
- Adnams Broadside
- Digfield March
Hare
- Grainstore Rutland
Beast
- Harviestoun Ptar-
migan
- Phoenix West
Coast IPA

SPECIALITY BEERS

- Coach House Fruit
Beer
- Grand Union Cen-
tennial Honey Ale
- Hadrian and Border
Ginger Beer
- Little Valley Heb-
den's Wheat
- Nethergate Umbel
Magna
- Three Rivers Crys-
tal Wheat

OLD ALES/

STRONG MILDS

- B&T Black Dragon
- Rudgate Ruby Mild
- Orkney Dark Island
- Sarah Hughes'
Dark Ruby Mild

PORTERS/STOUTS

- Cairngorm Black
Gold
- Elland 1872 Porter
- Mauldon Black
Adder
- Tomas Watkin
Merlin Stout

BARLEY WINE

- Green Jack Ripper

**Thursday 1st –
Saturday 3rd
March 2007
Priory Centre
St. Neots
45+ REAL ALES**
(over the duration of the Festival)
**Plus Cider and
Bottled Foreign Beer**

OTHER DETAILS

THE WORKERS

The festival is organised and run by mem-
bers of CAMRA who are all unpaid volun-
teers. We always need more helpers so
join at the festival's CAMRA stand.

STAFF NEEDED

If you can help at any session please con-
tact Andy Shaw (see below).

CONTACT NUMBER

Branch Chairman, Festival Organiser,
Newsletter & Festival Programme Editor,
Andy Shaw - 01480 355893 - festi-
val@huntscamra.org.uk.

Also visit our Web Site for updates
www.huntscamra.org.uk/festivals

ADVERTISERS

A 32-page programme will be produced
for the festival. Advertising at competitive
rates. Reach 3,000+ beer drinkers. Con-
tact the Programme Editor for more infor-
mation.

CAMRA launch Cyclops

CAMRA, the Campaign for Real Ale, recently unveiled a new phase of the Cyclops campaign for licensees and their customers, which aims to demystify the complexities of real ale.

Initially launched by Everards Brewery in March 2006, Cyclops was embraced by CAMRA and launched industry-wide with 14 brewery partners last August, after CAMRA commissioned research revealed that 1 in 3 adults thought a universal scheme which simplified real ale would encourage them to try more real ale.

"We were delighted with the initial 14 breweries that signed up as Cyclops partners in August 2006 as they own pubs and distribute beer across the whole of Britain. This now means Cyclops is a universal real ale tasting scheme that can be developed to play its part in increasing real ale sales nationally." said Tony Jerome, CAMRA's Senior Marketing Manager.

"Cyclops uses easy to understand descriptions and distinctive eye, nose and mouth symbols to help inform and educate occasional or new real ale drinkers of what different beers look, smell and taste like before they even try or buy a beer. Cyclops also promotes the style and strength of the beer and gives each real ale a score out of five for how bitter and sweet the beer is."

Since the initial launch at the Great British Beer Festival last August, Cyclops continues to build on its success with interest from a further 25 breweries who are looking to participate within the next few months.

To help consumers understand how the actual scheme works, and where to look for material, CAMRA has produced a Cyclops information leaflet which it hopes will increase real ale sales for all the breweries participating in Cyclops. The leaflet will be distributed to thousands of pubs across Britain by CAMRA members.

David Bremner, Head of Marketing for Everards and the inspiration behind Cyclops, said: "CAMRA's new Cyclops leaflet, and more breweries supporting the scheme, will help to increase the consumer awareness of this initiative and lead to more people understanding and drinking real ale."

Tony Jerome explained "It is important that we now promote Cyclops to licensees and consumers as there is a lot of support from the real ale industry for this initiative and it is vital to keep the impetus of this campaign going. As some of the Cyclops partners Point of Sale material hasn't been completed yet, we thought it would be important to develop some Cyclops templates that will allow licensees to produce their own Cyclops Point of Sale material such as posters, leaflets and table-toppers to help promote the real ales they have on sale in Cyclops format."

Licensees can now visit the Cyclops website www.camra.org.uk/cyclops, select the real ale tasting notes and logos for the beers that they have on sale in their pubs and drop them into the template. These can then be printed off and displayed as posters around the pub or used as beer menus on the tables. There is even space on the templates to add beer prices, pub food that matches the beer or history on the brewery.

CAMRA launch Cyclops

Jerome continued, "There has been a large number of pubs that have contacted CAMRA in the last year telling us that they would like to promote their real ales but do not know how to. These Word templates that have been created will be accessible to most licensees that own a PC. The templates will allow licensees to create their own Cyclops material and promote their own range of real ales to their customers. Hopefully this will encourage pubs to become more marketing led and help see their real ale sales increase."

Licensees will also be able to order Cyclops Point of Sale material such as posters, beer mats, tasting cards, leaflets etc direct from breweries that have already produced their material by visiting www.camra.org.uk/cyclops

Jerome concluded, "Within the next few months we hope to have a directory of hundreds of Cyclops tasting notes on the website for licensees to use and promote to their customers. We also hope that more breweries will be added to the on-line order form so licensees can order professionally designed Cyclops marketing material direct from the Cyclops brewery partners."

Breweries that would like to sign up to Cyclops, can either visit www.camra.org.uk/cyclops or email tory.jerome@camra.org.uk to request a Cyclops promotional pack.

The Cock *at Hemingford Grey*



- **Woodfordes Wherry** • **Earl Soham Victoria Bitter** •
Two other beers rotated between breweries such as Potbelly, Nethergate, Wolf, Milton and Fenland.

The **Beer Festival** this year is during the May Bank Holiday Weekend 25th – 28th, Friday night to Monday Lunch.
Live music every evening.

20 real ales to choose from and our homemade sausages.

Hunts CAMRA Pub of the Year 2003
Cambridgeshire Dining Pub of the Year 2006 & 2007

EVENTS AND SOCIALS

February 2007-Community Pubs Week 17 – 24 February

Sat 17th **Community Pubs Tour** Free coach tour for CAMRA members around the village community pubs of South St Neots. (1:30 – 7:30) Gamlingay, Steeple Morden, Abington Pigotts, Croydon, Arrington, Longstowe, Little Gransden. Pick-ups in St Ives, Huntingdon and St Neots and then return.

March 2007-St Neots Beer Festival

Thu 1st to Sat 3rd St Neots Beer Festival – Priory Centre, St Neots. Opening Times: Thurs: 6-10.45 pm; Fri 12-3 pm & 5-10.45 pm; Sat 12-10.45 pm. FREE ENTRY to CAMRA members. VOLUNTEERS WELCOME

Fri 23rd **New members' social, Lord John Russell, St Neots** (8.30 pm) for members who joined at the St Neots Beer Festival. A FREE PINT for new members and all those who helped at the Booze on the Ouse festival.

April 2007-Annual General Meeting

Tues 17th **Annual General Meeting, The Anchor, Little Paxton** (8.30 pm).

Fri 27th **Local pubs of Eaton Socon**, White Horse 8:30 / Wheatsheaf 9:00 / Old Sun - Waggon & Horses 9:30 / Millers Arms 10:00 / Rivemill Tavern 10:30.

May 2007-Cambridge Beer Festival

Tues 8th Open Committee Meeting, **Three Horseshoes, Abbots Ripton**, (8.30 pm).

Wed 23rd Visit to the **Cambridge Beer Festival**, Jesus Green (7:30pm - Foreign beer counter). County bus services from Huntingdon, St Ives and St Neots.

June 2007-London Pubs Tour

Tues 5th Open Committee Meeting, **Dragoon, Brampton** (8.30 pm).

Sat 16th **London Pubs Tour**. Travelling down by train to tour the pubs of inner London in conjunction with the London Pubs Group. Returning late evening.

For further information contact Pete Godfrey, Social Secretary (see below).

WHO TO CONTACT

Chairman & Newsletter Editor: Andy Shaw, 01480 355893 (h), 07802 485449 (m), andy.shaw@huntscamra.org.uk, 13a Peppercorns Lane, Eaton Socon, St Neots, PE19 8HL

Secretary, Press & Publicity: Paul Moorhouse, (01480) 496247 (h)

Treasurer: Sonia Clarke, (01480) 355893 (h), treasurer@huntscamra.org.uk

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

Socials: Pete Godfrey, (01480) 212849 (h), socials@huntscamra.org.uk

Pubs Info: Roy Endersby, (01480) 473364, pubs@huntscamra.org.uk

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 2007) All rights reserved.

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

To contact the Editor Andy Shaw, see "Who to Contact" opposite.

To Advertise

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

Neil Richards: 01536 358670 or
N.Richards@btinternet.com

**Deadline for Summer 2007 issue (131)
is Friday 20th April 2007.**

The Queens Head

30 High Street

Needingworth

PE27 4SA

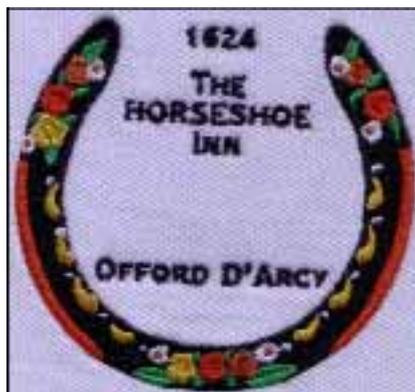
01480 463946

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 Old Speckled Hen,
Oakham JHB and guest beers

*Home cooked pub food
available daily.*

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



Under New Ownership

The Horseshoe Inn and Restaurant, Offord Darcy.

Enjoy top quality food and wine in our redecorated restaurant. Chef Richard sources quality fresh food locally. Fully certificated UK born, bred, and butchered meat, with local seasonal fresh vegetables.

Strongly influenced by top chefs Richard has trained with such as Anton Edelman, and more recently in Michelin Star and Rosette restaurants in East Anglia his A la Carte menu offers a range of dishes to interest any palate, all prepared with real passion.

The tradition of Sunday Roast Carvery continues with a focus on the quality which is our trademark.

The Horseshoe Inn offers two bars with a wide range of real ales, lagers, wines, and spirits. Visit us for dinner or lunch with a choice of A la Carte or bar meal. Richard and his team will cater for your every need and party events are welcome.

Real Ales normally include; London Pride, Spilfire, Green King IPA, and regular guest ale from Inveralmond Breweries in Perth,

'Ossian' We are probably the only provider of this remarkable real ale in England.

Richard Kennedy Chef-Proprietor

Table booking on 01480 810 293

E-mail: info@thehorseshoeinn.biz

