

# Opening Times



Huntingdonshire Branch of CAMRA

Issue 187

The Campaign for Real Ale

Summer 2026

**Cambridgeshire Pub of the Year 2026**



## King of the Belgians, Hartford

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# Hunts CAMRA Pub Awards

In the last edition we announced the winners of our annual pub awards. Since then, our Branch Awards Coordinator, Phil Harris, has been busy presenting the awards to the licensees of the various pubs.

## **King of the Belgians, Hartford** **Branch Pub of the Year, Urban Pub of the Year, Cider Pub of the Year and Community Pub of the Year**



In the above photo, from left to right, Matt Spicer (licensee) and Phil Harris. Thanks to Branch Vice Chair Christopher Bee for the photo.

In early May it was announced that the King of the Belgians had gone on to win the Cambridgeshire Pub of the Year Competition.

It will now go forward into the regional round for East Anglia Regional Pub of the Year.

## **Crystal Ship, Earith** **Rural Pub of the Year, LocAle Pub of the Year**



In the above photo, from left to right, Chris Jones (one of the owners of The Crystal Ship & Papworth brewery), Phil Harris, and James Huff (one of the owners of The Crystal Ship & Papworth brewery). Thanks to Branch Vice Chair Christopher Bee for the photo.

## **Falcon, Huntingdon** **Mild/Dark Ale Pub of the Year**



In the above photo, from left to right, Phil Harris, Trish Sodeaux, and Nic Faulkner. Thanks to

# Hunts CAMRA Pub Awards

branch member Cliff Watkinson for the photo.

## Elm, Abbots Ripton Most Improved Pub of the Year



In the photo above left, from left to right, are Lewis Pestell (manager responsible for the bar, cellar, restaurant and kitchen), and John Anderson (Branch Secretary). In the photo above right is Lewis behind the bar.

## Shumë, St Neots Bottle Shop of the Year



In the above photo, from left to right, Luan Saraqi

(owner) and Phil Harris. Thanks to Juliet Ferris for the photo.

## Other Regional Awards

The Cambridgeshire Club of the Year is the Toft Social Club, Toft

The East Anglia Cider Pub of the Year is the Black Horse, Rampton.

The Bedfordshire Pub of the Year is the Sir William Peel, Sandy.

## Alconbury



The Manor is reportedly being supported by the local council in an attempt to keep it open.

## Brampton



The Hare on the Green has reopened as the Gurkha on the Green, serving Nepalese food.



The Black Bull is currently closed but planning to reopen in June under new management.

## Buckden



The Vine and also the George are reported to be on the market.

## Eaton Socon



The White Horse has undergone an external refurbishment.

## Godmanchester



The Exhibition is reported as serving cask beer only occasionally.

## Great Stukeley



The Stukeley Country Hotel is expected to reopen during the first week in June.

## Hemingford Abbots



The Axe & Compass has submitted a revised premises licence to include the garden area.

## Hemingford Grey



The Cock celebrates its 25th anniversary this year as part of the Cambscuisine group. The pub is reported to be selling IVO and Papworth beers.

## Papworth

Papworth Printworks are selling keg beer brewed at the co-located Letterpress Brewery. They also have a beer fridge with a selection from local breweries.

## St Ives



The White Hart has reopened although cask beer is currently not available.

## Tilbrook



The White Horse has reopened.

# Brewery News

## IVO

IVO, St Ives held their 2nd 'Back to the Farm' event earlier this month and brewed a festival special for Cambridge Beer festival, BeehIVO, a 4.5% honey porter. They also have a new beer 'No Vests at the Bar' a 3.5% baby NEIPA.

## Letterpress

Letterpress, Papworth have now started brewing and are currently supplying keg beer to Papworth Printworks and hope to begin 'canning' shortly.

## Papworth

Papworth have recently brewed 'Cock-a-Doodle-Brew, a 4% pale ale to celebrate the 25th Anniversary of Cambscuisine. They also brewed Karmaraderie, a 4.5% American pale ale as part of International Women's Collaboration Brew Day, and a festival special for Haddenham beer festival was brewed with the festival team. They are now also running monthly brewery tours and will have a tap takeover at the Golden Lion, St Ives in August.

## Rocket Ales

Rocket Ales is now closed and the brewing vessels have been scrapped.



# Ever seen a Ginger Panther?

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FIND OUT MORE



# Pub Companies

## Pub Companies - Day to Day Management

Like all businesses, pub companies need a management structure and, for the larger companies, that structure can be quite complex. Whatever the company's size, though, the management practices and priorities will have a major impact on the people actually running the pubs and therefore on us, the customers.

With managed pubs, the issues are simple. The folk working in the pubs are employees and though pub managers will have varying degrees of leeway, the operation will be pretty strictly controlled from the top. Tenanted/leased pubs and, to a lesser extent, retail agreements, are a different matter. Tenants are their own boss and how they run the pub is primarily down to them. You'd think it would always be in the company's interests for them to do well, and keep doing well, as that means more money all round – though, as we'll see, it's not always like that. In any event, a carefully and positively managed relationship between the tenant and the company from whom they rent the building and buy many products ought to be in the interests of both parties – but again the reality can be different.

In a typical large pub company, the most visible senior person is the Regional Manager.

Reporting to them will be Business Development Managers (sometimes called Operations Managers) who each cover a 'patch' and are the key links between the company and its tenants. Other high-profile staff include Property Managers, Licensed Trade Valuers and Lettings Managers.

The main areas of responsibility for a Business Development Manager (BDM) are dealing with:

- rent assessments and proposals;
- repairs to pub premises;
- tenant recruitment;
- providing information about the Pubs Code;
- matters relating to a tenant's current/future business plans.

The last of these ought to be especially important, with BDMs using their experience and knowledge to support tenants, especially new ones, in developing a successful business. The Pubs Code requires BDMs to take appropriate notes of discussions with tenants and provide them with these records within 14 days.

At the end of the day, the main loyalty of BDMs lies with their employer, the company. Issues are therefore bound to arise where the company adopts policies and strategies that, in some cases, run counter to the interests of tenants. As an example, a sad but unarguable fact is that many pubs, particularly in rural areas, are worth much more as houses than as working pubs. Companies are often keen to cash in on these assets and therefore might task BDMs with effecting the removal of sitting tenants. Fortunately, the tightening up of the planning laws in recent years has made it more difficult to obtain change of use but the practice does still happen. A more worrying trend, though, is something we mentioned in an earlier article – the movement by many companies away from the tenanted/leased model towards pubs that are either directly managed or put on retail agreements. The BDM will invariably be a key player in attempts, one way or another, to dislodge tenants.

There are, of course, good BDMs who genuinely see mentoring and advising as key elements of their job and who build up great relationships with tenants whilst still keeping the company happy. They will provide the necessary links with other parts of the company like accountants, surveyors, property staff, lawyers and so on. Perhaps above all, they will have excellent problem-solving skills, drawing on their training, networks and experience to help tenants overcome the obstacles they inevitably encounter.

Unfortunately, many tenants have less than positive things to say about their BDMs. A common complaint is that they hardly ever see them and when they do it's only to hear bad news. Others find the quality of business advice questionable and see the BDM as a company

# Pub Companies

lackey who interferes rather than helps.

The Forum of British Pubs recently conducted a series of interviews with a former BDM of a major pub company and they make for fascinating viewing – [www.forumofbritishpubs/confessions-of-a-bdm-recruitment](http://www.forumofbritishpubs/confessions-of-a-bdm-recruitment) . The topics covered include tenant recruitment, the Pubs Code, retail agreements, rent assessments and dilapidations.

We'll cover some of these topics in the next article when we look at areas which commonly cause to tenants and which give rise to disputes with their pub company.



## Is your local pub under threat?

CAMRA has the tools to help you save it

[camra.org.uk/saveyourlocal](http://camra.org.uk/saveyourlocal)



**Did you know?**

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away from Britain's  
biggest beer festival?**



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THE 47<sup>TH</sup>

# **PETERBOROUGH BEER FESTIVAL**

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beers, wine, gin and rum**

**Live music, food and  
traditional pub games**

**Plus CAMRA shop and  
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PETERBOROUGH BEER FESTIVAL



Visit [pborobeerfest.camra.org.uk](http://pborobeerfest.camra.org.uk) for more details

Upcoming beer festivals and events (more details on the branch website or social media) Hunts Branch events and other CAMRA events in bold.

## June

Thu 4 - Sat 6 **Hitchin Beer & Cider Festival**

Thu 4 **Branch Social Midweek Train Trip to Lewes**

Fri 12 - Sun 14 The Cutter Inn, Ely, Beer Festival

Fri 19 - Sat 20 Bluntisham Beer Festival

Fri 19 - Sat 20 Wilburton Beer Festival

Fri 26 - Sat 27 Needingworth NFEST

Fri 26 - Sun 28 Haddenham Beer Festival

## July

Wed 1 **Open Branch Meeting - Rural West** (TBC)

Thu 23 - Sat 25 Sutton Summer Beer Festival

Sat 18 **Branch Social Summer beer buses**

## August

Fri 21 - Sun 23 The Cock Hemingford Grey Annual Beer Festival

Sat 22 – **Hunts Branch AGM followed by walking social in Huntingdon / Godmanchester**

Tue 25 - Sat 29 **Peterborough Beer Festival**

Wed 26 - Mon 31 **East Anglian Beer & Cider Festival, Bury St Edmunds**

Fri 28 - Sun 30 The Prince Albert Ely, Beer Festival

An up-to-date listing of pub & local beer & cider festivals can be found at:

[hunts.camra.org.uk/pubbeerfest](https://hunts.camra.org.uk/pubbeerfest).

An up-to-date listing of Hunts CAMRA events can be found at: [hunts.camra.org.uk/diary](https://hunts.camra.org.uk/diary), or contact the social secretary, on

[socials@hunts.camra.org.uk](mailto:socials@hunts.camra.org.uk).



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