

Opening Times

ISSUE 181
SPRING 2020



CAMPAIGN
FOR
REAL ALE

Huntingdonshire branch of CAMRA

hunts.camra.org.uk

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**HUNTS PUB &
BREWERY NEWS**

**ST NEOTS 'BOOZE
ON THE OUSE'
12-14 MARCH**

**STYLE STORIES:
GOLDEN ALES**



WHITE HORSE, SWAVESEY

MAYFEST 2020



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A warm welcome to the spring issue of Opening Times, the magazine from the Huntingdonshire branch of the Campaign for Real Ale (CAMRA).



This is a packed issue with lots of news regarding local pubs and breweries, details of the St Neots 'Booze on the Ouse' Beer and Cider Festival and articles including the association of beer and rugby, beer style stories featuring golden ales and a train trip to Grantham. A big thank you to all of those who contributed and apologies if anything you supplied has been omitted for space reasons.

The aim is for all news and articles to be current and accurate. However, errors may occasionally creep in, so if you do spot any errors please contact us using the email address below. Also, if you have any pub, brewery or festival news, or would like to submit a relevant article for publication in

Opening Times, please email to news@hunts.camra.org.uk (or forward them to a member of the branch committee). The copy date for the next issue is 30 April 2020.

Thank you for picking up this magazine and reading it.

Richard Harrison, Opening Times Editor on behalf of the Branch Committee, February 2020



CHAIRMAN Gareth Howell
chairman@hunts.camra.org.uk

SECRETARY & BRANCH CONTACT Chris Bee
secretary@hunts.camra.org.uk

TREASURER Graham Mulchinock
treasurer@hunts.camra.org.uk

SOCIAL SECRETARY Juliet Ferris
socials@hunts.camra.org.uk

MEMBERSHIP Varina Howell
membership@hunts.camra.org.uk

The main branch contacts listed. Please visit our website for a full list of our branch Committee members.
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CHAIRMAN'S CORNER



Hi there

Do you set yourself objectives for the year? Maybe you have New Year's Resolutions? It's not a bad idea, provided the objectives are realistic. Our branch also has objectives to help us further the aims of the Campaign.

We currently have three objectives:

1. To encourage more members to get involved with CAMRA
2. To improve the quality and currency of the data we (i.e. CAMRA) hold about the pubs in our area
3. To increase the number of beer scores submitted for pubs in our area

We currently hold "Open Branch Meetings"; which are combined committee and branch meetings. We propose to split these and hold separate Branch Meetings on Saturday afternoons that avoid committee business and have topics of more general interest to members.

Do you ever use WhatPub.com or the Good Beer Guide as sources of pub information? Both use databases that are maintained by branch members. Although we aim to survey as many branch pubs as possible, surveying all the pubs in our area on a regular basis is unfortunately too big a task. So, we have set ourselves the objective of

surveying all the Good Beer Guide (GBG) eligible pubs in our area at least once a year.

The pubs from our area that do make it into the Good Beer Guide are chosen using the average beer scores entered by CAMRA members into WhatPub.com or The Good Beer Guide App. The more members who score beers, the more likely it is that the GBG entries will truly reflect the quality of the pubs in our area. Sadly, some pubs, particularly those in rural areas, fail to make it into the guide because of too few scores. We want to encourage more members to score their beers. To assist with this, lookout for the reminder poster, replete with a QR code, that was distributed to all GBG eligible pubs last year.

Cheers!

Gareth Howell

Chairman, Huntingdonshire CAMRA

HUNTS PUB NEWS



Photo credit Lina and Tom

We start with news from Guilden Morden where it's been a great six months for The **Three Tuns** community pub. The landlords, Megan and Peter, are doing a fantastic job of creating a community pub we can be proud of, as well as developing a business that's successful for them. The **Three Tuns** Community Group has recently heard that they are the runners up in the

national CAMRA Pub Saving Award. The award certificate will be presented by Anthony Browne MP at a special event which will take place at the pub at 6.30 pm on Friday 20 March.

A number of special events are planned in the pub; see their website for more information www.thethreetunsguilden.co.uk/events

In the west of our region, it has been reported that the **Snooty Tavern** in Great Staughton has new management, with previous experience running another local establishment. This may see the introduction of a new beer range.



In St Ives, new tenants Joey Ovendon and Jemma Yeowart are now behind the bar at the **Oliver Cromwell**. They haven't made many changes at this successful pub, keeping Oakham JHB as their regular beer, with two changing beers from Adnams. There are three other changing beers available. Initially, **Cromwell Cider** was no longer available, but this has now been reintroduced (perhaps with some encouragement from our reporter!).

Renovation work has been ongoing at the **Dolphin Hotel** for some months. It is understood that the hotel is to be operated by a company called Canalside Hotels Ltd. The bar and restaurant area will become the first UK location for Gravy Baby, which we understand is a British owned company who operate several restaurants in Malaysia specialising in pies & gravy, and cocktails. It is possible that the real ales will disappear. It is believed that St Ives town council have commented on some aspects of the plans so it remains to be seen when the works will be finally completed.

In the last issue, we reported that a hand pump had been spotted at the **Three Tuns** in Huntingdon. Real ale has been introduced here with Purity UBU on sale in December, and Sharp's Doom Bar in January. Hopefully the real ales will be well received by the locals.

At **Brampton Institute Sports and Social Club** on the High Street in Brampton Village, their real ale offering is Sharps Doom Bar, with a changing locally brewed beer also available. Grainstore was on the bar in late January and beer from Grafham Brewery has been on sale with others to follow. This is private members club, but the club committee have agreed that CAMRA members can be signed in on production of a current membership card. If you are a Brampton resident, you would be expected to become a member. As well as the real ale there is sports TV, darts, pool and dominoes. There is a bowling green at the rear of the club and a gym operates in what used to be their function room.



The **King of the Belgians** in Hartford holds two annual beer festivals; one on the late May and the other on the August Bank Holiday weekends. The profits from these are donated to local charities and community groups chosen by the pub's regular customers. The two festivals held in 2019 raised a staggering £7,000 from which three local charities, Dreamdrops, Grub Hub and Huntingdon Community Centre, each received a share. To date over £30,000 has been donated to local good causes. Planning is already



The current lessee of the **Vine** in Buckden (the Venture Pub Company based in Peterborough) was intending to relinquish the lease in March, but has now decided to continue running the pub. This is good news as the company's managers serve real ale in good condition.



The new manager is Sue and she intends to re-introduce cooked food soon. Currently scotch eggs and pork pies are available. Adnams Lighthouse is the regular beer and there is one changing beer, which is usually Timothy Taylor's Landlord, or Sharp's Doom Bar.

In St Neots, the **Coach House** has had a refurbishment. It has not changed greatly, but it has been smartened up and now offers more seating, particularly in the outside area (perhaps one for later in the year!). As always, the pub continues to offer a range of up to five real ales, three of which change regularly. The ales are generally well kept, and the pub offers a warm and friendly atmosphere, with reasonably priced food also available.

The **Eaton Oak** has reopened after a major overhaul to its decor and furnishings, which

has been done very well. It is part of the Wells & Co empire, which is no longer a brewery, but more of a pub chain. However, Charles Wells are opening a new brewery in Bedford and once this is up and running the Eaton Oak will have one of their ales on, changing every few weeks. When visited, there were four ales on: Adnams Red Robin, Charles Wells Late Hop Pale, plus Sharps and Black Sheep beers. We tried the Red Robin and it was well kept. The pub also has capacity for ten keg beers/ciders. They have an extensive menu, many events, and of course rooms (something there is a shortage of in St Neots).

A place that rarely seems to get a mention, but is a lovely family run pub, is The **Chequers** on St Marys Street in Eynesbury. They always have one real ale on which is well kept. We visited on a Friday in late January and were lucky as they were just changing a barrel so got to sample two ales. They were Hanlons Firefly (light amber ale) and Bishop Nick Heresy (golden ale). Always something a little different - well worth a try!

It's been reported to us that the **Eight Bells** in Abbottsley reopened at the end of January after what was a very impressive refit. We look forward to visiting soon and will report more in a future issue.



As we went to press, the leases on several pubs in the branch area were being advertised. EI Publican Partnerships are currently marketing the leases for the Vine in Buckden, the Black Bull in Godmanchester and the White Hart in St Ives. In Huntingdon the lease

for the Samuel Pepys is being advertised by Admiral Taverns. The Wells & Co owned Crown & Pipes in Fenstanton and Dragoon in Brampton are available for lease. The lease on the Greene King owned Bulls Head in St Neots is being advertised on their website. Most of these pubs are still open for business, so please do continue to support them.

Pub news reports collated by Ian Baptist

HDC REJECT FENSTANTON MICRO PUB

An application to Huntingdon District Council to open a micropub in Rookery Place, Fenstanton has been refused by council planners, even though the council's licensing committee supported the initiative.

Applicant Pete Williams said "micro pubs are a growing trend as drinking establishments, often set up in small retail units, in residential areas selling real ales and ciders in friendly, cosy surrounds. They generally do not sell lagers, play music or prepare and provide hot food. They are also open on a restricted hours basis."

There are currently around 500 micro pubs around the country offering something different for the local community, which become assets to the local neighbourhood.

The micropub had planned to open limited hours for five days a week, with last orders being called at 8.45 pm and whilst the licensing authority only had an issue that no outside seating be provided, the planners had other thoughts.

Planners were concerned that noise and smoking by customers of the micropub, as well as the lateness of opening, would not be conducive to the residents in the vicinity. Residents themselves also had concerns over

excessive car parking. Despite this, there was a lot of support from residents and Huntingdon CAMRA. It will not be putting Pete off looking for alternative premises in the area!

Having moved to the Kent coast in 2010, Pete set up one of the first micropubs in the country in 2011, the Bake & Alehouse, Westgate on Sea, Kent, winning various awards. He has now relocated back to Cambridgeshire looking at setting up another community micro pub.

"Micro pubs in many ways are what was the local corner pub. They are generally used by the local community, with customers having the chance to chat and talk to like-minded individuals without the background noise of the TV, music and one-armed bandit. Most users are mature in years and like to socialise and chat amongst their peers."

Hunts CAMRA wishes Pete well with his plans to find alternative premises.

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THiNKLOCAL MAGAZINE
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BREWERY NEWS

IVO Brewery opens

IVO Brewery is a new venture started by two of our branch members and Somersham neighbours, Charlie Abbott and Jason Jones. Their range of beers are all vegan friendly and have been named based on pub stories or conversations. A selection will be available at the forthcoming Booze on the Ouse Festival in St Neots.



The idea to open a brewery started many years ago during a visit to Woodfordes Brewery Tap "The Fur and Feather" in Woodbastwick, Norfolk. We were supposed to be going on a brewery tour but didn't pre-book and ended up spending the whole afternoon going through the Woodfordes range of beers. At some point that afternoon, the topic turned to our local pubs and we decided that it would be a good idea to build our own as the types of beers available locally were not as flavoursome or adventurous as our palates had become accustomed to. Later that summer a concrete base was laid and what followed was to be the greatest homage to the pubs of the 1970's that Cambridgeshire had ever seen.

Having now established our research centre, it wasn't long before we started to envy those brewers who were able to create such wonderful libations and the decision was made to start to produce our own. It was at this time purely by chance, that the garage at No.10 Church Street suddenly became unfit for purpose and was replaced by a much larger building with room for a small brewery. Having not brewed any beer before, save from some awful kits in the eighties we determined that our

best bet was to buy the best system we could thinking that any defects would be of our own making. Elite Stainless in Swindon were deemed to be worthy and an order for a 100ltr system was placed.

To get the best training possible we sought out fellow brewers who had similar plants and were fortunate to find Gord, owner of Shed Ales in Pewsey who had a slightly bigger system than ours but did offer experience days and were close to Swindon. Diaries were synchronised and in April 2013 we made the trip to Pewsey where we mashed in and off to Swindon to collect our HLT, Mash Tun, Copper and Fermenter before 10 am. What followed was an intense brew day where lots of questions were asked and lots of notes taken before returning to Cambridgeshire with our shiny new brewery.

That summer the brewhouse was commissioned and we began to make beer. Our first efforts were clones of beers that we loved and through much reading, more research next door, brewery trips and a few online forums we started to produce beers that we were happy to share with others. Recognition at regional and national home brew competitions started the year after and has continued with awards for each style of beer that we have produced.

Recognising that the brewery needed to expand and production increase to make this a going concern, parking space in the garage was reduced and the brewery extended to over twice its size incorporating a cold store and four new conical fermenters.



In December 2019, we were finally awarded our AWRS number and can now legally sell to pubs and beer festivals. The plan is to keep things

small scale and local with casks being delivered to local freehouses and bottles being sold through bottle shops and farmers markets.

So do look out for their beers at Booze on the Ouse or in a local near you!

Charlie Abbott & Jason Jones, IVO Brewery

Papworth Brewery

The last year has been a busy one for Papworth Brewery in Earith, with production increasing in line with sales and the opening of their Tap Room and Bottle Shop. Papworth beers have been available at several beer festivals over the last year including GBBF, Norwich, Nottingham, York and at the New England Real Ale Exhibition (NERAX) in Boston, USA.

PAPWORTH
brewery



It's all about the beer

The Bottle Shop is usually open from 10 am to 5 pm each day Monday to Friday, whilst the Tap Room is open on Fridays and Saturdays (with outdoor seating in the summer). Winter opening hours are 2 to 6 pm, but hours will be extended in the spring. A choice of two or three cask ales are usually available, along with the full range of bottled beers (popular with customers for taking away after a visit and the more you buy, the cheaper they are!). You are also welcome to ask for a tour the brewery whilst visiting the Tap Room.

Around sixteen different beers have been available (several of which were occasional or seasonal brews). Mild Thing, The Whitfield Citrabort and Pass the Porter have become popular additions to the beer range. More recent additions include Old Riverport Stout

(named after St Ives) and Fen Skater – a very pale beer which will be available at the St Neots Booze on the Ouse in March. Three Wise Men was their dark and warming spicy Christmas offering.

So, if you find yourself with a couple of spare hours one weekend pop over to the brewery where you will be sure of a warm welcome and a good pint.

Juliet Ferris, CAMRA Brewery Liaison Officer

Grafham Brewing Company

Grafham Brewing Co was established last year by Paul Robinson in the idyllic surroundings of the village of Grafham, famous for the beautiful countryside surrounding Grafham Water. He plans to create a varied range of craft beers and traditional ales for sale to surrounding pubs, hotels & shops. Small batch high quality products will be brewed, served from cask, keg and bottle with an emphasis of introducing new flavours and styles to our customers.



The brewery operates in a converted space on Breach Road, using a 1.8-barrel plant and is capable of fermenting 900 litres simultaneously. The first beer on offer is an award-winning pale ale called "Hodders Panama". More products are in development and will be available very soon.



Paul Robinson, Grafham Brewing Company

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WANDERINGS AROUND HUNTINGDONSHIRE

As usual, we have been out and about visiting several pubs in the branch area.

A visit to the **Floods Tavern** in St Ives found just one Elgoods beer on sale, with Cambridge Bitter sharing the bar with Orkney Northern Lights. It is not known if guest beers are regularly available here or if this was just a one off. Elsewhere in St Ives, the **Golden Lion Hotel** regularly sells a beer from the local Papworth Brewery. When visited, Wadworth 6X, house beer Coachhouse Golden Ale (brewed by Wadworth), and St Austell Tribute were the real ales on sale.

The **Swan & Angel** (JD Wetherspoon) appeared to have a reduced guest beer range in January, however by the end of the month a visit found six guest ales on sale. This included the excellent Quantock Brewery Plastered Pheasant winter ale.

On Ramsey Road, **Slepe Hall** Hotel has recently been selling beers from Woodfordes Brewery. Further along Ramsey Road is the **Seven Wives** where three beers are usually on sale. Timothy Taylor Landlord and Hop Back Summer Lightning are normally available together with a changing guest beer. On Monday and Friday lunchtimes they hold a parent and tots meeting where there is a toys and music corner and other activities.

Further out from the town centre is the **Haywain**, our current branch Community Pub of the Year. Sharps Doom Bar and Timothy Taylor Landlord are sold here with four more changing beers. These often include Brains Rev James or Hogs Back TEA. A recent visit found Pheasantry Blue Steel and Sharps Cornish Winter on sale. Good value meals are sold here, with breakfast available from 9 am. The Sizzling Breakfast is recommended for those with a large appetite. Finally, back in in St Ives town centre the **Ivy Leaf Club** sells two real ales, Sharps Doom Bar and a changing guest beer that is sometimes from Hook Norton Brewery

or Butcombe. When visited it was Hook Norton Greedy Goose.

An afternoon walk from St Ives along the Thicket Path allowed us to call at the **Three Horseshoes** in Houghton. Four beers were on offer with Greene King IPA, Oakham JHB and Sharps Doom Bar being permanently available. There is a fourth changing beer which is often from a local brewery. Lacons Encore was the guest beer when I visited, with Milton Colesseum coming on next. Lunchtime and evening meals are available, with a carvery on Sunday lunchtime.



The next call was at the nearby **Three Jolly Butchers** which also sells three regular beers; Greene King IPA & Abbot plus Sharps Doom Bar. Two guest beers are normally both from smaller breweries, although when visited these were Mauldons Eatanswill Old Ale and Greene King Yardbird. This is another pub that is popular with diners and has a larger restaurant area. A further stroll across Houghton Meadow brought us to Hemingford Abbots where the **Axe & Compass** which has three real ales on sale. Sharps Doom Bar is a permanent and on this occasion Fullers London Pride and Hardy & Hanson's Rocking Rudolph were also available. This is another pub with a separate dining area which was busy when visited. On the way back to St Ives, the **Cock** in Hemingford Grey was closed for a short period in January but has since reopened. It usually sells beers from Brewsters, Nene Valley or Adnams, although Papworth Brewery beers have also been seen there recently.

We took advantage of a sunny January day to visit The **Crown Inn** in Broughton. The pub which is opposite the church in the centre of the village is a popular destination for diners. Drinkers are also catered for with two changing beers from smaller regional breweries on sale alongside two ciders. At the time of my visit Digfield Barnwell Bitter and Mauldons Suffolk Pride were on sale. The ciders are either from Saxby's or Glebe Farm. The dining space is often fully booked, and it is recommended that a reservation is made if you are planning to eat here especially at weekends and for their Wednesday evening steak night. Other regular food nights are also well supported. In the summer months, the large beer garden is popular, and it is here that their annual beer festival is held (this year's dates are 23-25 May).



On another day, the village of Brampton was visited, commencing at the **Hare on the Green** which is another pub with Doom Bar on sale. Here there is also a changing beer from local breweries. These have included Oakham, Grafham, Digfield, Papworth. Hare of the Dog was brewed for the pub by Grafham Brewery. When visited, the guest beer was Oakham Inferno. Bottle conditioned beers from Grafham and Draycott breweries are also sold and there is a cider from Saxby's of Northamptonshire available. Food is served at lunchtime and in the evening. There are tables at the front of the pub overlooking the village green.

The other pub in the village is the **Black Bull** on Church Lane. This is popular with diners, but four real ales are available, usually Sharps Doom Bar, Black Sheep Bitter, St Austell Tribute and Timothy Taylor Landlord. The pub has a large car park and a beer garden at the rear. The **Dragon** on Buckden Road was closed during our visit.



On the way back to Huntingdon, the **Brampton Mill** is on Bromholme Lane and overlooks the River Great Ouse. This is a multi-roomed pub which mainly caters for diners. There are two real ales with Sharps Doom Bar and Adnams Southwold Bitter on sale. The price of the beers could be considered to be on the high side, but the restaurant standard meals are good value. There are two outside areas with a beer garden overlooking the river and a rear patio area.

Another trip, this time just into the Cambridge branch area, was to the **White Horse** in Swavesey. This is close enough to St Ives to be considered local and is just a short walk from the Guided Busway. The regular real ale here is J W Lees Bitter from Manchester, whilst there are also two frequently changing beers which recently have been from Milton, New River, Kirkstall and Wolf breweries. We have tried the good value freshly prepared pub meals here on several occasions. See their advert for details of their upcoming beer festival.

That's it for this quarter but rest assured that there will be more reports from pubs in our branch area in the next issue.

Reported by Ian Baptist

CATCH A BUS TO THE PUB

Visiting rural pubs using public transport

Are you aware that there is rural bus service in Huntingdonshire which visits some of the more out-of-the-way village pubs? These services are run by Dews Coaches and subsidised by the council, but unfortunately are not well advertised.

Service 46A - Huntingdon to Glatton

This service runs from Huntingdon bus station, (the ring road end), and goes to the shopping centre on Serpentine Green, Hampton, Peterborough. It runs 3 times each day, Monday to Saturday.

We recently caught the noon service and had a pleasant trip to spend an hour and a quarter the **Addison Arms** at Glatton. On the way, we passed the Manor House Hotel in Alconbury, as well as the Bell and the Greystones in Sawtry; all of which will be visited on future trips.



The bus stops directly outside the pub (if you ask the driver). There were three beers on: Greene King Abbot Reserve and two from the local Digfield Ales brewery. All were in good condition. Good food was also available.

On our way back to Huntingdon we passed two closed pubs, the **White Hart** in Alconbury Weston and the **Three Horseshoes** in Great Stukeley both of which were looking very neglected and sadly could have served their last pints.

Other routes

Dews Coaches operate several routes which enable pubs to be visited and future editions of Opening Times will give further information. This website gives timetable information: <https://bustimes.org/operators/dews-coaches>

Stagecoach Dayrider tickets are valid on these buses and can be purchased from them. Bus passes are, of course, valid too.

Report & photo by Andy Blagbrough (with assistance from Ian Baptist)

BEER AND RUGBY

The perfect partnership!

Beer and rugby. Rugby and beer. The two go together like... well... beer and rugby, I suppose! Beer has been the drink of choice for rugby players and supporters alike since time immemorial and with the Six Nations Tournament starting in February and also being sponsored by Guinness until 2024, it is clear that the welcome symbiotic relationship between beer and rugby is not on the wane.

There is little doubt that readers of 'Opening Times' will know a great deal about the origins of beer - one of the oldest and most widely consumed alcoholic drinks in the world. But how many know as much about the origins of the game of rugby? Some may admit to knowing that the game was started by a pupil of Rugby School. 'Wasn't his name William Webb Ellis,' they will speculate, 'who violated the accepted rules of football by picking up the ball and running with it?' This is true, but the game goes much further back in history, with Ellis's innovation being only one of the stages in its evolution.

Various games involving kicking and carrying a ball were played by the ancient Greeks and Romans. The Chinese army in the 4th and 5th centuries BC, taunted opposing forces by throwing and kicking the heads of once-hostile soldiers. Britain's ball game was played for many hundreds of years, the ball being called a 'knappan' and made of tightly woven wicker. It was very hard, so it was probably not customary to kick it. Consequently, the game was just known as "ball," (without the 'foot'), and resembled coarse rugby at its finest.

Matches were played between rival villages, trades, etc., often with teams of over 1000 a side. Since there were no restrictions defining the field of play, the pitch size varied. Goals were usually four or five miles apart with the field of play extending between, around and behind them. The goals themselves were rocks, caves, ponds, trees or other easily identifiable objects, and there was only one rule-to touch the ball against the opponents' goal. It did not matter how this was done or who got hurt in the process. The ball was punched, thrown and carried, (sometimes even on horseback), across the fields, hedges and streams to the goal. 'Dealing the knappan,' (passing) and dribbling were rare. A player who was tackled and refused to part with the knappan was liable to be persuaded to do so with sticks, fists, cudgels or lumps of rock.

Remarkably the "game" became more and more popular. The hard knappan was replaced by an inflated bladder, often encased in leather so that the ball was soft enough to kick. "Ball" became "football" and the game established itself as an integral part of celebrations at fairs and on public holidays. Every year on Shrove Tuesday a game of football was played in the town of Chester. The cordwainers (shoemakers) presented a new ball to the drapers who had set up goals at each end of the town. The drapers then played the rest of the town through the streets in a game almost guaranteed to earn each player a doctor's medical certificate. In London, too, the game was very popular. William Fitzstephen, the secretary of St Thomas

Becket, wrote in 1183 that on Carnival Day in London: "After dinner all the youth of the City goes out into the fields in a much-frequented game of ball. The scholars of each school have their own ball and almost all the workers of each trade have theirs also in their hands." One of the most used "pitches" was a place known as the "smooth field," now called Smithfield.

Almost any comparatively smooth area (with or without the owner's permission) was likely to be used for playing football. In 1301, the Prioress of Clerkenwell Nunnery petitioned the King because the people of London regularly flattened her corn and grass. King Edward I took the side of the Prioress in this matter, and on 8th April 1301 issued a royal command forbidding the playing of games on the Prioress' fields, meadows and pastures, and caused them to be enclosed by hedges and gates. The players were told to hold their games elsewhere and did not take kindly to the idea. The Charterhouse Register records that the players returned to the convent of the Nuns of Clerkenwell, seriously under the influence of beer, "with a horrible tumult and the din of trumpet and there they applied fire which they had brought with them to the gates with their bars and posts and with the hedges and they destroyed all the enclosure" - and then played another game.

By the middle of the 14th century football's popularity led to its being banned for a long time in England as it interfered with the practice of archery which was considered necessary for the defence of the country. Three consecutive kings; Edward III, Richard II and Henry IV passed laws forbidding men to play football. Penalties included fines and even imprisonment, but the laws were largely ignored. These laws were repealed by Henry V when he came to the throne in 1413 as he could see he was fighting a losing battle. Others tried to prevent or restrict the ball games. The monks of St Bartholomew's Hospital, for example, because the games held on Smithfield were flooding the hospital with fracture victims.

On 10th September 1457, the Henley Borough

Assembly decided to fine each player 4d (old pence) "if anyone should play in that town at ball on holidays and feast days in the time of Divine Service." This was because the townsfolk preferred a knock-around on the green to a church service and consequently the collection trays began to show a loss. The 4d fines went to the Church of the Blessed Mary in Henley.

By the 16th century football was still characterised by violence and games frequently developed into serious brawls. The 16th century writer Sir Thomas Elyot described the game as "nothing but beastlike fury and extreme violence whereof proceedeth much hurt." Under Queen Elizabeth I, England was being steered through a period of chivalry and gracefulness, and mob football possessed neither of these qualities. Moreover, England was at war again and men with unbroken limbs were required to fight the Spanish, so football was banned once more.



A mob football match (London's Crowe Street, 1721)

The game's popularity went into a decline after this and little was played until after the Napoleonic Wars. Around 1800, football began to be played in English public schools and because each school formed its own rules, games between one school and another were impossible. Individual rules and styles of play were developed to suit the environment of each school. For example, Harrow football is

particularly suited to the heavy soil of the school grounds at the foot of Harrow Hill, and one type of football evolved at Eton to accommodate a wall with a door and an elm tree. The only rule agreed on by all schools was that the ball must not be carried or passed by hand towards the opponents' goal.

This was the rule broken by 16-year-old William Webb Ellis in 1823 and exactly why he did this is a matter for speculation. The commemorative plaque at Rugby School suggests that it was a "fine disregard for the rules of football as played in his time." The more cynical believe that Ellis was as dense as a neutron star and did not really know what he was supposed to be doing. At first Ellis's behaviour was condemned, even at Rugby, but the school soon decided to permit running with the ball by players who had received it in a fair catch. Then it was permitted if the ball was caught on the bound. Later other restrictions on running with it were abolished.



William Webb Ellis, Illustrated London News, 1854

In recent years, many Rugby historians have

questioned whether Ellis really was the boy who started it all. However, the legend has grown and is part of the Rugby-lore which appeals to the romantics. In any event it led to the division of modern footballers into those who play only with their feet, and those who wish to use both feet and hands.

In due course, the Rugby version of the game appeared at Cambridge University and in 1848 a meeting took place which tried unsuccessfully to establish a code of laws. Some schools, such as Blackheath, followed Rugby's example and in 1862 the Old Boys' Club of Blackheath formed Blackheath R.F.C., the first recognised club in the game. Other clubs were founded: Richmond in 1863, Manchester and Bath in 1865, and the Harlequins and Wasps in 1867. The first recorded club game was between Blackheath and Richmond in the 1863-4 season.

It was some time before Rugby Football was accepted as a game in its own right but almost

exactly 149 years ago on 26th January 1871, representatives of 17 clubs and three schools met in the Pal Mal Restaurant in Regent Street, London, and the Rugby Football Union was formed. The Union drew up the basis of the code in use at Rugby School and established a few rules. At this time each team fielded 20 players made up of 13 forwards, 3 half-backs, one three-quarter and 3 full-backs. By 1877 the distinctive oval ball had been adopted and the number of players per team had been reduced to 15, although it was not until 1892 that the present three-quarter line came into fashion, mainly due to the initiative of the Cardiff Club.

The question of payment to players caused a dispute between the Union and a group of clubs in the North of England. The result was the formation of the Northern Union which, in 1895, became the Rugby Football League. Rugby League rules differ from those of Rugby Union in various ways; e.g., the number of players, tackling rules, score values, etc., but "League" is

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a naughty word in the vocabulary of the amateur players of the Union, so I'll say no more.

In addition to the two great football codes; Rugby and Association, (often abbreviated to "Soccer"), other forms still exist. Several English public schools of the old foundation have an individual form of the game which they play in addition to rugger and soccer. Eton College has two such forms; the famous Wall Game which utilizes the wall and elm tree, and something which looks like a cross between rugger and soccer called the Field Game. Harrow School Football games are played with a large ball which is flattened on both sides rather like a cheese and the goals have no crossbars. Winchester College also has its own form of football which claims descent from 1647, although the present form was evolved in the first half of the 19th century. In this game, teams can be fifteen, ten or six a side and both passing and dribbling are forbidden.

Rugby Union Football has seen many changes since its birth as a mob free-for-all. It has grown up since then, so what you see in this Six Nations Tournament will be a vastly superior mob free-for-all to that which you would have seen 1000 years ago, despite, you may feel, appearances to the contrary! If, while watching the Six Nations, accompanied by a refreshing ale (or several), you should see a player burying the opponents' full-back, tying the scrum's bootlaces together or wiring-up the referee's whistle to the floodlight circuits, then please give him a cheer. It is, after all, just another refinement of that "fine disregard for the rules" that has helped Rugby Football along its evolutionary path.

For those readers who would really like to help to reinforce the link between beer and rugby there are several brews which have been focused on the current tournament. The following is a selection from which you might like to 'try' while watching the games (many more are available!):

- Six Nations Glory from Nethergate Brewery is a 3.8% ABV chestnut brown coloured ale

with a white head. The aroma has a nutty and light roasted maltiness with a touch of chocolate.

- Taking its name from England's rousing rugby anthem, Swing Low from Fullers Brewery is a crisp, balanced beer that will strike a chord with all fans of the oval ball. Brewed to just 3.5% ABV, it is a hoppy, session ale.
- From Greene King there is Grand Slam, 4% ABV, a clean refreshing ale with grapefruit citrus aroma and taste, and a long, dry refreshing bitter finish.
- Bedlam Brewery in East Sussex offers Six Nations, a strong, deep golden English Pale Ale at 4.5% ABV, made with local hops and giving a clean citrus flavour with assertive notes of pine, cedar and blackcurrant.
- Dirty Rucker from Wadworths is a 3.9% ABV cask ale described as 'a bold English ale, fruity on the palate with a malty sweetness that leads to a peppery note for a smooth finish'.
- Black Sheep Brewery, based in Masham, is re-releasing Ram Tackle - a 4.1% ABV ruby ale, brewed with eight different English hops.
- The Skinners Brewery in Cornwall has re-released a special edition golden session ale to celebrate the start of the Six Nations Tournament. Splendid Tackle at 4.2% ABV is a refreshingly zesty beer made with the best malted barley and wheat. It has 'tropical fruits with lemon notes' that, like a good rugby song, really sing out.
- And, of course, the (keg only) beer from the sponsoring company, Guinness. That traditional Irish dry stout, 4.2% ABV, with a deep colour and caramelized flavour that are characteristic of roasted (but not malted) barley which makes the drink distinctive.

Article written by Richard Walmsley

CIDER MATTERS – AND PERRY TOO!



Cider and Perry items and news

After a busy autumn gathering apples and pears, crushing them and transferring the juice into fermenting vessels, the cider and perry makers can take a well-earned rest prior to blending and getting ready for the summer. During this quiet period, this edition of Opening Times will look at cider and perry in general.



Traditional cider is made throughout the UK, with perhaps the best-known areas being the West Country, Kent and Herefordshire. There is, however, a long-established cider tradition in East Anglia and especially Cambridgeshire.

Making cider and perry is pretty simple; firstly, apples and pears are collected from trees or picked off the ground by scrumping - hence the term 'scrumpy'. These are then washed and sorted before being pressed to extract the all-important juice. This juice is placed in fermenting vessels where the naturally occurring yeast from the fruit ferments the sugars and produces the alcoholic drink.



Whereas the Cambridgeshire drinker can buy a pint of real ale in probably 90% of the pubs, real cider and perry is much harder to come by. This is particularly tragic as East Anglia boasts fifteen commercial cider makers; but their products can be hard to find in our pubs.

Article & photos by Andy Blagbrough

The Cambridgeshire Hunter

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ST NEOTS 'BOOZE ON THE OUSE' BEER & CIDER FESTIVAL

Details

Venue: The Priory Centre, Priory Lane, St Neots PE19 2BH - close to the Market Square in the centre of St Neots.

Dates: Thursday 12 to Saturday 14 March 2020

Times: 11 am – 10.30 pm (10 pm Saturday). No entry or re-admission after 10 pm.

Admission: £3 at all sessions, except after 6 pm on Friday when it's £4. Only £1 for CAMRA members at all times.

Bar Tokens: All drinks and snacks must be purchased using bar tokens which will be sold at the entrance. We will be offering a £10 entrance package, which will include admission, a festival glass and the remainder in bar tokens.

Real Ales: Over the course of the festival, we expect to serve around 60 real ales from all over the UK, from both well-established independent breweries and newer, smaller breweries, with a focus on local East Anglian and East Midland breweries, plus a feature on selected Scottish breweries. There will also be 5 beers served from Keykegs.

The wide range of beer styles available will cover traditional ales such as milds and bitters, newer styles like hoppy, refreshing golden ales, as well as speciality beers, brewed using ingredients such as wheat, fruit and coffee.

Cider and Perry: A selection of around 16 tasty traditional draught ciders and perries will be offered sourced from both local and national producers.

Features

Food and Drink: A variety of hot and cold food will be served at the festival by our friends from the Bridge House in St Neots. A selection

of snacks will be available at all sessions. Free soft drinks will be available for the designated driver of your party. A selection of wines will also be offered.

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 8pm in the evening. Under 18s must be accompanied at all times.

Rugby: On the Saturday, the three Six Nations rugby matches will be shown on the TV in the Café Bar area. Wales vs Scotland KO 2.45 pm, Italy vs England KO 4.45 pm, France vs Ireland KO 8 pm.

Sponsor a Cask: If you are interested in sponsoring a beer or a cider, for example to promote your business, please contact sponsorship@hunts.camra.org.uk. Prices start at £35 and include free festival entry for two, a festival glass each and £10 worth of bar tokens. Other packages are available for sponsorship of multiple beers / ciders.

CAMRA Stand: Come along and chat to our staff and learn about CAMRA, beer, brewing and pubs. Here you will be able to join CAMRA and there will have a special offer for anyone joining at the festival.

The Volunteers: The festival is organised and run by unpaid CAMRA volunteers. We are always seeking new volunteers; no experience is necessary and full training will be provided. If you can offer help at any session (including set-up and take-down) please contact Juliet Ferris at volunteers@hunts.camra.org.uk.

Contact Information: Festival organiser, Richard Harrison, festival@hunts.camra.org.uk, 07740 675712. Also visit our web site for updates - www.hunts.camra.org.uk/festivals.

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EAST COAST RAIL JOURNEYS

Reporter: Ian Baptist



In the latest in this regular series, Ian Baptist reports on his visit to Grantham

This time I didn't have too far to travel to visit the market town of Grantham in south Lincolnshire. Grantham is easily accessible by train from Peterborough with two direct trains each hour. I travelled on the new hourly LNER Azuma service which takes just over 20 minutes and continues on to Lincoln (allowing the two towns to be visited).

I arrived at Grantham Station and the early fog had cleared, although the day remained dull and overcast. I passed the new bar on Platform 1 which doesn't open until midday.



After a short walk into the town centre, I arrived at the Tollemache Inn a typical open plan Wetherspoons pub, originally built in 1884. It is named after Frederick Tollemache MP for Grantham in the mid-1800s whose statue is outside the pub. Inside there are pictures of other notables who were born or lived in Grantham, including Thomas Paine, Isaac Newton and Margaret Roberts. There was a

good range of real ales on sale including several from local breweries. From Newby Wyke, there was Bear Island and Stinger, with Rolling Stone from 8 Sail Brewery. As well as the regular beers there was also Magpie Jay IPA, Black Hole Starry Night and Courage Directors. The pub was busy with customers enjoying a late breakfast with their beer.

There are several pubs and hotels along or near the High Street, but I felt that the beer range was uninspiring, so they didn't warrant a visit. However, off the northern end of the High Street is Market Square where two establishments looked more promising. The Eden is a former pub which now advertises itself as a wine bar & restaurant. Two real ales are usually available with Timothy Taylor Landlord being ever present. This has recently been joined by a beer from Beermats Brewery from Newark, which on this occasion was Pragmatic.



Around the corner is the **Chequers** a small pub with two real ales and a cider on the bar. I had been told that a beer from a local brewery is often sold here and was not disappointed to find Oldershaws Mosaic Blonde on sale alongside

Greene King Old Speckled Hen. The cider was Weston's Rosie's Pig Cloudy Raspberry & Cucumber.



Retracing my footsteps, I crossed the High Street to find the Blue Pig at the junction of Vine Street and Swinegate. This is a historic half-timbered pub with low wooden beams inside. With origins in the 1660s, it is one of the few surviving Tudor buildings in Grantham. There were just two real ales here with Sharp's Doom Bar and Timothy Taylor's Landlord. Weston's Old Rosie cider was available.



Returning to the High Street, I continued to Watergate where micro pub BeerHeadZ was now open. I had previously visited their Lincoln outlet, so was expecting a good range of beer and cider and I wasn't let down. With five real ales and several keg beers, there were also nine real ciders. Cider options in Grantham had been limited so far, so Colcombe House Roaring Rocks was tried first; it was a delicious dry cider. There was also the ever-popular Apple

Cottage Filthy Tramp Juice for those with a sweeter palate. The cider choice was made up with seven flavoured ciders, including four from Seacider.



There was a good range of beer styles available which included Geeves Smokey Joe Stout, North Riding Idaho 7, Wilde Child Eastern Promises, Pentrich Heavy Glimmer IPA (unfined) and Beermats Father Christmats Red Ale 4.8%. There were also keg beers and cans in the fridge. BeerHeadZ offered by far the best choice of beer to be found in Grantham; a must for anyone visiting the town.

From here I headed down Westgate in the direction of the station. At No 83, I passed Apple Tap which as the name suggests specialises in cider. Unfortunately, it was closed when I visited (not opening until 5 pm on weekdays, although it opens at noon on weekends). They reportedly sell a large range of cider, but another visit will be required to check it out.

Back at Grantham Station, the Whistle Stop micro pub was now open. The bar is located in the former station buffet on Platform 1 and first opened last November. There are two real ales with Whistle Stop brewed by Oldershaws and a changing guest beer. This was Headstocks Frosty the Snowman from Nottingham.

To conclude, although Grantham is not a hotbed for real ale, there are a few pubs where a good selection can be found. If travelling by train I would recommend stopping off there on the way back from a visit to Lincoln.

STYLE STORIES

Golden Ales

This is the fourth article in a series of features on different beer styles, describing some of their history and characteristics and highlighting some significant examples, local production and outlets. This piece concerns those pale, hoppy, summery beers often known as golden ales.

The real ale scene over the past thirty years has seen a huge growth in this style of beer that began when a small number of British microbrewers decided to try to win over some of the massive sales of mainstream keg lager that had by then become the most popular beer style in the UK.

Somerset cask beer, Exmoor Gold, is claimed to be the first of the new breed; this 4.5% ABV cask beer was first brewed in 1986. Wiltshire brewer, Hopback, was set up in 1987, and first produced Summer Lightning in 1989, setting the market alight with what became a must-have beer in pubs the length and breadth of the country.

These tiny breweries lacked the capability of using bottom-fermenting yeasts and long cool fermentations that are needed to produce authentic lagers as opposed to ales. What they did instead was to brew very pale, yellow ales by using only pale malt and none of the darker malts that are usually used alongside pale malt in bitters to give balancing sweet malty nuances.

The lack of malty flavour allowed clearly defined hop aromas and flavours to emerge. Coupled with the innovative use of New World hop varieties that lend tangy citrus and tropical fruit flavours, this led to an exciting new style of cask beer that quickly caught on in a massive way.



The trend parallels the development of Blonde Ales by American craft brewers from the 1990s onwards, probably inspired by the Blonde beers of Belgium. Blonde ales, though, feature a malt aroma and palate balanced by more restrained levels of underlying hop.

In the UK, straw-coloured draught beers were not completely new. The widespread availability of coke as a fuel in the 19th century enabled more controlled kilning of malt and led to the universal use of pale malts in beer production. Kent brewer Shepherd Neame, Britain's oldest functioning brewery, was founded in 1698. In the early 19th century its Brilliant Ale was a very pale beer brewed with just pale malt and East Kent Goldings hops.

And some draught bitters favoured by many real ale aficionados in the 1970s and 1980s were very pale. Boddingtons Bitter, brewed in Manchester, was an immensely popular straw-coloured bitter. Others were Bathams Best Bitter and Holdens Bitter brewed in the Black Country area of the West Midlands. Boddingtons was packed full of an engaging aggressive hop bitterness, but the Black Country beers had a sweeter balance.

But none of these had the explosive aromatic and tart fruit hop flavour that came in the blond bombshells that began to be created in the UK with new varieties of hops imported from the USA and New Zealand.

In the early 1990s the Rooster brewery in Yorkshire started to brew Yankee, a 4.3% ABV produced with American Cascade hops. The booming citrus hop aroma, spritzy fruity hop flavours and drinkability of its relatively low strength were a winning combination.

Oakham Brewery developed its range of hop-led golden ales around the same time. Here, the brewers cram hop aroma and flavour from New World hops into every conceivable stage of the production process. The result is a stunning range of zesty fruity pale beers bursting with hops, some at levels that satisfy even the most ardent beer-loving hophead.

Oakham Citra has also won over CAMRA's Champion Beer of Britain judges twice in the past six years to bag the gold award for golden ales. It went on to win overall silver



in 2014 and overall bronze last year. This 4.2% ABV brew was first brewed in 2010. It was the first UK beer to use Citra hops, an American variety that which imparts the beer's soaring grapefruit and mango hop character.

The alluring lemon and elderflower flavour of JHB, or Jeffrey Hudson Bitter, ABV 3.8%, one of the original Oakham brews, has secured category medals in CAMRA's national competition no fewer than eight times and the overall Supreme Champion Beer of Britain award in 2001.

Another East Anglian brewery that has picked up national CAMRA awards is Crouch Vale, located a few miles from the coast in southern Essex. Its 4% ABV Brewers Gold cask ale was overall Supreme Champion Beer of Britain in 2005 and 2006. Its main hop variety, named Brewers Gold, was developed in the UK in 1917 and provides the beer's wonderful citrus and tropical fruit aromas. As with other beers of the style, there is a pungent hoppy taste but in Crouch Vale Brewers Gold this is balanced by an appealing sweetness.

The Mighty Oak brewery, situated at Maldon (a few miles from Crouch Vale), collected the national gold medal for golden ales in 2007 with its Maldon Gold.

Gold award winners for golden ales in the Champion Beer of East Anglia competition have in recent years gone to brewers in Norfolk and Essex, as well as the aforementioned Oakham Citra and Crouch Vale Brewers Gold.

Norwich brewer Golden Triangle scooped the gold award in 2015 using American hop Mosaic,

revered for its complex fruity aroma and clean bitterness, in its Mosaic City, 3.8% ABV.

Bishop Nick brewery in Braintree won East Anglian gold in 2017 for its 4% ABV Heresy, made with English hops Challenger and Goldings, and the current East Anglia champion golden ale is the 3.9% ABV ThreeOneSix, brewed with a complex mix of eight hop varieties by the Grain brewery in Alburgh, south Norfolk.

Locally, Oakham is not the only Cambridgeshire brewery using New World hops to produce hoppy golden ales.

In Earith, Papworth Brewery uses Citra hops in its 3.8% ABV golden beer, The Whitfield Citrabolt, named to celebrate the life of CAMRA member Giles Whitfield, who enjoyed golden ales, railways and movies.



Citra hops are also exhibited in Heavenly Matter, ABV 4.1%, a crisp straw-coloured bitter beer with a huge citrus hops flavour, brewed by the Moonshine brewery at Fulbourn.

The white grape and citrus flavours of New Zealand's Nelson Sauvignon hops are showcased in the 4.4% ABV Sauvignon Blonde from the Crafty Beers brewery in former stables at Hall Farm, Stetchworth, east of Cambridge.

Peterborough brewery Mile Tree's interpretations of the golden ale style are Citra Blonde, ABV 3.7%, with a dash of US Simcoe hop in addition to Citra, and an occasional 3.8% ABV pale gold summer ale, Meadowgold, featuring American Columbus hops as well as Cascade.

Elgoods' 4.1% ABV Golden Newt blends Cascade hops for its citrus aroma with conventional English hops Fuggles and Golding.

And at Little Downham, Three Blind

Mice brewery experiment with different hops in different brews of their highly drinkable 3.5% ABV American-style blonde cask beer Lonely Snake.

The remarkable development of golden ales in the UK reflects the pioneering use of new brewing ingredients and more varied beer styles by small brewers across the world in recent decades.

In particular, the popularity amongst brewers of experimentation with exciting new hop varieties lends itself perfectly to the golden ales style because of its low level of malt flavour. This allows the hops to shine through and, in many cases, dominate - sometimes at uncompromising levels.

Love them or hate them, golden ales are here to stay.

Written by Paul Moorhouse



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A LOOK BACK IN TIME

10 Years Ago

The Office of Fair Trading (OFT) reopened its investigation into the beer tie, following CAMRA's appeal against the OFT's ruling that the beer tie was not acting against the interests of consumers. The original investigation had been prompted by CAMRA's super-complaint to the OFT that anti-competitive practices were inflating pub beer prices by around 50p per pint, restricting consumer choice and leading to chronic under-investment in the UK's pubs.

Scottish & Newcastle's brewing arm became known as Heineken UK, following the joint takeover of S&N's brewing and pubs businesses by Dutch brewer Heineken and Danish brewer Carlsberg. The pubs part of S&N's business was renamed Scottish and Newcastle Pub Company.

Greene King launched the 'Head Brewer's Club' for 300 of its real ale pubs selected by volume sales and quality checks. Pub licensees in the scheme received £100 towards the cost of Cask Marque accreditation, early access to promotions on cask beers and the chance to have a beer brewed especially for the pub.

Brewing group Marstons introduced its Fast Cask technology, allowing cask beer to clear much quicker in pub cellars, whilst continuing to undergo secondary fermentation, an essential requirement for real ale. Fast Cask involves the removal of yeast in the brewery after primary fermentation and the addition of a new form of yeast solidified into small spherical beads. This draws sugar from the beer to enable secondary fermentation. CAMRA expressed reservations that the rapid clearing would encourage cask beer to be served before full flavour development in the cellar. But the Campaign did acknowledge that the process would allow real ale to be sold in new outlets by customers that had not previously felt able to stock conventional cask beers.

CAMRA condemned brewer Carlsberg for its decision to move production of the iconic Yorkshire beer Tetleys Bitter to Marstons in Burton on Trent after closing the famous 180-year-old Tetleys brewery in Leeds.

Colin Valentine became the first ever Scottish chairman of CAMRA as he took over the reins from CAMRA's first ever woman national chairman, Paula Waters, who had served as chairman since 2004.

Suffolk brewer Adnams pledged to hold its beer prices at March 2008 levels until at least the end of the year 2010. Commercial director Rob Flanagan said 'While others in the industry have this year increased prices, Adnams has pledged to continue the price freeze to support our customers. We are committed to supporting licensees throughout this economic downturn'.

25 Years Ago

CAMRA's St Neots and District branch, the forerunner of Huntingdonshire branch, celebrated the milestone of its first 20 years, and Opening Times looked forward to another 20 successful years. The branch had been formed at the Blue Ball in St Neots in December 1974. At that time, only 35 pubs served real ale within the branch area, stretching between Sawtry in the north and the Hertfordshire borders in the south.

CAMRA gave the thumbs-down to news that Scottish & Newcastle Breweries were preparing a £420 million bid for the Courage brewing group, owned by Australian brewer Fosters. CAMRA promised to urge that any deal should be blocked by the government's Monopolies and Mergers Commission, fearing that a merger would lead to brewery closures, fewer beer brands, higher beer prices and job losses.

CAMRA moved to a new head office at Hatfield Road in St Albans. The Campaign's office at Alma Road in St Albans had become too

cramped as the organisation had expanded over the years.

A new wave of enthusiasm for bottled real ales was reported by CAMRA in response to a booming market in canned keg beer. New bottle-conditioned real ales had been launched by mainstream brewers Fullers, Shepherd Neame and Harveys and even national brewing groups Whitbread and Scottish & Newcastle. CAMRA said that the new bottled beers would provide welcome competition to keg brands in cans fitted with a device known as a 'widget' which, together with the addition of nitrogen gas instead of carbon dioxide alone, resulted in an authentic head and low levels of fizz that some brewers were exploiting by drawing comparisons with the characteristics of real draught beer. CAMRA claimed that the canned products did not taste like the real thing and complained that in some cases they were being misleadingly branded as 'draught'.

The Office of Fair Trading forced national brewers Courage to drop its practice of discouraging its Intntrepreneur lessees from stocking guest beers. Courage reps had been claiming that some of Courage's own beers constituted 'guest beers' and could be stocked at a discount, but discounts were being wiped out for pubs that bought genuine guest beers from other brewers.

The merged Courage-Watney pub estate, Intntrepreneur Estates, was formally separated from the Grand Metropolitan business empire to become an independent set up. Following a government ruling on the merger, the estate was due to become free of tie to Courage within a few years. Intntrepreneur had become infamous for operating a 20-year lease arrangement with many of its pubs in ways that licensees felt was uncaring and led to many bankruptcies.

Peterborough CAMRA was celebrating the arrival of four new pubs in the city centre. Bass, Charles Wells and J D Wetherspoon were planning new pubs, and Greene King was leading the bidding to buy revered city centre pub the Still, closed by its owners Norwich

Union seven years earlier.

Bedford brewer Charles Wells brought out a horse and dray to publicise the delivery of a special edition real ale, the 6.5% ABV Champions Choice, to two of its Cambridge pubs, the Salisbury Arms and the Ancient Druids.

Two new East Anglian microbreweries began producing real ales. The Icen brewery was launched at Ickburgh in the Breckland area of Norfolk by Brendan Moore, who had taken redundancy from Homepride Foods, and the Old Chimneys brewery was set up by former Greene King and Vaux brewer Alan Thompson at Market Weston near Diss in Norfolk.

IN OTHER NEWS

CAMRA news from across the UK

The Philharmonic Dining Rooms, Liverpool, has been upgraded to Grade I by the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport on the advice of Historic England, making it the first purpose-built, Victorian public house to receive a Grade I listing. A further two Grade II* and eight Grade II pubs across England have had their listings updated to include further information about their interiors. This includes four of only eight pubs in the UK known to have no bar counter. Historic England's work to protect historic pub interiors is in collaboration with the Campaign for Real Ale (CAMRA) Pub Heritage Group.

Fixed Wheel Brewery has scooped gold in CAMRA's Champion Winter Beer of Britain competition with 'Blackheath Stout', a 5% ABV stout packed with malts, fruits and hops. Runners up were Elland brewery's '1872' porter (silver) and Hawkshead 'Brodie's Prime Export' (bronze).

Small brewers from across Northern Ireland have come together to call for changes to

outdated and unfair alcohol laws which prevent them selling beer directly to the public. Meeting in Belfast, the 11 brewers discussed forming a new campaign group to make the case for independent beer in Northern Ireland. They are being backed by CAMRA and the Society of Independent Brewers (SIBA). Recently the Department for Communities conducted a consultation seeking views on the current liquor licensing laws. Unlike brewers in England and Wales they cannot easily open tap rooms or brewery shops, sell beer at events or online directly to the public. CAMRA's Northern Ireland Chair Ruth Sloan said: "The current licensing laws are a barrier to the growth of small breweries and tourism. It means that beer drinkers, including many CAMRA members, can't enjoy a local real ale at the brewery or order them online. We support small brewers in Northern Ireland and would like to see changes to the law."

In response to the new ONS report, 'Economies

of ale: changes in the UK pubs and bars sector, 2001 to 2019', Nik Antona, CAMRA National Chairman, commented: "We cautiously welcome the trend these figures suggest, that small pubs and bars are beginning to 'bounce back' after years of decline and figures have increased between 2018-2019 nationally. Unfortunately, pubs continue to close across the country, particularly in small or rural communities. This means the loss of the social, cultural and economic benefits that come with a well-run local. To ensure pubs survive and thrive, they need a fair tax system and stability going forward. CAMRA continues to call on the Government for a review of the business rates system, as was promised in the Conservative general election manifesto, and a lower rate of tax on beer sold in pubs. We urge that these asks are reflected in the forthcoming Budget to help save the great British pub."

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HUNTS CAMRA SOCIAL DIARY

The following meetings and events are planned. All members are encouraged to attend and contribute to Open Branch Committee Meetings. Things can change and new events will be added, so please visit our website or social media channels for up to date information. Alternatively please contact Juliet, our Social Secretary (see contact details on page 3).

Tue 03 Mar, 8 pm

Open Branch Committee Meeting
White Horse, Tilbrook

Thu 12 – Sat 14 Mar

'Booze on the Ouse' Beer and Cider Festival
The Priory Centre, St Neots

Mon 6 Apr 2020, 8 pm

Open Branch Committee Meeting
Three Horseshoes, Graveley

Tue 2 Jun, 8 pm

Open Branch Committee Meeting
Black Bull, Brampton

All branch members are welcome at Open Committee meetings and it's always nice to see some new faces.

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- 3 Enjoy CAMRA BEER FESTIVALS** in front of or behind the bar
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Opening times

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