



**CAMPAIGN
FOR
REAL ALE**

Opening Times



**Huntingdonshire Branch of CAMRA
The Campaign for Real Ale**

**Issue 158
Spring 2014**



**Booze on the Ouse
St Neots Beer & Cider Festival
Thursday 13th - Saturday 15th March 2014**

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Chairman's Chatter



Hello and a belated Happy New Year. Welcome to the Spring 2014 issue of Opening Times. Many of us start the New Year with resolutions; some of which are kept, although unfortunately many are not. Resolutions can encourage us to do more (running, cycling, swimming) or less (shopping, eating or even drinking).

Much as I like a beer or two, health-wise it makes good sense not to overdo it. Taking a short break from booze can help clear your head, make you feel fitter and perhaps save a little money. So I did consider it when I saw an advert from Cancer Research UK about 'Dryathlon', suggesting I give up alcohol for the month of January to raise money for this worthy charity. However, before making a decision, I spotted a Facebook post originating from Frank Murphy, the proprietor of the Pot Still (an excellent, Good Beer Guide listed, Glaswegian pub, renowned for its rare malt whisky collection).

Frank's post called into question the suitability of a charitable campaign that displays a distinct lack of charity to an entire sector of the economy. Pubs, hotels and restaurants are often small businesses and cannot afford to be overstaffed, especially during quiet times. So if an outside force cuts trade, it's the bar-staff who end up with fewer shifts and a drop in take-home pay.

If you were to run a campaign that suggested not buying any clothing for a month and get friends to sponsor participants for it, this would soon be challenged by the major retailers as a threat to their businesses. Suggesting that participants should, by all means, go into stores, but only to use the coffee shop, just wouldn't cut it. It would be seen as merely a fig-leaf to cover the naked declaration of the campaign.

Other charitable campaigns are about doing more; running marathons, cycling, swimming and even growing copious amounts of facial hair. Indeed, Cancer Research's own website

lists nearly 100 events encouraging people to do MORE; 'Dryathlon' and a similar promotion by Macmillan in October sit alone in asking people to do LESS.

Pubs are eager to support charities in many ways, from the ubiquitous collection tin, to passing sponsor forms around the regulars, to the owner donating prizes for a raffle or auction. Pubs are also where many customers meet before setting out on fund-raising challenges and are often where they end up after them. Yet two national charities have spent large sums on campaigns which could diminish turnover in businesses during what can be very quiet months.

I would like to ask that you support charities that challenge you to do more, but think carefully about taking part in campaigns that encourage you to do less. I also call upon charities to reject this style of campaign and re-embrace the licensed trade, with a mutual benefit for both parties. Pubs are closing at a rate of 18 every week, so please don't do anything that threatens the viability of pubs and the employment of their staff.

Whilst on the subject of pub closures, CAM-RA have launched a new online petition calling on the Government to immediately introduce a Pubs Watchdog to protect pubs from closure due to unfair practices in the tied pub sector. Your support is vital to provide evidence to the Government that reform is desperately needed and is supported by the general public. Please visit www.pubscandal.org.uk to find out more and sign the petition.

And to finish, the 'Dryathlon' TV advert claimed that 'alcohol damages health.' Well I beg to differ; it's abuse of alcohol that damages health. But then, so does abuse of chocolate! Please support your local pub at all times of the year. And don't forget to come along to the St Neots Beer and Cider Festival at the Priory Centre in March (see page 14).

Cheers, until next time,

Richard

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A Look Back In Time

10 YEARS AGO

Chancellor Gordon Brown raised the ceiling for progressive beer duty from 18,300 to 37,000 barrels a year, which CAMRA hailed as a breakthrough for independent brewers – at the time at least one family brewer had recently considered cutting production to keep below the earlier threshold.



The Chequers at Little Gransden celebrated ten consecutive years of listings in CAMRA's *Good Beer*

Guide in 2004, a feat up to then achieved by just over a dozen pubs in the guide's 30-year history. The Chequers has now been in the Guide for twenty consecutive years.

Scottish and Newcastle Breweries announced the closure of its historic Fountain brewery in Edinburgh and a new joint venture with the city's champion brewery Caledonian. S&N would own the brewery and a 30% share of a new Caledonian Brewing Company. Caledonian had been formed in 1987 in a management buy-out of Edinburgh's Lorimer and Clark brewery from its owners Vaux breweries of Sunderland, led by Lorimer and Clark's General Manager Dan Kane. Then, in 1992, Caledonian won CAMRA's Champion Beer of Britain award for its Deuchars IPA. Under the new deal in 2004, Caledonian would brew McEwens 80/- as well as its own brands, and S&N's brewing arm, Scottish Courage, would take over Caledonian's off-trade and export sales.

Cambridge's Moonshine brewery made its first appearance – it was included in a mini beer festival in early 2004 at the Wissey Valley brewery.

Huntingdonshire CAMRA held its February

meeting at the Grange, Brampton. Later in the spring there was a meeting at the Prince of Wales at Hilton and a social at the Cock, Hemingford Grey. In April, the annual general meeting was at the Rivermill Tavern in Eaton Socon and members of the branch attended at beer festival at the Green Man at Colne.

Fenland brewery changed hands and moved from Chatteris to Little Downham, to be re-named the Isle of Ely Brewery.



Alterations began at the Queens Head, Needingworth, to move and extend the main bar and provide a

dining area in an extension.

Essex brewer Ridley dropped its Tolly Mild, two years after taking over Ipswich's Tolly Cobbold brewery in 2002. But mild production was to continue at Ridleys – the brewery at Hartford End had won a contract to brew Greene King XX cask mild.

The George at Buckden reopened in the spring of 2004 after extensive redevelopment, and recruitment of a chef from the Falcon at Fotheringay.

Pete Butler and Sue Gilliland took over the tenancy of Charles Wells pub the Wool-



pack, St Neots and introduced guest beers alongside cask Eagle IPA and Bombardier. The Woolpack is

now permanently closed, and Pete and Sue are running the Olde Sun, St Neots.



A Look Back In Time

25 YEARS AGO

CAMRA launched a 'Davenports action group' as the Greenall Whitley group announced closure plans for its Birmingham-based Davenports brewery. Production was to be transferred to Greenall's Shipstones brewery in Nottingham, where 'flavour-matching' trials had begun.

Scottish brewery Belhaven was bought by the Control Securities group, headed by Nazmu Virani, who had previously run Belhaven in the mid-1980s. The Belhaven pubs estate was swelled by the addition of Control Securities' 86 Blezards pubs, previously bought from Allied Breweries, and 150 pubs bought in 1988 from the Watney group – these included a number of pubs in the Huntingdonshire area, including the Mad Cat at Pidley, the Crown, Broughton, the



Mad Cat at Pidley

Cross Keys at Upwood, the Royal Oak, Sawtry, the Unicorn in Ramsey and

the George at Ramsey Forty Foot. A number of others in the Peterborough area included the Prince of Wales Feathers at Castor, the Blue Bell, Maxey, the Fox at Barnack, the Exeter Arms, Helston, the New Crown in Whittlesey and the Decoy at Milk-ing Nook.

In the spring of 1989, St Neots CAMRA held 'double pub socials' at the Falcon and Market Inn in Huntingdon, and the Bell and Three Horseshoes at Southoe.

The national Watney brewing group, by then known as Watney, Mann and Norwich Brewery in East Anglia, announced plans to sell 17 of its pubs in the Norfolk area. Classed by Watneys as not suitable for 'long-term development potential', many of them went on to become successful and revered free houses providing vital outlets for the fledgling local microbrewery network.

CAMRA national executive member Tony Millns fought a by-election at Richmond as the 'Keep Theakstons British/CAMRA' candidate, aimed at focussing attention on CAMRA's opposition to the takeover bid by Australian brewers Elders IXL for Theakstons owners Scottish and Newcastle. Tony had optimistically declared 'If everyone in Richmond who enjoys a good pint votes for me, I am sure of an historic victory'. He polled 113 votes.

Following the Brent Walker group's purchase of Ipswich brewery Tolly Cobbold and Hartlepool brewery Camerons, a deal with Grand Metropolitan, owners of the Watneys brewery group, was announced. Under the deal, 52 Tolly and Cameron pubs were swapped for 26 East Anglian Watney pubs and 119 betting shops. The Tolly pubs were expected to be changed to Chef and Brewer or Berni Inn status.

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Half Pints



It has been reported that Potton Brewery has closed and gone into liquidation, and that a buyer is being sought. The brewery

was set up in 1997 after Greene King closed its Biggleswade brewery, and its redundant chief engineer Bob Hearson and QC manager Clive Towner set up the new Potton brewery in the Bedfordshire town, 75 years after the closure of the original Potton Brewery Company. The brewery was expanded in 2008 with the installation of four new fermenting vessels.

CAMRA has welcomed the chancellor's announcement of a discount on business rates for two years for every retail premise in England with a rateable value of up to £50,000. In his Autumn Statement on 5 December, chancellor George Osborne told Parliament 'This discount will be worth £1,000 off their bills. This is what we offer. Business rates capped. For the smallest firms, no rates at all. And help for the high street. A thousand pounds off for small shops, pubs, cafes and restaurants across our country.'

Brewing group Marston's has sold 202 pubs to a property developer, NewRiver Retail, who plan to convert the pubs to supermarkets, convenience stores and restaurants over a four-year period. 158 of the sales are community pubs and 44 are from its leased estate. Marston's says the sale of the smaller, community-based locals is because they no longer fit in with its business model. Initially, the pubs will be leased back to Marston's for a total annual rent of more than £12 million, which according to CAMRA's head of policy and public affairs Jonathan Mail proves they are 'clearly profitable'. He vowed that campaigners and communities would mount a sustained challenge to keep the pubs open as pubs, not supermarkets.

There's a new band of brewers on the scene

in Northamptonshire, going by the name Merrimen Brewing, after taking over the premises of the Hoggleys Brewery. What started as a dream discussed over a few pints is now a reality after Andy Taylor and Alan Mellors stuck up a mutually beneficial deal with Roy Crutchley of Hoggleys. The deal allowed the pair to move into the premises in exchange for training from Roy. Roy is also continuing to use the brewing equipment to fulfil orders, whilst Hoggleys are in the process of moving to the new Phipps Brewery, Northampton, which was expected to be completed early in 2014. Merrimen's three launch ales are Merri Weather (a 4 per cent ABV golden ale), the Merri One (a 3.6 per cent amber ale) and Be Merri (a 4.5 per cent best bitter).



Skidders brewery in Cornwall has produced a new cask and bottled beer, the 4% ABV River Cottage EPA (English Pale Ale), in collaboration with TV chef Hugh Fearnley-Whittingstall. EPA is

brewed with Cornish-grown barley malt and English hops, including an innovative UK-grown Cascade hop. It was launched at Hugh's River Cottage headquarters at Park Farm, Axminster, the base for his organisation's chef's school, chain of three restaurants, and other activities promoting innovation with locally produced food.

The Head of Steam pub group, based in the north east of England, has been sold to Camerons Brewery. The Hartlepool based brewer has bought all seven of the Head of Steam sites including the Good Beer Guide listed Cluny in Newcastle, Central in Gateshead and the Head of Steam, Durham. The purchase of the sites has been supported by Carlsberg UK, as the two companies look to increase business together. Camerons Brewery says it will be retaining all staff in the group including the services of former managing director Tony Brookes.



Half Pints



CAMRA's 'List your Local' campaign is well on the way to achieving its target of having 300 pubs listed as assets of community value (ACVs). More than 260 pubs have been listed as ACVs since the campaign's launch in April

last year, including locally the Royal Oak, Hail Weston; Bell, Great Paxton; Queen Adelaide, Croydon; and the Three Tuns, Guilden Morden. Now, the Campaign says it want to see a total of 500 pubs listed as ACVs by 2015. CAMRA is encouraging its branches to get involved by working with parish councils and community groups to nominate pubs. CAMRA is in dialogue with the National Association of Local Councils, which represents 9,000 parish and town councils in England and Civic Voice, an organisation which represents hundreds of local voluntary civic and amenity societies, to raise awareness at a national level of the importance of communities getting pubs listed as ACVs.

CAMRA Launches Online Petition on Pubco Reform

CAMRA has launched an online petition calling on the Government to act now to introduce a Pubs Watchdog immediately to protect pubs from closure due to unfair practices in the tied pub sector.

Over 15,000 signatures were secured in the first 24 hours .

The petition comes ahead of a Commons Debate scheduled for Tuesday 21st January where Shadow Business Minister Toby Perkins MP will urge the Government to stop dragging its feet and introduce legislation

critical to the longevity of the pub industry.

The 8-week consultation into reform of the large pub companies launched last year, which promised to introduce a Statutory Code and Adjudicator.

To sign the petition please go to:

www.pubscandal.org.uk



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Most of you will have celebrated Christmas in the usual way: excited children; a long drive to pick up the in-laws; the one and only sweet sherry of the year; and a hearty meal. But for one Huntingdon licensee it marked the end of a patient struggle to get his hands on the pub in which he grew up and in which his father taught him to how to drink.

On Christmas Day 2006 Tony Ogle took on the lease of the Victoria (the 'Vic') in Huntingdon and became only the pub's 6th licensee in the last 40



years. His father had been a regular since he moved to nearby Hartford Road in 1973. Tony was then only 4 years old and grew up in and around the pub. He played cricket on the green and in later life cleaned the windows as part of his local round, but when his name went over the door the pub was on its last legs. A succession of licensees and a lack of investment meant that the pub was scarcely recognisable from the place that's portrayed in the picture gallery that adorns the bar today.

No sooner had Tony taken over when Punch Taverns sold it to Admiral Taverns in January 2007 and then the ban on smoking in public places was introduced in July. Tony hadn't given up 17 years as a Prison Officer to let such minor hurdles get in the way and used his own brand of advertising to spread the word. He began by touring the other pubs in Huntingdon and having a quiet pint with the locals, many of whom had probably drunk in the Vic with his father, but had gradually taken their custom elsewhere. Some of his closest friends began to join him before heading back to

the Vic, where little by little a new group of regulars was building up and showing that there was still life in the old place.

In 1945 a Texan quarterback called Merryll Frost came back from a serious injury to pick up his sporting career and attributed his success to his wife by proclaiming: 'They say behind every great man there's a woman. While I'm not a great man, there's a great woman behind me'. The same could be said for Tony and his wife Tee from whom he's had unstinting support over the past seven years and without whom he wouldn't have been able to realise his dream – they even moved into the pub from their family home for a year to help to pay the bills.

Now that he's the landlord of one of only

two free houses in the area, he is not about to reinvent the Vic with a distasteful makeover.



Yes there's work to be done, but in 12 months' time Tony still wants his customers to enjoy the atmosphere of a pub that's genuinely a part of the community. The Victoria Square fete, the carol service on the green and support for the local Combined Churches Group have helped to weave the pub back into a community from which it had become detached.

Many people in the area have no idea where the Vic is. It's not easy to find but it's worth the effort, so take a detour off the usual beaten track, look out for the sign at the end of Euston Street near the fire station and have a drink in a traditional back street pub.

The Three Horseshoes

Wistow

Gerry, Julia and Nick invite you to their traditional village pub.



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old and new, to our
traditional community
pub, reopening Friday
31st January



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01480 386584

Pub Pieces

What's On in Your Local? Reports in Pub Pieces are provided by our branch pub contacts, licensees, local CAMRA members and Opening Times readers. Further news of changes at local pubs is welcome.

Please send news to news@huntscamra.org.uk

It has been confirmed that pubs group JD Wetherspoon is to open a pub in St Ives as well as one in Huntingdon. It was an-



George Hall in Huntingdon

nounced in November that the old post office and **George Hall in Huntingdon** will become a Wetherspoons pub this

year, and the group said in January 2014 that they had agreed to buy a building in St Ives subject to contracts being exchanged. It is believed that this is the property occupied by the Warehouse Clearance store on the town's Market Hill, although there were rumours last year linking Wetherspoons' plans for St Ives with the neighbouring Golden Lion Hotel. Contracts were exchanged to sell the Huntingdon property to Wetherspoons towards the end of 2013.



The **Old Sun in Eaton Socon** has been refurbished and is expected to reopen on the 31st of January in the hands of the team who also run the Cambridgeshire Hunter in Eynesbury.



In Abbotsley, the freehold of the **Eight Bells** has been put on the market by Greene King, priced at £250,000.

Planning applications have been submitted to allow housing developments to replace

two local pubs, the **Plough in Eynesbury** and the **Tavern on the Green at Abbotsley**, which has been closed for over six years. The **White Horse at Kimbolton** is on the market as a 'development opportunity'.

The lease of the **Cross Keys at Caxton** has been acquired by the team who run the Willow Tree in nearby Bourne. The pub is currently undergoing an extensive refurbishment and will soon reopen as **No 77**, with two bar areas and a dining area and offering three real ales and Thai food.

The **Red House in Longstowe** is understood to have been sold, with the new owner intending to open a caravan park on the land behind the pub.

The **Royal Oak at Hail Weston** is also being



marketed as a development opportunity, at £325,000. The local community made a bid to buy the pub in November 2013,

but the offer was rejected by the owner. The campaign to save the pub remains active.

In **Bassingbourn** the former Pear Tree has



reopened as the **Belle**, a village pub with restaurant, named after the famous Memphis Belle, an American

B17 Flying Fortress bomber plane which operated from Bassingbourn in 1942-43.

A microbrewery and new pub are proposed for Papworth Everard in a planning application approved by South Cambridgeshire District Council for development of the former print works opposite the entrance to Papworth Hospital. 58 new homes are also included in the plan. It is proposed that the brewery will be operated as a social enter-

Pub Pieces

prise scheme by Allia, a Cambridgeshire-based company which raises investment for such schemes.

The **Three Tuns at Guilden Morden** has



been sold. An 'asset of community value' (ACV) registration had been in place for the pub, but no local groups

made use of the resulting moratorium on sales to bid to buy the pub. The moratorium period ended in September 2013, and the pub was then sold. The Parish Council has reported that the new owner wishes to convert the pub to a house.

The moratorium period for the 'asset of community value' listing for the **Queen Adelaide in Croydon** has also expired with



no local groups coming forward to bid to buy. The Queen Adelaide was sold in October,

and subsequently the tenants who were running the pub were given notice to leave, and the pub is now closed. The plans of the new owner are not yet clear.



Terri and Jethro Scotcher-Littlechild, freehold owners of the **Cambridge Blue in Cambridge**, are expected to be running their third Cambridge pub by next year. The **Royal Standard**

on Mill Road, which

closed seven years ago, was expected to receive planning permission in November for a return to pub use and extensions to provide student accommodation and flats. The renovations will



take around a year and then Jethro and Terri will run the Royal Standard for leaseholders RedBerry Inns. RedBerry also

lease the **Blue Moon**, formerly the Man on the Moon, on Norfolk Street, where Jethro and Terri have been in charge since November. Before buying the Cambridge Blue, Jethro and Terri owned the Enterprise Inns lease on the Carlton Arms in Arbury, north Cambridge, where they established their outstanding reputation for high quality ranges of cask beers. Jethro and Terri also run a fourth pub, the Three Horseshoes at Stapleford.

The 2nd Yelling Beer Festival will be held at Yelling Village Hall on Friday 2nd May (6pm till late), Saturday 3rd May (11am till late), and Sunday 4th May (12pm -10pm). Food available at all sessions including a Hog Roast on Saturday.



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Booze on the Ouse



OPENING TIMES

- Thursday 13th: 5pm–11pm
- Friday 14th: 12 noon–11pm
- Saturday 15th: 12 noon–10pm.

ADMISSION

- Thu: Before 7pm: £1; After 7pm: £2.
- Fri: Before 7pm: £1; After 7pm £3.
- Sat: £1 All day.

Families welcome until 8pm.

No entry or re-admission after 10.30pm.

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



BEERS and CIDERS REAL ALES

We hope to serve over the course of the festival over 60 real ales from all over the UK, both from the well-established independent breweries and the newer, smaller breweries, with a focus on local East Anglian and East Midland breweries.

BOTTLED BEERS

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

CIDER AND PERRY

A selection of tasty traditional draughts and bottled cider and perry, focussed on Cambridgeshire suppliers.



FEATURES VENUE

The festival is being held at the Priory Centre, Priory Lane, PE19 2BH, close to the Market Square, in the centre of St Neots.

FOOD AND DRINK

A variety of snacks and food will be available at all sessions. Free soft drinks will be available for the designated driver of your party, and a selection of wine will also be available.

St Neots Beer & Cider Festival

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.

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 we will have special offers for anyone joining at the festival. Adjacent will be the fabulous 'Every One's a Winner' tombola stall.

OTHER DETAILS

THE WORKERS

The festival is organised and run by members of CAMRA who are all unpaid volunteers. We always need more helpers, so if you can help at any session please contact Andy Shaw: 01480 355863, or andy.shaw@huntscamra.org.uk.

Thu 13 – Sat 15

March 2014

**Priory Centre,
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CONTACT INFORMATION

Festival organiser, Richard Harrison,
festival@huntscamra.org.uk, 07740 675712
(evenings preferred).

Also visit our web site for updates
www.huntscamra.org.uk/festivals.

The White Hart, Great Staughton

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and 6.30-9.00.
Saturday 12.00-9.00
and traditional
Sunday Lunch 12.00
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If you would like to be kept up to date with events at The White Hart
please email the address below and we will add you to our mailing list

**Hugh & Mary Cocker, The White Hart, 56The Highway,
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Quiz Report

The Hyde Park in St Neots hosted the latest in our series of occasional quiz nights on 15th November 2013. In recognition of the fact that the quiz was held during Armistice Week our branch quizmaster Keith Lawson surpassed himself by presenting a whole quiz based upon the number 11.

After the first two rounds there was little to choose between the teams but two rounds

later a clear leader had emerged thanks to the high score in the Science and Nature round and a solid knowledge of all things geographical by the team named 'Can't Do Any Worse'. Team 'Could Do Better' fell by the wayside after two successive poor rounds and even though they scored well in the music round they couldn't stop 'Can't Do Any Worse' romping home as winners with a total of 70 points.

Here's a selection of the number 11-related questions

1. Which three films have won 11 Academy Awards?
2. In May 2011 the BBC asked their listeners to vote for their Desert Island Discs: who were the 11 most popular recorded artists as chosen by the listeners?
3. In which country was the 11th race of the 2013 F1 championship held?
4. What is 11°C in Fahrenheit?
5. Who were the three crew members on the Apollo 11 mission?
6. Which Scandinavian capital city lies 11 degrees east of the Greenwich Meridian line?
7. Which village is 11km north west of St Neots railway station?
8. Who was the 11th different British Prime Minister of the 20th century?
9. Which 11 letter adjective begins with the 11th letter of the alphabet and means 'generous or benevolent'?
10. There are 11 member states of the United Nations which begin with the letter 'A' – how many can you name?

1. Ben Hur, Titanic and Lord of the Rings – Return of the King
2. Beatles, Bob Dylan, Beethoven, Mozart, Pink Floyd, Johann Sebastian Bach, Rolling Stones, Edward Elgar, Ralph Vaughan Williams, Queen and Led Zeppelin
3. Belgium
4. 51.8°F
5. Neil Armstrong, Michael Collins and Edwin 'Buzz' Aldrin
6. Oslo
7. Stonely
8. Clement Attlee
9. Kindhearted
10. Australia, Armenia, Argentina, Antigua and Barbuda, Azerbaijan, Afghanistan, Austria, Albania, Andorra, Angola and Algeria.

Answers

Events and Socials

February

Tue 11th Open Committee Meeting,
Lion Hotel, Buckden (20:30). All welcome.

Sat 22nd Coach trip to visit pubs in
Gamlingay, Guilden Morden, Steeple
Morden, Littlington, Abington Piggots, and
Bassingbourn. Free to CAMRA members.
Contact the social secretary to book your
place.

Tue 25th Good Beer Guide selection
meeting, **Black Bull, Brampton** (20:30).

March

Tue 4th Pre Festival meeting, **Anchor,**
Little Paxton (20:30).

Thu 13th - Sat 15th St Neots Beer & Cider
Festival, Priory Centre, St Neots (see pages
14 & 15).

Tue 25th Post festival social, **Pig n**
Falcon, St Neots (20:30).

April

Sat 12th Coach trip to visit local pubs
in a part of our branch area yet to be
decided.

Tue 15th Annual General Meeting with
buffet, **Bell, Great Paxton** (20:00). All
welcome.

Tue 22nd Post Festival wash-up
meeting, **Hog & Partridge, St Neots** (20:30).

May

Tue 13th Open Committee Meeting,
Rivermill Tavern, St Neots (20:30).

An up to date listing of social events can be
found on the web site:
www.huntscamra.org.uk/diary, or contact
the social secretary, Varina Howell.

Opening Times

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**Deadline for Summer 2014 issue (159)
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How and why CAMRA should attract new members

The branding on particular beers has a huge impact on who drinks them; I see this reflected in my peers' choice of ale. My local brewery Robinsons based in Stockport has just produced bestselling ale 'Trooper' endorsed by Iron Maiden, one of my personal favourite bands. Elbow also brought out a brew named 'Build a Rocket Boys' to appeal to the younger market. Real ale has increasingly become more fashionable with the help of some clever marketing and an increasing interest in drinking something often cheaper and more varied than other bigger brand alternatives. This switch in habits is evident all over Manchester, particularly in the Northern Quarter, where the typical age of drinkers has noticeably decreased to people under 30. The question for CAMRA is: how do we recruit the new emerging group of youngsters?

There has never been a better time for CAMRA to boost its numbers of young members. The target audience is already interested in real ale and in turn supporting their local pubs. In order to both engage and maintain members, recruitment needs to be strategically co-ordinated. Having attended a vast array of local beer festivals, I think that recruitment needs to be targeted at the younger based festivals where students and young professionals reside. Potential members need to be educated about the importance of pubs and the dangers of binge drinking. It would be beneficial to improve the discounts on admission to beer festivals to increase membership. Alongside this, how about a discount for a non-member brought to the festival by a member?

Once more young members have been recruited the dynamics of the CAMRA meetings can gradually progress, with more meetings held at pubs with live music or a

comedy venue. The use of twitter and facebook should also be increased to help young members become more active and to spread the hard work of CAMRA. Reminding people of celebrity involvement may help recruit more young members, for example Madonna's favourite drink was once cited as 'Landlord'. Maybe certain celebrities can be made honorary CAMRA members to develop the brand.

Prior to becoming a young member of CAMRA, I too wondered, why did I need to? Not only is it worth the fee for the Wetherspoons vouchers but more importantly we need to sustain the amazing work that CAMRA has already done and help to maintain pubs and develop the brand, thus ensuring that pubs can thrive and provide live music, comedy nights and band themed pints created just for people like you.

Author Bio: Heather Peel



I am currently a member of the Young Member Marketing group, helping to recruit and retain more young members, vital to CAMRA's survival. I have been a CAMRA member since 2010, after seeing the hard work of CAMRA and

how active changes can be made. I also feel strongly about maintaining local pubs, one of my favourites being the community pub of the year, the New Oxford in Salford which does an excellent pint of Chocolate and Vanilla Stout from Titanic brewery.

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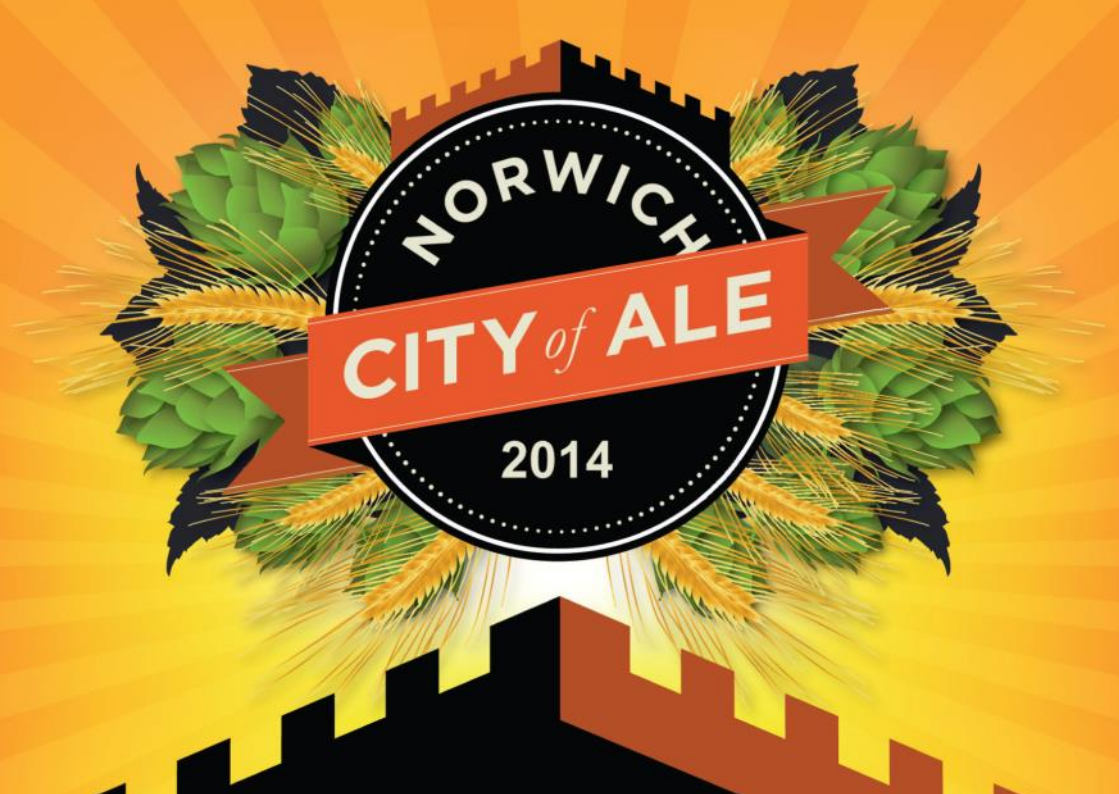
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