

Opening Times



Huntingdonshire Branch of CAMRA
The Campaign for Real Ale

Issue 184
Autumn 2025

Booze on the Ouse Beer and Cider Festival
Comrades Club, Godmanchester
Thursday 18th to Saturday 20th September

BOOZE ON THE OUSE BEER & CIDER FESTIVAL



HUNTINGDONSHIRE

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Booze on the Ouse 2025

Thu 18 - Sat 20 September 2025

Venue: Comrades Club, 58 Cambridge Street, Godmanchester, Huntingdon PE29 2AY

Festival Opening Times

Thu 18 Sep - noon to 10.30pm

Fri 19 Sep - noon to 10.30pm

Sat 20 Sep - noon to 10.30pm

The Trade Session takes place 12pm to 5pm on Thursday 18th and is open to all. We encourage publicans and those in the brewery and cider trade to attend this session in order to network and try the beers and ciders of local producers. Please download the BOTO 2025 Trade Invite [here](#).

Entry Packages

£7 for non-CAMRA members

£3 for CAMRA members

Entry packages include a non-refundable souvenir glass. Bring your own CE (or UK CE) marked glass; and reduce the cost of your entry package by £3. CAMRA members with their own glass effectively get in for free! Tickets available on the door only - no advance sales. Please note: No entry or re-admission after 10.00 pm.

How To Pay

The Booze on the Ouse Festivals Are Now Cash Free - Card Transactions Only - Booze on the Ouse 2025 will be a card payment only festival - there will be no facility for cash payments, so please come prepared for that.

63 Cask Ales, Keg Beers & Real Ciders n' Perries

Over the course of the festival, we plan to serve 45 cask conditioned beers and 6 craft beers including an alcohol-free option. These will be sourced from both well-established independent breweries and the newer 'craft' micro-breweries. As usual, we will have a wide range of beers sourced from local breweries and some regional breweries from across the UK. We also plan to have some vegan and gluten free beers and feature beers that are shortlisted for the Cambridgeshire regional round of the Champion Beer of Britain competition, the winner of which

will go forward to the final round held at the national category judging next year. The draft beer list will appear [here](#) in the near future, please check back soon to see what will be on offer at the festival, and also beers available for sponsorship.

The traditional cider bar will be serving a selection of tasty traditional cider and perry, sourced from quality producers, locally and elsewhere in Britain. There will be 12 ciders and perries available. The draft cider list will appear [here](#) in the near future, please check back soon to see what will be on offer at the festival, and also ciders available for sponsorship.

A selection of spirits, wines and soft drinks will also be available from the Comrades Club bar within the festival hall. Designated drivers can collect a token on entry for 3 free soft drinks from the CAMRA bar.

Live Music

We're really excited to share that there will be live music at this year's Booze on the Ouse. On Thursday and Friday evenings, between 8pm and 10pm there will be bands in the outside space immediately outside the festival hall. The local bands that will be featured include New Routes and Tenmoku.

Food

By popular demand, we will be welcoming back The Cheese & Pie Man as the main festival caterer. A selection of hot and cold food will be on offer at all sessions. A selection of snacks will be available at the Comrades Club bars, as well as from the Cheese & Pie Man.

Get here by Public Transport

Whippet buses stop very close by: X3 timetable at whippetbus.co.uk.

Busway buses from Cambridge and St Ives also stop in Huntingdon, as do Thames Link trains from Peterborough and London:

Busway timetable at thebusway.info

Thameslink timetable at thameslinkrailway.com

Christopher Bee
Festival Organiser

Hunts CAMRA Pub Awards

In the Spring edition of Opening Times, we announced the Huntingdonshire CAMRA Pub Awards. In August our Awards Coordinator Phil Harris made the final presentation.

Most Improved Pub of the Year - Green Man, Leighton Bromswold



On the left Andy Langridge, on the right Lizzie Langridge, and in the centre Phil Harris

Since Lizzie and Andy Langridge reopened the Green Man late in 2024, there has continued to be a steady stream of additional improvements to the pub.

Recently a courtyard at the rear of the pub was opened as an attractive and colourful outdoor drinking area.



In the courtyard is a barn that has been refurbished as a well-appointed function room, with its own bar, which is available for hire for special events, and will in the future to be used to hold quiz nights and live music events.

It was recently posted on the pub's Facebook page that the much-loved skittles table has a new home under the courtyard gateway.



There are more planned improvements that will take place in the future.

A new kitchen will be installed so that the pub can start serving food, and the area to the right of the pub will be converted into a kitchen garden supplying fresh vegetables.

On the occasion of the award presentation, Lizzie and Andy were informed that a CAMRA group had designated the Green Man as an "Outstanding Pub Restoration", this designation being shown on the [pub's entry on the CAMRA website](#).

Pub & Brewery News

Pub News

White Swan, Bluntisham

The White Swan has reopened with new tenants

Dragon, Brampton



The Dragon which has been closed since July 2020 is expected to reopen soon. A post on their new Facebook page states "Reopening Summer 2025! Classic Pub Food and Indian & Nepalese Fusion Specials".

Hare on the Green, Brampton

The current tenant at the Hare on the Green is giving up the tenancy at the end of summer.

White Horse, Eaton Socon



The White Horse has reopened. The new operator is a chef and the pub is offering Indian food as well as traditional pub food, and will have DJ nights Friday and Saturday 9pm-midnight.

Crown & Pipes, Fenstanton

The Crown & Pipes is to be reopened by Neil & Caroline who have previously run the White Swan in Conington and the Poacher in Elsworth. They are hoping for an October reopening for this pub which was last open in March 2020.

Barley Mow, Hartford



Soon after the Barley Mow recently closed, it reopened under a new operator, a pub group that operate a series of pubs

in East Anglia offering Nepalese food. A reopening evening was well attended with free Indian snacks on offer. One changing cask ale is offered.

Cock, Hemingford Grey



The Cock in Hemingford Grey held its annual beer festival from 15-17th August. There were 18 cask beers on the outdoor festival bar, many of which were from local breweries. Ivo Brewery, Papworth, Milton and Wylde Sky were among those whose products were available. Additionally house beer Papworth The Badgers Nadders and W heatsheaf Whippet Session IPA were two of the three beers on the main bar.

As well as the cask beers there were keg lager/pilsner beers from Nene Valley and Pastore. Real ciders from Cromwell and Cambridge Cider Company were also featured. Food from the pub's kitchen each session was augmented by a different food truck each session. Live music was a feature on all three days of the festival.

It was busy on the hot Friday evening when several local CAMRA members visited. On the

Pub & Brewery News

Saturday afternoon it was much cooler with overcast skies but there was a good crowd in the beer garden in the early afternoon. The beers sampled were in good condition despite the high temperatures. This was the first time that a beer from Wheatsheaf has been on sale in the pub and hopefully their beers will be stocked again.

Next year is the 25th anniversary of the Cock under Cambscuisine ownership as the first of the groups pubs and restaurants.

Falcon, Huntingdon



The Falcon unfortunately had a garden fire in the early morning of 26th June which was attended by fire crews from Huntingdon and St Neots. The pub hope to get the area restored soon.

Horseshoe, Offord D'Arcy



The Horseshoe has re-opened. Due to a kitchen fire, they are using an outside kitchen.

Broadway Cellars, St Ives



Broadway Cellars have submitted a licencing application to open the old J Wadsworth wine shop in The Broadway as a wine bar and shop. Broadway

Cellars is the same management team that run the Pheasant at Keyston.

Dolphin, St Ives

The Dolphin Hotel has reopened as the Dolphin Hotel Cambridge.

Floods Tavern, St Ives

Floods Tavern hosted several veterans for the towns VJ Day celebrations. The pub was decorated outside especially for the day.



Oliver Cromwell, St Ives

The Oliver Cromwell is now doing food.

Snug, St Ives

The Snug in St Ives won the title of best pub in Cambridgeshire awarded by Velvet Magazine in their recent Velvet Awards.

White Hart, St Ives



We have heard that the White Hart may reopen soon. The new operator is understood to be the operator of the White Hart in Warboys. Apparently, the pub will include an 'escape room'.

Bulls Head, St Neots

A planning application to change the Bulls Head into a convenience store has been submitted by the same team who previously submitted a planning application (which was rejected by HDC).

Pub & Brewery News

Corner House, St Neots

There have been reports that the Corner House will soon reopen.

Duncombe Arms, Waresley



The operator of the Duncombe Arms has submitted a premises licence application to Huntingdonshire District Council. The licence application would grant the approval for the establishment to serve alcohol both on and off the premises in addition to live music.

Brewery News

Elgoods



Elgoods have now successfully launched Strawberry and Cherry flavour wheat beers in 440ml cans. Both are 4%, gluten-free and vegan and will sit alongside Apple Wheat which is also gluten-free and vegan but has an abv of 2.4%. Cherry wheat is available in 30 litre kegs.

The new seasonal beers for the coming months are: September – Phoenix Rising 4.7% amber; October - Poltergeist 4.2% red; November -

Best of British 4.7% chestnut; December - Christmoose Carol 3.7% light amber; Quarterly October – December - Double Swan 4,=.5% pale ale.

IVO

The IVO brewery, Somersham have finally brewed their first beer at the new brewery site in St Ives and have also submitted a premises licence application seeking approval for a brewery shop and a tap room

Wheatsheaf

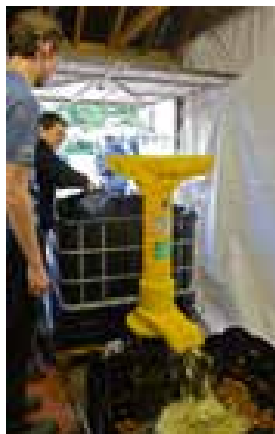


The Wheatsheaf, Huntingdon recently hosted the 2nd annual beer festival at Alconbury Weald with 26 beers and 4 ciders available. The Watch Office Bar & Kitchen supplied the gin and other drinks

Cider Matters – and Perry too!

Cider and Perry items and news

Yes, cider and perry do matter - after mead, they are possibly the world's oldest alcoholic drink, enjoyed by a large and increasing number of people who are looking for a good quality drink which is an alternative to beer.



This article is the first of what is hoped will be a regular feature which celebrates cider & perry as well as imparting information which will encourage people to seek it out and to drink it. Cambridgeshire will be the subject of this edition.

Why Cambridgeshire?

It's generally well known that most cider comes from the West Country: the two counties of Herefordshire and Somerset account for more



than half of the cider and perry produced in the UK. Fewer people realise that there are other areas

with a long history of cider making such as Kent and East Anglia, areas that supply the bulk of the UK's dessert apples.

Up to 20 years ago there were only a few cider makers in Cambridgeshire with a number of individuals making it for their own consumption. Since then, there has been a blossoming of producers and we are well into double figures. The Huntingdonshire branch has even had a CAMRA National award winner in its area – Harding's "3 Peace Sweet" from Abbotsley. There is no doubting Cambridgeshire cider can compete against all comers.

Flavour

Being made from dessert apples, the flavour of Cambridgeshire cider and perries are different from those from



the West Country where they use apples and pears specifically developed for making cider and perry. In general, the ciders and perries from Cambridgeshire have a sharper, more refreshing taste. They are also lighter in colour.

Where to buy

Finding local cider is not easy but the Huntingdonshire Branch's website provides information [here](#).

Latest News

New producer. Just over the border in Bedfordshire, Potton has a new cider producer – 'Russells'. This is not to be confused with the excellent 'Potton Press' cider and perry which is now made in Cambridgeshire. Currently, only the "Happy Jack" bottled cider has been sampled. It was light, refreshing and available from Shumë's in St. Neots – if there are any left.

Booze on the Ouse

Our beer, cider and perry festival will be taking place at the Comrades Club in Godmanchester, from Thursday 18th to Saturday 10th September. As usual, there will be a wide selection of ciders and perries. Come along and try some of them. For more details see our website:

hunts.camra.org.uk/festivals

calefactus siceræ

Midlands Train Journeys

I began my journey travelling by train from Peterborough to Nottingham. My first destination is one that I hadn't visited before but which I had heard good comments about.

Loughborough is 15 minutes from Nottingham by train, but this time I chose use the regular bus service which this takes you into the city centre in around 30 minutes.



White Hart (Churchgate)

I started at the [White Hart](#) (Churchgate) a single room pub, that serves 3 cask beers including one from the local Charnwood brewery as well as Timothy Taylors Landlord. On this occasion Charnwood Vixen 4% a very drinkable bitter was available. As a cider lover I spotted that they had three real ciders from Charnwood. The Special Reserve Dry 6% impressed greatly.

A brisk walk across the town centre took me to the [Amber Rooms](#) (The Rushes) a modern Wetherspoons pub which was busy on a Monday lunchtime. Alongside the regular beer offerings were several from Grainstore. I ordered a curry and chips and had a pint of Grainstore Triple B which was in good condition and enjoyed with the curry.

Just across the road is [Swan in the Rushes](#) a multi roomed traditional pub with a relatively unspoiled interior of historic interest, see the photographs on the CAMRA website. There were six cask beers on sale and I began with Little Brewing Loop Pale Ale. Shipstones Original was also tried and both beers found to be in good condition. Unfortunately, the Needles and Pins

micropub, which is almost next door, was closed but is recommended.

Heading back into the centre I passed several more closed pubs (always a problem early in the



week) and ended up at the [Organ Grinder](#) (Woodgate), a traditional pub with many original features. It has been the local CAMRA Pub of the Year for the past three years which is well

deserved. Owned by the local Blue Monkey brewery many of their cask beers are dispensed from the bank of handpumps on the bar. These include many different beer styles from which I chose the two dark ales. The Guerilla Stout 4.9% was excellent, and their Choco Mocha Coffee Stout 5% was the best beer of the day. There was also one guest beer which was Round Corner Market Pale which was also tried.

With several other good pubs in the town centre as well as the Moonface Brewery Tap another visit to Loughborough is needed. For railway fans the Great Central Railway is also worth a visit.

The next day I caught the train to Stoke on Trent changing at Derby. Stoke is not a town that I would normally visit for the pubs or beer. On return to Derby I visited [BOD Stoke](#) in a former waiting room at Stoke station. One of a number of BOD pubs owned by Titanic Brewery it is the only place that I know in Stoke with good beer. The pub/cafe can be reached from the road or an entrance on Platform 1. Four changing Titanic are usually available with Plum Porter being a regular. I started with Steerage 3.8% followed by Century 4.7%. The Plum Porter had to be tried so a half pint was ordered and enjoyed. Before

Midlands Train Journeys

catching the train back to Derby I had a look at the North Staffordshire Railway Memorial Arch on Platform 1 remembering the local railway workers who lost their lives in World War One.

Derby Station has several pubs within a few paces.



Almost opposite the station is the [Victoria Inn](#) (Midland Place) where up to nine cask beers can be found. This is a traditional two room pub, a small front room where the bar is and another larger room. I was told the landlord's favourite brewery is Leatherbritches so a number of their beers are always available. There were guests from Hollowstone and the local Little Brewing. I tried the Little Brewing Panther Oatmeal Stout which was delicious. As the Victoria is the local CAMRA branch Cider Pub of the Year I tried some of the real ciders there. Notable was the lack of any fruit flavoured ciders, which I think is to be encouraged. I tried the Rawlings Dry which was very good. This was followed by a cider from Dudda's Tun. Other cider makers whose products were available were Barbourne, Newton Court and Rich. Don't know why I hadn't visited here before.

A short walk away is the Alexandra Hotel (Siddals Road).



This is a traditional pub owned by Castle Rock with a number of their beers and several guests on sale. I started with one of the Castle Rock beers Nothing But Flowers IPA 4.2%, this was followed by Lenton Lane Pacific and Torrside Azucca. All of the beers were tip-top.



The pub has a lot of railway memorabilia on display including the cab of a Class 37 locomotive in the car park.

Midlands Train Journeys



Heading back towards the station is the [Brunswick Inn](#), home of Brunswick Brewery (Railway Terrace). This multi roomed pub opened in 1987 following the restoration of a row of Victorian railway cottages. Many Brunswick beers are sold and several from owners Everards. There are also several changing guest beers meaning that there is something for

everyone's tastes. I tried the Brunswick Triple Hop before heading back to the station. See photographs on the CAMRA website.

Not visited this time but well worth the ten minutes' walk is the Smithfield a traditional pub across the river. A varied selection of cask beers concentrates on smaller breweries and new beers. It's also ideal for bus fans as it is opposite the Trent Barton bus depot.

For anyone visiting Nottingham where good value hotel accommodation can usually be found the short train journey to either Loughborough or Derby is definitely recommended. There are good value advance rail ticket options available to both. Also Chesterfield is another destination nearby that is worth visiting for its choice of pubs and beer, and maybe featured in a future article.

Ian Baptist

ASK, "IS IT CASK?"

The launch of 'Fresh Ale' by Carlsberg Marston's Brewing Company (CMBC) is a handpump hijack, which misleads consumers into thinking they will be served a cask-conditioned beer - which is far from the case.

Serving so-called 'Fresh Ale' though a handpump also boots a genuine cask beer off the bar, depriving consumers of choice.

CMBC claim to champion cask beer but have instead closed breweries and removed cask lines from bars.

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Search for a pub or social club

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Help keep our information accurate!

Support an edit

CAMRA

Pub Companies

Pub Companies - Who They Are and What They Do

3. Pub Operating Models

According to the British Beer & Pub Association, in 2019 there were 47,600 pubs in the UK. Of these, 22,750 were free houses, 15,650 were tenanted or leased and 9,200 were managed. In this article, we'll look at the latter two categories along with a newish 'hybrid' model which the BBPA probably counts as a form of tenancy.

Tenancies

As a tenant, you rent the pub premises from a pub company or brewery and acquire the right to occupy the pub for an agreed period usually two to five years. You will generally be 'tied' for beer and other drinks i.e. you can only purchase the stock from the owning company though some companies offer partial or free of tie deals (but invariably demanding a higher rent for the privilege). You are self-employed and responsible for all the staff. Responsibility for building repairs will usually be confined to internal, non-structural work.

A big attraction of the tenancy is the relatively low cost of entry, though you still need around £15k to properly operate a start up; a downside is that if you build the business up you may well get no reward from the pub company other than an increased rent. Indeed, the 'reward' might be a refusal to renew the tenancy because, for instance, the company wants to take the now successful pub into direct management.

The Pubs Code of 2016 was designed to give tenants and lessees greater protection by requiring fair and lawful dealing by pub companies and ensuring that tied tenants were no worse off than if they were free of tie. We'll have a close look at how the Code is working out in a future article.

Leases

Having a lease means you're entitled to occupy the pub and run your business for a fixed term, often between 10 and 25 years. You'll still usually be tied for beer and other products and will be responsible for repairs, maintenance, insurance

and other running costs. Unlike with a tenancy, you have the option to sell the business, including a sum for goodwill.

Managed Houses

In this model, the pub is owned and operated by the pub company, who employ all the staff on the premises. The manager is likely to be eligible for performance-related bonuses in addition to his or her salary. Many managed pubs are branded e.g. Hungry Horse, Ember Inns, Slug & Lettuce.

The obvious advantage to the company is their complete control over every aspect of the operation. On the other hand, they incur all the costs and accept all the risks, instead of sharing those with a tenant or lessee.

Companies whose pubs are all or nearly all managed include Wetherspoons, Mitchells and Butlers, Sam Smiths and Loungers. Many other companies have a mix of models though the overall growth trend is definitely in the managed direction, especially if you include the next arrangement.

Retail Agreements

This is the new kid on the block and goes by a variety of names - Manchises (Management Franchises) being an increasingly common term. The model was pioneered by Marstons but most of the bigger companies have now adopted it, each with their own brand name e.g. Stonegate have Craft Union, Star Pubs & Bars have Just Add Talent and Greene King, Pub Ready. Unlike in conventional managed pubs, the licensee is supposedly self-employed. In most cases, their remuneration comes from a percentage (usually 18-20%) of the pub's net turnover. From this, as licensee, you pay yourself and all your staff plus incidentals like employer's liability insurance and Council Tax.

So, what freedom do you have to run your own business? In truth, not a lot. The pub company sets the opening hours and the prices, decides what products you sell, prescribes the menu for any food offer and provides all the equipment. You can also be chucked out at pretty short notice (immediately in the case of Just Add

Pub Companies

Talent). If there's a stock deficit then you're charged for it and these can be mysteriously large. The advantages for the licensee are the low incoming costs (Pub Ready require £5000), you get a roof over your head and have a prospect of making money. To do the last, though, you'd probably need to be taking over £10k a week. Urban, sports-oriented pubs seem to do best under this sort of regime. There are, though, many disgruntled ex licensees who found the scheme a quick way to lose their dosh try googling Sam Peeps Diary Marstons for a flavour.

The current number of these agreements is unknown but it has certainly been growing rapidly. Many tenants have been effectively thrown out of their pubs so that the company can convert the pub to what, for them, are more lucrative arrangements.

You can see why the companies love this model. It frees them from the responsibility of employing staff whilst retaining full control over what the pub actually does. However, there's suddenly a cloud on their horizon. Early in 2021, the Supreme Court ruled that Uber drivers were definitely not self-employed. The parallels with Retail Agreement licensees are striking and Her Majesty's Revenues and Customs are known to be taking a keen interest. Given the amount of control that the companies exert, can they really argue that these licensees are self-employed? Watch this space.



Is your local pub under threat?

CAMRA has the tools to help you save it

camra.org.uk/saveyourlocal



Photo credit: Stop Press Media / Alamy Stock Photo

Ever seen a Ginger Panther?

No, but we've tried one!

CAMRA, celebrating the
UK's best beers and pubs.

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amazing exploration of great
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160 CAMRA festivals.

Your membership supports the campaign to
preserve quality beer, cider and perry, along with
cherished pubs and clubs that bring us together.

Join CAMRA today
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Get £30
worth of beer
vouchers every
year as a single
member and £40
for joint
memberships!



FIND OUT MORE



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

September

Mon 1 - Sat 6 Histon Beer Festival, Red Lion, Histon, noon-11pm daily. See <https://histonbeerfestival.co.uk/>

Tue 16 Open branch meeting, Comrades Club, Godmanchester

Thu 18 - Sat 20 Booze on the Ouse. Comrades Club, Godmanchester

Wed 24 - Sat 27 St Albans Beer & Cider Festival

October

Wed 1 - Sat 4 Bedford Beer & Cider Festival

Sat 4 Post festival social (venue TBC)

Tue 21 Open branch meeting (venue TBC)

Mon 27 Oct - Sat 1 Nov Norwich Beer Festival

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

hunts.camra.org.uk/pubbeerfest.

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

socials@hunts.camra.org.uk.

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