

Opening Times



Huntingdonshire Branch of CAMRA

Issue 185

The Campaign for Real Ale

Winter 2025/2026

Crown & Pipes, Fenstanton

Reopened on Saturday 29th November - see page 2



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Pub News

White Swan, Bluntisham

The White Swan has reopened with new tenants

Dragon, Brampton

The Dragon is serving three cask ales, Timothy Taylor Landlord as a regular and two changing cask ales.

Racehorse, Catworth

The Racehorse, Catworth has closed.

Crown, Earith

The Crown, Earith has a new operator.

Old Sun, Eaton Socon



Following refurbishment, the pub is now run by a mother and daughter team as a 'Nest Pub' franchise, Greene King's

new operating model. Two cask ales are on sale, Greene King IPA and a changing offering.

White Horse, Eaton Socon



After a refurbishment, the White Horse has reopened yet again with new operators. The new husband

and wife team have reverted to a traditional pub food menu. They are offering two cask ales, Sharp's Doom Bar as a regular and a changing cask ale.

Crown & Pipes, Fenstanton

The Crown & Pipes reopened on Saturday 29th November. It is being run by Neil & Caroline who have previously run the White Swan in Conington and the Poacher in Elsworth.

Crown & Cushion, Great Grandsden

The pub's owner is appealing the planning decision which turned down his application to

convert the premises to a house. He has applied for a certificate to confirm that the property has been used as his home for the last four years. His application was opposed by the community group, and the application was refused.

Stukeley Country House Hotel, Great Stukeley

The pub has re-opened and is doing food.

Three Horseshoes, Houghton

Rumoured to be reopening soon.

Ese Lounge, Huntingdon

A new Afro-Caribbean restaurant that aims to be more "like a community centre".

Horseshoe, Offord D'Arcy

Now has a large container/portacabin which has been fitted out as a proper kitchen so they are proving a full menu including a Sunday carvery, a fish and chip night and a pizza night. The cask ales are changing regularly and Titanic Plum Porter has been on along with beers from Ivo Brewery. They are also hosting live music events.

Barn, St Ives

The bar appears to have finally opened after several 'false starts'. No cask beer.

Broadway Cellars, St Ives



This new wine bar and shop in the former Wadworth wine merchants building opened in October, run by the same

management team that run the Pheasant at Keyston. It is hoped that some cask beer will be available.

Taproom, St Ives

This bar is now stocking keg beer from IVO Brewery.

Whisky Café, St Ives

Was voted as New Restaurant of the Year for 2025 in the London and South East England

Pub and Brewery News

category at the Prestige Awards in London, and the E2 Media Award of Excellence 2025 as the Restaurant and Bar of the Year.

White Hart, St Ives

The White Hart, St Ives reopened after a short closure with new tenants. Cask beer is occasionally offered.

Corner House, St Neots



The Corner House in the Market Square is expected to reopen as **Madison's** in early December.

Saints Pool and Sports Club, St Neots

Opened on September 20th giving people a chance to play pool and watch live sport. It currently serves Greene King cask beer.

Smiling Grape, St Neots

Is now called **Low Cost Beer** and is now operating online only.

Duncombe Arms, Waresley

The Duncombe Arms, Waresley has reopened.

Brewery News

Papworth, Earith

They won a gold award in the East Anglia/East Central Region Champion Beer of Britain Competition judging for Koura, their wheat beer and this will now go forward to the national judging.

Hesketh Cider

Are a new cider producer based in Guilden Morden

Wheatsheaf

The Wheatsheaf Brewery in Huntingdon is closing. They held their last popup tap room on Saturday 29th November, which was very well attended with three cask ales being offered as well as six bottled beers.

Obituary - Jeremy 'Jerry' Peter Schonfeldt

Huntingdonshire recently lost one of its best known pub licensees when Jerry passed away on 13th October aged 81. He retired from the licensed trade several years ago but was well known to CAMRA members and regulars at the Oliver Cromwell in St Ives where he presided over the bar for many years before finally selling the pub to Charles Wells in 2019.

Prior to buying and running the Oliver Cromwell, Jerry was licensee of Greene King's now closed King William IV in Fenstanton.

In addition to being well known in the licensed trade he became active in the community following his retirement. Jerry served as a Councillor on Fenstanton Village Council for a number of years as well as being a director of the St Ives Corn Exchange. This included organising the beer festival at the Corn Exchange in April 2024.

In 2019 the Huntingdonshire CAMRA Branch presented Jerry with a Lifetime Achievement Award.

His funeral was held in Fenstanton where a large number of his family and friends gathered to see him off. This was followed by a wake at the White Swan in Conington where his son Richard is the licensee.

Jerry is survived by his daughters Joanne and Natasha and his son Richard to whom we send our condolences.

Watch Out Gulls Are About

For my latest trip I caught the train to the great city of Bristol. A fantastic city for traditional pubs with a good selection of micro pubs as well. As well as having a lively beer scene Bristol also claims to be the world's capital of cider. The recent 'Cider City' event showcased some of the UK's best real cider's and perry's.

Unfortunately, while most of the pubs sell cider this is often from larger producers such as Thatchers and Westons, with Lilley's fruit ciders frequently the only cider available. The smaller producers who use traditional processes are often overlooked but there are a number of pubs where their cider and perry can be found.



In the city centre is The Apple on Welsh Back. This is a former Dutch barge, think Charters in Peterborough with cider instead of beer. The main bar is on the boat but there is also an outside bar that is open in the summer months.



With plenty of tables on the quayside I sat in the evening sun while I tried some of the 18

traditional cider's and perries available. These are mainly from medium size producers with Branch Hecks, Ilford, Rich's and Wilkins among those represented. Most were in 20ltr boxes with some in tubs. Among those tried the Tricky Wizard 6.5% and Wilkins Farmhouse at 6% stood out.

South of the river it is a good walk along the dockside to Spike Island where you will find the SS Great Britain which is well worth a visit.



My target however was the nearby Orchard Inn. This is a traditional pub and the current Bristol CAMRA Cider Pub of the Year. The selection here isn't as large as at The Apple but includes ciders from smaller producers both local and from further away.

The fifteen to choose from included ciders from Issac, Crossland, Hecks and Rich's among others. I also tried the local Barley Wood Long Lane as well as Issac Anti Gravity and Lukes Queen Dab all from producers that were new to me.

I visited a number of pubs in the area of Bristol between the city centre and my hotel near Temple Meads Station. Some of these according to the CAMRA website have real cider on sale but in most cases this was only Lilley's fruit varieties (which is not classified by CAMRA as real cider).

The Kings Head sells just one traditional cider. On this occasion there was Ross on Wye Perry 6.5% which was refreshing, and excellent. The cask beer was also good here and included two from owner Good Chemistry Brewery. The pub

Watch Out Gulls Are About



which has a historic interior with many original features was runner up in the CAMRA Pub Saving Heritage Award in 2025. There are many photographs on the CAMRA website

which I recommend you look at. It is well worth a visit if you are ever in Bristol.

There are other recommended pubs which sell cider in the Bristol City area but with just one spare day I decided that a visit to Weston-super-Mare would be a good idea. I hadn't been to Weston for over ten years but had been told that there had been a vast improvement in the availability of cask beer and cider since. I was not to be disappointed.

Weston can be reached by direct train from Bristol but I decided to catch the X1 bus from the bus station. The journey is just over an hour depending on traffic conditions. On arrival I headed for the High Street where three venues at the north end were recommended. The Brit Bar (formerly The Britannia) is a traditional pub that is one of Westons live music venues. There are five handpumps serving cask beers from local breweries. I tried the Electric Bear Bob's Your Uncle 5.4%. Also available were beers from Hop Union, Bristol Beer Factory, Gloucester and Cheddar breweries. The only ciders were from Dorset Nectar and Lilley's.

Next stop was at the Fat Head Micro Pub and Brewery which is in a former shop unit. The brewery which celebrated its second anniversary in September can be seen at the rear of the pub.



Two Fat Head cask beers were available, The Mandarin Pale Ale 4.0% and Rapture ESB 5.0%. The one guest cask was Cascade Kveik IPA from Three Acre. Several keg beers from Fat Head were also available. There only cider was from Lilley's.

As my next target wasn't yet open I made a short detour to the seafront. The Cabot Court Hotel is a Wetherspoons pub and hotel with sea views. The cask beer range here was better than that at many of their other pubs. There were two beers from Exeter Brewery. Prince of Darkness and 'Fraid Not, plus one each from Hop Union and Brightside alongside the regular beers.

With The Black Cat micropub now open I headed back to the High Street. This is the runner up as Bristol CAMRA Cider Pub of the Year 2025. A black board lists the many ciders that are on sale. Most are traditional 'Bag in Box' ciders with local producers well represented.

Watch Out Gulls Are About



My preference is for dry cider and there was a good selection of these available. Among those that I tried were Cotswold No Brainer, Crossman's Mayfield, Ilford Sahara and Ross on Wye Harry Brown. All were top notch. One laudable thing that I noticed is that the ciders can be blended to suit your taste, something that I haven't seen before.

Beer drinkers are well catered for with Draught Bass, Glastonbury Best Bitter and Quantock Sauvign Sunshine on sale.

There had been several heavy rain showers while I was in the Black Cat which had now passed by so I took a stroll along the promenade to get back to the bus interchange. There are a number of other good pubs in Weston so another visit to this seaside town is required.



In Bristol I stayed at the IBIS hotel in the Temple Meads area. This hotel is handy for visiting the many breweries and tap rooms in the central

area which may be the subject of a future article. Mention must be made of the beers available in the hotels bar. Normally chain hotels may offer the likes of Camden or premium foreign beers. Here several beers are from the nearby Moor Brewery including their Stout and Resonance Pale Ale. Although not cask conditioned the stout was really good. The bar manager was proud to sell the local beers and also recommended a visit to the Little Martha Brewery which is even closer to the hotel.

Finally if you are wondering about the title for this article the city is famous for its aggressive gulls which as well as pinching your fish and chips may also even try to sip your beer.

Ian Baptist

A screenshot of the CAMRA.org.uk website. The browser address bar shows 'Help power CAMRA.org.uk'. The main content area features a search bar with the text 'Search for a pub or social club'. Below the search bar, there is a call to action: 'Help keep our information accurate! Please let us know if you see any errors or missing details! Help us keep our pub & club information accurate by sharing any corrections or updates you find.' There is a 'Support an edit' button with a mouse cursor over it. To the right, there is a green circle with the text 'Scroll down to suggest an edit'. At the bottom, there is another green circle with the text 'Help update our pub data' and a laptop icon showing a data entry form. The CAMRA logo is visible at the bottom left of the page.

Ever seen a Ginger Panther?

No, but we've tried one!

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

Join CAMRA and go on an
amazing exploration of great
beers and pubs in the UK.

Discover benefits, discounts and tools
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the beers you love and the great pubs that
serve them. You also save on entry to over
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Your membership supports the campaign to
preserve quality beer, cider and perry, along with
cherished pubs and clubs that bring us together.

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camra.org.uk/join



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



Pub Companies - How They Make Money

Introduction

It goes without saying that pub companies are first and foremost businesses whose main objective is to make money. There is no reason, though, why they cannot both be profitable and offer customers great pub experiences, either directly or via their tenants/lessees. Also, pubs are not just businesses; they are an integral part of our social network so community responsibilities are attached to their ownership (and hence the protections afforded to pubs by the planning system). Some companies have been accused of putting short-term profit ahead of long-term commitment to their pub estates – and we'll return to this in a later article.

Managed Pubs

We saw in the previous article that pub companies are increasing the number of pubs they manage, either directly or through retail agreements. The advantage for them is control over every aspect of the pub operation – stock, pricing, staffing, opening hours, décor and so on. The bigger companies can use their buying power to command significant discounts from suppliers, including brewers. They can standardise elements of the customer offer, like menus, which also bring economies of scale. Efficient practices can be identified and then applied across every outlet.

The danger, of course, is that pubs become identikit and certainly some branded operations are pretty much the same wherever in the country you find them with choice and character being sacrificed to conformity. Other companies, though, take great care to ensure the individuality of their pubs, notably by the way they are designed and fitted out – so a balance can be achieved. It must also be said that many customers value consistency and like to know in advance what they can expect to get.

Tenanted/Leased Pubs

Companies derive income from their tenants/lessees in two main ways – 'dry' rent and 'wet'

rent.

The dry rent is what you pay to occupy the building. Typically, there will be an initial deposit then a monthly rent, agreed for a three to five year term. Pub companies claim that their rent levels will generally be lower than the market rent for an equivalent non-pub property and so represent a relatively low-cost entry to a business that also provides a roof over your head. In fact, surveys by the Association of Licensed Multiple Retailers show that rent as a proportion of turnover (the key figure) is on average higher for tied pubs than free-of-tie leased pubs. The rent will be reviewed at the end of the term; we'll come back to the issues that can arise in a future article.

The wet rent is what you pay the company for beer and other supplies. As a tenant, you'll normally be 'tied' to the company and obliged to buy the products they offer at the prices they ask. With beer, for instance, that price will usually be 50%-100% higher than the free trade price. The company, because of its bulk buying powers, will pay less than that price so the profit for them from this income source is considerable – a minimum of £210 per barrel. Some companies offer free-of-tie tenancies and tenants can also try to use the Pubs Code (more later) to obtain freedom from the tie – but in both cases, the quid pro quo will often be a significant increase in the dry rent.

There are other ways in which companies can extract money from tenants/lessees but, again, we'll get onto these later.

Pub Disposals

Pubs often occupy attractive, well-located buildings. In many cases, particularly in villages, they are worth hugely more as houses than as pubs. Others are on large plots of land which make them attractive to developers. A little while ago, over a hundred pubs a year were being lost in conversions to convenience stores, mainly in suburban areas. The temptation for pub companies has been to capitalise on their assets and flog off pubs to make a quick profit.

Pub Companies

Fortunately, and thanks to campaigning by CAMRA and others, it's now more difficult to do this, in England at least (the planning laws are less helpful in the rest of the UK). Before 2017, planning permission wasn't needed to demolish a pub or convert it to a restaurant, a shop or most kinds of office. A change in the law means that consent is now required for any change of use or demolition. Pub losses have fallen greatly since then despite all the recent difficulties for the trade. Where a pub is clearly valued by the local community, CAMRA will always support objections to unwanted planning applications. On the other hand, it must be acknowledged that some pubs find themselves in the wrong place at the wrong time, because the previous clientele is no longer there or because of demographic changes in the area, and change of use in these circumstances would be reasonable and even welcome.

The Pandemic

The pandemic has, of course, hit both pub companies and their tenants/lessees hard. Stonegate, for instance, reported a loss of £746m for the year ending 27/9/20.

Some pub companies have been criticised for their attitude to rent reductions or payment holidays for their tenants. Others, like Admiral Taverns, behaved better, cancelling rents for three months during the crisis.

At the time of writing (August 2021), things were looking up for the trade generally and demand for pubs, both in the free trade and tenanted arenas, was reported to be healthy. Running pubs can (and should) be a profitable business but, as campaigners, we want all pub companies to appreciate that they are custodians of a much-loved British institution and to behave accordingly.



Is your local pub under threat?

CAMRA has the tools to help you save it

camra.org.uk/saveyourlocal



Campaign
for
Real Ale

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

December

Wed 10 - Sat 13 - Cambridge CAMRA Winter Beer Festival, Corn Exchange, Cambridge, see cambridgebeerfestival.com/

Sun 21 - **St Neots Christmas Beer Shopping**, for timings and route see hunts.camra.org.uk/diary

January

Tue 13 - **Open Branch Meeting** - Huntingdon TBC

Sat 24 - **Rural Pub beer scoring trip**

February

Thu 5 - Sat 7 - Booze in The Pews, All Saints Parish Church, St Ives

Fri 6 - Sat 7 - Elysian CAMRA Winter Beer Festival, The Maltings, Ely

Sat 21 - **Walking social in Branch area**

March

Sat 14 - **Walking social in Cambridge**

Tue 31 - **Open Branch Meeting** - Three Horseshoes, Graveley

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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Deadline for the Spring 2026 issue (186) is Monday 23rd February 2026. Publication on Sunday 1st March.

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