

FALCON



CAMPAIGN
FOR
REAL ALE

Opening Times



Huntingdonshire Branch of CAMRA

Issue 162

The Campaign for Real Ale

Spring 2015

WEDDY SCAMERON YE TA ELL E DOCTI PUBLICAD MY BEEPS YE OLDE BEERE SHOPPE
WERE YE LADYES LIFF TOU POPPE IHAVE A DRODDE SOMETHIN HOTTER DOR

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Chairman's Chatter



Hello and a very warm welcome to the first 2015 issue of Opening Times, the magazine of the Huntingdonshire branch of Campaign for Real Ale (CAMRA).

The last year was a significant one for the branch as we celebrated our 40th Anniversary in November. A birthday party was held at the Hog & Partridge in St Neots and a report from this can be found on page 4.

However, as 2014 drew to a close there were other important events to celebrate. We were delighted to see the reopening of two treasured pubs in the branch area just before Christmas. Firstly, the historic Falcon in Huntingdon opened its doors to customers after a six year closure (see page 13). This was followed almost immediately by the Mermaid at Ellington (see page 8).

So, after many years of pub closures, are we seeing the trend reversing? Well, some pubs were lost over the last year and in particular the threat from conversion to supermarkets remains high. However, some of these large retailing companies had their own problems in 2014, so the threat could lessen moving forwards. The subject of pub closures does seem to be attracting media attention, including recent features on Radio 5 Live and ITV's Tonight programme.

The announcement in the Chancellor's Autumn Statement of an extension to small business rate relief and an additional £500 business rates reduction for most pubs in England must be good news. The effect of recent legislative changes to introduce a market rent only option for licensees tied to the large pub companies has yet to be seen. However, the option of buying beer on the open market at competitive prices should help keep pubs open and ensure the cost of a pint remains affordable to pub-goers. The large pub companies will no longer

be able to charge their tenants prices up to 60 pence a pint higher than on the open market.

Locally we saw a good number of pubs reopen last year after differing periods of closure. In addition to the Falcon and Mermaid, these included the No 77 in Caxton (formerly the Cross Keys), the Belle in Bassingbourn (formerly the Pear Tree), the Eight Bells in Abbotsley and the Black Bull in Godmanchester. In the future, JD Wetherspoon has plans to open new pubs in both Huntingdon and St Ives, although the schedules for these conversions have still to be established. And how long before the first micropub arrives in Huntingdonshire?

Additionally, the number of commercial microbreweries continues to increase. The 2015 edition of CAMRA's Good Beer Guide lists 1,285 UK breweries. This is the highest number since the 1940s and represents 10% growth for the last two years running. The UK now has more breweries per head of population than any other country in the world. In Huntingdonshire, TinShed launched last year in Kimbolton with some tasty brews and a new brewery is expected to open in St Ives early this year. These breweries can only thrive if there are sufficient outlets available to serve their beers.

Maybe we don't yet have enough evidence to say that the pub closure trend has reversed, but it certainly looks to have slowed. My personal view is that the picture is looking rosier within the branch area and we should be optimistic, whilst remaining vigilant.

If you have any news to share regarding local pubs and breweries, please email news@huntscamra.org.uk or contact us via Twitter (@HuntsCAMRA) or Facebook (www.facebook.com/HuntingdonshireCAMRA).

Hope to see you at the St Neots 'Booze on the Ouse' Beer and Cider Festival in March (see page 12).

Cheers, until next time, Richard

40th Birthday Party

Huntingdonshire CAMRA's 40th Birthday Party was held at the Hog & Partridge, St Neots on Friday 14th November.

The St Neots branch of CAMRA was founded in 1974 after a meeting, organised by George Cottam and Dave Cox, was held at the Blue Ball, in Russell Street, just a few yards from the Hog & Partridge. Sadly the Blue Ball closed many years ago.

George Cottam and Dave Cox are pictured below (Dave on the left, George on the right).



The party was attended by 52 CAMRA members (47 local branch members and 5 from other branches).

The favourite ales of the night were Potbelly Bellowhead (which sold out) and Grainstore 1050 (which almost sold out).

Large quantities of other ales were enjoyed: Red Brewery Cottam & Cox (a special brew for the night, in honour of our founding members); Batemans Whiskers; and Elgood's Black Dog. Also on sale were Southwark London Pale Ale (LPA) and Clarks Traditional.

The favourite cider of the night was Pickled Pig New Season Porker, and Potton Press Discovery was also enjoyed.

Prices started at 15p a pint (as 1974 prices). The price per pint then increased during the night with inflation: 75p (1984); £1.50 (1994), £2.10 (2004), finishing with current prices (less the 40p per pint CAMRA discount normally offered by the Hog & Partridge).

These fun prices were made possible by generous donations from : Potbelly, Batemans, Pickled Pig Cider and the Red Brewery. The following all gave some discounts for the night: Elgood's; Grainstore and Potton Press Cider.

A buffet was enjoyed by all. Some members played traditional games while others met old friends and some made new friends.

John Nunn, his wife Gillian and their son Brett staffed the event to keep the cost of the evening to a minimum. This helped with the 'silly' prices. The Huntingdonshire branch would like to thank John and his family for all their efforts to make this event so memorable and enjoyable.

A raffle was held on the night and 'everyone was a winner'. All partygoers staggered home with a prize raising £216.50 for the Cambridge Unit of the Teenage Cancer Trust.

Prizes were generously donated by the following: Potton Press Cider, Pickled Pig Cider, Potbelly, Grainstore, Cromwell Cider, Greene King, Buckden Brewery, Batemans, Star Brewery, Elgoods, TinShed.





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A Look Back In Time

10 Years Ago

In the spring of 2005, Huntingdonshire CAMRA held a Belgian beer tasting and a walking tour of the pubs of St Ives - and there was a trip to Adnams brewery. Meetings were held at the Three Horseshoes at Abbots Ripton and Royal Oak, Hail Weston.



The branch annual general meeting was held at the **Rivermill Tavern in Eaton Socon**.

CAMRA updated and re-launched its 'Public House Viability Test', a document aimed at helping local authorities to ensure that the potential viability of pubs could be considered in determining planning applications for change of use of pubs.



The **King of the Belgians at Hartford** was saved from closure. Huntingdonshire CAMRA had been supporting a local action

group opposing plans for change of use. CAMRA committee members Kathy Hadfield-Moorhouse and Paul Moorhouse spoke at a packed public meeting at which the town council agreed to recommend refusal of a planning application, by the then owners, for conversion of the pub to housing. CAMRA also submitted objections to the district council and contributed to the action group's briefing paper for the council planners, pointing out the important social role provided by the King of the Belgians as a community-focussed local. The council refused planning permission after receiving evidence of its likely viability and local demand for its continuation as a pub, including the fact

that the then licensee Jamie McAulay had put in a formal request to buy the pub as a going concern.

CAMRA introduced a new beer category, 'Golden Ales', for its Champion Beer of Britain awards. A new wave of golden beers, largely aimed at converting lager drinkers, had begun in the 1990s with real ales such as Hopback Summer Lightning, providing refreshing, relatively light-bodied, hop-based beers whose wide appeal meant that they gradually began to oust traditional darker, more malty and full-bodied bitters from the top awards in the bitter categories. A separate golden ales category was aimed at ensuring that traditional bitters were not overlooked, by categorising them separately in CAMRA's competition.



The Queens Head at Needingworth reopened after a major expansion, with new areas for dining and drinks service;

Marstons Pedigree and Greene King IPA were the real ales on offer.



Bedford brewer Charles Wells bought the **Leeds Arms at Eltisley**, and leased it to the then lessee of the Dagoon at Brampton.

The government's Competition Commission blocked a proposed merger between the cellar service providers owned by three multinational brewers, Scottish Courage, Carlsberg and Coors, that would have controlled 60% of the UK's pub cellars.

A Look Back In Time

25 Years Ago

There was a branch social at two pubs to the east of St Neots, the Leeds Arms at Eltisley and the Spread Eagle at Croxton, and a joint social with North Bedfordshire branch around the pubs of Eaton Socon.



The branch annual general meeting was held at the **Royal Oak at Hail Weston**.



St Neots CAMRA presented a certificate to the **Wheatsheaf in St Neots** to salute its tenth listing in CAMRA's annual Good Beer Guide. The Wheatsheaf was closed in December 1998.

CAMRA called for a brewery merger between Courage and Grand Metropolitan, owners of the Watney brewing group, to be referred to the government's Monopolies and Mergers Commission on the grounds that it would be anti-competitive and would create a single brewer with 18% of the UK beer market. In the proposed merger, the Courage group, owned by Australian brewing group Elders IXL, would swap its 5,000 Courage and John Smiths pubs for Grand Metropolitan's breweries.

CAMRA held its 1990 annual general meeting in Norwich. Motions debated included three in opposition to CAMRA's use of star ratings for real ales and the 'wine bar image' engendered by the use of 'flowery words' in CAMRA's tasting notes published in its Good Beer Guide. The meeting elected Christine Cryne, Paul Moorhouse, Steve Parry and Sarah Edmondson

to CAMRA's national executive.



Brewing group Whitbread put the **Higsons brewery** in Liverpool up for sale, around a month after buying it along with the other

Boddingtons group breweries. In response to the announcement, CAMRA instigated a boycott of Whitbread, and a boycott pledge, signed by 11,200 people, was handed in to Whitbread at the Boddingtons brewery at Strangeways, Manchester.

Marston's announced plans to expand its production capacity for Pedigree bitter and three

other beers by installing four new and larger **Burton Union sets** to augment the existing eight sets at its brewery in Burton-on Trent.



This would guarantee the continuation of an historic brewing technique, unique to Burton pale ales such as Pedigree, using the Burton Union sets, in which beer is fermented in parallel rows of large oak casks linked by swan-neck pipes and a central trough.

The Control Securities group, owners of the Belhaven brewery near Dunbar, Scotland, and an estate of former Allied Breweries and Watney pubs in southern England, bought a further 220 pubs from Grand Metropolitan, mostly in London and the South East.

Pub Pieces

Mermaid, Ellington

Nick, Ann and Richard Marriott have purchased the freehold of the Mermaid at Ellington, an old and neglected but beautiful 17th century public house. The pub has had many owners over the years but unfortunately it has been closed since February 2014. This was a huge blow to the social being of the local residents, and there is massive local support from the surrounding villages for the reopening of the pub.

Being of such an age, the building needs some revitalising and reinforcement. Under the many owners it has housed, it has been through many adaptations and additions. The new owners want to bring back the natural essence of the building and allow it to breathe again. They are currently refurbishing the pub - an exciting and busy project.

Nick is a chef by trade and has extensive experience, including the Paris House in Woburn, the Grove in Watford and the Plough in Bolnhurst. The plan is to invest that experience to create something truly special and give back what the Mermaid at Ellington deserves as an aesthetically natural and warm public house, offering imaginative food, and quality real ales.

They plan to have the kitchen refurbished and start serving food soon with a targeted grand opening date of 25th of January, Burns Night.

They are currently opening the bar every evening to allow the villagers to once again



meet and enjoy a drink at the Mermaid with friends and family. They warmly invite all to come and see their progress to date.

Around and About

The licence for the **Oliver Cromwell in St Ives**



has been renewed with new conditions requiring CCTV and additional staff to ensure that customers are not allowed to drink outside the pub in the residential

street. Owner and licensee Jerry Schoenfeldt will be handing over to his son, Richard, within the next year.

Welcome to Steve Bird and Carol Moffit, the new tenants of the **Dragoon in Brampton**. Currently they are offering Wells Eagle and Bombardier, but they hope to offer guest beers in the future.

The **Saddle, Kimbolton** is currently offering St Austell Proper Job, Trelawny and Tribute, as well as Star Meteor.

The **Addison Arms, Glatton** is now offering a



permanent Nene Valley brewery beer alongside the permanent from Digfield brewery. In rotation the pub will offer a different dark

beer from the Nene Valley range: Dark Horse, Starless Stout, and the award winning Bible Black Porter. In addition, the pub now offers Cromwell Oliver's Choice cider.

The **Alconbury Manor House** is another addition to the list of local pubs offering real cider. Recently on offer were Weston's Old Rosie and Wild Root.

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Half Pints

Micropubs

Over 100 'micropubs' are trading in the UK, following the opening of the Lanes in Dover in December 2014.

Martyn Hillier opened the country's first micropub, the Butcher's Arms,

Herne, Kent in November 2005 and addressed CAMRA's annual conference in Eastbourne in 2009 about his new concept – low overheads through the use of small premises, and focussing on conversation and real ale.

Locally, the Bank micropub in Willingham is run

in a former Lloyds bank by Linda and Chris Warren. Here, typically three or four cask beers are offered, often featuring beers from Adnams.

The Bank opens on

Tuesday to Saturday evenings, but Chris is giving up his day job as the village postmaster at the post office next door, and Willingham locals are hoping for a resulting increase in opening times for the Bank.

PubCo Reform

MPs voted last November to introduce a market rent only option for licensees tied to the large pub companies. The Government was defeated by 284 votes to 259 with MPs from all parties voting in favour of a new clause to the Small Business Bill that will empower pub company licensees to choose between a tied agreement and a market rent only agreement that will allow them to buy beer on the open market.

CAMRA Chief Executive Tim Page welcomed the news: 'After over ten years of campaigning for such a move by CAMRA, allowing over

13,000 pub tenants tied to the large pub companies the option of buying beer on the open market at competitive prices will help keep pubs open and ensure the cost of a pint to consumers remains affordable.'

CAMRA welcomed an extension of small business rate relief and an additional £500 business rates reduction for most pubs in England in the Chancellor's Autumn Statement. CAMRA Head of Communications Tom Stainer said 'Business rates are a significant burden on pubs and so these announcements will help keep pubs open, boost investment and ensure consumers continue to benefit from great pubs.'

Assets of Community Value

Over 600 pubs are now listed as Assets of Community Value in England, following a CAMRA campaign to encourage local groups to register pubs as ACVs. The Government introduced ACVs to help retain valued community assets such as pubs by providing communities with an opportunity to bid for a property if the owner intends to sell.

But Tom Stainer, CAMRA's Head of Communications, warned that the scheme is 'undermined by rules that allow pubs to be converted into supermarket convenience stores and a wide range of other retail uses, without any need for a planning application.' Evidence collated by CAMRA earlier this year revealed that two pubs a week are being converted into supermarkets and convenience stores. CAMRA's 'Pubs Matter' campaign asks the Government to close the current loopholes and ensure planning permission is always required to convert a pub to other uses'.

Gluten-Free Beer

A gluten-free brewery is to open in Scotland later this year. The Bellfield brewery aims to produce a range of Coeliac UK-accredited gluten-free beers, to include an IPA, a stout and a lager.

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St Neots Beer & Cider Festival



OPENING TIMES

Thu 12th - Sat 14th March

Thursday 13th: 5pm–11pm

Friday 14th: 12 noon–11pm

Saturday 15th: 12 noon–10pm.

ADMISSION

Thu: From 5pm £2.

Fri: Before 5pm: £1; After 5pm £3.

Sat: Before 5pm: £2; After 5pm £1.

Families welcome until 8pm.

No entry or re-admission after 10.30pm.

Free entry to CAMRA members at all sessions

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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.

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 355893, or andy.shaw@huntscamra.org.uk.

Contact Information

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

Also visit our web site for updates

www.hunts.camra.org.uk/festivals.

Falcon, Huntingdon



Christmas came early this year. On Monday 22nd December, the the Falcon in the Market Square, Huntingdon, reopened after being closed for six long years.

Like a pheonix rising from the ashes, the Falcon is a wondrous sight to behold. So many photos have

been posted to indicate the appalling state that the pub had fallen into. So much needed to be done - 'could the Falcon ever reopen' was the question we were all starting to ask.

The reason for the concern was that the Falcon is thought to be Huntingdon's oldest and most historic pub, most notably as it is said to have been a recruiting centre for Cromwell's cavalry, part of the New Model Army formed during the English Civil War.

In the end the committment to tackle an apparently impossible task is so very often a matter of confidence, and an existing reputation so often the basis of that confidence.

The new lease holder of the Falcon is Paul Hepworth. Paul has run the very successful Olde England in Northampton as a special real ale pub for several years. The Olde England offers up to 20 real ales, including a number of LocAles from Great Oakley, Potbelly and others.



The Olde England is a very successful pub.

Some months ago, Paul took the lease of a run down pub in Wellingborough, formerly the Swan in Silver Street, and renamed it the Olde England 2. This pub now becoming very popular.



So much as been done to bring the Falcon back to life, and much more is planned: new flooring and wall pannelling, a decent cellar - and the pub is already humming.

Over the next three months an upstairs function room will be renovated, good pub food will be served from March/April, and a front room with darts and bar billiards is a longer term plan.

Right now the the Falcon offers 15 real ales on handpump, including at least five LocAles from breweries like Phipps, Nobbys, Potbelly, Julian Church and Great Oakley.

At least 10 real ciders are available, from producers like Gwynt Y Ddraig, Lilly's and Westons. Also on offer are craft keg beers like Revisionist Craft Lager and Shipyard American Pale Ale.

With experienced manager Stuart Everitt at the helm, we believe the Falcon has an exciting future. We encourage you to see for yourselves.



Top of the Hops!

My Countdown of the Best British Beer Names

As a regular volunteer at CAMRA beer festivals, I've noticed that the first beers to sell out are often not the best tasting or highest quality, but tend to be those with an unusual or humorous name.

The names usually feature a terrible pun or dreadful innuendo and sometimes both, whilst the beers can range from well-known, regularly available ales to seasonal brews and one-off specials.

As a matter of taste, some of the more obvious names have been excluded from my chart (eg Wychwood's The Dogs Bollocks and the Fuzzy Duck beers, Pheasant Plucker and Cunning Stunt). Similarly, our local Son of Sid's Golden Shower didn't quite make it on to the list.

Christmas seems to bring out the best (or perhaps that should be worst) in beer names, with the following spotted over the last few festive seasons: B&T Santa's Slayer, Broughton Santa's Stout, Caledonian Elf Esteem, Fat Cat Santa's Paws, Fuzzy Duck Elf and Safety, Mighty Oak Santa's Blotto and even Vale Brewery Good King Senseless (sorry about that one!).

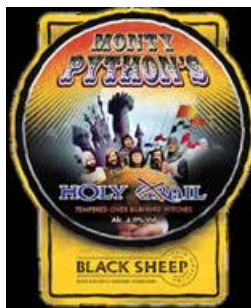


However, my countdown starts at **Number 10** with our choice of the best name for a Christmas beer which is Ridgeway **Seriously Bad Elf**. This is a bottle-conditioned interpretation of a Belgian Tripel, weighing in at a hearty 9% ABV, so too many of these may indeed necessitate a trip to the doctor.

In at **Number 9** is perhaps the most famous beer on the list; **Theakston Old Peculier**. The name pays tribute to the unique ecclesiastical status of Masham (the North Yorkshire



town where it's brewed) as a 'Court of the Peculier.' It may also be a reference to the characteristic kaleidoscope of strong, rich sweet flavours in the beer.



Almost exclusively now only seen in bottles, our **Number 8** is Black Sheep **Holy Grail**. This was specially commissioned to commemorate the 30th anniversary of Monty Python in 1999 and like the Pythons is still going strong more than 15 years later.

Keswick Brewery's **Thirst Ascent** is my **Number 7**. This more subtly named beer is brewed for those celebrating conquering Scafell Pike, England's highest peak. Golden in colour, it's a refreshing bitter that serves as an excellent post-climb therapy. Keswick also brew many other beers which feature 'Thirst' in the title; some of the best are Thirst Love for Valentine's Day, Thirst Light for Spring, Thirst Blood for Halloween and, of course, Thirst Noel for Christmas!



At **Number 6**, is Britain's oldest brewer, Shepherd Neame, with **Bishop's Finger**. Contrary to some speculation, this beer takes its name from the finger-shaped signposts which pointed pilgrims on their way to the tomb of Thomas a Becket in Canterbury. It was the first strong ale to be



Top of the Hops!

brewed by Shepherd Neame after malt rationing was eased in the late 1950s.

A traditional Yorkshire brown session bitter comes in at **Number 5** with **No Eye Deer** from Keighley's Goose Eye Brewery. It's a well-balanced mix of malt and hops with a pleasingly bitter finish. Definitely worth seeking out.



And I remain in Yorkshire for **Number 4** with **Daleside Old Legover**. A tongue in cheek name for a well-balanced mid brown refreshing beer that leads to an equally well-balanced fruity bitter aftertaste. The name actually comes from a type of style common in the Harrogate area which will be familiar to experienced ramblers.



And before I get on to my top three, here's a small selection of beers bubbling under that just missed the cut this time: Harvieston Old Engine Oil and Bitter & Twisted, Hebridean Berserker, Hog's Back A over T, Orkney Skull Splitter, Purple Moose Dark Side of the Moose, Wolf Granny Wouldn't Like It and Woodforde Headcracker.



So back to my charts and at **Number 3** is Loch Ness Brewery, which is a small brewery based in Drumadrochit on the shores of Loch Ness. Most of their beers have 'Ness' somewhere in the title, such as Light Ness, Dark Ness and the very

aptly named Hoppy Ness. However, for me the winner just has to be the special ale brewed for the Strangers' Bar in the Houses of Parliament, simply titled **Ness Minister**.

The runner-up on my list has to come from the Blue Monkey brewery, which takes its name from the flickering blue flames seen climbing into the night sky when coal-fired blast furnaces were in full flow. Most Blue Monkey beers are named using terms associated with our Simian relatives. Examples include the refreshing BG Sips, the revolutionary Guerrilla, the tuneful Funky Gibbon and the cinematic Right Turn Clyde. But my



Number 2 just has to be **99 Red Baboons** which has a fabulous combination of fruity hoppyness, together with a dark, malty side. It's certainly no one-hit wonder.

And finally pub-pickers, I reach the top of my charts and for my **Number 1**, we're heading back north of the border. Our winner is Spey Stout from Spey Valley Brewery. That's a great name for a great beer, which is a good thick dark malty stout with a smoky background. And at 5.4% ABV, can we suggest that you don't over indulge or you will indeed be **Spey Stout!**



Disagree with my chart? Not seen your favourite beer name here? Then please let me know and I'll publish the best in the next issue. And I might even order them for our 'Booze on the Ouse' festivals!

Richard Harrison

Inns and Meals Out

We thought that it was about time that we discovered and reported on what food was being offered by the pubs in Huntingdonshire. It's always good to have an excuse to eat out.

In November three of us, myself, my husband Andy Shaw, and branch Chairman Richard Harrison, visited the **Three Horseshoes in Wistow** for a few pints and a meal.



As you enter the pub lobby from the car park, the restaurant is in a cosy traditional

room through the first door on the left, while the separate bar and seating area is accessed through the next door. The pub serves two excellently-presented beers from Adnams brewery and we settled down with two and a half pints of Southwold bitter to discuss and decide on our dinners.

The menu was varied with nine starters and a wide choice of mains, including five fish dishes and three vegetarian choices. Most mains come with a choice of potato dishes and vegetables or peas. A variety of puddings hot (plus a choice of custard, cream or ice-cream) and cold were available. Another six mains and four desserts were offered on the specials blackboard. A gluten-free menu is also available on request.

The starters soon arrived; my crispy whitebait with my choice of granary bread; Andy had a luxury fishcake consisting of spicy cod and prawn with a salad garnish; Richard had a tasty carrot and coriander soup of the day accompanied by his choice of white bread.

For my main course I had a luscious liver and bacon casserole with chips and veg, while Andy had new potatoes and mushy peas to accompany a steak and kidney pudding, which he reckoned was the best he had had for a good many years. Richard elected to have the cottage pie with peas from the specials menu and pronounced it delicious. More beer for the boys – this time Ghost Ship was ordered.

I love a pudding and enjoyed a childhood favourite – yummy apple crumble with ice-cream. The fruit will vary most days so one should ask what is on. Andy had a ginger sponge with custard from the specials menu. He was delighted as he really likes the taste of ginger. Richard felt a bit full but managed to squeeze in an ice-cream to finish off his meal.

We had had a very pleasant, lively evening in homely surroundings.

The pub offers a concession to CAMRA members of 10% off food on production of a current CAMRA card.

Sonia Clarke

Cider Trail Award Presentation

Congratulations to Amy Steele of St. Ives, our 2014 Cider Trail winner. Not only did Amy receive three bottles of **Cromwell Cider** for visiting all the pubs on the trail – and of course drinking cider in each – but she was also the winner of the special prize draw and received a 10-litre box of her favourite **Cromwell Cider**.

The presentation was made at the King of the Belgians by Tony Hobbs of **Cromwell Cider**. Although not the overall winner last time, Amy did complete the 2013 Ale Trail.





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Events & Socials

January

Fri 23rd Post-Christmas Social, **Chequers, Little Gransden**, 8pm

February

Tue 10th Open Branch Meeting, **Hog & Partridge, St Neots**, 8.30pm

March

Tue 3rd Open Branch Meeting, **Eight Bells, Abbotsley**, 8.30pm

12th-14th **St Neots Beer & Cider Festival**.

See page 12 for details.

Tue 24th Post-Festival Social, **Hog & Partridge, St Neots**, 8.30pm

April

Tue 7th Annual General Meeting, **White Hart, Great Staughton**, 8.30pm

An up to date listing of events can be found at: www.hunts.camra.org.uk/diary.

Opening Times

Opening Times is published by the Huntingdonshire Branch of CAMRA, the Campaign for Real Ale (© 2015) All rights reserved.

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Deadline for Summer 2015 issue (163) is Monday 22nd December 2014.

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