

ISSUE 122 SPRING 2005

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# OPENING TIMES

HUNTINGDONSHIRE BRANCH NEWSLETTER



**CAMPAIGN  
FOR  
REAL ALE**

## CAMPAIGN FOR FULL PINTS

Getting what you pay for is a basic consumer right. When ordering a pint of beer you should receive exactly that – a full pint. The reality is very different, and because of loopholes in the law over 8 out of 10 pints are short measure. Despite repeated promises, the Government has failed to act on short beer measures.

Under pressure from the pubs industry, the Government is now proposing to define a pint as "not less than 95% liquid". CAMRA believes that this proposal will lead to the worsening of the current situation as it gives a green light for pubs to short change consumers.

CAMRA is supporting a new parliamentary early day motion expressing concern at the 95% pint proposals. Posters and leaflets have been produced and a 'full pints' postcard is available for people to send to their MP, urging them to sign the motion, EDM 331. There is also an on-line lobbying system on CAMRA's website at [www.camra.org.uk](http://www.camra.org.uk).

Opening Times readers are urged to write or email your MP calling on them to support the campaign for an honest pint law and to sign EDM 331.

EDM stands for Early Day Motion. These can be signed by backbench MPs to show their support for a campaign. Frontbench MPs do not usually sign EDMs. EDM 331 reads:

*"That this House expresses concern at current proposals to define a pint of beer as "not less than 95% liquid"; notes that the Campaign for Real Ale,*

*the Trading Standards Institute and LACOTS believe that this proposal will result in the proposed 5% "tolerance" being added to the existing deficiency threshold normally applied by enforcement agencies before considering prosecution action, and which will result in licensees being able to serve "pints" of substantially less than 95% liquid; further notes that short measure costs consumers over £400 million annually, HM Treasury over £54 million annually in lost excise revenues, and brewers £133 million in lost beer sales; this House therefore calls on the Government to bring forward legislation to protect consumers from short beer measures by defining a pint of beer as 100% liquid."*



**HOW DOES YOUR PINT  
MEASURE UP?**

- Short beer measures cost drinkers £1 million a day
- 8 out of 10 pints are less than 100% liquid
- Pledge your support for an Honest Pint Law at [www.camra.org.uk](http://www.camra.org.uk) or call 0845 60 30 20 8

**100% LIQUID**



**CAMPAIGN  
FOR  
REAL ALE**

**CAMRA, the Campaign for Real Ale, is a consumer organisation founded in 1971**

## EVENTS AND SOCIALS

### February 2005

Fri 18<sup>th</sup> **Belgium beer tasting** at (Eaton Socon) (8.00 pm). The cost of the beer will be in the region of £5.

Fri 25<sup>th</sup> **National Pubs Week** tour of **St Ives** pubs starting at **Aviator** at 7.30 pm; **Floods Tavern** at 8.15 pm; **Nelson's Head** at 9.00 pm; finishing at the **Oliver Cromwell** at 9.45 pm.

### March 2005

Tues 1<sup>st</sup> *Open Committee Meeting, **Three Horseshoes, Abbots Ripton** (8.30 pm).*

Sat 12<sup>th</sup> Heritage Pubs Trip by rail to Hereford including Spinning Dog Brewery visit.

Sat 19<sup>th</sup> Trip to **Adnams Brewery, Southwold**. A tour of the brewery has been arranged for CAMRA members and their guests, starting at 9.30 a.m. Entertainment for Friday and Saturday night will be arranged for those staying locally to Southwold.

### April 2005

Tues 12<sup>th</sup> **Annual General Meeting, River Mill Tavern, Eaton Socon** (8.30 pm).

Fri 29<sup>th</sup> Visit to the **Beer Festival** at the **Green Man, Colne**. (8.00pm). The will festival run from Friday 29<sup>th</sup> to Monday 2<sup>nd</sup> and plans to offer ~20 real ales.

### May 2005

Sat 7<sup>th</sup> Rail and walking trips along the **Wherry Lines, East of Norwich**, sampling real ales along the route. More information from: <http://www.wherrylines.org.uk/>. We plan to catch the 11.37 train from Norwich to Great Yarmouth. To get to Norwich, either take the 08.21 St Neots (08.51 Huntingdon) train and change at Peterborough, or take the 10.02 Cambridge train and change at Ely. Note that times may be subject to change with new timetable.

Sat 21<sup>st</sup> Heritage Pubs Trip by rail to Telford to visit Mild passport pubs.

Tues 10<sup>th</sup> *Open Committee Meeting, **Samuel Pepys, Huntingdon** (8.30 pm)*

Wed 25<sup>th</sup> Visit to the **Cambridge Beer Festival**, Jesus Green (7:30pm). County bus services are available from Huntingdon, St Ives and St Neots.

### June 2005

Tues 7<sup>th</sup> *Open Committee Meeting, **Woolpack, St Neots** (8.30 pm)*

Sat 25<sup>th</sup> Trip to **Wissey Valley Brewery, Stoke Ferry**, Norfolk. A tour of the brewery, a mini beer festival and food has been arranged for CAMRA members and their guests. The events start at 12-Noon.

For further information, or to book a place on the beer tasting and Adnams tour, please contact Pete Godfrey, Social Secretary, on 01480 212849 or e-mail: [socials@huntscamra.org.uk](mailto:socials@huntscamra.org.uk).

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# THE RED HOUSE

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## A LOOK BACK IN TIME

### 25 YEARS AGO

Spring 1980 saw CAMRA's St Neots branch welcoming Charles Wells's new real ale Bombardier to local pubs after having seen the beer launched in London the previous summer. By March 1980 the beer, named after famous boxer Bombardier Billy Wells was available in 12 pubs in the branch area.

The success of Bombardier led to the demise of their stronger cask beer Wells Fargo, launched in 1976 on the back of the surging demand for real ale. In April 1980 it was announced that Fargo would be supplied only as a processed bottled beer.

CAMRA's disappointment at this, and the demise of another local cask beer, Cantab, from the Tolly Cobbold brewery in Ipswich, was tempered by the success of Tolly's new Original Bitter real ale. This was on sale at the Manchester Arms, St Ives by March 1980 and was expected at the Racehorse, Catworth and the Black Bull, St Ives by that Easter.

St Neots CAMRA held its Annual General Meeting at the Cannon in St Neots (now the Hyde Park) in March 1980. Other spring branch meetings were held at the Royal Oak, St Neots and the Market Inn, Huntingdon. There was an April social at the Barley Mow in Hartford and a darts match at the Hardwick Arms, Gamlingay.

Local pubs owned by national brewers Watneys had recently been re-badged as Manns houses, reviving the name of a brewing legend long since closed down by the Watney group. Real ale had been re-introduced to some of these pubs – Manns IPA and Watneys Stag Bitter were brewed by Watneys in Norwich. The Black Bull at Brampton was serving Manns IPA in April 1980 using a handpump, preferred by CAMRA to the air pressure dispense used in some Manns pubs, including the Bell, Huntingdon for Manns IPA.

Former Trumans pub the George in Ramsey reopened as a free house after its closure in 1976, finding favour with local CAMRA members by introducing cask McEwens 70/-.

Local CAMRA members were dismayed at a number of St Neots pubs that had dropped real ale, and St Neots CAMRA was urging its members to ask for real ale in the pubs concerned. The Kings Head, a Paines house, had received two hand-pumps but pressurised beer had since been installed and the pumps were out of action. There was a similar story at the Angel, where pressurised beer had been outselling real ale, although real draught Bombardier was expected to be installed. The Greenacres, a former Ruddles pub, then a Whitbread house, had served Wethered's cask bitter but this, too, had been discontinued. The Wrestlers on New Street had tried Ind Cope Burton Ale but it was withdrawn after poor sales. The Robin Hood in St Ives and the Crown at Earith had also withdrawn the real thing.

CAMRA chairman Joe Goodwin led a delegation to Tadcaster brewers Samuel Smiths to urge them to 'put the necessary cash and energy' into their Stamford Brewery Museum, or to 'give it up and let someone like CAMRA take over'. Sams had decided to open the brewery for limited periods, which they had opened two years earlier in the premises of the former Melbourns brewery in the Lincolnshire town.

Allied Breweries recreated another old brewery name with the launch of the Halls Brewery name for their estate of pubs in the Oxford area formerly known as Ind Coope (West). A Burton-brewed Halls cask beer was launched for sale in the pubs. East Anglia thus became the only region to keep the Ind Coope identity for all Allied brewery pubs, following earlier re-creations of Benskins, Friary Mew and Taylor Walker branded estates and beers.

## A LOOK BACK IN TIME

A boost for Elgoods cask mild was provided by the Salisbury Arms in Cambridge, then part of a small estate of pubs owned and run by CAMRA. The sales of a barrel a week were believed to represent more than a tenth of the entire production of this rare beer.

National brewers Whitbread revived the Flowers name with the launch in the West Midlands of Flowers Bitter, a new cask beer brewed at Cheltenham. The revived Flowers name survives in 2005 as a cask beer produced by multi-national brewers InBev at their Boddingtons Brewery in Manchester, but threatened by their impending closure of the Boddingtons plant.

### 10 YEARS AGO

After celebrating its 20th year, St Neots CAMRA boasted of over 200 pubs serving real ale in its area at the beginning of 1995, in contrast with just 35 pubs twenty years earlier, when just eight St Neots pubs and only one pub in Huntingdon stocked real ale.

CAMRA slammed Whitbread's official 'short pint' as the national brewer advised its stockists to ensure a head of 1.75cm depth on a pint of Boddingtons, and 2cm on a pint of Murphys. CAMRA claimed that this would result in a pint at least 15% short pint in a standard brim measure glass. Hampshire Trading Standards began making test purchases of Boddingtons after CAMRA's complaint.

St Neots CAMRA chairman Kathy Hadfield presented a 'pub of the season' award to Bob and Wendy Mitchell at the Chequers, Little Grandsen. Bob had introduced cask beer since taking over the pub in 1992 on the death of his father, Syd, who had run the classic local for 42 years.

Silly pub names were in the news as Scottish and Newcastle's Philharmonic in Cardiff became the first of a new chain of 'Ferret and Trouser Leg' pubs. CAMRA sarcastically praised S & N for its

'commitment to defend the dignity and authenticity of Britain's historic pubs'. Meanwhile the Magic Pub Company was under fire for re-naming the Twelve Bells in Trowbridge the 'Pickled Newt'.

Peterborough was set to get four new alehouses as Bass, Charles Wells and Wetherspoons were planning to open new pubs, and Greene King were leading the bidding to buy the Still, the classic town pub closed by owners Norwich Union in 1988.

Stamford Brewery Museum re-started brewing at their former Melbourns Brewery site that had been run as a museum during the summer months by owners Samuel Smiths, the Tadcaster brewers, since they took over and closed the brewery in 1974.

Adnams cask beers arrived in Paris for the first time as the seaside brewer from Southwold supplied its Extra bitter to 'English pub' the Cricketer, in the heart of the French capital.

Children's Certificates became available in February 1995 for English pubs to allow accompanied children access to licensed bars, as CAMRA expressed fears over draconian restrictions being imposed by magistrates in some areas before granting the new certificates. Meanwhile, a spokesman for the Wetherspoon's pub chain claimed that its customers preferred their pubs to remain 'child-free zones'.

Greene King's seasonal real ale Black Baron had been very well received over the winter period by local CAMRA members, who were looking forward to Sorcerer, Greene King's spring 1995 offering.

CAMRA was urging its members to lobby for Sunday afternoon pub opening as the Home Office called for evidence of demand before it would agree to end the enforced 3 hour weekly closure.

The **King of the Belgians, Hartford** has been the subject of a vigorous preservation campaign since owners Alliance and Mutual Pubs applied for planning permission to convert this community local to housing. Huntingdonshire CAMRA have supported the local community in objecting to the plans and in November committee members Kathy Hadfield-Moorhouse and Paul Moorhouse spoke at a packed public meeting at which the Town Council agreed to recommend refusal of planning permission.

The local action group has produced a detailed briefing paper for the District Council's planning service and CAMRA have submitted their own objections. The planning panel will make its decision at a meeting that has been postponed until February or March to allow more research into the local usage of the pub.

CAMRA have claimed that the King of the Belgians is the only community pub in Hartford, other nearby estate pubs and food-orientated pubs offering different amenities. CAMRA believes that closure would mean the loss of a unique amenity and an integral part of the community's historical heritage and cause considerable detriment to the economic and social heart of the Hartford community.

Objectors have also pointed out that some proposed structural changes would have an adverse impact on the character of a Grade II listed building. Meanwhile, licensee Jamie McAulay and has put in a formal request to buy the pub as a going concern.

The **Leeds Arms, Eltisley** has been sold to Bedford brewers Charles Wells, who have let the pub to the lessee of the Dragon in Brampton, who is now leasing both pubs.

Good reports are being received of Charles Wells pub the **Woolpack, St Neots**, which is stocking 4-5 cask beers

including up to 3 guest beers, a welcome improvement in beer choice for St Neots.

Good reports have also been received of the **George, Buckden**. The stylishly refurbished bar serves Adnams Bitter and a guest beer, and excellent food is on offer.

Wolf Golden Jackal is now a part of the excellent range of cask beers at the **Cock, Hemingford Grey** alongside Woodforde's Wherry, Oakham JHB and a guest beer.

The **Priory, St Neots** has been reported to be selling Adnams Bitter and Marstons Pedigree.

Pedigree has also been spotted recently at the **Pear Tree, Bassingbourn**, alongside Greene King IPA.

At the **Pig and Abbot, Abington Pig-gots**, guest beers Adnams Old Ale and Woodforde's Wherry have been on sale.

The **Queens Head, Needingworth** has undergone comprehensive expansion, with a number of new areas for eating and drinking. Greene King IPA and Marstons Pedigree are the real ales.

In **Earith**, the **Crown** provides a choice of Greene King IPA, Fullers London Pride and Adnams Broadside.

The **Three Horseshoes, Wistow** has raised nearly £800 towards the Tsunami Appeal. In response to donations by customers, the pub organised a special quiz night, at which a raffle was also run, and the pub donated part of the bar takings for evening. The Three Horseshoes now keeps at least 3 real ales, with house beers Adnams Bitter and Broadside, and ever changing guest beers. They will have Adnams Oyster Stout in early February.

Work on the **Eight Bells, Abbotsley** is progressing well following the extensive fire some months ago. Much of the ground floor interior was saved, and CAMRA has been told that the character of the pub will not significantly change. The pub is due to reopen in early March.

## PUBS WEEK SUCCESS

CAMRA's annual Pubs Week celebration in support of British pubs looked like being the best ever as the week, 19-26 February, approached. Orders for promotion packs have been flooding in and CAMRA's Pubs Week website, [www.pubsweek.org](http://www.pubsweek.org), details scores of pub trails, crawls and passport schemes in support of the campaign.

Here are some of the local events we were aware of as we went to press. Visit our branch web site for updates.

The **Green Man, Colne** is holding a special mini Beer Festival to coincide with National Pubs Week and also the 6 Nations Rugby Tournament. At least 6 real ales will be available at all times.

The **Leeds Arms, Eltisley** will be holding a pub quiz on Tuesday 22nd, and the **Dragon, Bampton** will be holding a pub quiz on Wednesday 23rd.

## FLEXIBLE LICENSING

The new Licensing Act comes into effect this year. Huntingdonshire District Council will take over local pub licensing from magistrates and the new provisions provide flexible hours, a new single premises licence for alcohol sales, entertainment and late night refreshment and a new transferable personal licence for publicans. Local residents and businesses will be allowed a say to get conditions attached to licences where appropriate.

CAMRA have asked for additions to Huntingdonshire's licensing policy to encourage room partitions, adequate seating/tables, responsible drink promotions and scrutiny of hours for alcohol sales by shops and supermarkets in line with pubs – all of which support the Licensing Act's stated objectives of prevention of crime, disorder and public nuisance, public safety and protection of children from harm.

# THE OLIVER CROMWELL

Wellington Street, St. Ives, Cambs.

Tel: 01480 465601

Serving five real ales:

Adnams Bitter plus four

regularly changing guest beers

New no smoking bar



Enjoy a good pint of traditional ale  
in traditional surroundings

Reasonably Priced Lunchtime Bar Snacks  
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## HALF PINTS

British largest regional brewer Wolverhampton & Dudley has taken over Burtonwood's estate of 460 pubs, based mainly in north west England

Smiles Brewery of Bristol has gone into administration. It was bought out by a consortium in March 2003 for just over £1m in cash, after years of running at a loss.

Multinational brewers InBev, owners of the former UK Whitbread breweries and some former Bass breweries, have become the biggest world brewer by volume, although US brewers SABMiller and Anheuser-Busch are bigger by sales value.

China is now the world's top beer consumer. In 2003 Chinese drinkers got through 6.6 billion gallons of beer.

And in Russia, beer has overtaken vodka as the most popular alcoholic drink.

Asahi brewers will this summer become the fourth major brewer to launch a 'beer flavoured' alcoholic drink in Japan, prompted by a new 3-tier beer tax system based on the amount of malt used in the brew. Sapporo produced the first malt-free beer, 'Draft 1' in 2004, produced using yellow peas. Suntory's Super-Blue contains some malt but is fortified with a barley-based spirit. Kirin launches a malt-free beer this spring.

And in the UK, Meantime Brewery of Greenwich are supplying coffee flavoured beer to Sainsbury's following the earlier success of their strawberry and chocolate-flavoured beers.

### **LOCAL BREWERS SUPPLYING PUNCH AND ENTERPRISE PUBS**

Real ales are available for direct supply to dozens of local pubs in agreements between the Society of Independent Brewers (SIBA) and national pub chains Unique plc, now part of Enterprise Inns, and Pubmaster, now merged with Punch Taverns. This means that local licensees can di-

rectly order from a range of some 200 locally produced cask ales. There are potential environmental benefits as fewer 'beer miles' are involved, as well as potential quality benefits from fresh beer delivered locally.

### **SMOKING BAN THREAT TO COMMUNITY PUBS**

CAMRA has expressed concern that the proposed pubs smoking ban will be divisive for community pubs. Community pubs will face the stark choice of tearing up their food menus or alienating regulars by banning smoking.

CAMRA is calling on the Government to allow pubs to allow smoking in one room where there are two or more entirely separate rooms, while other rooms where food is served are made smoke free.

Mike Benner, Chief Executive of CAMRA, raised concerns about the proposals: "While it's clear that smoke in pubs needs to be managed, these proposals threaten to split the pub trade, creating polished smoke-free eateries for the middle classes and smoking dens for everyone else. The problem is that committed smokers may well switch their custom to small community pubs which don't serve prepared hot food and the resulting fug may alienate other parts of the local community - no one enjoys sitting in a smoke-filled room. It's quite possible that small community pubs, which rely on beer sales rather than food sales, will tear up their menus to make sure their smoking regulars are not driven away"

**Visit CAMRA online:**

**CAMRA's Home Page**

<http://www.camra.org.uk>

**Huntingdonshire Branch Home Page**

<http://www.huntscamra.org.uk>



# The Queens Head

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12 - 2.30 : 5 - 11pm  
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12-10.30pm Sunday

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*Home cooked pub food  
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## Shaw's Strolls



### Introduction:

Once again, I am offering exceedingly good value with three pubs on this circular walk. You can start at any of the three pubs – I chose to start the walk at Colne.

**Colne**, set amidst orchards between Earith and Somersham, is centered around a green on which is located the church of St. Helen, completed as recently as 1900. Nearby is the south porch which is all that remains of the old church which collapsed in 1896.

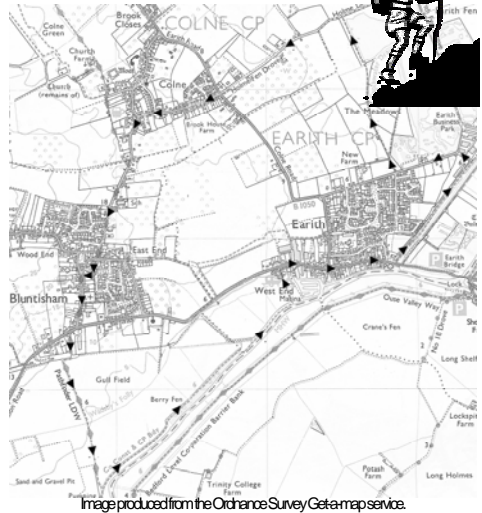
**Bluntisham** is bordered on the one side by the fens and on the other by what was mainly orchards but has now been turned under the plough. It is an attractive, growing village with a 'gothicised' Baptist chapel and a medieval church built of local brown cobbles.. A short distance away lies Bury Fen where, weather allowing, ice skating is the local sport and ice hockey is reputed to have originated under the name of "Bandy".

**Earith** is situated on the northerly banks of the Great Ouse River at the junction with the Old and New Bedford Rivers, two of the major drainage channels of the Fens, dug out in 1631 and 1651. The New Bedford, often referred to as the Hundred Foot River, was the work of the Dutch engineer Cornelius Vermuyden. Between the two rivers lie the washes which are flooded in winter and are home to a variety of water fowl. Also in this stretch of ground are the remains of ancient earthworks known as The Bullwarks which were used in the Civil War.

**Distance:** 10 km (6.2 miles). The walk can be completed in around 3 hours allowing for stops at the two pubs on route.

**Map:** OS Landranger sheet 153 Bedford, Huntingdon and OS Explorer sheet 225.

**How to get there:** Colne lies off the A1123 Huntingdon to Haddenham road, approximately 5 miles east of St Ives.



**Parking:** The Green Man has ample parking at the front and the side. The White Swan and Crown also have cars parks.

### The Walk:

From the front of the **Green Man**, turn right along East Street and turn left at the junction, walking towards Bluntisham, noting the attractive sugar pink thatched cottage opposite. This part of our walk follows the Pathfinder Long Distance Walk (LDW). At the next junction cross the road and go down the footpath to the right of the thatched Stone Grove cottage. After 200m turn right onto another footpath. This leads to the centre of Bluntisham, with the White Swan in front of you.

Leaving the **White Swan**, continue to the right, heading towards the A1123 main road. When you reach the main road, turn right, cross the road, and take the marked footpath. At the gate turn right, follow the tree line and after 20m turn left to follow the line of the ditch. When you reach the river, turn left taking the path on top of the bank. You have now left the Pathfinder LDW and you are following the Ouse Valley Way. Passing by a bar gate, keep alongside the river through a line of trees

## Shaw's Strolls

and passing through a kissing gate, continue towards the marina. At the marina boundary fence, turn left away from the river. Passing through another kissing gate head along the track to the road, and turn right. Continue along Earith High Street until you reach the Crown.

Departing the **Crown**, continue along the High Street past the post office then cross the road and take the footpath down the right side of Bridge House. The path follows the left hand bank of the Old Bedford River. Passing over a stile, turn left going down the bank away from the river, and go through a stile and two gates to join a track leading to a road. At the road, turn left. Just after the 30 mph road sign turn right on to a marked footpath. You are now passing over part of the County Farms Estate owned and run by the Cambridgeshire County Council. After passing through a second gate keep to the right side of the field and pass through a gate. Keep to the right side of the field. At the corner of the field, ignore the path turning right and continue straight through a gate and across a footbridge. With a water meadow on your right, you will shortly reach a road - turn left here. At the cross roads, go straight across on to East Street, and after 500m you will be back at the Green Man.

### The Pubs:

#### Green Man, Colne

East Street, Colne, PE28 3LZ.

Tel: (01487) 840368



12-3, 6-11; 12-11 Sat;  
12-10.30 Sun

Greene King IPA, Abbot; guest beers (H)

Busy village local in a fruit-growing area on the edge of the fens. Trade has been steadily built up by providing

good beer and food as well as regular special events. Diners are accommodated in an extension to the unspoilt two-roomed pub. The lounge bar encourages conversation in its relaxed, welcoming atmosphere. Parties and beer festivals are staged for special occasions, often using a marquee in the garden. Weekend meals are served all day.

#### White Swan, Bluntisham

30 High Street, Bluntisham, PE28 3LD.

Tel: (01487) 842055

4.30-11 Mon-Thu; 12-11 Fri-Sat; 12-10.30 Sun

Greene King IPA; guest beers [H]



Village community pub with an open plan main bar, and a small games room at the rear (pool and darts). The pub does not

serve food, but you are welcome to bring your own food into the pub.

#### Crown, Earith

48 High Street, Earith, PE28 3PP.

Tel: (01487) 740982

5-11 Mon-Wed; 12-3, 5-11 Thu-Sat; 12-3, 7-10.30 Sun

Greene King IPA; Fullers London Pride; guest beers [H]

Busy village pub catering for locals and passing trade. A comfortable lounge bar is laid out for diners (meals are served 12-2 and 6.30-9). A more basic public bar offers pub games (pool and darts). The garden offers a wonderful view of the River Ouse.



## HUNTINGDON BREWERIES AND ENTERPRISE INNS

Many pubs in the Huntingdon and St Ives area belong to the biggest UK pub company **Enterprise Inns**, but were once owned by **Huntingdon Breweries** of 123 High Street, Huntingdon, which was registered in 1910, and closed in 1950 following a merger with Hall, Cutlack and Harlock of Ely, to create East Anglian Breweries, all brewing being transferred to Ely.

The other brewery in Huntingdon was the **Falcoln Brewery**, also in the High street, founded in 1844, and taken over by Huntingdon Breweries in 1932.

In 1960 East Anglian Breweries was swallowed by Norwich brewers Steward & Patteson who by 1964 had become a part of Bullards of Norwich, then Watney Mann, subsequently taken over by Grand Metropolitan. In the 1980's most of the local pubs were badged as Manns houses and became a part of Grand Met's Inntrepreneur estate, merged in 1991 with the

Courage estate in a joint venture with Courage's Australian owners Fosters.

Grand Met was forced to give up management of Inntrepreneur in 1995 at the insistence of joint owners Fosters. This followed a flood of bankruptcies and bad publicity resulting from the 20-year lease introduced by Inntrepreneur in 1988, with its high rents, financial targets and penalties replacing short-term tenancies.

Between 1995 and 1997 the Inntrepreneur estate was gradually sold to Japanese bank Nomura and was renamed Unique in 1999. The Unique chain was taken over by Enterprise Inns last year to form part of an estate of over 9000 pubs – a far cry from 1991, when Enterprise was set up with 370 pubs bought from Bass. This was a part of the break up of the national brewers' pubs monopolies prompted by the government's beer orders and intended to increase competition.



## THE LEEDS ARMS

The Green, Eltisley  
Tel: 01480 880283

### Wells Eagle and guest real ales

Bar open 11.30-2.30, 6.30-11 Mon-Sat; 12-2, 7-10.20 Sun

### Traditional pub food

A la carte and blackboard specials

Lunch 12-2, Evening 7-9.45

Bar snacks and restaurant meals

### Accommodation

3 twins and 6 singles, all en-suite

# The Three Horseshoes

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 \* Accommodation \*  
 \* Bar \*

Open: Tue-Fri  
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 Fax: 01487 773440

Elegant Accommodation  
 Available

## The Pig and Abbot



The Pig and Abbot is a traditional old Country Pub and Restaurant with a warm and friendly atmosphere.

4 Real Cask Ales served including Adnams Bitter, Fullers London Pride plus 2 Guest Ales. Bar Meals are available every day. A la Carte Menu is served in our restaurant Monday to Saturday. The menu caters for all tastes including vegetarian and any special dietary needs.

Traditional Sunday Lunch. Children's menu available.

Open all day Saturday and Sunday.

High Street, Abington Pigotts, Nr. Royston, Hertfordshire, SG8 0SD

Telephone: 01763 853515

## TRADING STANDARDS

Your local Trading Standards organisation is Cambridgeshire County Council Trading Standards. If you have any complaints about trading standards issues at local pubs please contact them.

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## OPENING TIMES

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Contact Andy Shaw, on (01480) 355893, or [news@hunts.camra.org.uk](mailto:news@hunts.camra.org.uk), or 13a Peppercorns Lane, Eaton Socon, St Neots, PE19 8HL.

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## THE GODMANCHESTER CRAWL

We managed to squeeze in a pre-Christmas crawl this year and the selected venues for this evening of merriment were the good hostelrys of Godmanchester. With the exception of the Black Bull, all the pubs in Godmanchester were once owned by national brewers Watneys, but have undergone significant changes in recent years. We began our evening at the Exhibition which is a comfortable and popular pub, with a good food reputation. The main bar area sports a display of Victorian style shop fronts which are worth examination. The beer range was Greene King IPA, which was good, Fuller's London Pride, the best sample for a long while and Cottage Christmas Cottage. This one was new to me and though I'm not usually a fan of Cottage beers – normally too malty to my taste – it was pretty good and my companions enjoyed it.

Our next port of call was the White Hart, whose transformation since I last visited is complete. It now has a separate restaurant at the far end of the building and a much revamped bar area at the other. Despite the Christmas decorations, which were lovely, I felt the pub had somehow lost its 'pubbiness' and was a little too chintzy for a basic pub lover like me. The beers – Adnams Bitter and Youngs Special – were both a little too cold.

Back out into the cold December weather we made our way to the Royal Oak – a characterful building that overlooks the river and the Chinese Bridge. Inside the pub has probably changed little since its Watneys days. To me this is what a pub should be – a genuine pub with no pretensions to be anything else. Its split level layout means that there are cosy corners in which one could secrete oneself and do a bit of people watching. On this occasion, we chose to prop up the bar and engage the very friendly barmaid in conversation. The only real beer available was Web-

sters Yorkshire Bitter and, although not a brilliantly crafted beer, this sample had been kept well and was served with a smile.

A visit to Godmanchester would not be complete without popping into the Black Bull, a one time Whitbread establishment. Once an old coaching inn, the downstairs bar has a marvellous 300 year old fireplace. The beers we tried were Adnams Bitter, Fullers London Pride and Wadworths 6X. Now there has been talk lately that Adnams bitter has changed (not my words I hasten to add). Well, trust me, it is as good as ever when on this form, and as a purchaser of polypins of the stuff, all I can say is that the beer coming out of Southwold is as brilliant as ever. The sample we tried here was very good and had the defining features one expects of Adnams. The London Pride was not as good as earlier but still a good drop. My companions assured me that the 6X was also fine but as I'm not a fan, I declined a sample.

As there was still time, we did a quick march to get last knockings at the Old Bridge but as has happened to us before, our advances were repelled being told that the bar was closed for a private party! So we trudged the extra few yards to the Samuel Pepys, another former Watneys pub (how things have improved) and a couple of halves of Archers. The pub was quiet but we soon livened it up.

It had been an interesting evening as I for one don't often venture into Godmanches-ter but I can recommend an evening exploring the pubs that Watneys sold off!

## THE POST CHRISTMAS SOCIAL

So we were greedy. Not satisfied with having a pre-Christmas crawl, we had to have a post Christmas social as well. Well, for us, it's a part of the New Year tradition to start off the branch social calendar with a visit to Bob and Wendy at the Chequers in Little Gransden. As ever the



## PINKS SUNK



turn out was good, the word having got around that this is a pub not to be missed. Always friendly, Bob and his locals know how to make you feel welcome. We took over the lounge bar and having rearranged the furniture, got stuck in to trying the beer. The choice was Oakham JHB, Oldershaw's Pale Ale, Church End Baldric's Cunning Plan and Nethergate Old Growler. Well, being the designated driver for the evening, my sampling was restricted to sipping other people's pints but I was still able to enjoy the delights on offer without having to buy a round!!

The Oakham JHB was in good condition and I have to confess that I had more than one sip of this. Baldric's Cunning Plan was an interesting little number, being a bit maltier than other Church End beers I've had before. It wasn't one that I would have drunk a lot of had I been able to as I'm not a malty beer sort of person but the occasional half would go down very nicely.

It was now half way through the evening. There was much 'putting the world to rights' going on as well as general laughter and merriment. To make the evening complete, Bob appeared out of the kitchen with a mountain of food for us all – fish, chips and mushy peas, homemade hummous and pitta bread and ham rolls. It now seemed appropriate to sample some of the Nethergate Old Growler to serve as

something of a nightcap. So the good nature of my friend Tina was prevailed upon and I had my sip. This beer rarely disappoints and it wasn't going to tonight either! It is used as a base for Nethergate Umbel Magna but is superb in its own right. The flavour was a rich combination of roast malt, liquorice and a little fruit with a pleasing bittersweet finish to round it off.

It had been a very enjoyable evening with very good attendance. We had all had a chance to catch up with each other and have a really good chat – only really possible in a pub that doesn't have music blasting your eardrums. Although I must admit that we do have the ability to get a bit loud when the conversations get going. Our thanks as always go to Bob and Wendy for putting up with us and to the locals who are so tolerant of these seasonal invaders.

Kathy Hadfield-Moorhouse

### THE CHEQUERS

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## HOW PUBS GET IN THE GOOD BEER GUIDE

The Good Beer Guide is published by CAMRA every September. The guide aims to encourage and promote well-kept cask ales, and there is one single criterion for selection of entries – consistent high quality of cask beers as served at the pub. Pubs do not pay for entries, either directly or through taking advertising in CAMRA publications.

The Good Beer Guide is CAMRA's independent guide to the best real ale and CAMRA branches select the pubs listed and research and write the entries. The Huntingdonshire branch is allocated seventeen entries in the guide – just one in every nine or ten pubs in the branch area, and the branch aims to select those pubs consistently serving the best cask beers.

The branch does this using a beer quality scoring system developed by CAMRA for use by members, many of whom are trained tasters who also assess cask beers for the Good Beer Guide's tasting notes and selection of finalists for judging in CAMRA's Champion Beer Awards.

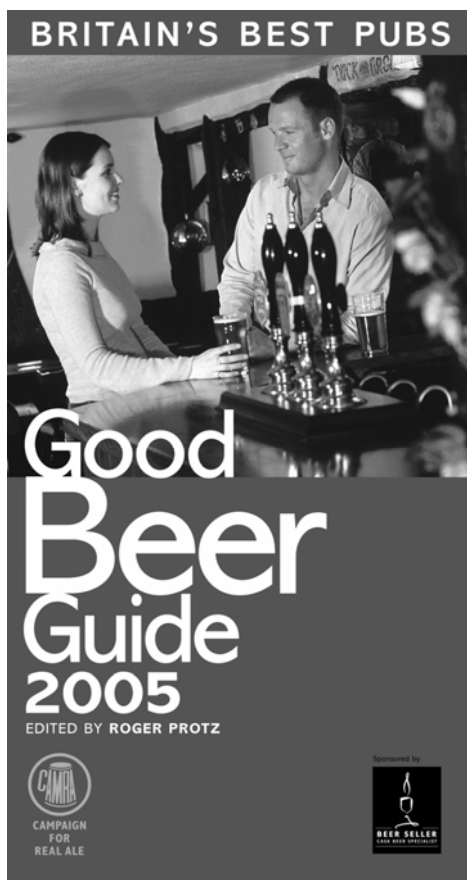
For Good Beer Guide selections, members score the cask beers on their visits to pubs throughout the year. The quality of the beer in the glass depends on many factors. These include the inherent quality of the brewery's products - some breweries consistently score higher than others. Also important are the freshness of the cask and its treatment in the distribution system as well as the skill of the cellar staff in producing the optimum clarity, temperature, condition and flavour of the beer.

In effect, a place in the Good Beer Guide is not awarded to the pub, but instead is recognition of the individual(s) who select the beers to be sold, and in some cases choose the supplier of those beers, and who prepare the beers in the cellar.

There are simple score descriptors to guide scorers in judging the end product,

and occasional group tasting sessions in pubs help to ensure consistency in the scoring. Seriously faulted samples will score 0 or 1. Occasionally an example of the very best one can expect will score the maximum 5. Over the year all members' scores are averaged. The pubs entered for the guide are those with the best average scores. They will have been assessed at a number of visits in each quarter of the year.

Competition for a place in the Good Beer Guide is understandably very strong, and we aim to apply the fairest selection mechanism possible.



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