

opening times

Huntingdonshire Branch of CAMRA
The Campaign for Real Ale

Spring 2006
Issue 126

National Pubs
Week 18-25
February

Hunts CAMRA
Pubs of the
Year 2006

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Punch overtakes Enterprise

**Roy rides through Great
Staughton, Buckden & Offords**



THE CHEQUERS

71 Main Road Little Gransden

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**Hunts
CAMRA
Pub of the
Year 2005
and 2006**

**Bob and Wendy Mitchell
invite you to try their unique
unspoilt village local with its
own special atmosphere**

Different Real Ale each week

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*HOTEL*RESTAURANT*BAR*

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The Dragoon Brampton



Charles Wells Pub of
the Year 2003

Open all day every day,
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- Cask Marque approved real ales, Wells Eagle and Bombardier plus two guest ales changing weekly, good selection of wines and spirits.
- Food served daily lunch times and evenings, Sunday Lunch served from 12.00 noon all afternoon (No food service Sunday night).
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The Dragoon

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THE GEORGE INN RAMSEY FORTY FOOT

Real ales: John Smiths Bitter
and Old Speckled Hen plus a
guest beer

Food: Lunchtime 12-2pm.
Evening 7-9pm Mon-Thu,
6-9 Fri-Sat.
(no food Sunday evening)

Mandy and Bill Hollis
welcome you to our
comfortable village pub.

1 Ramsey Road
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01487 812775

HUNTS CAMRA'S PUBS OF THE YEAR 2006

The Huntingdonshire Branch of CAMRA has this year selected two pubs to be awarded Pubs of the Year 2006. One, the Chequers, Little Gransden, is an archetypal rural pub. The other, the Oliver Cromwell, St Ives is a perfect example of a town pub.

CAMRA gives this annual award to the pub that it judges to provide the widest appeal for its combination of good beer, atmosphere, style, service and value. On this occasion, the judges were unable to identify one single pub that stood out above all the other nominations, and felt justified in making two awards.

Bob and Wendy Mitchell have owned and run the **Chequers, Little Gransden** for 12 years and the pub has been in the Mitchell family since 1950.

Bob has a passion for real ale, and as well as the house beer Oakham JHB, at least one unusual guest beer is always available. If Bob wants a beer from a brewery who can't deliver, he'll drive to pick up the casks, even when the brewery is on the south coast.

Bob also has a passion for good food. His hog roasts are legendary; Friday night is fish night at the Chequers, and on a recent visit, Bob had organised a home made pork pie competition, which he and numerous pub regulars took part in (Bob's pork pie won first prize).

The cosy public bar with its plain wooden seating and open fire is an unaltered gem and there is a choice of two other rooms. There is always a warm welcome at this family run pub, from both Bob and Wendy, and the village regulars.

A well researched and documented history of the pub displayed around the walls makes interesting reading. Bob is well known for his keen sense of humour. A roaring fire in the public bar will stop you from propping up the bar for too long.

Check out all the beer festival glasses - a sign of a true enthusiast.



There was a presentation of a framed certificate to licensees Wendy and Bob Mitchell on the occasion of the branch's post Christmas party on Friday 13th January.

The **Oliver Cromwell** is a highly regarded **St Ives** pub on Wellington Street, close to the old river quay. It was built as a cottage and in the 18th century was known as the Feathers. It became a beer house in the 1840s and beer was brewed on the premises until 1920. This warm, friendly wood-panelled bar provided highly congenial surroundings for St Ivesians for many years under the ownership of David and Pat Livingston-Spence.

A change of style followed the arrival of Gerry Schonfeldt as its new owner in 2002. A new non-smoking area features a glass floor with a view into an old well, revealed during renovation work and possibly once used for the brewery that operated here. A new kitchen was also provided and a varied and popular lunchtime menu includes fish dishes and Mexican style food.

Other than these new parts of the operation the interior has been changed little in recent decades and overall the Oliver Cromwell provides a stylish environment

HUNTS CAMRA'S PUBS OF THE YEAR 2006

that remains the epitome of classic old style town pubs. But of course the high quality beer is the main reason for the accolade. Adnams Bitter makes a wel-



come appearance in St Ives as a permanently stocked line, and there is always one other Adnams beer, either Broadside

or the current seasonal ale. Oakham JHB and Woodforde's Wherry are also a permanent part of the well presented and highly drinkable selection on offer; there are two other guest real ales.

A remarkable feature of the pub that has not changed is its appeal to a wide cross-section of the community. The physical arrangement of the pub encourages sociability, particularly amongst those who choose to occupy the areas around the bar counter. Quiz nights are held monthly on Tuesday nights, and there is acoustic live music on the first and third Thursday evenings each month as well as occasional Sunday afternoon music sessions.

The Huntingdonshire branch is announcing these awards to coincide with CAMRA's National Pubs Week which will run from 18-26 February.

THE OLIVER CROMWELL

Wellington Street, St. Ives, Cambs.

Tel: 01480 465601

Serving six real ales:
Adnams Bitter plus
regularly changing guest beers
No smoking bar



Enjoy a good pint of traditional ale in traditional surroundings.
Reasonably priced lunchtime bar snacks available Mon to Sat

Huntingdonshire CAMRA Pub of the Year 2006

THE RED HOUSE

Old North Road Longstowe, Cambs

Tel: 01954 718480



**A Genuine
FREE House**

Real Ales feature local breweries
including Potton
Ever-changing guests

Bar Snacks and Full Menu
available 7 days a week

A LOOK BACK IN TIME

25 YEARS AGO

In spring 1981 the Royal Oak in St Ives was expected to install handpumped Ind Coope Bitter, a new beer brewed especially for East Anglia in Allied Breweries' reorganisation of their Ind Coope operation. Allied had launched cask beers for its new Benskins, Friary Meux and Taylor Walker estates, named after old breweries previously closed. Oddly in the light of this, the East Anglian arm of Ind Coope had been renamed . . . 'Ind Coope East Anglia'. The Royal Oak licensee had also requested cask Ansells Mild but this would only be supplied if three local outlets took it. St Neots CAMRA appealed for other pubs to request the beer.

CAMRA proposed a break up of the 'big six' national brewers and a number of MPs backed the plan to break the beer giants into smaller independent companies. A number of less radical proposals in CAMRA's package were eventually adopted: relaxation of product ties, limits to sizes of brewer's tied estates and enforced pub swaps to relieve local monopolies. In 2006 most of the remaining 'big six' brewers no longer run pubs and are foreign-owned.

The licensee of Tolly Cobbold's Exhibition pub at Over, Grace Bullen, retired in early 1981 after running it since 1933.

Allied Breweries closed their Ansells brewery in Birmingham permanently after a strike by brewery workers over redundancies and short-time working. CAMRA urged the continued production of cask Ansells Mild and Bitter within the group, and of course they did survive – in 2006 they are brewed at Tetleys in Leeds by Danish owners Carlsberg.

CAMRA reported a landmark in the real ale revival, with over 50% of British pubs again serving real cask-conditioned ales. Over 3700 pubs had switched to real ale

from keg-only draught beers during 1980.

St Neots and District CAMRA held its 1981 Annual General Meeting at the Market Inn in Huntingdon. Spring branch meetings were at the Waterloo in Huntingdon and the Green Man, Leighton Bromswold. There was a bar billiards match at the Hardwicke Arms, Gamlingay and a walk around Buckden pubs ending at the Chinese take away! Joint socials were held with Northampton branch at the RAFA Club in Rushden and North Beds branch at the Anchor, Tempsford. There was also a social at the Plough, Abbotsley.



In St Neots in spring 1981, the Lord John Russell and the Kings Head were reported to be serving Paines 1041, with Paines EG

also on offer at the latter pub.

Manns, the Midlands arm of the national Watney pub and brewing group, said that 'following an ear-bashing from CAMRA' they were to reintroduce real ale into hundreds of their pubs in the South Lincolnshire, Peterborough, March and Ramsey areas. Handpumped Manns Bitter would be backed by TV and press advertising as it was launched into each new area, following its earlier successful launch in 80 pubs in the Boston and Sleaford areas.

CAMRA's 1981 Annual General Meeting decided not to set up national tasting panels 'to differentiate between good and bad brands of real ale' following opposition from CAMRA's national executive, who said that it was not practical and would make the Campaign look elitist. The position was eventually reversed and CAMRA's tasting panels were set up in 1989 to publish tasting notes and select beers for CAMRA awards.

A LOOK BACK IN TIME

10 YEARS AGO

In March 1996 CAMRA's 25 years of campaigning was marked with an award from 'The Publican' newspaper for outstanding services to the brewing and pubs industry. Accepting the award, CAMRA chairman John Cryne said 'The Publican Awards are an industry showcase, so we value this splendid recognition and support. We are an established force in the industry. However, I am sure you will agree, we should never allow ourselves to become Establishment'.

St Neots and District CAMRA conducted its 1996 Annual general Meeting at the Hyde Park, St Neots. In April that year there was a branch social in St Ives at the Royal Oak and Nelson's Head and a walk around the pubs of Fenstanton.

CAMRA vowed to fight 'tooth and nail' against the imminent merger of UK national brewers Bass and Carlsberg-Tetley, which would give the combined operation 40% of the UK brewing trade. Bass were planning to buy Allied-Domecq's half-share in their rivals, the other half being owned by Danish brewers Carlsberg. The merger was eventually banned by the government and in 2006 the former Bass and Allied brewing interests are owned by foreign brewing giants based in Belgium, Brazil and the USA plus the Danish brewers.

Following a denial of a timetable for closures of Websters brewery in Halifax, Home in Nottingham and the Courage brewery in Bristol, in Spring 1996 owners Scottish and Newcastle announced the closure of Home and Websters to establish a reduced network of seven 'high-volume, low cost production units'. Of these, in 2006 only their John Smiths plant in Tadcaster is retained for cask beer production although in 2005 S & N took over the former Federation Clubs brewery in Newcastle and linked up with

the Caledonian brewery in Edinburgh.

In 1996 Greene King rolled out its spring seasonal ale Royal Raven, a dark, malty stout with 4.5% alcohol by volume, aimed at keg stout drinkers. This was followed in late spring by Sorcerer, an amber 4.5% brew that had proved very popular the previous year. Bedford brewers Charles Wells expanded into Finland, where sales of its Bombardier ale were going 'great guns' following the de-regulation of the liquor trade in 1995.

Ten years ago real cask stouts and porters were all the rage. Whitbread launched Oyster Stout, 5% alcohol by volume, under their Murphys name. The stout was produced at their Cheltenham brewery with an extract of Irish oysters. Meanwhile, another Irish concern, Guinness, latched on to the demand with the launch of cask Harwood's Porter Ale (4.8% abv), brewed at their Park Royal plant in London and named after Ralph Harwood, who was reputed to have been the first ever brewer of London porter ale, produced from 1722 at his Bell brewhouse in Shoreditch.

CAMRA was urging regional brewers to 'stick to their roots and not repeat the mistakes of the 1960's and 1970's' as Dorset brewing company Eldridge Pope decided to split its brewing and pub operations into two separate businesses in spring 1996. The brewery's free trade had previously been sold to Carlsberg-Tetley and with no tied estate, the brewery would rely on contracts to supply other brewers. The Ruddles and Devenish Redruth breweries were earlier casualties following similar arrangements and the move was eventually to prove fatal for the Dorset brewery, which was sold in 1997 and closed in 2003. Its new owner had merged it in 1998 with his Burtonwood brewery, also sold without its tied estate and destined for an uncertain future.

PUB NEWS

The **White Hart, Godmanchester**, owned and run by Huntingdon restaurateur Willem Middlemiss, has recently been refurbished, opting for polished wood floor, light painted walls, and an absence of soft furnishings to give a modern and increasingly frequent bistro feel. The real ale range continues to be Greene King IPA, Adnams Bitter and a guest.

Meanwhile round the corner, the **Exhibition, Godmanchester** was sold by Willem Middlemiss last October to Paul Dyer. The Exhibition has been refitted and redecorated but essentially the pub feels similar to before. The real ale range is currently Greene King IPA and Fullers London Pride, but Paul has plans to introduce guests within the next couple of months.

The **Three Horseshoes at Graveley** has received a silver award for their commitment to protecting employees and public from the dangers of secondhand smoke. The award was developed by the Roy Castle Lung Cancer Foundation and is being presented to smoke free workplaces across the country.

The **Cock at Hemingford Grey** is the latest local conversion to a non-smoking venue following a short closure in January for a refurbishment of the pub.

Somersham now has two non-smoking pubs, the **Windmill** and the **Rose and Crown**. Both have been very busy after major refurbishments. The Windmill has much more space for diners following its £300,000 extension and refit and the small former public bar has been retained as a sociable area for drinkers. A guest beer from outside the Greene King range has added a welcome boost to choice. The Rose and Crown now has leather sofas, plasma TV and reports of paranormal activities. New manager Chris Moule has cited a history of use of the premises as a court for inquests and murder trials

as an explanation for its haunting. He has heard footsteps during the night and seen items moved from shelves.

Pidley Mad Cat has been a focus for some spirited charity fund raising. Licensees Min and Ray Tarling presented £1500 to the Pidley Mountain Rescue Service, which has been raising funds for 30 years to provide specialist equipment for deserving local disabled people. The Mad Cat offers a constantly changing selection of two real ales.

In **Eynesbury** there has been a change of management at the **Cambridgeshire Hunter** and the **Merry Boys** has returned following a short-lived name change to the Berkeley Arms. The **Chequers** in Eynesbury was flying the mild flag recently with the excellent Mauldons Micawbers Mild.

At **Abbotsley** the **Tavern on the Green**, formerly the Jolly Abbot, includes a South African menu under its changed proprietorship. Cypriot cuisine is included on the menu at the **Queens Head at Needingworth**, which now provides a busy and vibrant village focus and recently celebrated the first anniversary of its reopening after extensive enlargement and refurbishment. Cask ales are from Greene King and Adnams.

Following its recent change of ownership the **Mermaid at Ellington** has introduced a more English menu of pub favourites including Beef Stew and Dumplings and Liver and Bacon, with home-made puddings.

Greene King pub the **Bell at Great Paxton** provided a special weight-watchers 3-course menu in December. Landlady Diane Preece, previously a nutritionist, provided three mouth-watering healthy choices. The event was such a success that Diane is planning to keep some of the low calorie dishes on the menu permanently.

PUB NEWS

New licensees at the **White Hart** in **Warboys** are reported to be planning a beer festival at the pub.

The **Crown and Cushion** in **Great Gransden** has new publicans, Mike and Cindy. Longstanding proprietors Chris and Barbara Clark have retired after 20 years at



the pub, but they will not be far away as they have purchased a property close by. They introduced weekly music sessions at the Crown &

Cushion, some involving famous names. Mike and Cindy are continuing the music nights and are also planning a beer festival later in the year. The real ale range has been extended to 4 beers, which includes Greene King IPA and Fullers London Pride plus two guest ales - Youngs

Special was on offer on a recent visit.

After significant delays in getting planning permission, the refurbishment of the **Victoria** in **Huntingdon** is now on track. The pub is planned to reopen on March 19th. The cellar has been refitted, and 4 real ales are planned to be on offer. A chimney breast is being removed, which will create more seating space, but wooden beam dividers will ensure the pub retains its cosy feel. The restaurant area has also been enlarged, and an extensive menu focusing on traditional English food and steaks is planned. The Victoria is run by Phil Beer of the Green Man at Colne.

Something new going on in your pub? Contact the editor with the details to get your pub highlighted in this column.

Andy Shaw, news@huntscamra.org.uk, (01480) 355893.

Crown and Cushion

Under new management.



Mike and Cindy welcome you to their 15th century oak beamed country pub.

Real ales: Greene King IPA and Fullers London Pride, plus two constantly changing guest beers.

Regular live music every Thursday and Saturday evenings.

Featured in the 2005/6 Good Food Guide.

Traditional pub food: 12-9:30pm Monday-

Saturday, 12-4pm Sunday Lunch

Open 11am-11pm Monday-Saturday, 12-10:30pm Sunday.

The Crown and Cushion

2 West Street, Great Gransden, SG19 3AT

Tel 01767 677214

Email sindeemikey@yahoo.co.uk

Web www.crownandcushion.com

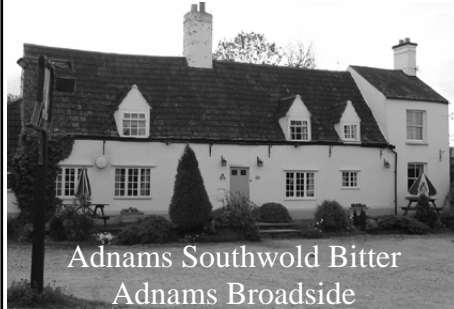
Beer Festival planned for May

THE SWAN

Main Street, Old Weston

Tel: 01832 293400

REAL ALES and REAL FOOD



Greene King Abbot + Guests

Hunts CAMRA Pub of the Year 2004

Fish & Chips Wednesday Evening

Restaurant open Friday & Saturday evenings & Sunday lunchtimes

BIGGEST EVER PUBS CAMPAIGN

The biggest generic pubs campaign ever, National Pubs Week 2006, takes place between 18-25 February. The Pubs Week campaign has been running for four years and is now firmly established in the CAMRA calendar as an annual celebration of the pub as an essential part of British life. It supports all British pubs by encouraging more people to visit them at a quiet time of the year for the industry. Pubs Week also encourages pubs to organise events and promote themselves whilst taking part in an established, generic consumer campaign.

CAMRA will run press stories to raise the profile of the British pub throughout National Pubs Week. These will include the announcement of CAMRA's National Pub of the Year and in Huntingdonshire the branch Pub of the Year results have been revealed (see page 3) – the local winner will go into the county stage of the national competition for the award to be made during Pubs Week 2007.

Pubs Week also sees the launch of a new 'Pubs in Time' plaque scheme to commemorate famous events that have taken place in a pub. If you know of any such pubs then please contact iain.loe@camra.org.uk. Claims will be checked and true stories will result in a plaque being awarded to the pub and media attention.

Around 10,000 pubs participate every year in National Pubs Week. Tony Jerome, CAMRA's Marketing Manager said, "It has been good to see pubs increasing trade after running a few simple promotions during Pubs Week. And many pubs have continued to organise functions through the year for events such as Valentines Day, Mother's Day and Halloween which has really boosted their trade."

Events that have been organised in the past have included pub quizzes, fancy dress nights, themed beer and food eve-

nings and local entertainers. Jerome said, "There are two different ways that pubs can sign up to National Pubs Week. Licensees can either order free promotional packs direct by post, phone or the Pubs Week website www.pubsweek.org or under the 'adopt a pub' scheme, CAMRA members can order and deliver them to their local pub and encourage their licensee to come on board. This was successful last year and enabled CAMRA members to help to get more of their favourite pubs involved."

The National Pubs Week promotional packs include branded beer mats, empty belly posters which have space for licensees to promote events they are running throughout the week, advice sheets on how to get the most out of National Pubs Week and press release templates that will help pubs attract some free publicity from their local media. The National Pubs Week website, www.pubsweek.org, will also promote pub events for free.

WIN BEER FOR A YEAR!

CAMRA is offering one lucky winner FREE beer for a year in this year's National Pubs Week beer mat competition. CAMRA has produced a million beer mats that will be distributed to 10,000 pubs across Britain. All you need to do is track them down, answer a simple question concerning an important conversation that took place in a pub and you will stand a chance of winning twelve cases of bottled-conditioned beer...real ale in a bottle... one for each month of the year!

CAMRA hopes that the prize of a variety of fantastic bottle-conditioned beers will highlight examples of real ales to track down at local pubs as well as allowing the winner to enjoy bottles of the real 'stuff' at home. The lucky winner will be announced on the CAMRA website on Friday 17th March 2005. Good luck!

Huntingdonshire *CAMRA PUB of the Year 2003*

The Cock

at Hemmingford Grey

Real ales include:

- **Woodfordes Wherry** • **Wolf Golden Jackal** •
and two guest ales

Recently refurbished and now non-smoking throughout

Delightful garden

Attached restaurant you can find in the Good Food Guide
Cambridgeshire Dining Pub of the Year 2005 (Good Pub Guide)

Set in a beautiful village, on the Ouse river,
Between Huntingdon and Cambridge—2 minutes from the A14.

47 High Street, (01480) 463609

The White Horse Inn

Swavesey

WARREN & PAT

Will be pleased to welcome you to their
17th Century traditional village Inn

- Selection of Fine Real Ales
- No Smoking Restaurant Area
- Two Bars
- Children's Play Area
- Darts and bar billiards
- Separate pool room
- Beer garden
- Pub and restaurant meals,
including sunday roast lunch
- Open all day at weekends
- Real log fires in both bars for those cold winter nights
- Function/ children's room available for private dinners, birthday
parties or club/board meetings.

Tel: 01954 232470 For Enquiries & Bookings. Fax: 01954 206188

It takes all sorts to campaign for real ale



Join CAMRA Today...

Just fill in the form below and send, with a cheque (payable to CAMRA Ltd) or for Three Months Free membership (for those renewing or joining by Direct Debit) complete the Direct Debit Form. All forms should be addressed to membership secretary, CAMRA, 230 Hatfield Road, St Albans, Herts, AL1 4LW. Alternatively you can join online at www.camra.org.uk. Rates for single membership are £18 and joint £21. Concession rates are available on request.

.....
 Title Surname Forename(s) Date of Birth
 P'tner Surname Forename(s) Date of Birth

 Address Postcode

 Tel. no.(s)

I wish to join the Campaign for Real Ale, and agree to abide by the Memorandum and Articles of Association.

I enclose a cheque for..... Signed..... Date

Applications will be processed within 21 days

Instruction to your Bank or Building Society to pay by Direct Debit		DIRECT DEBIT	
<p>Please fill in the form and send to: Campaign for Real Ale Ltd, 230 Hatfield Road, St Albans, Herts, AL1 4LW</p> <p>Name and full postal address of your Bank or Building Society</p> <p>To The Manager Bank or Building Society</p> <p>Address</p> <p>Postcode</p> <p>Name(s) of Account Holder(s)</p> <p>Bank or Building Society account number</p> <p>Branch Sort Code</p> <p>Reference Number</p>		<p>Originator's Identification Number</p> <p>9 2 6 1 2 9</p> <p>FOR CAMRA OFFICIAL USE ONLY</p> <p>This is not part of the instruction to your Bank or Building Society</p> <p>Membership Number</p> <p>Name</p> <p>Postcode</p> <p>Signature(s)</p> <p>Date</p>	
<p>Banks and Building Societies may not accept Direct Debit instructions for some types of account</p>		<p>This Guarantee should be detached and retained by the payer.</p> <p>The Direct Debit Guarantee</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> This Guarantee is offered by all Banks and Building Societies that take part in the Direct Debit Scheme. The efficiency and security of the Scheme is monitored and protected by your own Bank or Building Society. If the amounts to be paid or the payment dates change CAMRA will notify you 10 working days in advance of your account being debited or as otherwise agreed. If an error is made by CAMRA or your Bank or Building Society you are guaranteed a full and immediate refund from your branch of the amount paid. You can cancel a Direct Debit at any time by writing to your Bank or Building Society. Please also send a copy of your letter to us. 	

12 Join 77,000 members of CAMRA and fight for Britain's beer heritage

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



North Brink Brewery, Wisbech,
Cambridgeshire Tel: 01945 583160

Available all year round



SEASONAL ALES

Thin Ice 4.7% Jan/Feb Old Wagg 4.0% March/April
Double Swan 4.5% May/June Mad Dog 4.4% July/Aug
Barleymead 4.8% Sept/Oct Old Black Shuck 4.5% Nov
Snickalmas 5.0% Wenceslas Winter Warmer 7.5% Dec

HALF PINTS

PUB GAMES REVIVAL

Greene King is to be congratulated for a campaign to revive traditional pub games as part of a promotion under their Ruddles brand.

Shove Ha'penny, table skittles and quoits are among games being supplied to over a thousand pubs across the UK including local pubs the Market Inn, Huntingdon and the White Hart at Alconbury Weston.

Greene King says that real pub games are about interacting with friends and neighbours over a pint of real ale. Psychologist Dr David Lewis has backed the campaign as a more convivial social alternative to solitary pub games often played using electronic game machines.

GALES BREWERY TAKEN OVER

London brewers Fullers have agreed a £91 million deal to take over Hampshire's oldest traditional brewer, George Gale of Horndean and its 111 pubs, and have refused to be drawn on the fate of the brewery.

Fuller's has already dealt a devastating blow to brewery workers at the Horndean Brewery and their families. A third of the work force, 31 staff, received redundancy notices as Fuller's slashed the office and support staff.

The shock purchase was announced with no warning and immediately posed the questions of what will happen to the brewery, its beers, its pubs and its workers.

CAMRA is calling on Fuller's to keep brewing the full range of Gale's beers at the Horndean brewery in Hampshire, and to provide a commitment to retain the full Gale's pub estate and workforce. An online petition can be signed at www.savegales.org.uk or via the CAMRA website www.camra.org.uk.

It is understood that Fullers have been

test brewing Gale's beers at their Chiswick brewery and that they have only limited raw materials remaining at the Hampshire brewery.

The takeover is the latest in a recent succession of family-owned breweries to fall to bigger predators, following last year's takeovers of Ridleys and Belhaven by Greene King, and Jennings by Wolverhampton & Dudley.

HOEGAARDEN TO CLOSE

The board of the world's biggest brewery InBev (formerly Interbrew) has decided to move the production of the famous Hoegaarden White beer to Jupille in Wallonia with the loss of 59 of the present 150 jobs in Hoegaarden. Campaigners have claimed that if real parma ham has to have its origin in Parma and champagne has to be produced in a strictly assigned region then the internationally famous regional Hoegaarden White beer should be produced in the town of Hoegaarden.

Without doubt InBev will have excellent production facilities, but even years of experience and the use of exactly identical ingredients will not guarantee that Hoegaarden White beer will remain as unique as it is today. One thing is for sure: it will no longer be associated with Hoegaarden.

Visit the action group website at www.redhoegaarden.be or via the CAMRA website www.camra.org.uk.

LONGER PUB HOURS CARNAGE?

Initial impressions were that the months of media hysteria surrounding the new flexible licensing arrangements were looking fairly silly following the introduction of the new arrangements last November.

Town and city streets around the country were quieter than usual as the usual throng of people leaving premises at the same time no longer occurred.

HALF PINTS

Cambridgeshire police reported a fall in the number of alcohol-related incidents from 70 on the last weekend under the old arrangements to 38 on the first weekend with the new licences in force.

PUNCH OVERTAKES ENTERPRISE

Punch Taverns became the UK's biggest pub operator in terms of pub numbers after its acquisition in December of the Spirit Group and its estate of 1832 managed pubs.

Punch now has around 9800 pubs compared with Enterprise Inns' estate of 8637 lease and tenanted pubs. Punch is not a managed pub operator and is expected to convert around a third of its newly acquired managed pubs to lease or tenancy arrangements and to sell on others that are not suitable for conversion.

Greene King just pips Wolverhampton & Dudley into third place and these four are currently the only operators with over 2000 pubs.

In a significant move that was applauded by CAMRA, Enterprise Inns have decided to allow all its pubs to order cask beers for direct delivery from local microbreweries that are members of the Small Independent Brewers Association (SIBA) in SIBA's Direct Delivery Scheme deal with Enterprise Inns. Check if your pub is in the Enterprise group, and if it is, encourage the publican to get some locally brewed beers from Cambridgeshire breweries.

Locally, the Spirit acquisition brings more pubs into Punch Taverns empire, which includes the former Pubmaster and Chef & Brewer estates.



The Green Man
Country Pub & Restaurant
East Street, COLNE
Tel : 01487 840368

St Patrick's Day Party
Friday 17th March
Live band "Black Velvet"
Great Irish singalong music
£5 per ticket
Free hat and free buffet
Guinness and a selection
of real ales
Come for the Craic!

Beer Festival
Bank Holiday Weekend
Friday 28th April—
Monday 1st May
**20 real ales from all
around the UK**
Live music and BBQ

ROY RIDES GT STAUGHTON, BUCKDEN & OFFORDS

Introduction

We are back to Cambridgeshire for our next ride. This is another ride that has evolved out of delivering branch newsletters. Dedication to duty again.

Distance: 20 miles. Should take around 4 hours. Depending on how many pubs you visit and how long you stay in each.

The Ride:

This time we start from St Neots Market Square. Exit the square by travelling over the town river bridge. At the roundabout take the third exit, towards the **Barley Mow** (Greene King). Stop if you want to, but it's a little early in the ride. Proceed along Crosshall Road, parallel to Riverside Park, then up the hill, until you reach the **Eaton Oak**, (1.0 Mile) a Charles Wells house. This is a relatively new pub and was formerly called Stephenson's Rocket. Again stop if you wish, but you will hardly have had time to work up a thirst, so for most it's onward we go.

There is a cycle path on the right hand side of the road so it would be prudent to use that in preference to the road. Follow the cycle path to the end, and turn right off the main road into Hail Weston village where you will find our first pub, the **Royal Oak**. (2.0 miles)

This is a lovely thatched village pub, belonging to Charles Wells. It has a huge garden for kids to play in. Inside there is a cosy inglenook fireplace in the main bar and a separate restaurant for diners. Charles Wells, Eagle and Marston's Pedigree were on offer at the time of our visit. Exit the pub, turn right and follow the road out of the village. On the left hand side at the end of village you will notice Crown Court which has taken its



name from the Crown public house which stood the site until a few years ago.

Unfortunately the cycle path is no more, so it's on to the main road heading towards Great Staughton.



The next pub, the **White Hart** (5.0 miles) is 500 metres or so after entering the village. This is a former coaching inn, as suggested by the archway through to the car park at the back.



This is a Bateman's tied house, one of only two in the branch area. DM dark mild and XB bitter are usually on sale.

After tearing yourself away from the excellent mild, the next pub, just around the corner is the **Tavern on the Green**. The pub has just been entered in the Michelin 'Eating out in Pubs' guide, so maybe a chance to have a good bite to eat. This is a free house so a wide range of beers is possible. Greene King featured heavily in our visit. This pub was originally named the Crown, and belonged to the former local brewer James Paine. Interestingly, the name Tavern was taken from the closed New Tavern on the opposite side of the road.



After leaving the pub take the B661 towards West Perry. There is bit of a hill to climb but then it is flat along the side of Grafham Water and then into West Perry.

The next pub is the **Wheatsheaf** (7.0 miles), a Greene King tied house with all the usual beers on offer. This pub is good

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for traditional pub food. Note the bar is shaped like a boat.

Continue right after leaving the pub, towards Buckden. The

road leads to the A1 Buckden roundabout, but do not attempt to cross the road. There is an underpass on the left which will see you safely underneath. In Buckden (10 miles) we have a choice of three pubs. The **Vine** is a popular free house selling Black Sheep Bitter and Fullers London Pride on our visit. Adjacent is the upmarket **George Hotel**, an old coaching inn, with its grand stainless steel bar counter. Adnams Bitter and a cask beer from B & T were on tap here. Across the road is another old coaching inn, the **Lion Hotel**, another very upmarket establishment, sadly closed at the time we called.

Time to leave Buckden. From the Lion Hotel follow the road towards the Offords. A point of interest en route is the former Spread Eagle pub on the right. Take in the sights of Offord mill and marina. You may also have to wait at the level crossing for a train or two. This is the main East coast line. Whilst waiting, ponder that there was once a station here, sadly closed in 1959. Once across, proceed to the main road. On your left is the **Swan** (11.7 miles) a Charles Wells house. On our visit hand-pumps were on the bar, but there was no real ale on. All sold out. Never mind!

The next pub is only a short ride. Leaving the Sun, turn right towards Offord D'Arcy and in less than half a mile is the **Horseshoes** (12 miles), a fine old building with plenty of character. There is



plenty of choice, with three beers usually on tap. There is also a good selection of good value food if you are feeling peckish.

Now its decision time, between a return to St Neots via Great Paxton or via Graveley. Great Paxton is the shortest route, but you must traverse the steepest hill on the route, at Paxton Hill. There is one pub at Great Paxton, the **Bell** which offers Greene King beers. We took the longer route but with no hill via Graveley.

Once in Graveley go just past the Tose-land turn to get to the **Three Horseshoes** (14.5 miles). This

is the only pub in the village and offers a couple of beers on hand-pump. Adnams Bitter is usually the house beer.



The pub made a bold move in the summer by announcing that it was going totally no smoking. I'm glad to report that this has been a hit with all the customers.

Leaving the Three Horseshoes, go back to the junction and take the road towards Toseland. Keep going until you reach a crossroads and turn right into Toseland. There was once a pub in this small village, the Blue Ball. One of the branch's first campaigning events was to try to stop Greene King from closing the pub. Sadly we lost and the pub closed in 1977. Continue through the village and along the road until you reach the junction at the top of Paxton Hill. Turn right and freewheel all the way back down the hill to St Neots.

By now you are probably thirsty so call in at the **Woolpack** (20.5 miles) in Church Street for a pint of Charles Wells or one of the usual guest beers on offer.

Roy Endersby

EVENTS AND SOCIALS

February 2006 – St Neots Beer Festival

Thurs 16th to Saturday 18th **St Neots Beer Festival** – Priory Centre, St Neots. Opening Times: Thurs: 6-10.45 pm; Fri 12-3 pm & 5-10.45 pm; Sat 12-10.45 pm. FREE ENTRY to CAMRA members. VOLUNTEERS WELCOME

March 2006 – New Members' Social

Tues 7th Open Committee Meeting, **Dragoon, Brampton** (8.30 pm).

Fri 17th **New members' social, Woolpack, St Neots** (8.30 pm) for members who joined at the St Neots Beer Festival. A FREE PINT for new members and all those who helped at the Booze on the Ouse festival.

Sat 25th An evening social around the city centre pubs of Cambridge. Bus services available from St Neots and Huntingdon. Unfortunately the visit to the **Moonshine Brewery** has been postponed.

April 2006 – AGM

Tues 11th **Annual General Meeting, Three Horseshoes, Abbots Ripton** (8.30 pm).

Sat 22nd **Highgate Brewery, Walsall**. A trip around the brewery building starting at midday. Travel by train on Sat or on Fri night to visit pubs in the area. Contact Pete Godfrey to book a place and confirm travel details.

May 2006 – Social Around Somersham

Tues 9th Open Committee Meeting, **Samuel Pepys, Huntingdon** (8.30 pm).

Fri 19th Social around **Somersham**, starting at the **Windmill** at 8.30 pm, the **Rose & Crown** at 9.15 pm, the **Black Bull** at 9.45 pm, finishing at the **Green Man, Colne** at 10.30 pm

June 2006

Tues 6th Open Committee Meeting, **White Hart, Great Staughton** (8.30 pm)

For further information please contact Pete Godfrey, Social Secretary, on 01480 212849 or e-mail: socials@huntscamra.org.uk. For an up to date listing, log on to: www.huntscamra.org.uk/diary. For current train timetables please refer to www.rail.co.uk.

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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.

They have a role to protect consumers from errors or frauds concerned with quality, description or price of goods, services or facilities and to detect and rectify unfair advertising practices.

Contact **Cambridgeshire Trading Standards** helpdesk on 0845 3030666, or at Trading Standards Division, Sackville House, Sackville Way, Great Cambourne, Cambridgeshire, CB3 6HD. The trading standards web site is www.tradingstandards.gov.uk

OPENING TIMES

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To Advertise

To place an advert or enquire about our rate card please contact:

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**Deadline for Summer 2006 issue (127)
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