



**CAMPAIGN
FOR
REAL ALE**

opening times

Huntingdonshire Branch of CAMRA Issue 134
the Campaign for Real Ale SPRING 2008

HUNTINGDONSHIRE BREWS AGAIN

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Half Pints

**Booze on the Ouse, St Ives Beer
Festival, Thu 11—Sat 13 Sep 2008**

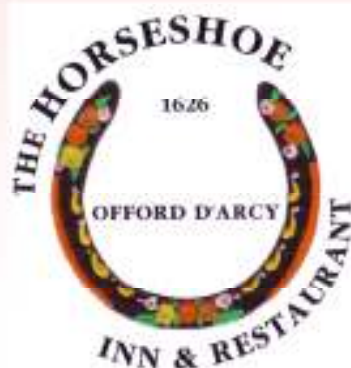
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2 Support your local pub - don't give them an excuse to close it!

HUNTINGDONSHIRE BREWS AGAIN



Opening Times can finally report the opening of a new Huntingdonshire brewery.

The Son of Sid brewery, operated by Bob Mitchell at the **Chequers** in **Little Gransden** is the first commercial brewery within the area covered by Huntingdonshire CAMRA since the closure of Paines in St Neots just over 20 years ago, after its takeover by Tolly Cobbold in 1987.

Another brewery, Payn, produced real ale in Ramsey, just outside the branch area, for around 2 years from June 1999, and was an amalgamation of the Nene Valley, Leyland and Nix Wincott breweries.

At Little Gransden the Chequers has been in the Mitchell family for 57 years and was run by Bob's father, Sid, before him.

Several house-brewed beers have been sampled at the Chequers, including Drivers' Delight (3% abv), Roofer's Revenge, Builder's Brew, a highly hopped IPA of around 3.6-3.7% and The Wonder of Woo, a sweetish, grainy and full-bodied 4.6% brew with a dry, hoppy finish.

Son of Sid beer was also expected to be on sale at CAMRA's Cambridge Winter Ales festival in January.

West Norfolk brewery Icenis have been providing ingredients and Icenis's Brendan Moore has been providing advice for the new brewery.

Opening Times congratulates Bob on this exciting venture that has been eagerly awaited since it saw the light of day as a future project in his plans for the Chequers.



THE CHEQUERS

71 Main Road Little Gransden

Tel: 01767 677348



**HUNTS
CAMRA
Pub of
the Year
2007**

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

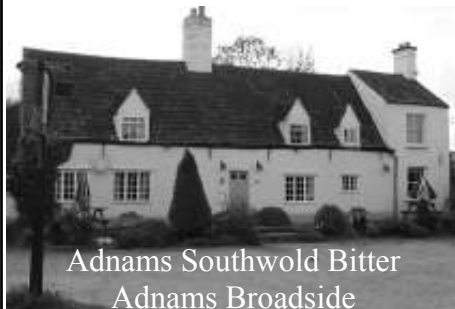
Different Real Ale each week

THE SWAN

Main Street, Old Weston

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REAL ALES and REAL FOOD



Greene King Abbot + Guests

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Fish & Chips Wednesday Evening

Restaurant open Friday & Saturday
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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

COMMUNITY PUBS WEEK



CAMRA research has shown that 56 pubs are closing in Britain each month, and thousands more face an uncertain future. The majority of these pubs are not high street chain bars or theme pubs, but community pubs, recognised as important amenities for local people. The local pub, after all, is often the heart of the community.

After four years of running National Pubs Week, in 2007 CAMRA changed the focus of the event to reflect the need to retain pubs that serve the community. Nothing can match the British pub for its service and atmosphere. Yet pressures from deep discounting of alcohol in supermarkets, massive levels of tax on beer in the UK, and skyrocketing property prices, have seen the traditional British pub under more threat than ever before.

CAMRA is issuing a call to action for all those who want to secure a future for their local. By rallying behind your community pub between February 16th – 23rd, you will be showing your support for the irreplaceable backbone of British life.

In 2008 Community Pubs Week will complement a range of CAMRA-led initiatives, and celebrate and promote all community pubs – not just village locals, but urban gems too.

Adopt Your local Pub

Anyone concerned over the threat to British pubs is being encouraged to “Adopt their local pub”. Members of the public who want to support their local can do so by ordering a free Community Pubs Week pack from CAMRA by calling 01727 867201 or visiting www.pubsweek.org and delivering it to the licensee of the pub and encouraging them to participate in this event.

CAMRA Chief Executive Mike Benner said: “Many people are concerned about the potential loss of community pubs but don’t know what they can do to help. By adopting their local pub in Community Pubs Week they can help to boost trade at this difficult time of year for the licensed trade and put pubs at the heart of the community where they belong.”

Community Pubs Week website - www.pubsweek.org, includes:-

- a. On-line form for pubs to order Community Pubs Week Pack
- b. Information on how a pub-goer can Adopt a Pub
- c. Press Area that includes press releases and images
- d. Events happening across Britain during Community Pubs Week

Huntingdonshire CAMRA are organising a coach tour around the village community pubs east of St Ives on Saturday 23rd of February, in the afternoon and early evening. The coach will make pickups in St Neots, Little Paxton, Buckden, Brampton, Huntingdon and St Ives, and will visit pubs in Pidley, Somersham, Earith, Bluntisham, and Needingworth. The trip is free to CAMRA members, and £5 to non-members. See page 22 for contact details to book your place.

A LOOK BACK IN TIME

25 YEARS AGO

Senior CAMRA officers were 'furious' at news that a new EEC rule would, from July 1983, ban pubs from being tied to a supplier for any drinks – except beer. CAMRA's Neil Harris, in a letter to the European Commission and UK office of Fair Trading, said '... a rigid brewery tie system does not result in many of the purported benefits to consumers. Competition is virtually stifled by networks of agreements. New entrants find it almost impossible to break into the market'. Sadly, in 2008, despite the retreat of the big brewers from pubs, this situation has changed little from the viewpoint of the consumer and the microbrewer.

CAMRA's St Neots branch held meetings at the Green Man at Colne, the Royal Oak at Hail Weston and the White Swan at



White Swan, Bluntisham

Bluntisham. The branch AGM was at Charles Wells pub the Cannon in St Neots, now the Hyde

Park, and a social was held at Litlington Crown.



Whitbread's Portsmouth brewery, the former Brickwoods plant, was the latest closure victim of the national brewing giant, following its closure of six breweries since 1981, in Hampshire, Kent, Devon, South Wales, Liverpool and Leeds. Whitbread blamed falling beers sales, and provided no comfort for CAMRA in a statement: '... in terms of the future of our other breweries, all we can

say is that all our production facilities are continually under review'.

Cask milds were struggling even in 1983. Devenish XXX, brewed at Redruth, and Elgoods Mild brewed at Wisbech, were both discontinued. Elgoods said that they had been telegraphing warnings for five years about sales of their 1030 og cask mild. 'It was only the bottled brown ale that was keeping it going', said head brewer John Holder. Thankfully in 2008 Elgoods have a successful cask mild of real character and distinctiveness in their 'Black Dog', og 1036.8.



A National Opinion Poll showed that 65% of beer drinkers like a head on their beer, but want it to be on top of their pint, not included as a part of the pint, the legal position as adjudged by a High Court ruling the previous year. In 2008 this issue remains as a minefield for beer consumers. Despite Government promises of a fair pint over the years, the brewing trade recommendation that a pint of beer means no more than 19 fluid ounces of liquid (95% of a pint) holds sway.

Birmingham brewer Davenports rejected a £21 million takeover bid from neighbours Wolverhampton and Dudley Breweries. Davenports would eventually fall victim to takeover by Warrington brewer Greenall Whitley – by 2008 merely a brewing name from the past.



A LOOK BACK IN TIME

10 YEARS AGO



Pig & Abbot,
Abington Pigotts

A village action group in Reach, Cambridgeshire was clubbing together to buy their village pub, the King's. Owners and licensees Dotty and William Lester had applied for planning permission for the pub to be converted to housing. The group sought advice from nearby Abington Pigotts, where a co-operative had bought the Pig and Abbot under similar circumstances following guidance from CAMRA. Happily, both of these pubs survive in 2008 as Good Beer Guide listed pubs, with the Reach pub being the home of the Devil's Dyke brewery.



In April 1998 CAMRA launched campaigns opposing three major brewery closures. Whitbread had announced the closure of the Castle Eden and Cheltenham Breweries and Morlands announced the closure of their Ruddles plant in Rutland. Castle Eden was to be saved in a management buyout, and in 2008 it survives as an independent brewer and pub owner. It closed its Castle Eden plant, though, after buying the Cameron brewery in Hartlepool, which had been taken over by Wolverhampton and Dudley Breweries in 1992.

Kathy Hadfield of CAMRA's St Neots branch stood down as chairman of CAMRA's national Pubs Group, CAMRA's national committee for campaigning on pubs, to complete an MSc study course.

Bass's much travelled bottled real ale

Worthington White Shield was saved following a campaign by CAMRA as Bass dropped plans to axe the beer and signed up Sussex brewer King and Barnes to produce it. In 2008, King and Barnes are sadly no longer with us, but White Shield is back home in Burton, brewed by Coors Brewers of Colorado in a pilot scale brewery on their UK brewing site bought from Bass.



CAMRA's St Neots branch held meetings at the White Hart in St Ives and the George in Huntingdon. There was a Belgian beer tasting evening at St Neots Town Football Club and a walk around St Ives pubs beginning at the Seven Wives. There was an inquorate branch annual general meeting at the Nags Head in Eynesbury, and a joint social with the East Bedfordshire branch at the Brown Bear in Biggleswade.

Allied Breweries lost a battle to convert the historic Grade II* listed Running Horses pub in Leatherhead into a Firkin theme pub. The appeal inspector agreed with English Heritage that an 18th century dividing wall must be retained and that Allied had failed to demonstrate that the existing pub was not viable – on the day of the official site visit the pub was so busy that Allied's representatives could hardly get to the bar.

Nethergate brewery of Suffolk won CAMRA's Champion Winter Beer of Britain award with its roasty Old Growler cask porter ale, based on a London recipe from the 1750s.



HALF PINTS

In January, Scottish & Newcastle, the UK's biggest brewing group, agreed to a joint takeover by Carlsberg and Heineken following their increased bid to £7.8 billion. The Dutch Heineken group will take over S&N's UK operations, including John Smiths, and the Danish Carlsberg company will take on S&N's interests in Russia and France, including Kronenbourg.

Beer prices could increase following rocketing prices in malt and hops over the past two years. Poor harvest of hops and barley resulting from the wet 2007 summer are partly to blame, together with fluctuations over a longer period in the balance of supply and demand due to changing brewing practices such as increased usage of hop pellets and extracts.

Price rises could accelerate a steep decline in the UK beer market seen in the past year. AC Nielsen reported a drop of 6% in beer volumes in the year to November 2007. The British Beer and Pub Association reported a reduction of 9.7% in volumes in the same period. But the real ale sector is showing signs of revival with a 7.5% increase in sales by regional and small brewers and 160 new small breweries opening over the past two years.



Refresh UK's Wychwood Hobgoblin cask beer has been dropped in strength from 5% to 4.5%. This follows a similar weakening of other major premium cask bitter brands that seems to threaten diversity in choice of real ale styles and a proliferation of cask bitters around 4.3-4.5% dominating the guest

beer market. Other beers reduced in strength to 4.5% were Greene King's Old Speckled Hen (formerly 5.2%) and before that Youngs



Special (from 4.8%). An earlier drop was Greene King's Ruddles County, from 5.0% to 4.3%. The change in the Hobgoblin recipe follows the success of a bottled version brewed for Sweden at their maximum permitted 3.5% abv.

The Cyclops taste note system for real ale, developed in 2006 by Leicester brewer Everards in conjunction with CAMRA, is now used by over 50 beer brewers and



suppliers and pub companies. Symbols and numbers from 1 to 5 are used to characterize beer style, colour, aroma and taste on product advertising. 54 brewers are in the scheme as well as pub chains Punch Taverns and Mitchells & Butlers, and beer agency Waverley TBS, who are using Cyclops to promote their guest beer schemes.

Youngs is launching a new range of genuine imported lagers into its pubs in London and the South East. Czech beer Pilsner Urquell and Dutch premium lagers from Heineken will be available to all their pubs in addition to the existing range, which includes Staropramen, and UK-brewed Stella Artois will be dropped. Cask



HALF PINTS

Courage Directors and Wells Bombardier are also available to Youngs pubs alongside Youngs cask brands brewed by Wells and Youngs in Bedford.

Pubs in designated Alcohol Disorder Zones will pay up to £100 a week towards policing costs in a new scheme. The payments will be reduced or removed for pubs in recognised accreditation or award schemes and, controversially, supermarkets and convenience stores will be exempt from the charges.

Britain's Small Independent Brewers Association won an award in BBC Radio 4's Food and Farming Awards for its Direct Delivery Scheme, which allows small brewers to sell beers direct to pubs and shops in large national chains.



Fuller's will release three seasonal beers during spring 2008. Gales Swing Low, 3.8% abv, will be available in February for the rugby Six Nations. Gales Festival Mild, 4.8% abv, in March, will be followed by 4.8% abv

Fullers India Pale Ale.

Liverpool brewer Cains has launched Cains FA (Formidable Ale) in a one pint can, following a recent EEC ruling allowing the UK to con-



tinue using Imperial measure. Asda stores will be one supermarket chain selling the new can.

Blackburn brewer Thwaites has bought the rights for the production, marketing and sales of LCL Pils lager from Scottish & Newcastle. Thwaites have already taken over the sales and marketing of the beer and will begin brewing it in Blackburn in December 2008.



Cobra, the company behind the UK-brewed Cobra lager sold in Indian Restaurants around the UK, has acquired its first ever brewery in India

with the acquisition of a controlling stake in Iceberg Industries. Previously the company's beers have been brewed under license by brewers in India and European countries including the UK.

Shepherd Neame has won an award for exports of its Spitfire Ale to Germany, France, Hong Kong, Russia and Italy. The Kent-brewed beer was granted Protected Geographical Indication status by the European Union. This is the same regional produce protection awarded to producers of Champagne and Parma ham.

The award, for EU Protected Food Name Exporter of the Year, was presented at the Food from Britain Export Awards 2007.



PUB PIECES



Robin Hood

In the Winter 2007 issue, Opening Times incorrectly reported the **Robin Hood** in **St Ives** to be under the proprietorship of the LEL club. Opening Times apologises for this incorrect report, which was published in good faith. The Robin Hood is owned by TCG Acquisitions, who bought their 150 pubs from the Spirit Group; they were originally part of the Scottish & Newcastle pub estate. Jim Smith and Kim Lorrigan have managed the Robin Hood for TCG for around 18 months. S & N supply the beers and Adnams Bitter is a permanent real ale alongside Courage Directors. A third pump serves a regularly changing guest ale from S&N's 'Cellarman's Reserve' scheme; recently the rare Fullers Chiswick bitter was sampled in good order.

Also in **St Ives**, the **Manchester Arms**,



Manchester Arms

owned by Punch Taverns, has been leased by David and May Barlow. David was born in a pub, the Half Moon and Seven Stars in Preston, Kent and has lived in pubs for 22 years and in St Ives for 21 years. David and May are looking to restore the Manchester Arms to a vibrant and welcoming community pub and will be introducing various promotional nights and bringing back the pub's pool team. Guest real ales are also planned – watch this space for further details.

Former Charles Wells pub the **Bell** at **Eaton Socon**, which closed in 2006, is set for demolition following a plan-



Bell

ning application to redevelop the site as a drive-through Kentucky Fried Chicken operation following demolition of the pub. The application was submitted jointly by Wells and a local operator of KFC franchises.

Another Charles Wells pub, the **Swan** at **Offord Cluny**, has closed and is for sale for potential redevelopment.

On a more cheerful note, Charles Wells pub the **Leeds Arms** at **Eltisley** has been



The Eltisley

PUB PIECES

transformed into 'The Eltisley', a 'destination dining pub' with a firm focus on good food using seasonal produce, some home grown and some from high quality local suppliers. The new proprietors have established an award-winning reputation at the Hare and Hounds in Old Warden. The food is highly recommended and the Eltisley will continue to welcome non-diners and offer a range of real ales from Charles Wells.

A change of licensee is also expected soon at the **Three Horseshoes, Abbots Ripton**. Again watch this space for further news.



News from the Cambscuisine group, who own and run the excellent Cock pub and restaurant at Hemingford Grey, is the opening of a new venue. The Cambridge



Chop House, in Kings Parade, Cambridge, is a restaurant and bar with two local cask beers on sale, recently including one brewed in Cambridge. Meanwhile, at the Cock, Elgood's Black Dog mild is

back as a permanent line, and selling well.

CAMRA encourages dual uses for pubs to maintain their viability and importance as part of the local community. In Ramsey a novel new use for a pub is seasonal craft workshops organised by local adult learning providers supported by Cambridgeshire County Council, Cambridge and Peterborough Learning Trust and Abbey College. The workshops will cover a range of areas such as making seasonal gifts, salsa and ornithology, with refreshments provided by the pub.

Wetherspoons have applied for a premises licence for the old post office in New Street, St Neots, following their application for planning permission reported in the Autumn 2007 issue of Opening Times.

In **St Neots** the **Corner House** stopped serving cask beer in the autumn of 2007.



Better news at the **Bridge House, St Neots** is the introduction of a rotating range of guest beers. This is a good place to try some real ales not often available in the area.

Opening Times has had reports of a cider producing operation near Hemingford Grey. We would be grateful to receive any further details.

It takes all sorts to campaign for real ale

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Complete the Direct Debit form below and you will receive three months membership free and a fantastic discount on your membership subscription. Alternatively you can send a cheque payable to CAMRA Ltd with your completed form, visit www.camra.org.uk or call 01727 867201. All forms should be addressed to Membership Secretary, CAMRA, 230 Hatfield Road, St Albans, AL1 4LW.



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Forename(s).....

Date of Birth (dd/mm/yyyy).....

Address.....

Postcode.....

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Title..... Surname.....

Forename(s).....

Date of Birth (dd/mm/yyyy).....

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For Young Member and concessionary rates please visit www.camra.org.uk or call 01727 867201.

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 31 days

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Please fill in the form and send to Campaign for Real Ale Ltd, 230 Hatfield Road, St Albans, Herts AL1 4LW

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FOR CAMRA OFFICIAL USE ONLY

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HELP US MAKE A DIFFERENCE!

56 community pubs close every month!
Join CAMRA's crusade to save Britain's pubs.

Research in February 2007 showed that we are losing more pubs now than ever before. A staggering 56 pubs close every month and CAMRA needs your help to campaign and save the pubs that under threat from closure in the future before it is too late.

CAMRA is acting through initiatives such as the Community Pubs Foundation – www.communitypubs.org – and Pub is the Hub – www.pubisthehub.org.uk – to stop unnecessary pub closures.

9 out of 10 pints served contain less than 100% liquid.

Consumers lose over a million pounds a day due to short measure! We are lobbying the Government to change the law so you get what you pay for – a full pint every time.

6 out of 10 pubs are prevented from serving a guest beer of their choice.

Most pubs can only stock beers brought from the brewery or pub company to which they are tied. CAMRA is campaigning for the introduction of a guest beer law, which will give all licensees the right to serve a guest beer of their choice.

CAMRA has over 90,000 discerning members and there are now more than 600 real ale breweries brewing over 2,500 different varieties of real ale in Britain.

CAMRA achievements:

We have had many successes over the years which include:

- Being instrumental in allowing pubs to

open longer to suit the local community.

- Running a powerful campaign that helped the introduction of small brewers' tax relief which enabled many small breweries to invest money into their operations and become more viable.
- Working with many local communities to save hundreds of community pubs from closure.
- Organising over 150 beer festivals a year including the Great British Beer Festival, which saw over 60,000 people visit last year at Earls Court.
- Having over 5,000 volunteers who give up their time to survey pubs, work at beer festivals and actively campaign for real ale and pubs.

If you care about these issues and would like to help make a difference then join CAMRA today! For less than £1.70 a month you can help to campaign for quality real ale and good pubs. As a member you will also receive the following:

- A monthly colour newspaper informing you on beer and pub news and detailing events and beer festivals around the country
- Reduced entrance prices to over 150 beer festivals, including the Great British Beer Festival.
- Chance to join CAMRA / Brewery Complimentary Clubs that are exclusive to CAMRA members. These clubs offer members a variety of promotions including free pint vouchers, brewery trips, competitions and merchandise offers.
- Discounts on CAMRA books including the Good Beer Guide

Join CAMRA today by completing the form opposite, visiting www.camra.org.uk/joinus or calling CAMRA HQ on 01727 867201

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

Referred to as **“A NATIONAL TREASURE”**

by *Saturday Times* - Food and Drink Critic - Richard Brass



The essence of any good pub is that it caters for the needs of a wide range of customers; essentially a good pub serves the community. This is the difference between a pub and a restaurant: a restaurant provides food and drink; a good pub offers a great deal more.

Live music is one good example of the kind of diversity our local pubs offer, and we are fortunate in this area to have a vibrant live music scene.

Promoting pubs is at the core of what CAMRA is all about, and for some months one of our local CAMRA members, Chris Knowles, has been compiling lists of up and coming local live music events into an event guide called **Going Out Live**, which he has been distributing via various email lists, online discussion groups, and local interest web sites, including CAMRA's own email discussion group based on Yahoo, of which 95 local CAMRA members are now members.

This event guide has been so successful and well received that the Huntingdonshire branch has decided to make it more accessible, by putting it on the branch web site. This project has been undertaken by local CAMRA member and committee member Edric Ellis.

In a few weeks time you will see a new menu option when you go to

www.huntscamra.org.uk – Gigs. Initially this will allow you to see a list of future events, month by month, with details of the event (the band), the pub, location etc. Since we are CAMRA, the Campaign for Real Ale, listings will highlight pubs in the branch online pub guide, which is a selective guide of the top 40 or so pubs in the area, based on our continuous assessments of real beer quality. We will also be highlighting venues that offer guest ales, and which guest ales might be expected to be available on the day of the specific gig.

Initially, this event guide will continue to be compiled by Chris Knowles but in a second stage, in April, we will allow pub landlords to create an account on our web site and directly add details of music events and guest beers.

So if you are a local pub landlord and have live music events in your pub and would like help to promote these events, completely free of charge, get in touch with Chris Knowles right now at gigs@huntscamra.org.uk and give him the details.

And if you like good music and good beer, you will soon have a new way of finding the best of both!

Cheers!

A traditional old country
pub and
restaurant with a warm
and friendly atmosphere.

Traditional Sunday Lunch.
Children's menu available.

Open all day Saturday and
Sunday.



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.

The Pig and Abbot

High Street, Abington Pigotts, Nr. Royston, Hertfordshire, SG8 0SD
Telephone: 01763 853515

The White Horse Inn

1 Market Street, Swavesey

Warren and Pat welcome you to their 17th century traditional village Inn in Swavesey

Open all day at weekends

ALL SKY SPORTS



- CAMRA Good Beer Guide listed
- Vast selection of malt whisky
- Non smoking lounge bar and dining area
- Beer garden & childrens play area
- Darts, bar billiards, separate pool room
- Family Sunday roast lunch
- Function/party room

Tel: 01954 232 470 for enquiries and bookings

Fax: 01954 206 188

A TOUR OF FENLAND BREWERIES

Members of Huntingdonshire CAMRA set off on a tour of the fens for visits to breweries Elgoods of Wisbech and Fenland at Little Downham.

At Elgoods Georgian brewery on the banks of the River Nene we were met by



Alan Pateman

h e a d
b r e w e r
**A l a n
P a t e m a n**,
formerly
brewer at
Paines in
St Neots,
and free
t r a d e
s a l e s
m a n a g e r
Paul Mar-
shall. The
beer be-
gan to flow

immediately with a brief wet before our brewery tour. The Black Dog mild and Cambridge Bitter were both immaculate.

The Elgood family were based in Godmanchester and St Neots before they bought the brewery in 1878 and at that time part of the family moved to Wisbech.

Over the years, much of the brewing plant has been obtained second hand on the closure of other breweries and their continued use provides some compensation for these losses. Even the cask washer was previously used by Tolly Cobbold brewery in Ipswich.

A wooden malt elevator and malt cleaner and mill date from 1910. The oldest vessel, a former hop back now used as an under back, was a part of the original brewery on the site dating from 1795.

A direct-fired copper was used until 1950,

when the currently vessel was installed. A helical steam coil boils the wort for an hour, or 90 minutes for dark beers.

The impressive copper open wort coolers, around 90 years old, are still in situ but were taken out of use around ten years ago. Similar coolers were also used at Paines brewery.



open wort coolers

Fermenting tanks are being upgraded to enclosed vessels. Two tanks dating from the 1930's are lined with copper and there are wooden vessels around 50 years old lined with polypropylene but originally used unlined.

A stainless steel racking tank from Camerons brewery replaced an old copper one from Morgans brewery in Kings Lynn.

A ten-barrel microbrewery is used to extend the season of seasonal ales and for occasional beer festival brews and contract beers for holidaying microbrewers.

Mains water, derived from a borehole at Marham, is 'Burtonised' by the addition of sulphate and pH-adjusted for brewing, and river water is abstracted for cooling.

In 1999 Elgoods changed to Maris Otter pale malt – a local connection is that the renowned malting barley strain was developed at the Plant Breeding Institute at

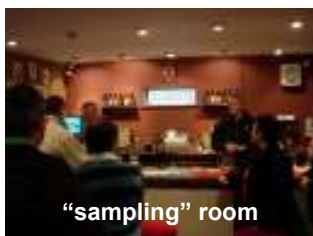
A TOUR OF FENLAND BREWERIES

Trumpington. Crystal, amber and chocolate malt are used in various grist mixes and flaked maize also contributes to flavour profiles. Invert sugar is included in most recipes and malted wheat improves head retention. Whole hops are almost exclusively used. Fuggles and Challenger are the main varieties with some Goldings, Progress, Cascade and Willamette.

Cambridge Bitter is brewed at a strength to allow a batch of Greyhound Special to be taken off for fermentation before dilution of the bulk of the brew. Two winter ales are also produced from a single wort.

Five Elgoods cask beers are available year round and seasonal cask beers rotate every two months. The impressive Christmas treats North Brink Porter and Snickalmass were made available for an early sampling.

The beers pass via conditioning tanks where adjustments are made for colour, alcohol and yeast count. Roast barley extract is added for colour and purified water to adjust alcohol by volume.



Pressurised nitrogen is added to the keg beers, which are chilled and filtered but not pasteurised. The bottled beers are pasteurised, though, and are bottled by Robinsons of Stockport.

Fenland (Isle of Ely) Brewery's 5 barrel brewery in its small industrial unit showed the other end of the scale for cask beer production. But the brewery has grown each year since the present owners bought it and moved to the Isle of Ely in

2004 from its original home in Chatteris. Fenland is now looking to expand its production facilities.



No adjuncts are used in the brewing. Some lager and wheat malt is used in certain

recipes and a complex range of hop varieties is used to produce an impressive choice of 8 regular beers and six seasonals. A unique 'oaked' taste in the beers is derived from a specially formulated yeast with which they ferment the beers.

Smokestack Lightning is difficult to characterise, but its strong chocolate malt flavour was very appealing. Other beers provided for tasting included Rabbit Poacher, a light session bitter and Babylon Banks, a more malty ruby coloured best bitter.

The beers are fermented for a week and chilled for two days then conditioned in cask for two or three weeks before release into the trade. Fenland own one tied house, in Northampton, and a second in Wellingborough should be theirs by the time you read this.

We adjourned to end the day in two local pubs. At the Red Lion in Histon we enjoyed the products of a variety of brewers, surrounded by fascinating exhibits of breweriana. Elgoods' Waggon and Horses in Milton provided a cosy end to the day. The Elgoods beers were all very well presented, and a craving for chips that developed amongst the party on the way there was duly satisfied.



oakham ales

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Barleymead 4.8% Sept/Oct Old Black Shuck 4.5% Nov
Snickalmas 5.0% Wenceslas Winter Warmer 7.5% Dec

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WINTER BEER OF BRITAIN

**Supreme CAMRA Champion
Winter Beer of Britain 2008**



'Station Porter' steams in to be voted best winter beer in the land!

Wickwar Station Porter from Gloucestershire was named as the Supreme Champion Winter Beer of Britain 2008 by a panel of judges at CAMRA's National Winter Ales Festival in Manchester.

The 6.1% abv porter is described in CAMRA's 2008 Good Beer Guide as "A rich, smooth, dark ruby-brown ale. Starts with a roast malt; coffee, chocolate and dark fruit then develops a complex, spicy, bittersweet taste and a long roast finish."

At the announcement, Steve Prescott, Organiser of the National Winter Ales Festival congratulated Wickwar on its victory. He said, "It's great to see a porter winning the Supreme Champion Winter Beer of Britain competition as this beer style has been in danger from disappearing from

the British pub. I sincerely hope people will be inspired to try more porter on the back of Wickwar's victory."

On hearing the news, Kevin Newbould, Wickwar's Key Accounts Director said, "We are very pleased to have been voted the best winter beer in Britain and delighted that everybody feels the same way about this wonderful beer as we do. Let's hope we see a resurgence in people trying more porters in the near future."

The Silver award went to Robinson's Old Tom and the Bronze to Hop Back Entire Stout.



A panel of CAMRA experts and beer writers at the National Winter Ales Festival (New Century Hall, Manchester) judged the competition.



2008

HITCHIN

BEER & CIDER FESTIVAL



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Check www.camranorthherts.org.uk for info
Organisers reserve the right to refuse admission

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EVENTS AND SOCIALS

February 2008 – Community Pubs Week

- Tues 12th Open Committee Meeting, **The Lord John Russell**, St Neots (8.30 pm).
- 15th-17th **Tour of Belgium Bars and Breweries.** Spend several days travelling through the Belgium countryside and sampling the delights of local beer.
- Sat 23rd **Community Pubs Tour.** Coach tour around the village community pubs east of St Ives. Pick-ups in St Neots, Huntingdon and St Ives and then return (1:30pm – 7:30pm). Free to CAMRA members and £5 for guests.
- Tues 26th Open Committee Meeting for 2009 Good Beer Guide pub selection, the **Anchor, Little Paxton**, (8.30 pm).

March 2008 – St Neots Pub Ramble

- Fri 7th Pub ramble around **St Neots** pubs, starting the **Olde Sun** at 8:30 pm, the **Globe** at 9.00 pm, and finishing at 9.30 pm at the **Lord John Russell** beer festival.
- Tues 11th Open Committee Meeting, the **Oliver Cromwell, St Ives**, (8.30 pm).

April 2008 – Castle Rock Brewery / Annual General Meeting

- Tues 8th Annual General Meeting, the **Three Horseshoes, Abbots Ripton** (8.30 pm).
- 19th – 20th **CAMRA AGM / Members Weekend, Cardiff.**
- Sat 26th Trip to **Nottingham** and visit to the **Castle Rock Brewery**. The brewery tour starts at 11 am and then sampling the Brewery range in the tap room at the Vat and Fiddle. Then a tour around the city pubs using the local tram services. Several members will be staying locally.

May 2008 – St Ives Pub Ramble

- Tues 6th Open Committee Meeting, **Old Bridge Hotel, Huntingdon**, (8.30 pm).
- Sat 24th **Local pubs of St Ives.** A trip around the pubs of St Ives starting in the Floods Tavern 8:30 / Nelsons Head 9:15 / Royal Oak 9:45 / Oliver Cromwell 10:15

For further information contact Pete Godfrey, Social Secretary, on 01480 212849 or e-mail: socials@huntscamra.org.uk. An up to date listing of Social Events can also be found at the web site: www.huntscamra.org.uk/diary.

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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 08454 040 506, or at Trading Standards Division, Sackville House, Sackville Way, Great Cambourne, Cambridgeshire, CB3 6HD. The local trading standards web site is www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/business/trading/. The national trading standards web site is www.tradingstandards.gov.uk.

OPENING TIMES

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To contact the Editor Andy Shaw, see "Who to Contact" opposite.

To Advertise

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**Deadline for Summer 2008 issue (135)
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