



CAMPAIGN
FOR
REAL ALE

Opening Times



Huntingdonshire Branch of CAMRA
The Campaign for Real Ale

Issue 154
Spring 2013



Booze on the Ouse

St Neots Beer & Cider Festival

Thursday 14th - Saturday 16th March 2013

Events and Socials

February 2013

- Tue 12th Open committee meeting, at the **Vine, Buckden** (20:30)
- Tue 19th Good Beer Guide selection meeting, at the **Three Horseshoes, Graveley** (20:30)

March 2013

- Tue 5th Pre-Festival Meeting, at the **Anchor, Little Paxton** (20:30)
- 14th-16th **Booze on the Ouse, St Neots Beer & Cider Festival**. See pages 8-9 for more details.
- Tue 26th Post-Festival Social, **Olde Sun, St Neots** (20:30)

April 2013

- Sat 6th **Community Pubs Month coach trip to Old Weston, Leighton Bromswold, Catworth, Spaldwick, Ellington, Buckden**, with pick ups from St Neots, Huntingdon and St Ives. Free to CAMRA members. Book your place with the social secretary.
- Tue 9th **Annual General Meeting**, at the **Black Bull, Brampton** (20:30)
- Tue 23th St Neots Beer Festival washup meeting, **Hog and Partridge, St Neots** (20:30)

May 2013

- Tue 7th Open committee meeting, at the **Crown & Cushion, Great Gransden** (20:30)

An up to date listing of social events can be found on the web site: www.huntscamra.org.uk/diary, or contact the social secretary, Andy Shaw.

Opening Times

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To Advertise

To place an advert or enquire about our rates please contact:

Neil Richards: 01536 358670 or N.Richards@btinternet.com

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Deadline for Summer 2013 issue (155) is Friday 12th April 2013.

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Cambridgeshire Trading Standards: 08454 040 506, www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/business/trading/

Mass Lobby of Parliament

CAMRA held a mass lobby of Parliament last December to support the campaign to persuade the government to abandon the beer duty escalator, which automatically, year by year, increases the duty on beer by two percentage points above the rate of inflation. This policy has applied since 2008 and has caused tax on beer to increase by 26%, to the point where at least £1 from each £3 pint now goes to the government.

Following the successful ePetition, which over 100,000 people signed, an Early Day Motion (EDM) was not sufficient to convince the Treasury to change their policy.

CAMRA therefore decided to arrange a mass lobby, to allow CAMRA members to talk to their MPs and encourage them to petition the Chancellor and support another EDM.



Hunts CAMRA members gather for the mass lobby of Parliament.

Eight members of the Huntingdonshire branch of CAMRA took part in the mass lobby and met MP Jonathan Djanogly.

Jonathan very kindly took us to the Strangers Bar, where we discussed the beer duty escalator and its impact on local pubs in his constituency. We also challenged the assumption that the tax escalator was actually increasing revenue, since the Treasury's own projections suggest that total revenue from beer duty will not rise in the next several years, due to falling consumption.

Jonathan acknowledged our various points, and indicated that he, too, thought that the escalator should be scrapped. He agreed to write to the Chancellor, which he later did



and sent a copy of his letter and the reply he received to the branch.

After our meeting we returned to a rally in a nearby hall to hear rousing speeches by various personalities, including several MPs. The day was declared a success, with over 1,200 delegates travelling from all corners of Britain to lobby over 300 MPs and make it quite clear that the beer duty escalator should be scrapped.

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Home of Son of Sid Brewery



**CAMRA
East Anglia
Pub of the
Year 2008**

A Look Back In Time

10 YEARS AGO

CAMRA's first ever Pubs Week in February 2003 was an unqualified success. It was run in conjunction with a number of industry partners including Punch Taverns, Enterprise Inns, Wolverhampton and Dudley Breweries and Cask Marque. CAMRA distributed beer mats and posters and encouraged pubs to run local activities to promote pub going.

St Neots CAMRA ran a Pubs Week tour of rural reopened pubs at Broughton, Wistow, Upwood, Woodwalton and Holme.

Britain's oldest brew pub, the All Nations at Madeley, Shropshire, reopened under new ownership 21 months after it closed. The All Nations had first brewed beer in 1789, when pubs with breweries were common. By the early 1970's it had become one of only four pubs in the country still brewing its own beer, and acquired a national reputation for its one draught beer, a 3% ABV pale ale, commonly named 'Mrs Lewis's' after a venerated long term landlady of the pub who passed away in 1988.

Butcombe brewery in Somerset, one of the oldest of Britain's new wave of microbreweries spawned in the 1970s, changed hands following the retirement of Simon Whitmore, Butcombe's founder and former regional managing director for brewers Courage. He had founded Butcombe 25 years earlier, in 1978. The new owners of Butcombe were Guy Newell and Paul Horsley, who founded the Beer Seller distribution business in 1987 and sold it to Bulmers in 2002.

Pub company Eldridge Pope of Dorchester finally severed links with its brewing history as it sold its remaining interests in contract brewing company Thomas Hardy Burtonwood, operators of its old brewery in Dorchester as well as the Burtonwood brewery near Warrington. Eldridge Pope and Burton-

wood were among a number of old family breweries that had separated their brewing and pubs businesses around this time.

Another such brewing company, Brakspear of Henley, ousted its Chief Executive, Jim Burrows, a brewer by trade who had spent six years at the helm of the Brakspear brewery that had been revered by beer lovers until its closure in 2002 by Brakspear, when it decided to change to a non-brewing pub company.

The Hogshead chain of real ale pubs was controversially revamped by new owners Laurel Inns. Hogsheads were originally set up by national brewer Whitbread and widely supported by CAMRA for a policy of stocking impressive ranges of cask beers, many from small local breweries. Laurel offered a highly curtailed range of cask beer brands in its new look Hogsheads.



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A Look Back In Time

25 YEARS AGO

In the spring of 1988 the Watney brewing and pubs group's parent company Grand Metropolitan announced a sale of 700 of its low barrelage pubs. These included 250 in Norfolk (nearly a third of its Norfolk estate) to be sold to Brent Walker, a London based property company, along with another 136 pubs in London and the Home Counties. 105 pubs in the South and South West went to Salisbury brewers Gibbs Mew and 210 in the North and Midlands to Heron International, acting with Nazmu Virani's Control Securities company. The sales followed an announcement that the government's Monopolies and Mergers Commission had concluded that Britain's biggest brewers were operating a monopoly worth investigating. Two years earlier, Norfolk CAMRA had submitted a report on Watney's monopoly of Norfolk's pubs, claiming that various abuses of their monopoly acted against the public interest.

Watney discontinued its real ales Truman Bitter and Combe Bitter as the group pushed its Ruddles Best Bitter towards national brand status.

St Neots CAMRA braved the February weather for pub walks in Eaton Socon and Great Staughton, the latter starting at the New Tavern. The branch Annual General Meeting was at the Royal Oak at Hail Weston.

Closures of breweries by Britain's big brewing companies continued. Greenall Whitley closed their Wem brewery in February. Boddingtons closed Oldham Brewery in April. And Whitbread were planning to close their Wethered brewery at Marlow, Buckinghamshire and Chesters brewery in Salford, both in May. CAMRA launched a 'blitzkrieg' of campaigning against the Wethered closure, with a national petition, postcard writing

campaign and massive demonstration through the streets of Marlow.

CAMRA's annual general meeting in Birmingham in April 1988 decided to set up tasting panels to produce beer descriptions for the Good Beer Guide. The meeting also agreed a new strategy to counter the 'international lager culture fostered by advertising' and the decline of independent brewers as well as the quality and distinctiveness of real ales. The meeting elected Val Guest, Rob Walker, Dave Goodwin, John Norman, Sean Murphy and Paul Moorhouse to its national executive.

In Bedfordshire, the Nix Wincott brewery was set up at the Three Fyshes in Turvey with the help of Banks and Taylors brewery at Shefford. Nix Wincott was named after Three Fyshes licensee Charles Wincott and partner Martin Nix.

Ye Olde Sun



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Half Pints

The government has announced proposals for a statutory code of practice and an independent adjudicator for Britain's pub companies, following its disappointment that an agreement with the pubs industry in 2011 for voluntary reforms has not produced a promised revised industry code of practice. In a January debate, MPs backed the new proposals, which will ensure fair rents and wholesale beer prices and embed the principle that tied licensees should be no worse off than free-of-tie licensees. A mandatory free-of-tie option for leases, as proposed by CAMRA, is not included but has not been ruled out. The proposed adjudicator will have powers to investigate complaints and impose sanctions if pub companies break the code. There will be a consultation on the proposals during the spring.

CAMRA has donated £18,000 to the 'Pub is the Hub' organisation to help expand its activities promoting community pubs and helping

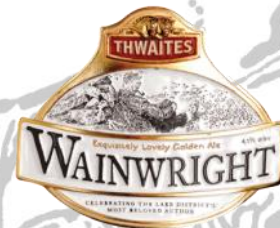
licensees to diversify into new business-building activities. The money was raised from the proceeds of the sale of tickets for last year's CAMRA's annual raffle. The Government has donated £150,000 for Pub is the Hub's new community services fund to help UK pubs to diversify into new services. The organisation has previously helped more than 350 pub landlords diversify into new services for the benefit of their local communities and more vulnerable residents.

Independent family brewing companies are selling more real ale as a proportion of their total sales, according to figures from the



of cask beer, up from 45.5% the year before.

Blackburn-based family brewer Thwaites



Independent Family Brewers of Britain (IFBB) organisation. 47.7% of sales in the year to July 2012 were

has launched a new £2m promotion for its 4.1% ABV Wainwright beer, the straw coloured bitter that is already the fastest

growing cask beer brand within the top 25 in the UK. The new promotion will include a web site dedicated to the brand, a Facebook page and a Wainwright Pub Walks app.

Two other revered and historic family-owned brewing companies have made bullish announcements. Swindon-based Arkells is planning to add to its estate of 100 pubs following a 1% increase in profits to £1.8m for the year to the end of March 2012. In Manchester, JW Lees is aiming to open ten new pubs during 2013 to add to its estate of around 170 houses, which are mainly in north west England and north Wales.

Property agent Savills say that the proportion of their pub sales going for change of use has almost doubled since 2009. 60% of 40 pubs sold by Savills in 2012 were for alternative use - mostly residential or convenience stores.

Miller Brands has introduced St Stephanus Grand Cru, 9% ABV, a second Belgian Abbey ale to sit alongside St Stephanus Blond,



Half Pints

which Miller launched in 2011. Bottles of St Stephanus Grand Cru will be dated when put on sale, to allow buyers to age the beer for as long as they wish.

The CAMRA Members Investment Club



**CAMRA
MEMBERS
INVESTMENT
CLUB**

(CMIC) is looking to make up to £100,000 invest-

ments in established microbreweries which may be struggling to take the next step in expansion. Chris Bruton, chairman of CMIC, explained that as the result of consolidation in the brewing industry, the number of independent breweries CMIC can invest in is gradually declining. He said: 'Clearly the microbrewery sector is the growth sector in the beer market and we perceive that in the current financial and borrowing climate, some of the relatively successful ones may be in a position to expand but are struggling to raise the necessary finance.' Further details on criteria for investment from info@cmic.uk.com

January 2013 saw wholesale beer price rises of up to 5p per pint from large multinational brewers. Molson Coors, Carlsberg and Heineken have increased prices by around 5p per wholesale pint and Diageo have upped prices of Guinness and Red Stripe by 5%.

The Hawkshead microbrewery, based in the Lake District, has launched



HAWKSHEAD BREWERY three limited edition beers aged in whisky casks from the single malt distillery Bladnoch in Galloway. Brodie's Prime Reserve 2012, weighs in at 8.5% ABV. Imperial Stout and Damson and Vanilla Imperial Stout are both 8.3% ABV.

A famous old east London brewing name was expected to return in March with the opening of the new Truman's brewery in Hackney Wick by James Morgan and Michael-George Hemus, using funds raised from former Truman brewery employees and east London beer drinkers. Morgan and Hemus originally revived the Truman brand over four years ago after acquiring the brand from owners Heineken. Since then, they have been selling Truman beers contract-brewed for them.

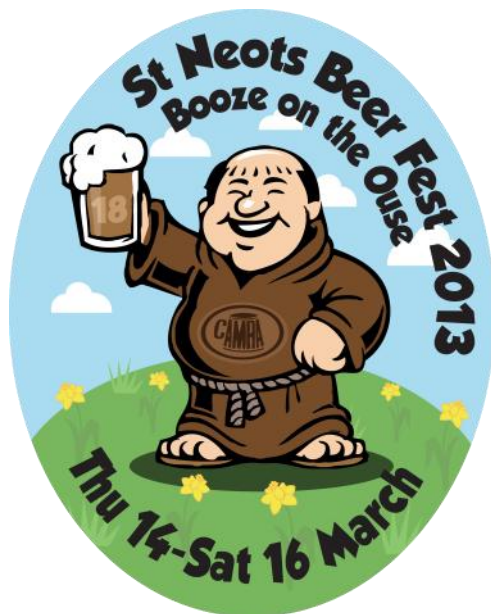
CAMRA's online beer scoring www.beerscoring.org.uk website has been re-launched to make it easier for members to rate pubs and contribute to compiling the Good Beer Guide. Members contribute scores to help branches choose the best pubs in each area for the guide. The site has a new interface to make finding pubs and entering scores easier, and scores can also be entered via WhatPub.com, CAMRA's new national online pub guide.



The new system links pubs with branches, which makes it easier for them to download local scores as part of the GBG selection process. The process to ensure all pubs in the country are uploaded to WhatPub.com and beerscoring.org.uk is ongoing and National Director Brett Laniosh has urged CAMRA branches to continue to provide details as part of the project.

One of the more entrepreneurial new-wave brewery and pub operators, Joule's of Shropshire, is planning to spend £1m to add five to six more pubs to its estate and double the storage area at its 10,000 barrel production site.

39th Booze on the Ouse



OPENING TIMES

- Thursday 5pm–11pm
- Friday 12 noon–11pm
- Saturday 12 noon–11pm.

ADMISSION

- Thu: Before 7pm: £1; After 7pm: £2.
- Fri: Before 7pm: £1; After 7pm £3.
- Sat: £1 All Day.

Families welcome until 8pm.

No entry or re-admission after 10.30pm.

Free entry to CAMRA members at all sessions - a good reason to join CAMRA!



BEERS and CIDERS

REAL ALES

We hope to serve over the course of the festival over 60 real ales from all over the UK, both from the well-established independent breweries and the newer, smaller breweries, with a focus on local East Anglia breweries.

BOTTLED BEERS

The popular cider and bottled beer bar will be selling a range of Belgian, Dutch, German, and American bottled beers including examples of the most distinctive individualistic beer styles in the world, such as Trappist, lambic and wheat beers.

CIDER AND PERRY

A selection of tasty traditional draughts and bottled cider and perry, focussed on Cambridgeshire suppliers.



FEATURES

VENUE

The festival is being held at the Priory Centre, Priory Lane, close to the Market Square, in the centre of St Neots.

FOOD AND DRINK

A variety of snacks and food will be available at all sessions. Free soft drinks will be available from the cider bar for the designated driver of your party.

18th St Neots Beer Festival

CHILDREN AT THE FESTIVAL

Whilst lunchtime is the ideal time to bring the family to the festival, we do allow children into the hall up to 8pm in the evening.

CAMRA PRODUCTS STAND

Come along and chat to our staff and learn about CAMRA, beer brewing and pubs. CAMRA and brewery products will be on sale, including sweatshirts, t-Shirts and polo shirts, as well as books, pens, badges and beer mats. Adjacent will be the fabulous 'Every One's a Winner' tombola stall.

OTHER DETAILS

THE WORKERS

The festival is organised and run by members of CAMRA who are all unpaid volunteers. We always need more helpers, so if you can help at any session please contact Andy Shaw: 01480 355863, or andy.shaw@huntscamra.org.uk.

**Thu 14 – Sat 16
March 2013**

**Priory Centre,
St Neots, PE19 2BH**

**60+ REAL ALES
plus Bottled Beer and
Cider & Perry**

CONTACT NUMBER

Festival organiser, Richard Harrison, 07740 675712, festival@huntscamra.org.uk.

Also visit our web site for updates
www.huntscamra.org.uk/festivals.



The Three Horseshoes

Wistow

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their traditional village pub.*



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Broadside**

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(01487) 822270**

Pub Pieces

What's On in Your Local? Reports in Pub Pieces are provided by our branch pub contacts, licensees, local CAMRA members and Opening Times readers. Further news of changes at local pubs is welcome. Please send news to news@huntscamra.org.uk

The Three Horseshoes in **Abbots Ripton** reopened at the end of December and has been renamed **Abbot's Elm**. Following a serious fire, the pub has been extensively refurbished and has been 'opened up to allow natural light in'.

The **Manchester Arms, St Ives** is advertising that they are 'under new management', and the pub reopened in mid-January.

The lease of the **Mermaid, Ellington** has been taken by an exclusive chain of hotels and restaurants run by the celebrity chef Marco Pierre White. All the other hotels and restaurants run by Marco Pierre White group are up market five star establishments, and a pub such as the Mermaid, Ellington seems to be a major departure from the norm for this group. The letting accommodation has already been upgraded to the appropriate standard, and the kitchens are now undergoing a similar refurbishment. At the moment the pub is being run by a temporary manager, until a chef patron can be appointed.

The **Three Tuns, Guilden Morden** closed on Sunday 13th January, when villagers packed into the pub to wish landlady Lynda goodbye. Lynda handed in her tenancy notice before Christmas. Greene King has decided not to find a replacement tenant, and the pub is on the market to be sold freehold. A group of village residents have formed a committee to explore the possibility of taking the Three Tuns into community ownership.

Enterprise Inns are advertising the lease-

hold of the **Rose & Crown, Somersham**.

Greene King are advertising the freehold of the **Bell, Great Paxton** for sale for £230,000. The agents Fleurets are highlighting that the Bell is the 'only pub in the village', and are not suggesting the possibility of 'alternative use'.

In **Willingham**, Cambridgeshire's first 'micropub' has recently opened. The licensee also runs the village post office, so **The Bank** opens at 5.30pm daily, and offers four constantly changing guest real ales. See www.thebankmicropub.co.uk for more details.

The **Fox & Hounds, Great Gidding** reopened on the 11th of December with the previous tenant Christine Hill as the manager. The pub was sold at auction last June and has remained closed for many months.

The **Hail Weston** Community Pub Society along with the Hail Weston Parish Council have made an successful application to Huntingdonshire District Council (HDC) to have the **Royal Oak** registered as a community asset under the Community Right to Bid part of the Localism Act, which came into force in September 2012. The Community Pub Society plans to launch a community share offer in February to raise the necessary funds to make a community bid to purchase the freehold of the Royal Oak.

Meanwhile, the Huntingdonshire branch of CAMRA is approaching a number of parish councils to encourage them to similarly apply to have a number of pubs registered as community assets. If you are concerned that your local community pub is at risk from being sold and converted, please contact the branch Pubs Officer, pubs@huntscamra.org.uk.

A correction to a report in the last edition of Pub Pieces: the **Aviator in St Ives** will not



Pub Pieces

as was rumoured become a restaurant, but will reopen as the **Merchant House**, a 'pub first and foremost', to quote the team behind the new developments. Two real ales will be available. The pub has undergone an extensive refurbishment and the new interior will be 'cosy, comfy, shabby chic, and lots of interesting bric-a-brac'. See www.themerchanthouse.net for details.

The **Green Man** at **Colne** plans to stock a mild, Elgoods Black Dog, during May, and the **Prince of Wales** in **Bluntisham** will offer Greene King XX Mild. We will be reporting on other pubs that plan to offer mild in May in our next edition.

The **White Swan**, **Bluntisham** continues to offer an interesting guest beer, and recently had Crouch Vale, Brewers Gold and Dark Star, Hophead, both excellently kept.

The **Mill** at **Brampton** was recently flooded twice in a four week period, including on Christmas Day when the restaurant was fully booked, and the bar was covered in three inches of water. Fortunately, the kitchen lies above the flood level, allowing food to be prepared. Diners were given the option of a refund, taking the meal home, paddling through water and being served by waiters in wellies, or a meal at the Flying Horse at Clophill. The Mill currently offers two real ales - Doom Bar and Adams Southwold Bitter, and a guest ale is to be added soon.

The Yelling Social Club are holding a beer festival on Friday 3rd May in the evening, and all day on Saturday 4th May. Ten real ales, real cider and a barbeque are planned.

PIG n FALCON New St St Neots

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962



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We look forward to seeing you soon



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