# Opening Times

Huntingdonshire branch of CAMRA

ISSUE 176 WINTER 2018



hunts.camra.org.uk



### **EDITORIAL**

A warm welcome to the winter issue of Opening Times, the magazine from the Huntingdonshire branch of CAMRA (the Campaign for Real Ale).

We have more great news to report in this issue with two pubs in our area, the **Chequers** at Little Gransden and the Cock at Hemingford Grey, receiving national recognition. In addition, the second round of our branch pubs awards were announced at the recent Booze on the Ouse festival in St Ives. The branch has also seen the reopening of two pubs, the **Three Horseshoes** in Gravely and the **Hare on the Green** in Brampton, whilst the **Pub at Grafham** is due to open imminently.

Nevertheless, we cannot be complacent as pubs have continued to close over the last year, with more under threat of closure. Pubs are suffering from the combined effects of high duty, VAT and business rates, together with the PubCo tie and cheap supermarket booze. There was some relief in the Budget, with announcements of a freeze in on beer and cider duty and an extension to rates relief. However, more must be done to save the Great British pub from extinction and CAMRA is campaigning for urgent reform to business rates, beer duty and the Pubs Code.

As we approach the festive season, I'm sure many of the pubs in our branch area will receive a welcome boost in trade with a horde of celebrating customers. Many of these will be new or at least irregular visitors to the pub. With luck, some will be converted to the delightful aromas and flavours present in the real ales they sample. The upturn in trade is great to see and hardworking publicans will be very happy to see it (although a few pub regulars may be less

content with the disturbance this offers!).

However, what happens when we get to January? Well many pubs are likely to go quiet, with drinkers deserting them in their droves. Perhaps hoping to save some cash after a costly Christmas? Or under a potentially mis-guided belief that partaking in Dry January will have more than transient health benefits? But why not do something different this January? We suggest giving up drinking mass-produced, generic brands, especially at home! Follow the Tryanuary trend instead; support independent breweries, pubs, bars and other retailers during what can be a challenging month. May be avoid drink at home, but spend more time in the pub and try the expanding range of local beers and ciders on offer. In short, become a LocAle champion!

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all who came along to the St Ives 'Booze on the Ouse' Beer and Cider Festival held in October. A special thank you must go to our volunteers whose skills and enthusiasm made the event a great success. Thanks also to the Burgess Hall and all of our suppliers.

As always, if you have any pub, brewery or festival news, or would like to submit a relevant article for publication in Opening Times, please email to news@hunts.camra. org.uk (or forward them to a member of the branch committee; contact details are shown on our website and on this page.

We wish you all the best for the festive season and the New Year!

Richard Harrison, Chairman of Hunts CAMRA on behalf of the Branch Committee, May 2018

#### **VACANCY**

There is currently a vacancy on the Hunts Branch Committee for a Minutes Secretary. The role involves taking minutes at branch meetings, which are usually held on a weekday evening or Saturday afternoon. It also requires distribution of the draft and final minutes to Committee members by email. Access to a laptop or tablet would be helpful, but not essential.

If you are interested in volunteering or for more information, please contact the branch chairman, Richard Harrison, at chairman@ hunts.camra.org



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The main branch contacts listed. Please visit our website for a full list of our branch Committee members. hunts.camra.org.uk







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### **HUNTS PUB NEWS**

We were proud to announce in the last issue of *Opening Times* that the **Chequers** in Little Gransden won this year's CAMRA Cambridgeshire Pub of the Year (POTY) competition and also the East Anglian POTY. So we are delighted to now be able to report that the **Chequers** has reached the final four in the competition for the national pub of the year. More details are included in the article on page 9.

It is always good to get news of a closed pub that has reopened for business. The **Three Horseshoes** in Graveley reopened earlier this year under new management. Chefs Ben and Fab are at the helm and presumably the restaurant will be their priority. We welcome them to our area and wish then success with their business. A visit found Greene King IPA and Old Speckled Hen, as well as Thwaites Wainwright on sale. Hopefully a report on the pub will be available for the next issue.

More good news is that the **Hare on the Green** in Brampton (formerly the Harrier and then an Indian restaurant) has recently reopened. One side is operated as a bar, with the other side being a restaurant area. It is a local family run business with a fun relaxed environment for all ages to enjoy. There is a children's area in the restaurant and dogs are welcome in the bar area on leads. The food is fresh and locally sourced wherever possible and a range of cask beers are offered, including some from Papworth Brewery, plus bottled real ale from Draycott Brewery. We intend to include a full report in our next issue.

In Grafham, the long awaited **Pub at Grafham** is due to open its doors in December. This new build community pub will be run by volunteers from the village as well as some from further afield. There should be one cask beer on sale initially which should be a LocAle from Draycott and other local breweries. There should also be a local cider. More

details will appear on the branch website (hunts.camra.org.uk) and in the next issue where an article about the pub will appear.

With two pubs reopening and a new pub about to open, we have unfortunately received news of the closure of **The Racehorse** in Catworth. The owner has retired and sadly closed the pub on 15 October. The local parish council are holding a meeting of villagers to discuss the future of the pub which is a vital and integral part of Catworth life. It is hoped that The Racehorse can be kept open as a village pub and a social centre for the community. Hopefully there is enough support in the village for a community group to be formed in order to purchase and run the pub. Anyone who can help should contact Chris Elison (chrise57@btinternet.com).

Another closed pub is the **Victoria** in Huntingdon which closed last year and was sold at auction earlier this year. The pub is currently for sale through Giggs & Co estate agents and is unfortunately unlikely to reopen as a pub, although in the right hands it could have been a successful business.



'The Victoria in better times'

At the time of going to print we had no news on two of the closed pubs in our area (the **Three Tuns** in Guilden Morden and the **Three Horseshoes** in Wistow) that local community groups are trying to reopen. Also, the **Three Horseshoes** in Great Stukeley remains closed and is sadly looking rather derelict; any news from here would be appreciated.

Following a number of recent changes in pub management in our area, the branch welcomes another new manager to our area. Anthea Kenny is the new manager at the **Weeping Ash** (JD Wetherspoons) in St Neots. This pub has long been renowned for its limited selection of real ales, but Anthea is eager to improve this and we have seen that there has recently been a greater and more varied selection available. If you haven't visited the Weeping Ash recently, pop along and have a look. You will notice the changes as soon as you go through the door, with a blackboard showing ales available and also those on next. Anthea also hopes to add a local beer to those on sale.

Our three local Wetherspoon pubs took part in their beer festival during October with over thirty real ales, some of which were brewed specially for Wetherspoon, on sale during the event.

In St Ives, there has been a change in the beer range at the **Slepe Hall Hotel** with the Adnams beers being replaced by ones from the local Oakham Brewery in early September. In late October these were Bishops Farewell and Citra. Extended renovations at the **Royal Oak** are ongoing. At the **Seven Wives**, the kitchen has reopened and meals are served from Thursday through to Sunday, when a Sunday Carvery is served.

Also in St Ives, local brewery, Elgoods, have recently carried out some refurbishment work at **Floods Tavern** including an external repaint.



The 100th anniversary of the end of the First World War was commemorated in style by Floods with a tribute to all of the brave men and women who have protected our country in that war and every other war and battlefield since. We thank you all for your service to this great nation and we remember our fallen heroes. We Will Remember Them



"Photos courtesy of Philip M Pope of Floods Tavern"

Not often mentioned in these pages, the **George Hotel** in Huntingdon held a small beer festival in the autumn with 10 real ales available from late September to early November. The Greene King owned hotel offered a discount for CAMRA members during the event. Also in Huntingdon, a beer festival was held at the 4th November race meeting.

Many pubs in the area celebrated the Halloween festival with some landlords

decorating the pubs appropriately, although some didn't make as much effort as others. Perhaps next year members could send in photographs of their local pubs Halloween decorations for inclusion in Opening Times?

Finally in this section, pubs regularly raise funds for charities, both local and national. However, a special mention should go to Matt and Jane of the King of the Belgians, Hartford, who proudly announced that in 2018 they have raised the fabulous sum of £6060! This was principally from the beer festival held in May. Donations have been made to the Ladybird Boat Trust (Wyton), Huntingdon Community Centre, Parkinson's UK (St Ives). The Veronica Claxton Memorial Fund (Hartford) and Action Duchenne (St Neots). Many congratulations to all involved!

Reports collated by Ian Baptist



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### **HUNTS BRANCH PUB AWARDS**

Each year, the branch presents pub awards at both of the Booze on the Ouse beer and cider festivals we organise. The awards are presented to draw attention to pubs and clubs that operate in ways that CAMRA would wish to encourage, such as providing well-presented varied ranges of real ales including milds, dark ales and LocAles (real ales sourced from local breweries).

The following awards were presented at the St Ives festival in October:

#### **Most Improved Rural Pub**

There were three nominees in this category and these were:

- · Crown & Cushion, Great Gransden
- Fox & Hounds, Great Gidding
- Red House, Longstowe

The winner was the **Fox and Hounds** at Great Gidding. During a recent visit by the branch, this was shown to have developed into a thriving local pub, with good beer and a nice, welcoming atmosphere.

#### **Most Improved Urban Pub**

The three nominees in this category were:

- Anchor, Little Paxton
- Sandford House, Huntingdon
- Seven Wives, St. Ives

The **Anchor** Pub & Restaurant in Little Paxton was the worthy winner in this category. In less than two years, this pub has grown from a quiet, run-down venue with little welcome and atmosphere to a busy local pub, with lots of customers and a great environment in to

which to eat and drink. Recent renovations have further improved the facilities available.

# Milds and Dark Ales Pub of the Year

There were four nominees in this category which were:

- Falcon, Huntingdon
- Pig 'n' Falcon, St. Neots
- Royal Oak, St. Ives
- Sandford House, Huntingdon

This was a competitive category, but the **Royal Oak** in St Ives won out with a commitment to always stock at least one dark or mild ale, served in good condition.

#### LocAle Pub of the Year

This was also a particularly competitive category with six nominees! These were:

- Chequers, Little Gransden
- Courtyard, Papworth
- · Green Man, Leighton Bromswold
- Pheasant, Keyston
- · Pig 'n' Falcon, St. Neots
- Royal Oak, St. Ives

The judges commended all of these pubs for their commitment to stocking a real ale, but considered that the **Green Man** at Leighton Bromswold was the deserved winner. On all recent visits, a LocAle (often several) was available and served in good condition.

Hunts branch would like to congratulate all of the nominated pubs, with a particular commendation for the winners in each category. Well done to all and please keep up your worthy efforts!



The first tranche of the awards for 2019 will be presented at the St Neots festival in March. This will include the Cider Pub of the Year, Community Pub of the Year, Club of the Year, Urban Pub of the Year and Rural Pub of the Year, together with the overall winner of the Hunts Branch Pub of the Year. If you would like to nominate a pub or club for an award, please email pubs@hunts.camra. org.uk before the 31 December 2018.

# CAMRA NAMES THE FOUR BEST UK PUBS

CAMRA has named the best four pubs in the country as part of its Pub of the Year 2018 competition; one of the most respected and well-known pub awards in the UK. All of the pubs in the competition were selected by CAMRA volunteers and judged on their atmosphere, decor, welcome, service, value for money, customer mix and most importantly – quality of beer. The four finalists will now have a chance to win the National Pub of the Year title for 2018, which will be announced in February 2019.

As reported in the Hunts Pub News section, a Huntingdonshire pub, the **Chequers** in Little Gransden was one of the four named. If you've not yet been to the **Chequers**, an early visit is highly recommended! It is a traditional village pub, with wooden benches and a roaring fire, which has been run by the same family for over 60 years. The **Chequers** has featured in CAMRA's Good Beer Guide on 24 occasions and is the home of Son of Sid Brewery, offering a selection of their beers. Fish and chips are a highlight on a Friday night (advanced booking is essential)! Presentation of Certificates will take place at the **Chequers** at 4 pm on Saturday 24 November, with a report in our next issue.



#### "Chequers, Little Gransden"

The other finalists in the competition are:

 The Volunteer Arms (Staggs) in Musselburgh (near Edinburgh). This is a traditional local decorated with wooden floors, wood panelling and mirrors from defunct local breweries. Run by the same family since 1858, it offers a regularly changing range of real ale.



 The Wonston Arms in Wonston, Hampshire. Saved from closure and now run by a persevering community group, this pub has made it through to the final for the first time. Situated in the heart of the village, it serves four real ales from local breweries and is home to jazz sessions, quizzes and regular visits from food providers.



 The Cricketers in St Helens. This is the current CAMRA Pub of the Year. A friendly local community pub also saved from closure, the pub boasts 13 handpumps on the bar and offers brews from newer regional brewers and local microbreweries.



National Pub of the Year Co-ordinator and East Anglian Regional Director, Andrea Briers, said: "Each of the finalists are different, with both town and village pubs represented, all of which are excellent examples of their style of pub. This stage of the competition is very tough and all four finalists should be proud of their achievement."

# The Wheatsheaf

92 Church Street, Gamlingay SG19 6JJ

This idyllic historic village pub full of character and charm situated next to the church in Gamlingay is going from strength to strength. Deryck and Lorna have been there for one year now and are still encountering new faces as well as the much treasured locals all are ensured a great welcome together with high quality beers and home cooked food.

Keep an eye on the notice boards outside for the regular musical events and entertainment arranged on frequent occasions. We have a charity quiz night on alternate Mondays just give us a ring or see the notice board for specific dates and the Crib team meet on Thursday evenings.

The Wheatsheaf boasts exceptional freshly cooked food served daily except on Mondays. Fresh fish is delivered daily to provide our speciality fish and chips including our well famed takeaway service shortly to include Pizzas. We offer reduced prices for the children. Sunday lunch is by bookings only, phone 01767 651743.

The wheatsheaf has invested in extending and improving the garden area with new patios and more security for children to safely enjoy themselves. The pub has adequate seating and dining areas in the newly renovated panelled Brogans bar which has a 75 inch television to cater for special sporting and televised events.

Award winning pub for Doom Bar ale.



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SUNDAY 12pm - 9pm

Sunday Lunches are bookings only please by Thursday

The Wheatsheaf offers a fish and chip takeway service Tuesdays – Saturdays.



### LONGEST SERVING LICENSEE IN ST NEOTS



Karen Walker who runs the **Barley Mow** in Eaton Ford has been a landlady in the St Neots area for 25 years, making her the longest serving licensee in St Neots.

When Karen, originally from Cork in Ireland, came to St Neots to visit a friend, she was already a trained chef. She met her future husband Andy and decided to stay and look for work in the area. She found employment at the Old Falcon Hotel on the Market Square. then owned by Charles Wells. One day she was asked to help out behind the bar, and although initially sceptical as she had never pulled a pint in her life, she found she loved it! She continued to work at the Old Falcon, working her way up through Trainee Manager, Assistant Manager and eventually, Manager. She ran the Old Falcon for seven years, at that time incorporating a night club and eight letting rooms. The place allegedly even had a ghost called George!

Eventually Karen decided she would like to work for herself and by this time she and Andy had a two year old daughter, Leah, and a house in

Eaton Ford. So when the tenancy on the **Barley** Mow came up it seemed perfect. Karen has run the Barley Mow for eighteen years and has tried many different themes and events over the years with varying degrees of success. Two weekly events, still going strong as they are very popular, are Wednesday Fish night and Thursday Steak night.

Whilst Karen runs all aspects of the pub and kitchen, her husband Andy looks after the cellar and the beers. In spite of being situated in a fairly large town, the Barley Mow has a traditional, almost village pub type atmosphere with darts and crib teams and also a wellsupported Petangue team.

With regards to beer, Greene King Abbot is always available together with at least one guest ale. In the five years we have been drinking in there these beers have always been excellently kept.

So please raise a glass to the longest serving Landladv in St Neots. Karen Walker - Cheers!

Reported by Janice & Peter Harridge

### **GOOD PUB GUIDE**

#### Pub of the year winner!

#### The Cock, Hemingford Grey

As we went to press with the last issue of Opening Times, we heard that the Cock on the High Street in Hemingford Grey had gained national recognition after being named 'Pub of the Year' in the 2019 Good Pub Guide. The award follows on from other local awards that have been won on a number of occasions. What makes the latest award even more remarkable is that this is the second time that the Cock has won this prestigious award having also being Good Pub Guide 'Pub of the Year' in the 2013 edition.

The Good Pub Guide (not to be confused with CAMRA's Good Beer Guide) assesses pubs on all round aspects and it is a credit to the pub manager and all the staff at the Cock to have beaten over 5000 other pubs to win this award. The guide describes the Cock as 'a first class pub in a delightful village'.



#### 'The Cock, Hemingford Grey'

The 17th century Cock public house in the picturesque village of Hemingford Grey was an ordinary boozer until it was taken over by Oliver Thain and his business partner Richard Bradley in 2001. It was soon transformed into a destination gastro pub with a restaurant serving first class food to its customers who return again and again. Today the Cock is part of local restaurant group Cambscusine of which Oliver is the Managing Director (Richard left the business some years ago).

Branch chairman, Richard Harrison, and I met with Oliver 'Olly' Thain at the Cock in early October to ask him about the award. Olly worked for Scottish and Newcastle Breweries before joining up with Richard to buy the Cock. They soon transformed the pub with part of the pub becoming a restaurant while retaining the other part of the pub as a traditional pub for the villagers. The strategy of providing high quality freshly cooked food using local ingredients where possible, while retaining the pub where local real ales initially from within an hour's drive of the pub soon began to drive the Cock's success.

Today the Cock sells three real ales with Adnams Southwold Bitter (a favourite with the locals) and Brewsters Hophead (from Grantham) being joined by a changing beer on the third pump. At the time of our visit this was American Red from Calvor's Brewery of Cambridge. Other beers are often from local breweries. The pub also sells two keg beers, Egyptian Cream and Release the Chimps both from Nene Valley, as well as a local craft lager Calvors Premium Pilsner. The local theme is continued with Cromwell Session Cider which comes from a short distance away from the pub.



#### 'The Cock internal view'

The quality of the real ales has justified the Cock's continuous entry in our own Good Beer Guide for many years. Being the only pub in the village (the other two pubs in Hemingford Grey closed many years ago), the pub is well supported by locals and is very much a

community pub where people drop in for a pint or two while they catch up with friends or read the newspaper. Bar snacks such as Pork Crackling with Apple Sauce and Meeze Platter show how the Cock differs from the average pub. The pub is also dog friendly with customers able to bring well behaved dogs into the bar, as well as the large garden at the back of the pub which can be packed in the summer months. There is also no TV, music or video games to cause distraction.

**The Cock** holds a successful annual beer festival every August and has attracted visitors from far and wide for many years. The beer festival allows the Cock to showcase more local beers as well as some from further afield.



#### Beer festival at The Cock

The restaurant, for which booking is essential (call 01480 463609), is kept separate from the pub side and describes its menu as 'Modern British', serving dishes such as guinea fowl, venison haunch, daily fish specials, as well as homemade sausages such as pork, marmite and cheese. On Tuesday's there is a steak night, when a range of steaks are available, and traditional roasts are served every Sunday. Also there are regular special events such as their recent Wild Game Week. A lighter lunch menu is available from Monday to Saturday. As well as appearing in the Michelin Guide, which describes The Cock as 'a homely village pub', it has been awarded Cambridgeshire Dining Pub of the Year on a number of occasions.

As for the future, Olly said the he doesn't plan to make many changes at the Cock.

Why would he want to with such a successful establishment!! He said that he could expand the restaurant into the bar area to add more room for diners however their plan has always been to provide a pub for villagers in addition to the restaurant something that Cambscusine do successfully at their other village pubs. Apart from minor changes to the garden area where some form of heating may be installed for the cooler times of the year don't expect to see any changes at the pub.



#### 'Cock pub sign'

A finally interesting fact is that Olly mentioned that the landlord of the pub in the late 1800's was Robert Thain. Despite the same family name, as far as Olly knows he wasn't a relative!

Report and photos from lan Baptist, St Ives
Pub Contact



### **HUNTS CAMRA MEMBERS**

Among other social events, the Hunts branch of CAMRA organises around four campaigning coach trips each year calling at pubs in parts of our branch not readily accessible for many of our members. We also organise walking tours and occasional trips outside of the branch area, often taking advantage of the rail network. The following articles report on several events which took place over recent months.

# Tour of Nottingham Pubs - May

Nottingham is full of history and legend; not only for Robin Hood and his Merry Men, but also legendary for its extensive range of pubs offering great selections of real ale. Our own band of (soon to be merry men and women) put the latter to the test on a Saturday in May. We're happy to report that this is no fable; our group of real ale enthusiasts toured 14 pubs and as usual great memories were made.

Everyone thirsty from the train ride had a long 5 minute wait outside the first pub on the tour awaiting for the midday bell to chime. On the stroke of noon, **Ye Olde Trip to Jerusalem** opened their doors and we all enjoyed our first ale of the day in the disputably oldest Inn in England, dating back to 1189 AD. This beautiful ancient pub is built into stone caves with a charming, wonky interior, resident ghosts, plus food.



"Ye Olde Trip to Jerusalem"

Five pubs in found the crew in Canning Circus; the sun was blazing and **The Sir John Borlase Warren** had a fantastic beer terrace that was a real sun trap; an excellent spot to enjoy a beer. The great range of beer and excellent surroundings led to a flurry of photos, the one below hopefully captures the happy mood of everyone on the tour.



#### "The Sir John Borlase Warren"

Pub number 10, the **Barrel Drop**, was a hidden gem of a place tucked away at the top of Hurts Yard. A number of beers were available for us to try and there was a great display of old casks to live up to the pubs name; great talking points.



#### "The Barrel Drop"

Following a beer in The Bell Inn we found ourselves back in the vicinity of the **Ye Olde Salutation Inn**, which was meant to be the second venue on the tour, but they weren't quite ready for us. Not wanting to miss out, we headed in to this impressive historic building to

have a beer and make it pub number 12. It was still a beautiful evening, so many of us decided to drink outside and enjoy some fresh air.



#### "Ye Olde Salutation Inn"

Lucky for us, pub number13, the penultimate of the tour, was an impromptu stop at **The Canal House**. Not that we needed an additional stop, but this pub sounded so intriguing that the group agreed to stop by. And everyone was glad to; this impressive pub with access over the canal is a real gem. Just a word of warning, the All American Burger comes in a sweet donut... not to everyone's liking! However, the beer was really good!



"The Canal House"

#### **Mystery Coach Tour - June**

Yet another successful mystery coach trip, and the mystery was again maintained right up to the first stop and then throughout the tour. We first visited the Three Blind Mice Brewery at Little Downham, Ely.



#### "Three Blind Mice Brewery"

After an interesting tour of the brewery we moved on to visit seven pubs: the Drayman's Son, Ely; Prince Albert, Ely; The Ship, Chatteris; The Jolly Sailor, Ramsey; The **Royal Oak**, Warboys; The **Crown Inn**, Broughton; and finally the **King of the Belgians**, Hartford. These photos capture the mood of the day.





# Summer Social in St Ives - July

On Saturday 7th July, not only was England playing Sweden in the World Cup, but the Hunts CAMRA branch was partaking in a summer walking tour around the pubs of St Ives. Spending about 40 minutes in each pub, we tried the real ales and ciders on offer and a great day was had by everyone. England's win over Sweden was the cherry on the cake (for some!). The pubs in St Ives that we visited were as follows, with some snaps of the day to capture the mood.

White Hart, Swan & Angel (JD Wetherspoon), Golden Lion, Oliver Cromwell, Nelson's Head, Royal Oak, Slepe Hall, Seven Wives







# Campaigning Coach Trip - September

Campaigning Coach Trip - September

The latest such trip organised by our social secretary took us to pubs in the North East area of the branch. After making pick-ups at several locations between St Neots and St Ives, we set off along the A14 to visit the first of several country pubs.

The **Green Man** is situated in the village of Leighton Bromswold which is located just north of the A14.



#### 'The Green Man'

Here we were welcomed by the landlady who provided trays of snacks to soak up the beer. The pub usually serves four real ales of which one is normally from a local brewery. On this occasion this was Nobby's Celeia 4.0% a single hop pale ale using Styrian Celeia which was enjoyed by many of our group. Others tried Sporting Times a 4.1% 'kolsch style' beer from Froth Blowers Brewery of Birmingham. Also on sale were Young's Bitter and Lees Bitter. I was told that the beers are frequently rotated, but that the Young's is usually available. The beers from Froth Blowers brewery are apparently very popular with the locals.

The pub displays a large collection of breweriana and other items, this included old brewery signs and bottled beers. A main attraction is the Northampton hooded skittles room, where several of our group tested their skills.



#### 'Northampton Skittles'

After a short drive in the coach, we arrived at the Swan at Old Weston; another unspoilt country pub. On offer here were Timothy Taylor Landlord, Greene King Abbot and Church End Goats Milk. The latter of which was CAMRA's champion beer for 2017 was the choice for many in our group. Another beer Grainstore Osprey had run out by the time I got to the bar, did anyone manage to try it?



#### 'The Swan'

Passing through Winwick, whose village pub the **Three Horseshoes** closed many years ago, we arrived in the village of Great Gidding where the Fox & Hounds is definitely still open for business. Here we found three beers on sale and several chose the local Angles Ales American Ale which unfortunately was at the end of the barrel. This was quickly taken off and we were offered the Stoney Ford Sheepmarket Super Nova from Stamford as a replacement. The other beer was Doombar, but the two local beers on the bar made up for this. Most people decided to make use of the large beer garden at the rear of the pub.



#### 'The Fox & Hounds'

Continuing our trip we carried on to the Addison Arms in Glatton where as usual there was a good selection of local ales on sale. Two from Digfield Ales were Fools Nook 3.8% and the house beer Addison Ale 4.5%. From Peterborough based Angles Ales was Necromancer 5.5% and finally there was Grainstore GB Best 4.3%. With a good selection to choose from our party was spoilt for choice. As with Old Weston we had mistimed our visit with the pub holding a mini beer festival the following weekend.

The next pub is actually in the Peterborough branch area, but as it usually has a good beer offer and is only a short drive away we visited the Admiral Wells in Hoime. The pub is 9ft below sea level and a plaque outside the pub told us that this is the lowest pub in the British Isles. Inside the pub the walls are adorned with



pictures of United States Army Air Force B17's which operated from the nearby Glatton airfield during World War Two.

### 'Plaque outside the Admiral Wells'

As expected there was good range of beers here with two local beers from Digfield Ales being Fools Nook and Shacklebush which are permanently on sale here. Adnams Broadside is also a regular and the pub usually sells one changing beer, on this occasion this was Black Sheep Threedom 4.2%, brewed with Citra, Galena and Summit hops. The Admiral Wells was the first pub where we found a real cider on sale in the form of Lilleys Merry Monkey. The bar staff told me that cider sells well here and

that it changes frequently. Most of us chose to sit outside on this warm sunny afternoon. The East Coast rail line passes close to the pub with

trains passing by at regular intervals.



#### 'The Admiral Wells'

Moving on we headed South to the large village of Sawtry where there are two pubs to choose from. First stop was Greystones where two real ales are on sale. These are usually from larger brewers and on this visit we were able to choose from Adnams Ghostship and Wells Bombardier. Some of the party decided to stay here while others walked to the other village pub the Bell. A few also visited the Sawtry Village Club.

Some of the party left us in Sawtry, whilst those remaining continued to the last stop of the day which was at the Manor House Hotel in Alconbury which serves three rotating real ales. On this occasion there was a local beer from Turpins Brewery of Cambridge whose Dragons Den was enjoyed by many of us. The other beers available on this visit were Black Sheep Bitter and Adnams Broadside. The pub was selling a real cider with Kentish Pip Vintage on sale. The landlord informed me that he usually has two ciders on sale. Of the seven pubs in our branch area visited today, this was the only one selling a real cider with the other pubs selling various 'fizzy keg' products. I must be more observant in the future having not noticed that the Manor House had a real cider available when I visited earlier in the year.

The coach returned to St Neots stopping on the way to drop off our merry band of drinkers who will no doubt be looking forward to our Social Secretary's next outing!

Report by Ian Baptist



Mad Jack - Whispering Grass - Papillon - Crystal Ship

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Each year, the Cider & Perry Group of CAMRA (official title being the 'Apple Committee'), organise a day-trip to a cider and perry making area. This year we visited two farms in Worcestershire in October.

#### **Tardebigge**

Steve and Christine Cooper have run their orchards since planting trees in the early 1990s. We enjoyed sampling a wide range of ciders and perries, all with good fruit flavour. An excellent lunch was provided to complement the drinks.



#### "Steve talking about the orchards"

#### **Barbourne**

This family run business source their fruit from cider and perry orchards throughout Worcestershire. They are a larger, more commercial operation than Tardebigge, producing lighter, more subtle ciders and perries. The whisky cask perry proved very popular with a lot of flavour.

The location of next year's trip is yet to be decided, but information should be available in late spring or early summer. If you would like to

join the trip, it will be publicised in the CAMRA newspaper "What's Brewing" and on the local Hunts CAMRA website.

Reporter: Andy Blagbrough

# Real Cider & Perry Taste Introduction

#### Styles & attributes

All the styles and attributes described below also apply to perry (which is fermented pear juice) and pyder (which is a mix of perry and cider). It is difficult to separate styles and attributes. Styles are generally considered to be geographic in origin and attributes are generally considered to be based on taste, appearance, or production method.

The widely accepted cider types are West Country Style, Eastern style and Kentish Style. Taste attributes include tannic, sharp, fruity, cask matured and wine like. Appearance attributes include clear, hazy and cloudy. Production method attributes include single variety, blended, cask matured and keeved.

An important aspect of cider and perry is that the taste and appearance can not only vary from year to year, but also vary from batch to batch. This is because the apples and pears vary from year to year and form orchard to orchard.



#### **Typical taste attributes**

Sweetness: The level of sugar in the drink

**Fruitiness:** The taste of the fruit (as opposed to

sweetness)

**Sharpness:** The taste of the fruit acids (malic or citric acid). Not to be confused with vinegar (acetic acid)

**Tannin:** The sensation of drying in the mouth (astringency), similar to that found in tea and wine

Wine-like: see Kentish Style below

**Cask Matured:** The taste of oak, whisky, rum, wine or sherry you get from maturing the drink in a previously used wooden cask

Other tastes include: tart, sour, bitter and 'farmyard'

#### West country style

This is cider made from cider apples, which are not pleasant to eat. These apples contain tannin, which causes the juice to go brown when exposed to air. As a result West Country cider is often dark in colour.

Cider apples are often classed as Bitter Sharp or Bitter Sweet. Bitter Sharp apples are high in tannin and high in acid. Bitter Sweet apples are high in tannin and low in acid. Some well-known cider apples are Kingston Black, Dabinett, Yarlington Mill, and Stoke Red. Traditionally perry is made using perry pears, which are high in tannin and acid, and are not pleasant to eat.

We now use the name West Country Style as such cider can be made in any part of the country. Traditionally cider apples were only grown and used in West Country (Somerset, Devon, and Cornwall) and Three Counties (Herefordshire, Worcestershire and Gloucestershire). However, Dorset, Wiltshire, Shropshire, Staffordshire, Warwickshire and Wales are also known for their West Country Style cider. Ciders from the West Country tend to have a high degree of acidity and have less clarity than those from further north in the Three Counties. They also tend to be darker in colour, but there are always exceptions.

#### **Eastern style**

This is cider made from eating and/or cooking apples. These apples contain little or no tannin, which normally results in the cider being pale in colour.

Eating and cooking apples are often classed as Sharp or Sweet. Sharp apples are low in tannin and high in acid. Sweet apples are low in tannin and low in acid. Some well known eating apples used for cider include Cox, discovery, Spartan and Gala. Eastern Style cider often has more of an apple taste than West Country Style cider. Dessert pears are used to make eastern style perry.

Traditionally Eastern style cider was made in East Anglia (Norfolk, Suffolk, Essex, Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire and Hertfordshire). However, this style is common in all areas that do not traditionally grow cider apples. It is sometimes made in the West Country and Three Counties.

#### Kentish style (wine like)

The Kentish style can be considered as a sub-



style of eastern Style. It is made from cooking apples, but tastes much more like wine than cider. This is achieved by using certain wine yeasts rather that cider yeasts. Not all ciders from Kent are wine-like, so do not conform to the Kentish Style. Wine-like ciders can be made anywhere.

#### Single variety versus blended

A single variety cider is made from just one type of apple, whereas blended is made from more than one type of apple. In general, a blended cider has a good aroma, initial taste, main taste, and after taste. A single variety cider often lacks most of these elements; however a few varieties can have most of them, for example Kingston Black.

Keeved (naturally sweet cider or perry)

This is cider that has been made using a process called keeving, where the yeast is intentionally starved of nutrients before all the sugar has been fermented to alcohol. Starving the yeast is achieved by encouraging a pectin gel to form at the top of the cider, which absorbs the nutrients. Without these nutrients, yeast will stop fermenting.

Chris Rouse - CAMRA Regional Cider Coordinator

# National Cider Pub of Year 2018

A former Blockbuster shop turned independent micropub has been named CAMRA's National Cider Pub of Year 2018. The Firkin Shed in Bournemouth is an independently-run pub, stocking the best selection of real ciders and perries, cask ales, mead and rum. In 2017, it won local Cider Pub of the Year and Beer Drinker's Pub of the Year for the East Dorset branch area.

Using a shed for the bar, customers can choose from six constantly-changing cask ales and around 20 ciders from across the country. Beers are served straight from the cellar, which can be viewed through the window in the rear corridor.

### IN OTHER NEWS

# Beer and pub campaigners cheer Beer Duty freeze

The Chancellor's decision to freeze Beer Duty in the Budget at the end of October was welcomed by CAMRA and beer drinkers around the country. Thousands of emails were sent by CAMRA members to MPs ahead of the Budget, which saw the unexpected announcement of a freeze in duty on beer and cider.

Pub-going is increasingly becoming an unaffordable activity for many, driving consumers from their local to supermarkets. With pub closures at 18 per week, pubs are becoming an endangered feature of our high streets, suburbs and villages.

The Chancellor also announced rate relief for businesses with a rateable value under £51,000, which will see rates bills cut by a third for around 90% of independent small business, including pubs. Whilst this change will see annual savings of up to £8,000 for some pubs, CAMRA is disappointed that pub specific rate relief has been scrapped, meaning that pubs with a rateable value of over £51,000 will lose out. Many of these pubs saw the largest rates increases after the last revaluation, and are struggling under sky-high bills that threaten them with extinction.

CAMRA's national chairman, Jackie Parker, said: "A decision to freeze Beer Duty is welcome, and will no doubt go some way to keeping the British pub-going tradition affordable. However, the decision to implement the business rates relief for some and not all pubs is not enough to help protect pubs from extinction - we need wholesale reform of the business rates system future of our treasured locals."

## CAMRA Launches Three Point Plan To Save The Great British

Hundreds of CAMRA members descended on Westminster last week to send a message to MPs about the very serious threats facing pubs. All agreed there must be urgent reform to business rates, Beer Duty and the Pubs Code to save the Great British pub from extinction.

The Lobby Day saw the launch of CAMRA's three point plan to save the Great British pub, and encouraged MPs to commit to:

- Introducing a preferential rate of duty for draught beer
- Reforming the business rates system to address the unfair burden on pubs
- Conducting an urgent review of the Pubs Code so that the Market Rent Only option becomes a genuine choice for tenants

CAMRA members held meetings with MPs throughout the day, which culminated in a rally with speeches from the Chairman of the All Party Parliamentary Beer Group, Mike Wood MP, as well as Ruth Smeeth MP and Alan Brown MP. The Lobby came the day after the Budget, which contained the very welcome decision to freeze duty on beer and cider, and the announcement of a new package of business rate relief that will help smaller pubs.

Speaking at the Members' Rally, Mike Wood MP, Chairman of the All Party Parliamentary Beer Group added: "We need to make sure that we have a proper review of local business taxation which goes beyond what was announced (in the Budget) on business rates, so that pubs of all sizes are actually taxed at a fair rate and we have a taxation system fit for the 21st century rather than the 1950s, and one that recognises the economy as it is now rather than one that was based solely on land values."

#### St Ives Farmers Market

The award winning St Ives farmers market is held on the 1st and 3rd Saturday of the month. For a long time, the local **Cromwell Cider** had a stall here, but this has been replaced by Simons Cider from Camborne. Their range of award winning ciders are sold in bottles as well as 3 litre pouches, which are ideal for parties or for the upcoming Christmas and New Year celebrations.

Red Brewery used to have a stall on the market, but the closure of this brewery last year meant that beer was no longer available at the market. However St Botolphs Brewery made their first attendance at the market in early September. This brewery is based in Lowestoft and had their range of four bottled beers on sale. Initially they will only be attending the market on the first Saturday of the month, but if sales are good they may well put in an appearance on the third Saturday.



## 'St Botolphs Brewery stall at St Ives Farmers Market'

Why not visit and purchase some of their products. The owners are more than happy to chat to customers and if you are a home brewer or cider maker you may well be able to get some useful advice from them.

Reports collated by Richard Harrison



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#### FREE CHRISTMAS PARKING AFTER 3PM

Free parking in the run-up to Christmas is once again being offered to shoppers in car parks run by Huntingdonshire District Council.

To encourage shoppers to visit their local High Street, parking will be free after 3pm, Monday to Friday, from 3 to 24 December. This special offer is valid in our market towns of St Neots, St Ives and Huntingdon in Council-run off-street car parks. Market Square, St Neots and Market Hill, St Ives are Cambridgeshire County Council on-street facilities so charging will remain there after 3pm. Parking is already free in the town centre car parks on Sundays.

Councillor Marge Beuttell, Executive Councillor for Operations and Regulation, said: "This has proved to be very successful over previous years, and we want shoppers and businesses to continue to benefit from free parking after 3pm leading up to Christmas. We hope that this offer will once again encourage residents to shop more locally and continue to support businesses in our district."

Shoppers will not have to pay and display a ticket during the special offer period. Signs and stickers will be on display in car parks, and on the car parking machines explaining the times when the offer is valid.





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### **HUNTS SOCIAL DIARY**

The following meetings and events are planned. Things can change and new events will be added, so please visit our website or social media channels for up to date information. Alternatively please contact Juliet, our Social Secretary (see contact details on page 3)

#### Sat 24 Nov

Festival Thank You Mystery Coach Trip, including presentation of the East Anglian Pub of the Year to the **Chequers**, Little Gransden. All festival volunteers will be invited to join this trip and any spare places will then be offered to branch members and guests

#### Sun 23 Dec, from 2.00pm

Christmas Beer Shopping in St Neots pubs. Will include the **Barley Mow**, Bridge House, **Pig N Falcon**, Olde Sun, **Ale Taster**. Timings will be posted on our website and on social media

#### Wed 16 Jan 2019, 8.00 pm

Open Branch Committee Meeting, The **Anchor**, Little Paxton

#### Thu 14 - Sat 16 Mar 2019

St Neots 'Booze on the Ouse' Beer and Cider Festival, The Priory Centre, Priory Lane, St Neots

Full details to follow in our next issue

#### **Opening Times by post:**

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Please contact:

Lorraine on 07702 933381 or email camra@thinklocalmagazine.co.uk

#### Deadlines

#### **CAMRA**

Spring edition: 1st February 2019

**THINKLOCAL** 

January issue: 10th December 2018 February issue: 14th January 2019 March issue: 11th February 2019

#### **Opening times**

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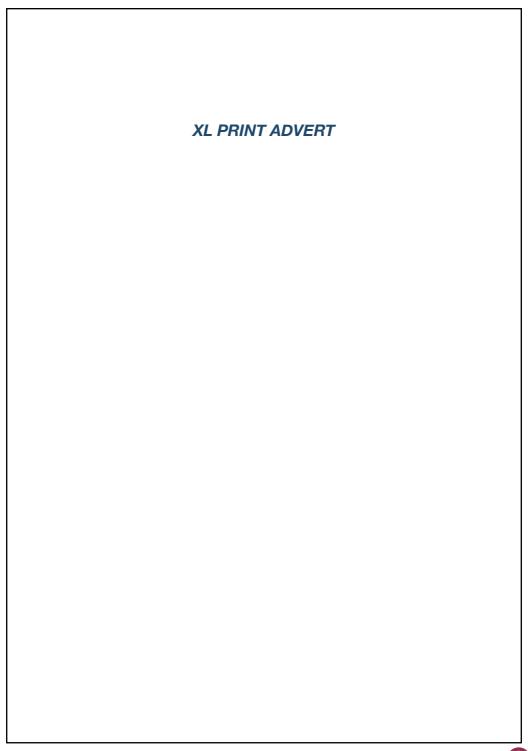
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