

# Opening Times

ISSUE 179  
AUTUMN 2019



CAMPAIGN  
FOR  
REAL ALE

Huntingdonshire branch of CAMRA

[hunts.camra.org.uk](https://hunts.camra.org.uk)

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## EDITORIAL

Welcome to the autumn issue of **Opening Times**, the magazine from the Huntingdonshire branch of the Campaign for Real Ale (CAMRA).



I hope you've had a good summer, with the opportunity to visit some of the numerous beer festivals that have been held both locally and nationally. I spent a week in August running a bar at the Great British Beer Festival held at London's Olympia. It was a great week, with lots of superb real ales on my bar and on the other bars at the festival. It never ceases to amaze me how good the CAMRA volunteers were, including several from the Huntingdonshire branch. Many of them worked from early morning until late in the evening, always looking after the customers well and (mostly) with a cheery smile throughout. I'd like to thank all the volunteers who made the festival a great success.

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That leads me on nicely to the upcoming St Ives 'Booze on the Ouse' Beer and Cider Festival which will be held at the Burgess Hall from 17-19 October. There will be a wide range of beers and ciders, together with hot and cold food, and for the non-CAMRA members there will be a special offer for those joining at the festival. There are many roles for volunteers at the festival; not just serving behind the bar. If you would like to volunteer, please get in touch with Juliet (our volunteer coordinator) by emailing [volunteers@hunts.camra.org.uk](mailto:volunteers@hunts.camra.org.uk) by 4 October. You don't have to be a CAMRA member to volunteer, although preference will be given to those who are members.

Amongst the seemingly never-ending political news, a story on the BBC News website stood out and discussed a report which proposed making 'supermarket booze more expensive.' That could mean that beer in pubs would become less expensive, depending on how the duties were structured. More details of this are included near the back of this issue (In Other News), but this does seem to be a great proposal that would support pubs and reduce the problem of excessive consumption at home. Let's hope that this is followed up by our hard-working politicians!

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](mailto:news@hunts.camra.org.uk) or forward them to a member of the branch committee; contact details are shown on our website and below.

***Richard Harrison, Opening Times  
Editor on behalf of the Branch  
Committee, September 2019***



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**BRANCH  
CONTACTS**



# INSTANT ONLINE QUOTATION



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# CHAIRMAN'S CORNER



Now that I've been in office for a couple of months, I'm really beginning to appreciate the amount of hard work that goes on behind the scenes to make the Huntingdonshire branch so successful.

Whether that's arranging social events and coach trips to breweries and pubs; getting this magazine together and distributing copies to many of the pubs in our branch area; defending the interests of drinkers by campaigning to keep threatened pubs open; or arranging our two massively popular beer festivals; there is plenty going on all the time.

I hope that most of you get the opportunity to take advantage of this hard work by attending events, beer festivals or meetings; but even if our only contact with you is via this magazine, thank you for being a member of CAMRA and helping us to promote good beer and cider. Or if you're not a CAMRA member, please consider joining us - come along to Booze on the Ouse in St Ives for a special offer for new members joining there.

A quick glance at the Branch Diary on the website shows that we have a coach trip in September and our annual St Ives Booze on the Ouse in October. We also have Open Branch meetings at the **Chequers**, Little Gransden, on 1 October and at the **Anchor**, Little Paxton, on 2 December. Hopefully,

you'll be able to come along to one of these events. I hope to be at all of them as well, so do say hello if you can make it.

Cheers!

**Gareth Howell**  
*Chairman, Huntingdonshire CAMRA*

## HUNTS PUB NEWS

In the last issue we had news about the **Three Tuns** in Guilden Morden and the pub reopened on 7th June. There was also an official opening on 3rd August, when South Cambridgeshire MP, Heidi Allen, and local councillor, Sebastian Kindersley, were in attendance. Local correspondent, Keith Rowland, visited shortly after their reopening and reported that the real ales on sale were Adnams Ghostship and Broadside, as well as Young's Bitter (brewed by Marston's in Bedford). The Adnams beers will be permanently on sale after the brewery refitted the cellar and installed new beer lines. A report on the official opening can be found later in this issue.



**Photo 1 – The Three Tuns**

There is some good news regarding another pub in our branch area. We are pleased to report that the **Three Horseshoes** in Wistow which we have often mentioned

in these pages has been purchased by Al Scott and has reopened. He is keen that the **Three Horseshoes** will be a 'CAMRA pub'. It would be good to see local real ale on sale and maybe real cider as well.



With two long closed pubs reopening, we must report that the news from the **King William IV** in Fenstanton is less good. Despite the parish council applying for an Asset of Community Value (ACV), Huntingdon District Council approved the change of use in July, leaving the large village with just two pubs. Of these, the lease for the **Crown & Pipes** is currently being advertised on the Wells & Co website.

In Eaton Socon, the **Millers Arms** was closed for a couple of weeks in late June, but this was only temporary with the pub soon open again for business. The new operators are Your Local Pub Company, a small pub company based in Watford. As well as the Millers Arms, they operate pubs in Watford, Rickmansworth and Meppershall, Beds. A new chef and new menus have been introduced. Also, in Eaton Socon, the **Highwayman** restaurant and bar at Colmworth Business Park has been refurbished and is now operated under the Cookhouse and Pub brand (previously run as Brewers Fayre).

In St Ives, the **Oliver Cromwell** which has been owned by the Schonfeld family for many years, was purchased by the Bedford based Wells and Co in early June. Jerry Schonfeld will stay on to manage the pub, while the new owners find a manager or lessee. Beers from Marston's Eagle Brewery in Bedford

and other group breweries have started to appear, replacing beers including those from Adnams. Several visits in July found the following beers on sale: Eagle IPA, Marston's Pedigree, Courage Directors and Wychwood Hobgoblin all from the Marston's range. As well as regular beer, Oakham JHB, there were guest beers, Hop Back Summer Lightning and Timothy Taylor Landlord. Cromwell cider and three Weston's fruit ciders were also on sale.

On Church Street in Gamlingay is **The Cock**, a Greene King pub which sells IPA and Abbot plus a changing beer. Normally this isn't another Greene King beer and when visited it was Canopy Poets Corner Extra IPA (brewed in collaboration with Greene King). While there, this was replaced by Black Sheep Holy Grail.

Keith Rowland reports that **The Jester** in Odsey has new owners, with Bas Basra taking the pub and hotel over in late June. We hope that his new venture will be successful. The pub and adjoining hotel are just around the corner from Ashwell & Morden railway station and was the first stop on one of Cambridge CAMRA branches Saturday pub strolls. Ringwood Best Bitter was the one real ale on sale which was in good condition. The large beer garden at the rear was enjoyed on a dry afternoon.



In Arrington, Paul and Lisa have taken over at the **Hardwicke Arms** and are currently giving the pub a through re-launch. A hog roast and barbecue were organised for their official opening in early August. The beers on offer are Sharps Doom Bar, Woodfordes Wherry and a frequently changing guest beer.



News from St Neots is about the **Art & Soul Café**, which is in what was part of Barret's department store on New Street (opposite the Pig 'n Falcon), was visited in early July. Describing itself as a cafe, gallery and creative hub, it comprises a ground floor coffee shop and an upstairs area where there is a gallery and space where regular events that are often designed with families in mind take place. Although it opened late last year, they have only been selling beers and ciders for a few months. The range is limited but changes frequently and when visited included two canned beers (Tiny Rebel Cali APA 5.3% and Whitewater Brewing Maggie's Leap IPA 4.7%). Two bottled ciders were on sale and I was told that they had previously been selling bottles from Grafham Brewing. Why not pop in when visiting St Neots?



In the spring edition we mentioned that a premises licence had been applied for in Toseland. We can now report that the **Dinky Drinky Box** is operating in a converted horse box as a mobile bar that is for hire for weddings, birthdays and other events. It operates as a pop-up bar in Toseland on some weekends, apparently selling craft beers and gin. Check their website for details ([www.dinkydrinkybox.co.uk](http://www.dinkydrinkybox.co.uk)).

As part of its Summer of Pub campaign, CAMRA issued a list of 100 recommended pubs to visit. Although the number of pubs in the East Anglia region was limited, the ten dog friendly pubs included our award-winning **King of the Belgians** in Hartford. On a recent

visit, landlord Matt was keen to point out the new water bowls for dogs in the garden.

A visit to Warboys in the North East of our branch area was made in early July. There are two pubs in the village. The **White Hart** is a 17th century pub with a thatched roof, which has been redecorated in recent years. There is a large bar area and a smaller area set out for diners. Outside there are two large beer gardens that make this a popular place to visit and at the rear of the pub is a bowling green. Greene King IPA is the regular real ale together with two changing beers; Adnams Ghostship and Sharps Doom Bar during our visit.



The other pub in Warboys is the **Royal Oak** which has only been in the hands of the current management for the past year. The outside of the pub looked very picturesque with many large hanging baskets and potted flowers. There is a beer garden at the front of the pub. It sells two changing real ales which when visited were Grainstore Cooking and Sharps Atlantic. There was also a real cider on sale from the Rutland Cider Company. The landlord said that they only have a real cider occasionally, but if he could he would have more on sale.





On the way back to St Ives, the **Lakeside Lodge** at Pidley was visited. The bar sells two real ales with Greene King IPA and a changing beer often also from Greene King. The bar person said that they sometimes sell beer from the local Papworth Brewery (empty casks of Mad Jack were in evidence outside). This is part of the hotel and golf centre but is open to the public.

Other news from St Ives was the appearance of cask beer at **J Wadsworth Wines** store on The Broadway. This was available for sale in two-pint containers or you can take your own container to be filled. The first beer on sale at the end of June was Marble Pint from Manchester, which was followed by Burning Sky Plateau Pale Ale. This year is the 150th anniversary of the Wadsworth business. John Wadsworth began making mineral water and other drinks in 1869. Wadsworth went on to own several pubs and hotels locally, although some have been sold in recent years. However, two local pubs, the **Three Horseshoes** in Graveley and the **Queens Head** in Needingworth, are still owned by the Wadsworth family.

The **Three Jolly Butchers** in Wyton was one of the pubs visited on our summer social walk. The regular beers on sale here are Greene King IPA and Abbot, plus Sharps Doom Bar. Manager Mark Hurley was keen to talk about his beers especially the changing guest beers explaining that a fifth hand-pump had been added to allow an extra guest beer to be put on. He also mentioned that he has a good deal of freedom in choosing the beers that he can order. Judging from those available on the day, more regular visits are called for.



A pub which doesn't get mentioned too often is **The Lord Protector** on the Oxmoor estate in Huntingdon. Shepherd Name Spitfire is the one permanent real ale on sale, with a changing guest which was Fullers London Pride when I visited. There pub gives a discount on food for senior citizens, with 20% off at lunchtimes and 10% in the evening, although apparently you must present a bus pass when ordering.

Not far from here is the **Hartford Mill** which sells three beers from the Greene King range. Greene King managed pubs give a discount to CAMRA members on their real ales. Another Greene King pub that gives a CAMRA discount is the **George Hotel** in Huntingdon. Greene King IPA, Abbot and a third changing real ale are on sale here. Does anyone know if the **Old Ferry Boat** in Holywell (which is one of the Greene King Old English Inns chain), or any other Greene King pubs in our area also offer a CAMRA discount?

A visit was made to the **Stukeley Country Hotel** in Great Stukeley where the new landlords have been in place for a few months. The outside has been repainted and changes inside include new lighting that makes it much brighter and inviting. There have been no changes in the beer range of Greene King IPA and a changing guest. More photographs from here and other local pubs can be seen online via WhatPub.





Finally, many of our local pubs and community organisations have been holding beer festivals and all the ones that I have visited have been well attended. Everyone was enjoying the wide range of beer and cider that was on offer. These were too numerous to mention them all, but one that is particularly worth a mention was the **1st Bluntisham Beer Festival** in June. Beers were supplied by Milton and Papworth breweries, who as well as their own beers supplied others from brewers outside the local area. The beers included two festival specials, Papworth Bluntisham Beast IPA 6.5% and Milton The Bluntisham Bandy 4.6%. The festival was a great success, selling more than double the amount of beer and cider originally ordered. This was no doubt helped by the hot weekend weather with over 400 people attending on the Friday evening alone.

*Pub news reports collated by Ian Baptist*

## LOCALS SAVE THE THREE TUNS

The **Three Tuns** in the picturesque village of Guilden Morden in South Cambridgeshire reopened its doors in June after being saved by the local community. Over 280 villagers and other interested parties are shareholders of community group the Guilden Morden Pub Company (GMCP). John Harrison chairman of GMCP said: "We have overcome so many hurdles to secure this important asset for the community for generations to come". The pub had been closed for six years but has been beautifully restored with help from many of the shareholders. The GMCP added that "The project has brought the whole community together. We have had volunteers working fulltime on the pub for months and many others giving up weekends, or a few hours here and there to help renovate and restore this beautiful old pub".



The official reopening took place on Saturday 3rd August with Heidi Allen, Member of Parliament for South Cambridgeshire, and Sebastian Kindersley, Cambridgeshire County Councillor, cutting the ribbon after a flypast by a historic Hurricane aircraft. Both Heidi and Sebastian supported the campaign to save The **Three Tuns** for many years. Excellent weather saw large crowds filling the large beer garden. Amongst those attending were representatives from the local Huntingdonshire CAMRA branch. An outside bar had been set up on the day with beers from local breweries Potton and Roughacre. There was also a barbeque and hog roast, live music and games to keep younger visitors entertained.



# PUB PROTECTION IN NEW LOCAL PLAN

Huntingdonshire District Council has adopted its new 'Local Plan to 2036', which replaces several older local plan documents. The new plan, which can be viewed on the council's website, includes policies that provide protection and support for pubs.

Policy LP22 (Local Services and Community Facilities) means that the council will only support a planning application that involves the loss of a pub if an equivalent facility will be provided, or the applicant has demonstrated that there is insufficient support for the pub to continue and that it has been effectively marketed as a pub, without success.

Policy LP21 (Town Centre Vitality and Viability), and policy LP22, will support new pubs or extensions of pubs in built-up areas, particularly primary shopping frontages and areas, with some provisos concerning scale, to ensure this is appropriate to local needs.

The council's planners will need to have regard to these policies in respect of planning applications and any comments or objections to them.

It is also to be hoped that our local planners will differentiate different types of pubs, some being mainly drinking establishments, for example, but others providing a wider range of services, such as dining. Generally, these alternative sorts of pub serve separate sectors of the community. For example, food-led pubs tend to provide services mainly aimed at families or visitors from a wider geographical area.

If a proposal involves the loss of one category of pub, communities should be able to look to the council to protect its continued use, even if there is a pub in the same locality that provides different facilities and services to different sectors of the community.

**Report by Paul Moorhouse**

# ST IVES 'BOOZE ON THE OUSE' BEER & CIDER FESTIVAL

**Venue - Burgess Hall**, Westwood Rd, St Ives PE27 6WU.

## Opening Times

- Thursday 17 October: Noon – 10.30pm
- Friday 18 October: Noon – 10.30pm
- Saturday 19 October: Noon – 10:00pm

## Admission and Bar Tokens

£3 at all sessions, (except after 6 pm on Friday when it's £4). Only £1 for CAMRA members at all times. All drinks and snacks must be purchased using bar tokens which will be sold at the entrance. We will be offering a £10 entrance package, which will include admission, a festival glass and the remainder in bar tokens.

## Beers and Ciders

At least 66 cask and 5 Keykeg beers have been ordered in a wide range of styles and strengths, together with a selection of 16 traditional draught ciders and perries.

## Sponsor a Cask

If you are interested in sponsoring a beer or a cider, for example to promote your business, please contact [sponsorship@hunts.camra.org.uk](mailto:sponsorship@hunts.camra.org.uk). Prices start at £35 and include free festival entry for two, a festival glass each and £10 worth of bar tokens. Other packages are available for sponsorship of multiple beers / ciders.

## Volunteers

The festival is organised and run by members of CAMRA, all of whom are unpaid volunteers. We are always seeking new volunteers; no experience is necessary and full training will be provided. If you can offer help at any session (including set-up and take-down) please contact Juliet Ferris at [volunteers@hunts.camra.org.uk](mailto:volunteers@hunts.camra.org.uk).

## Contact Information

Visit our web site for updates ([www.hunts.camra.org.uk/festivals](http://www.hunts.camra.org.uk/festivals)) or contact the festival organiser, Richard Harrison by email: [festival@hunts.camra.org.uk](mailto:festival@hunts.camra.org.uk).

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# STYLE STORIES

This is the second of a series of features on different styles of real ale, describing some of their history and characteristics and highlighting some significant examples, local production and outlets. This edition concerns bitters and pale ales.

## Pale Ales and Bitters

Until the 18th Century, most British draught beer was aged for much longer than in the present day, some stale beers being matured in the brewery for a year or more. Around 300 years ago, mild ale had become popular as a relatively fresh draught beer conditioned by a short period of storage in pub cellars rather than being aged in the brewery.

Cask-confined draught bitters arrived on the scene in the 19th Century, but they had developed on the back of pale ales, which had first appeared in the early 18th Century. At that time coke started to be used for kilning malt. Coke provided more controllable kilning which enabled the production of lightly kilned malts. These resulted in pale ales, so called because, up until that point, virtually all beer had been dark.

Pale ales were generally bottled beers, amber in colour, clean tasting and dry-ish with well-defined hop flavours balanced by light maltiness.

In the 19th Century, as pale ales developed and began to appear in draught form, the term 'Bitter' came into use by drinkers, to distinguish them from other draught beers, most of which were the less hoppy mild and porter beers.

Bitters grew out of pale ale but, although some bitters are amber or golden, they are stylistically a darker deep bronze to copper in colour due to the inclusion of a slightly darker and partly caramelised malt, known as crystal malt, along with the pale malt. This led to a more malty and sweeter balance, often with a touch of caramel. In fact, in the present day, many consider the term bitter to be a misnomer,

with beers of other styles tending to be more bitter with little or no sweet flavours from malt.

Consumers and brewers began to differentiate different strength ranges for bitters: ordinary or session bitters up to around 4% ABV, best bitters up to around 4.5% ABV and strong bitters around 5% ABV.

Another development in the 19th Century was India Pale Ales (IPAs), developed for export to India. They were powerful pale ales with high alcoholic strengths, typically around 6%, and high hop rates, to help prevent spoilage during long sea journeys to India. In the 20th Century, the term IPA also began to be applied to beers with lower strengths and hop levels, closer in style to ordinary or best bitters, but recently a world-wide revival in more authentic IPAs has begun, spearheaded by the USA.

Real cask IPAs in East Anglia at authentic strengths include the 6% ABV No.2 India Pale Ale from the Bullards brewery in Norwich, who describe its taste as 'a distinctly English IPA flavour, full of rich caramel and burnt brown sugar, with a bitter orange aroma'.



A well-known cask IPA with citrus-flavoured hops, and therefore more in the style of an American IPA, is the award-winning Jaipur IPA, 5.9% ABV, from the Thornbridge brewery in Derbyshire.

In Cambridgeshire, Milton brewery has developed a range of well-liked real cask bitters that have won medals in CAMRA's Champion Beers of East Anglia awards:



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Sparta - a 4.3% ABV yellow/gold best bitter with floral hop flavours, a malty softness and a long dry finish; Pegasus, 4.1% ABV - malty, amber and medium-bodied with faint hops and a bittersweet aftertaste; and Cyclops, 5.3% ABV - deep copper-coloured, fruity, malty and full bodied with a rich hop aroma.



The Moonshine brewery at Fulbourn produces a number of cask bitters. Their 4.2% ABV Cambridge Best Bitter is copper-coloured, malty and hoppy. Cambridge Pale Ale, ABV 3.8%, is an authentic pale ale, light to the palate as well as colour, with a semi dry, hoppy finish.

Buckden Pale Ale, 4% ABV, by Draycotts of Buckden, boasts a special note of authenticity for a pale ale in that it is only available in bottles – live yeast is included to enable flavour development in the bottle in the same way that real cask ale matures in the pub cellar. Two other impressive bottled bitters from Draycotts are Buckden Bronze Bitter, 4.1% ABV, and Buckden Ruby Bitter, 4.6% ABV.

A fine cask bitter from the local Papworth Brewery is the amber-coloured 4.2% ABV Crystal Ship, brewed with Pilsner malt and a range of hops, resulting in a light malty bitter with citrus hop flavour. Papworth's range of bitters also includes Papillon (4.1% ABV), Half Nelson (4.2% ABV) and Red Kite (4.5% ABV) and their beers are also available in bottle with live yeast.



Another impressive Cambridgeshire pale ale is the 3.9% ABV Barn Ale, produced by the Tydd Steam brewery at Tydd St Giles. Barn Ale is golden, with biscuity malt balanced by spicy hops, and a long, dry, fairly astringent finish.

A Cambridgeshire bitter that struck gold in CAMRA's national Champion Beer of Britain awards is Elgood's Cambridge Bitter. This dry, malty and fruity bitter won the national gold medal in the Bitters category.

East Anglia's seaside brewery Adnams, based at Southwold, has won three category golds in CAMRA's national competition with its range of bitters. And CAMRA's East Anglian competition has also made gold awards in recent years to Adnams for its Southwold Bitter and Ghost Ship.



Both of these can be enjoyed in many pubs in the Huntingdonshire area. Southwold is an outstanding session bitter with well-defined



malt and caramel flavours underlying bags of aromatic Fuggles hops, and a moderately bitter finish. Cask Ghost Ship is an impressive pale ale with assertive citrus hop backed up by a biscuit malt and caramel background.


But look out for another East Anglian brewery that has been winning a lot of medals for draught bitters in CAMRA's East Anglia awards— Bishop Nick brewery, based at Braintree in Essex. Their Riddleys Rite session bitter, ABV 3.6%, is brewed with Fuggles and Goldings hops, two classic hops for English bitters, lending earthy and floral hop flavours and a long bitter aftertaste.

Bishop Nick's 1555 is a rich tawny best bitter with a sweet nutty taste underlined by ginger and fruit from Styrian hops.

Next time we'll look at paler beers - blonds and golden ales.

**Written by Paul Moorhouse**

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At the River Mill we believe in the production and consumption of only the best quality local ales and ciders for our customers. We are always working hard to bring you variation and the best from local breweries always concentrating on delicious new flavours and individual style.

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Visitors to the Rivermill can enjoy a variety of Local Ales - from malty, lightly hopped milds to dark and bitter stouts and porters, there is a beer in the River Mill for everyone. Our Orchard Pig Cider is made with apple juice so real you can taste it's rooted in Somerset. We offer still ciders throughout the summer months and fun fruity flavours that range from Rhubarb to Pineapple & Grapefruit to our Gladiator, a strong rustic cider that is intoxicatingly easy to drink for 8.4%.

**All Camra Card holders receive 10% Discount off all Ales.**

If you are not a member of CAMRA you won't miss out, we offer 10% Loyalty cards that can be used on all food and drink items after each visit.

The next Rivermill Beer Festival will be in April 2020, check out our website <http://www.therivermillpub.co.uk/> to see dates for all our exciting events.

A warm welcome to all the new folks and to our current customers from the Rivermill Team.

**01480 219612**  
**[www.therivermillpub.co.uk](http://www.therivermillpub.co.uk)**

**Rivermill Opening Times**  
**Monday -Friday 10:30-23:00**  
**Saturday & Sunday 9:00-23:00**

# SOCIAL SCENES

## Another Coach Trip

(and yes – the coach was early again!!)

The Hunts branch of CAMRA organises several campaigning coach trips each year mostly calling at rural pubs in our area that are not readily accessible for many of our members. However, we also organise walking tours and occasional trips outside of the branch area, often taking advantage of the rail network.

The morning of 15th June dawned, and I was knocking on the door of Wetherspoons at 8 am for my fry up. Liquid wise, I decided to stick to the coffee this time which was a good decision. The coach picked us up from St Ives bus station and off we headed to the first stop Papworth brewery, which to the uninitiated is no longer in Papworth, but on the Business Park in Earith. To be honest, this trip was slightly shorter in distance than our normal ones, in fact Jan our coach driver joked that some of the stops were so near, we could get on the front of the coach and off at the back to move between pubs!



Anyway, beers on offer at the brewery were Mild Thing (3.5%), Crystal Ship (4.2%), Pass the Porter (5.5%) and for the cider drinkers, Cromwell Session Cider (4.5%). I decided to go for all three real ales. Unfortunately, I made a cardinal mistake by starting on the Crystal Ship, then the Porter and finally the Mild and then back to the Crystal Ship, but all were very good even though I don't normally drink Porter or Mild



Richard gave a guided tour of the brewery and brewing process for those who wanted it and games and nibbles had been laid on, although killer darts with alcohol didn't always comply with H&S and I thought table football was only a game, not the battle to the death as evidenced by Luke and Rory.



Next stop was the **Green Man** at Colne where I had Adnams Ghost Ship, other beers on offer were Milton Justinian, Papworth Half Nelson, St Austell Tribute and Timothy Taylor Boltmaker. Some of our party even got involved in judging a pickled egg competition.



Onto the White Swan at Bluntisham, where Sharps's Sea Fury was the order of the day for me and then off to the Pike and Eel at Needingworth where I stuck to the Adnams Broadside. The other choice was Nene Valley Brewery Bitter and when we arrived, the sun was out so most of us sat in the garden next to the river and watched the world go by until it started to rain.

Our last stop was the **Haywain** in St Ives, which won the Community Pub of Year at the recent Huntingdonshire CAMRA awards and a very nice pint of Timothy Taylors Landlord was swiftly emptied.



Unfortunately, I had a very early start the next morning so called it quits then and left the stalwarts in the **Haywain** whilst I threaded my way through the estates of St Ives and made it home safely.

Once again, thanks to Juliet for organising, Jan our coach driver for putting up with us, Richard and Chris from Papworth brewery for their hospitality, the pubs that we visited as it can't be easy when a coachload arrives and all want serving at the same time. Thanks also to the CAMRA members that turned up as we need people to make these campaigning trips a success.

**Reported by Jez Stone**



Mild Thing - Mad Jack - The Whitfield Citrabolt - Whispering Grass - Crystal Ship

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# CIDER SECTION



**News and views on cider and perry are brought to you by Andy Blagbrough and Ian Baptist (Hunts CAMRA cider contacts)**

## Cider & Perry Social - A grand day out

This took place at the **King of the Belgians**, Hartford, on Saturday 20th July. Those who attended had an enjoyable time trying the seven ciders and perry on offer. The beer was good too!

## Cider & Perry Availability

Finding real cider and perry in locally can be a problem as there are only a few outlets where it is available on a regular basis. Often it is only sold occasionally and even not clearly advertised. Our branch website (<https://hunts.camra.org.uk/viewnode.php?id=3904>) gives the latest information which we have. If you have more up-to-date information, please email it to: [cider@hunts.camra.org.uk](mailto:cider@hunts.camra.org.uk)

## Brooks & Conquest – Artisan Cyder Makers

We have previously mentioned local cider maker, Brooks & Conquest, in a previous edition of Opening Times. The Somersham based producer run by Peter Brooks and Mark Conquest uses local apples to make their range of ciders. Their ciders are Fen Tiger (dry), Devil's Dyke (medium sweet) and Cambridge

Gold (matured in oak vats to give a smoky peaty finish). The annual limited edition 'cyder' is sold in 75cl bottles aimed at the top end of the cider market. They have recently started attending St Ives farmers market and their stall was doing good business when visited. Brooks & Conquest also attend local events such as Kimbolton County Fayre and Cambridge County Show. Additionally, their ciders can be ordered using their website (<https://brooksandconquest.com>).



## Swavesey Cider Festival

The annual Swavesey Cider Festival took place at the recreation ground from 18-21 July. A total of 28 ciders and perries were on sale, mainly from Cambridgeshire producers. These included Simons Cider Swavesey 6.3% that was made using apples from the village. Next year's event will be the venue for Huntingdon Branches cider day.

# BANNERS POSTERS AND MORE...



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# EAST COAST RAIL JOURNEYS

*Reporter: Ian Baptist*



## **In the latest in this regular series, Ian Baptist reports on his visit to Doncaster**

This month I made the short journey up the East Coast mainline to the South Yorkshire town. Better known for its railway heritage and of its racecourse home of the St Ledger which is held each September, Doncaster doesn't have much history when it comes to beer. Stock's Doncaster Brewery brewed at the Hall Cross pub in the town from 1981-1996, its beers have recently been reintroduced at the Hall Cross but are now brewed at Welbeck Abbey Brewery a few miles away. Today the Doncaster Brewery (established 2012) which produces a range of real ales is the only brewery in the town and can be found at its brewery/tap room in Young Street in the town centre. Nearby the 1086 Brewery was established in the old brew house at the 16th century Cusworth Hall at the beginning of 2019.

There are frequent trains from Peterborough to Doncaster with journey times of around fifty minutes. On arrival you don't have to travel far for the first beer. The Draughtsman micro-pub is situated on Platform 3a and is used by visitors to Doncaster and commuters on their way home, as well as locals. Opened in 2017 by a local CAMRA member The Draughtsman is in a former buffet bar that had been unused for many years. Three real ales are always available which are nearly always from Yorkshire breweries. On this occasion they were Jute Session IPA, Alpaca DDH IPA and Velveteen Cacao Porter, all from Salt Brewery, with some of the keg beers from the same brewery also on

sale. The local CAMRA branch magazine Donny Drinker informed me that the team who run The Draughtsman have recently been brewing beers using the brewery at The Imperial in Mexborough so look out for them if visiting.



Turning right out of the station is West Street where there are two pubs selling real ales. The Railway is a traditional street corner local's pub with two or three real ales on sale. On this occasion there was Timothy Taylor Boltmaker and Jennings Snecklifter. Further along West Street is The Leopard the splendid green tiled frontage of the pub still has the original 'Warwicks and Richardsons Ltd Newark Ales and Stouts' signage. The pub is owned by Doncaster Council who saved it from closure in 2014. Despite recent renovations it is relatively unspoiled with two separate drinking areas. The real ales on sale were from local breweries with Doncaster Its Not Rocket Science 5.4%, Welbeck Abbey Portland Black 4.5% and Rat Loomtown Rat 4.5%. There was also a local real cider Whisky Cask from Udders Orchard which I wouldn't have noticed if the barperson hadn't



given me a free sample (this being served by hand pull in the other room).



Around the corner on St Sepulchre Gate West is The Corner Pin a local pub of the year a couple of years ago where a new landlord had recently taken over. This small cosy pub dates from the 1830's and has an unspoilt interior which probably hasn't changed for many years. The wood panelled bar serves the main bar area, with another separate drinking area. The owning pubco's tie means that there were only national real ales on sale here with Ruddles Best, Black Sheep Holy Grail, Otter Bitter and Theakston Old Peculiar.



I made my way into the centre stopping first at The Little Plough another unspoilt gem on St Sepulchre Gate. The tiled exterior still retains the 'Hewitt's Grimsby Ales' lettering as a reminder of former owners. The pub retains its authentic thirties character, with wallcoverings and fittings typical of the period much in evidence, including the fixed seating with bell-pushes in the lounge and the bar-counter with horizontal wooden banding. The domino or card tables with wooden shelves to put your beer glass reminded me of

those which used to be in many pubs up north in my younger years. The rear lounge contains similar decor with a serving hatch to the bar. The team running the Plough recently moved from the Corner Pin. Real ales were Acorn Barnsley Bitter 3.6% and Bradfield Farmers Blond 4.0%, there was also an IPA on sale.



Not far away is The Gatehouse a Wetherspoon pub which is part of the Forum Centre on Priory Walk and is built on the site of a former medieval priory. The pub is a typical open plan Wetherspoons establishment. Alongside the core real ales were Acorn Kashmir Rub Ale 4.5%, and Summer Lovin 3.9%, Raspberry Wheat 5.6% and Honey Porter 4.9% all from Milestone Brewery.

There are several pubs and bars in the area around the town market. The first to be visited was the Don Valley Tap situated in the recently reopened Wool Market. Here there are many stalls operated by independent food and drink retailers. One of these is the Don Valley brewery from nearby Mexborough. Opened in April 2019 the bar sells three of their cask beers and several keg beers and I was told has been doing well. The cask beers on sale when I visited were Atomic Blond 4.3%, Bit O' That Yorkshire Bitter 4.0% and Go Your Own Way IPA 5.0%. The beers were really good but because of the venue's rules have to be sold in plastic glasses slightly affecting the experience of drinking the beers. The beers were available for off sale in 2-pint containers but interestingly only the cask beers.



Not far away is Market Place Alehouse & Deli which advertises that it only sells local products. That is certainly the case with the real ales and their food range. On the bar were 5 hand pulls serving Bradfield Yorkshire Farmer, Great Newsome Liquorice LADS Stout, Welbeck Abbey Red Feather, as well as Blond Bombshell and Jack's Batch 34 both from Old Mill Brewery. Amongst the beers coming on soon was one from Jolly Sailor Brewery. This is one of the best outlets for local beers in the area.

A couple of doors away is the Queen Crafthouse on the corner of Market Place and Sunny Bar. As well as serving good real ales and keg beers this is a major music venue with live music on Friday and at weekends. Other events include a monthly comedy club. The pub is open plan with wooden flooring throughout and the bar at one side with a stage at the back. There were five regularly changing real ales from local breweries. On this occasion Great Heck Amish Mash 4.7%, Mill Valley British Bitter, White Rose Raven. Plus from Bradfield brewery Yellow Jersey (brewed for the Tour of Yorkshire cycle race) and Peach Ale. There were two real ciders including local Udders Orchard Whisky Cask.

Not far away is the Red Lion Hotel which has been run by Wetherspoons for many years and is one of their Wetherlodge hotels. As with most Wetherspoon pubs it was by far the busiest place that I visited in the town. The regular beers were joined by Arkells Kingsdown Ale and

Stonehenge Great Bustard. There were also local beers Acorn Gorlovka Stout, Leeds Pale and Elland Blond.

Heading away from the centre there are a couple of pubs on Hall Gate that are worth visiting. The furthest of these is The Salutation a former coaching inn, which now operates as a pub with a Thai restaurant upstairs. The pub was mainly open plan with a couple of areas off the main room and it appeared to be mainly unspoilt with lots of wood panelling although the bar front had been painted. Operated by Greene King I had been told that there are usually some local beers on sale here. There was in fact only one of their beers so there is obviously freedom to sell other beers. The Greene King beer was Yardbird (rather than the expected IPA or Abbot). Also available were Black Sheep Bitter, Timothy Taylor Landlord and three from the local Don Valley Brewery. These were Atomic Blond and Bit O' That plus Gongoozler 5 Malt Stout 4.5% which had not been available at their tap. Weston's Old Rosie was the single real cider.



Not far away is the Hall Cross which until the mid-90's had its own micro-brewery. The beers were Stocks Golden, St Ledger and Horizontal which are brewed for the pub at Welbeck Abbey Brewery. Tetley Bitter is also on sale. The pub which was converted from a bakers shop many years ago is open plan with stone flooring by the entrance and wooden flooring leading up to the bar which is on the left side of the pub. There

are raised seating areas on the right and at the front left. There are several TV screens which were showing racing and cricket. Outside there are tables on the pavement.

I had intended to finish at the Rum and Rock on Cleveland Street but it was closed. This looked more like a music shop with musical instruments and other memorabilia in the windows. One local had described it as a 'dive bar'. There should be up to 4 real ales on sale including some from local breweries. One for next time? With time to spare I carried on to The White Swan on Frenchgate. This is a small pub with a tiny front room and a long narrow back room where the bar is. It has obviously been redecorated recently giving a modern feel. There were two real ales on sale. Black Sheep Bitter served from a modern looking swan neck dispense and Jolly Sailor Blonde. The latter was tried but was the first ale that I had had that wasn't in good condition.



Before I visited Doncaster, I was uncertain about the quality of the local pubs and bars, and also the range of real ales that I would find on sale. However, I found that there were a number of really good pubs in the town and that the beers on sale, which were often from local breweries, were generally in good or excellent condition. As a lover of real cider, unfortunately I found the availability and range to be uninspiring.

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# A LOOK BACK IN TIME

## 25 Years Ago

In a story familiar throughout East Anglia, Greene King were under fire from CAMRA for pub closures in its home county, Suffolk. The St Edmunds Head in Bury St Edmunds, the **White Horse** at Haughley and the Volunteer Arms in Mildenhall had all closed after the departure of their tenants. CAMRA complained that it was losing a slice of history in the case of the St Edmunds Head. Formerly one of the last pubs in the town to brew its own beer, it traded as the Cannon brewery until World War One. Greene King said it only de-licensed pubs when there were others in the vicinity, citing the difficulty in obtaining tenants. Tenanted Trade Director Tony Trembath said 'People tend to look on pubs more and more as eating houses and as pubs change over to the middle market of food and wine it is hard to find people of the right calibre who want to run boozers.'

CAMRA was campaigning for Sunday afternoon opening for pubs. Petitions, legal Sunday afternoon beer socials in station buffets and other protests were arranged by CAMRA branches, including Cambridge branch, which attracted plenty of attention by tipping a cask of beer into the River Cam at a pub in the city.

CAMRA's Peterborough branch was celebrating the success of its latest beer festival by the River Nene. The second biggest in the UK after CAMRA's Great British Beer Festival, Peterborough had doubled in size over the previous four years to become twice the size of its nearest rival. Attendance in 1994 went up by 3000 to 22645, with 5000 visitors packing out the riverside marquee on the Friday evening.

CAMRA organised 'The Pub in 2000', a one-day conference aimed at confronting what CAMRA saw as a crisis facing the British pub. Speakers at the event, held at Church House, Westminster, included Richard Wood of the Henley Centre for Forecasting, Marston's managing director David Gordon, Phil Dixon, Midlands Licensed Victuallers Association director and Portman Group director Peter Rae.

A serious fire at the Caledonian Brewery in Edinburgh, saved seven years earlier in a management buyout from brewers Lorimer and Clark, virtually destroyed the old maltings at the

site. Cask storage cellars were also damaged, but brewing resumed a few days after the fire.

## 10 Years Ago

CAMRA was campaigning for a 'People's Pint' – zero alcohol duty on beers at or below 2.8% ABV. The Irish government had halved duty on beer below 2.8%. CAMRA claimed that EU rules allowed the government to drop duty entirely on such beers, and that this would make it easier for people to drink responsibly - and save consumers up to 60p a pint on lower strength beers.

The Windmill at Somersham was back in business following work completed there to repair flooding damage which occurred shortly after new leaseholders had taken on the popular village dining destination.

It was also business as usual at the Snooty Tavern, Great Staughton, which had been sold on behalf of administrators.

CAMRA's Yorkshire branches were campaigning to save brewing of the iconic Tetleys cask beer in Leeds, as owners Carlsberg continued to progress their plans to close the famous Tetleys brewing site. CAMRA was calling for Carlsberg to develop a new brewing site in Leeds or transfer brewing to an existing local production site.

The Charles Wells pub estate increased to a total of 260 on their purchase of 26 pubs from Punch Taverns. Fullers, Shepherd Neame and Lees breweries had also been snapping up managed and tenanted pubs from Punch. Greene King bought 11 Punch managed houses in the South East of England, London and Scotland and sold 11 of its Belhaven pubs in Scotland.

CAMRA campaigning resulted in two major pub companies dropping the use of restrictive covenants to prevent new owners of their pub premises from operating them as pubs. Enterprise Inns and Punch Taverns bowed to CAMRA pressure and abandoned the use of covenants, and Punch also offered to reverse existing covenants if requested.

**Compiled by Paul Moorhouse**





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## 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.

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# IN OTHER NEWS

## Make supermarket booze more expensive

In early September, the BBC website reported on a study commissioned by the Institute of Alcohol Studies (IAS), which commissioned research that said that taxing alcohol sold in supermarkets at a higher rate would help to cut problem drinking.

A 'pub relief' would skew taxation towards high-strength drinks bought for consumption at home and away from weaker products bought in pubs. That could mean that beer in pubs would become less expensive, depending on how the duties were structured. Taxing cider and wine by the unit, as is already the case with beer and spirits, would also help cut down problem drinking.

We would agree that alcohol and particularly beer sold in supermarkets is routinely very cheap compared with the price you pay in the pub. A minimum price per unit of alcohol has been introduced in Scotland. However, this has only had a small effect and has only increased the price of a few products in supermarkets, such as very strong cider and some 'industrial' spirits.

It would seem to make a lot of sense for the tax regime to encourage consumption of lower strength products such as beer in the social, controlled environment of the pub. Landlords have a duty of care to people in their pubs, whereas there is no such control for individuals drinking at home.

Nik Antona, CAMRA National Chairman said: "We absolutely echo the calls in the report for a taxation solution that favours on trade consumption, especially on lower strength drinks like beer. CAMRA have long maintained that the best place to enjoy a pint or two is in the social, community setting of the pub."

"Beer and pubs already face a huge tax burden - one of the highest rates of duty in the EU and an unfair business rates burden. CAMRA is campaigning for a lower rate of tax

on beer served in pubs, as this would level the playing field between cheap supermarket alcohol consumed at home and beer sold in a community pub. It's great to see others now calling for measures that would achieve this."

Let's hope that our politicians will see sense and make changes to duty that cut the difference between the price paid in supermarkets and the price paid in the pub. After all, the pub is best place to drink real ale!

## Wetherspoon sales up whilst profit is down

Mega pub operator, JD Wetherspoon, announced that sales had risen by 6.8% in the year to 28 July, whilst operating profit slipped by 0.3% and profit before tax fell by 4.5%. The group opened five new pubs and disposed of nine over the same period.

Following this, the chain announced an average cut of 20p a pint across their 879 pubs. The Chief Executive of Society of Independent Brewers (SIBA), James Calder, wrote an open letter to Tim Martin, the JDW chairman, expressing significant concern at the cut. He stated "Beer sold this cheaply has to be made cheaply. The beer my members make is a quality premium product and should be treated as one. It is brewed with the finest quality ingredients by artisanal people with real skills."

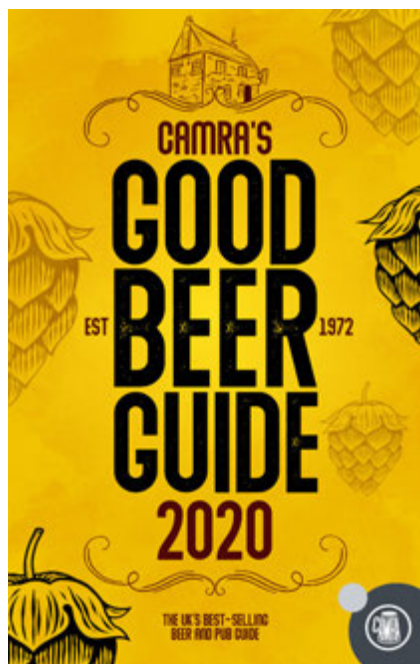
He continued "Selling a pint of beer for as low as £1.39 may appeal to consumers but it doesn't support independent craft brewers who fear further downward pressure on price. This combined with inevitable inflationary increases in all their costs. Our research shows that most brewers operate on very low profit margins and many struggle to survive in a very competitive market ... Moves like this signal a race to the bottom to the brewers that supply your pubs."

In response, Tim Martin commented that "I can understand the concerns of your members ... We feel confident that volumes of your members' beers will not be affected, and we will not be asking them for any reductions in price - indeed, we have not asked Greene King,

the supplier of Ruddles, for a reduction either. As you point out, Wetherspoon has an excellent relationship with SIBA and its members – and we do not believe our Ruddles initiative will have an adverse effect.”

## Time called on ‘the usual’ down at the pub

Long gone are the days of limited choice, according to the Good Beer Guide 2020, CAMRA's premier publication featuring the very best pubs to find a great pint in the UK. With forwards from award-winning beer writer Emma Inch and licensee Jodie Kidd, the impact of choice and diversity on the beer and pubs industry cannot be clearer.



Figures from the latest Guide, now in its 47th year, show that pubs have diversified their offerings with 61% of pubs offering evening meals and 65% offering lunch food, compared to traditional wet-led pubs. In addition, many of the pubs in the Guide offer some kind of community event or activity, such as providing a social beer garden (76%), screening live sports

(32%) or providing entertainment (43%).

This is complemented with a surge in 1,850 real ale breweries, making more flavours and styles available to consumers than ever before.

Tom Stainer, CAMRA's Chief Executive said: “Long gone are the days of limited choice - today's beer drinker now not only has a huge range of beer styles and flavours to choose from, but also a number of fantastic venues for choice that are working harder than ever before to attract footfall.”

“Pubs play a crucial role in our communities and social lives, and it's heartening to see such diversity in the beer industry and a real drive to encourage more people to enjoy a brew. Beer drinking and pub-going is for everyone, and these days you are guaranteed to find a pint you love in a pub that suits your tastes - we can all cheers to that!”

Discover all the listed pubs, and more, with CAMRA's new Good Beer Guide app, available on both iOS and Android device or visit the CAMRA shop for your copy: [www.shop.camra.org.uk](http://www.shop.camra.org.uk) Alternatively, get your copy at St Ives 'Booze on the Ouse'.



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# HUNTS CAMRA SOCIAL DIARY

The following meetings and events are planned. All members are encouraged to attend and contribute to Open Branch Committee Meetings. 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)

## Tue 1 Oct, 8 pm

White Hart, Great Staughton  
Open Branch Committee Meeting

## Mon 14 Oct, from 12:00

Burgess Hall, St Ives  
Beer Festival Set-Up - Volunteers needed - Refreshments provided.

## Thu 17 – Sat 19 Oct

St. Ives Booze on the Ouse Beer and Cider Festival  
Burgess Hall, St Ives  
Thursday & Friday Noon-10.30 pm,

Saturday Noon until 10.00pm.

## Sun 20 Oct, from 9 am

Burgess Hall, St Ives  
Beer Festival Take-Down - volunteers needed – breakfast provided.

## Sun 3 Nov

Huntingdon Racecourse Beer Festival Race Meeting  
Horseracing, Beer and Live Music! CAMRA members can get a discount on entry tickets purchased online by inputting the promotion code CAMRA19.

## Mon 2 Dec, 8 pm

Open Branch Committee Meeting

## Anchor, Little Paxton

Sat 1 Feb 2020, 2 pm  
Open Branch Committee Meeting  
Golden Lion Hotel, St Ives (venue TBC)

All branch members are welcome at Open Committee meetings and it's always nice to see some new faces.

## PIG n FALCON - St Neots



### New Street PE19 1AE

Mon 6pm-late  
Tue-Wed 11.30am-late  
Thu 11am-late  
Fri/Sat 11am-2.30am  
Sun 11am-late

### Live Music Wed, Fri & Sat

Wed 8pm live music  
(every other week)  
Thu 8pm quiz  
Fri 9pm bands  
Sat 9pm bands

## Large range of Ales and Ciders available

Minimum eight real ales & micro brewery craft ales. Minimum of eight real ciders. Extensive range of bottled ciders and beers (including Belgian and American). Potbelly Best £3.00/pint. CAMRA members 40p/pint discount on real ales. CAMRA Award Winning Pub. John Nunn Hunts CAMRA Pub Champion 2013.



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Whether you're looking to make a small renovation to your home or you've accumulated a list of small repair projects, Huntingdon Handyman can help.

### Services include:

- |                              |             |                                       |
|------------------------------|-------------|---------------------------------------|
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| • Wood and composite decking | • Locks     | • Flatpack Assembly                   |
| • Patios                     | • Kitchens  | • Carpentry                           |
| • Fencing                    | • Bathrooms | • Guttering, fascia, soffits and more |
| • Ivy Removal                | • Basements |                                       |
|                              | • Painting  |                                       |

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## Opening Times

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If you would like to advertise in next quarters CAMRA magazine or are interested in advertising in the St Neots Thinklocal magazine.

Please contact:

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### Opening times

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