



CAMPAIGN
FOR
REAL ALE

Opening Times



Huntingdonshire Branch of CAMRA
The Campaign for Real Ale

Issue 171
Summer 2017



King of the
Belgians, Hartford
Pub of the Year

Booze on the Ouse
- St Ives Beer
& Cider Festival
Thursday 19th
- Saturday 21st
October 2017



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Part 2 – Wednesday 16th August – Sunday 20th August

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Pub of the Year



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Fri 9pm bands
Sat 9pm bands

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Annual General Meeting (AGM)

Hunt's CAMRA's AGM was in April at the Falcon in Huntingdon. The meeting was very well attended and we recruited five new members to the committee.

As always at the Falcon we were made very welcome and enjoyed the buffet that was provided.

There was a good range of beer available to choose from and we stayed after the meeting to sample these.

Later, several attendees enjoyed a walk around the town, visiting the Samuel Pepys, the Victoria, the Market Tavern and the Sandford House.

Thank you to everyone who came along; we look forward to the forthcoming year getting to know our new committee members and socialising with everyone.

Train Trip to Derby

On Easter Saturday a group of members headed off to Derby for a pub tour.



The route was provided by a CAMRA member from a different branch who has explored Derby several times. In the time available it was difficult to do justice to the large number of great pubs in the area and the time we had.

We started off by visiting The Brunswick by the station where we received a very warm welcome and had a range of beers to choose

from.

Our next stop was the Babbington Arms (Wetherspoons) which had 12 ales to choose from and no sign of an 'available soon'!!!

Our third stop was Ye Olde Dolphin which is the oldest pub in Derby and one of the oldest in the country.

We followed this with a visit to The Flowerpot and then an unplanned trip up the road to the Five Lamps as we had learned that it was serving our Social Secretary's favourite beer!!

Other stops were the Silk Mill and the Brewery Tap before heading back to the station for the journey home with enough time for a 'cheeky half' in the Station Hotel, Peterborough between trains!

Juliet Ferris
Social Secretary

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No. 3 - The Seven Wives



As I was going to St Ives I met a man with seven wives, each wife had seven sacks. In each sack were seven

cats. Each cat had seven kits. Kits, sacks, cats, wives. How many were going to St Ives?

The old English riddle provides the name for the Seven Wives public house. It is the only pub with the name in the UK. Built in 1962 at the time when St Ives was expanding north of St Audreys Lane/Houghton Road the Seven Wives was the first new pub to be built in the town for over 100 years. It is thought that local brewers Steward & Patteson of Ely and Norwich built the Seven Wives as a flagship pub for the company. It was certainly the largest pub in St Ives at the time and is still an impressive building. The first landlord was Gerald Dancer. Cyril Haigh, the mayor of St Ives performed the ceremonial opening of the pub and pulled the first pints.

The pub consists of three main areas. Entering the pub you are in the main bar area. Two handpumps are on the main bar and a blackboard shows the beers on offer. To the right is another room which doubles as a function room; three further handpumps can be found here. On the left of the main bar another area contains two snooker tables and dart board. Sport is shown on televisions throughout the pub.



At the rear is a large beer garden, and there is a large flagged patio with benches at the front of the pub.

Both are popular on sunnier days.

Intended as a community pub its location on Ramsey Road means that it is far enough out of the town centre to still claim to be a community pub today. Many of the regulars coming from the nearby housing areas.



The Seven Wives is also one of the premier live music venues in St Ives featuring bands of various styles and genre. These gigs are extremely well supported and bring in people from a wide area.

The pub passed into the ownership of Watney Mann (Grand Metropolitan) when they bought Steward & Patteson. Later it was included in the sale of many of their pubs to Enterprise Inns plc (now Ei Group plc) who still own the pub today. The pub has continued to prosper with Tony and Lynn have been at the helm. They have been at the Seven Wives for over 10 years but they are planning to leave the licensed trade and there will be new faces behind the bar once Enterprise Inns find new tenants. The locals will be sad to see them leave. Tony is often seen playing cards with some of the regulars when I visit the pub.

Tony and Lynn often hold special events on



days such as St George's Day and St Patrick's Day. They also hold an annual family fun day in August and various

charity events. At the town's annual carnival the Seven Wives often enters its own float and in 2016 theirs was they won the best float award. Another event held recently was a weekend

motorbike gala.

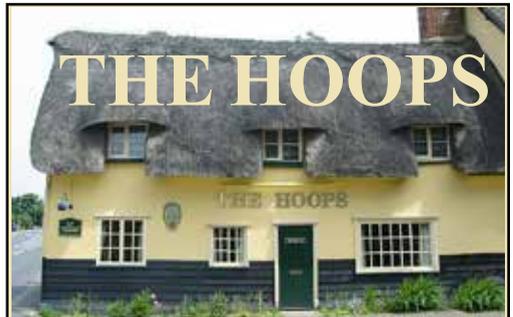
The pub's real ales all come from the Enterprise Inns beer list. Hopback Summer Lightning is the regular offering with up to three rotating beers. These are often from Charles Wells, Woodfordes and Adnams.



Unusually for the area, the pub concentrates on wet sales. However, food has been available in the past and the new tenants may reintroduce food to the pub. The rear room would make an ideal dining area.

Tony and Lynn are expected to leave the Seven Wives before the summer. Hunts CAMRA wish them all the best for the future.

Ian Baptist



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There has been a lot happening in St Ives since the last issue of Opening Times was published.

Wetherspoons have opened their new pub the Swan & Angel in the Market Square. 12 real ales are available usually including several local beers. As well as the discount on beer and ciders using the CAMRA Wetherspoon vouchers a 20% discount on food is offered to CAMRA members on production of a valid membership card (this offer does not including breakfast or meal deals).

At the Seven Wives in Ramsey Road landlord and landlady Tony and Lynn are due to leave the pub after ten years behind the bar. They will remain in charge of the pub until the owner finds a new tenant. See elsewhere in this issue for an article on the pub.

Also on Ramsey Road the Merchant House closed in February after a short period with Dave Sanderson from the Royal Oak in charge. He failed to make a success of the pub and gave up the tenancy. The pub is still closed and has I understand been sold. A planning application has been made by new owners to convert it from a public house to residential use.

The Dolphin Hotel has new owners. Cambridgeshire Hotels Limited purchased the hotel in February for £4.3m. They are part of US hotel operator Aston Management Company and have also bought the Pike & Eel pub in nearby Needingworth. Both were previously owned by local company Wadsworths.

The Oliver Cromwell has frequently changing beers from local breweries and from further afield; the beers from Acorn Brewery in Barnsley on sale recently were really good. Following their selection as our cider pub of the year an increased range of traditional ciders is now

available. As well as the regular Cromwell Choice other local ciders include Happy Medium from Potton Press and Three Piece Sweet from Hardings, as well as some from further afield. Hopefully these will be well received. Has a good value menu



featuring freshly prepared food that is available every lunchtime and their summer menu will be available shortly. Daily specials are shown on a blackboard. Food is not normally available in the evening but several food nights have taken place recently, the last being a pie night, ask at the pub for details of future dates.



The Nelson's Head has been selling beers from Grainstore and new local brewery Angles Ales in addition to beers from the other local

brewers that are seen here. One of my favourite local beers Nene Valley Egyptian Cream is often available here. Their main menu and specials are served every lunchtime with roasts on Sunday. Pizza is available at lunchtime and also in the evening (except Sunday).

The Slepe Hall Hotel in Ramsey Road changed its beer range in late February. Having previously been selling two rotating beers, Adnams Bitter and Broadside are now permanent features here.



Floods Tavern are offering the monthly specials from owning brewery Elgoods. My PA was available in March, with Fork Handles

in April. A poster by the bar advertises future specials.



Not normally mentioned in these pages The White Hart on Sheep Market sells three permanent beers (Greene King IPA,

Fullers London Pride and Sharps Doombar). Their outdoor seating on the pavement in front of the pub should be in use shortly. Food is served at lunchtime and in the evening with a varied

menu that includes roasts every day.

The Ivy Leaf Club continues to sell two rotating real ales.

Up at the Haywain on Constable Road unusual guest beers can often be found alongside more well known beers from larger breweries. Timothy Taylor Dark Mild has recently been on sale following a request from a regular for a mild to be available. It has been popular with the locals.

With the better weather I recently paid a visit to the Three Horseshoes in nearby Houghton (an easy walk along the Thicket path from St Ives). They had three beers on offer. One was from local brewery Nobby's. The landlady informed me that they usually stock a local beer with those from Moonshine and Oakham being popular with locals.

Local cider maker Simon's Cider of Cambourne now have a stall on the St Ives Farmers Market every first and third Saturday of the month. Red Brewery of Little Staughton also frequently have a stall there. Keep an eye out for them both.

There are also rumours that another local cider maker may soon be at the market held on the third Saturday of the month.

Local Pub Beer & Cider Festivals

27-29 May Crown Inn, Broughton beer festival, 14+ local beers & cider, music & food.

26 to 29 May King of the Belgians, Hartford - 5th annual beer festival, 30+ beers, 8 ciders, BBQ and entertainment.

16-18 Jun White Swan, Conington beer festival - approx 12 beers + cider, music on Saturday.

23-25 Jun Oliver Cromwell, St Ives, Beer, Cider & Oyster Festival

24 Jun St Ives Rugby Club: 2nd annual beer festival

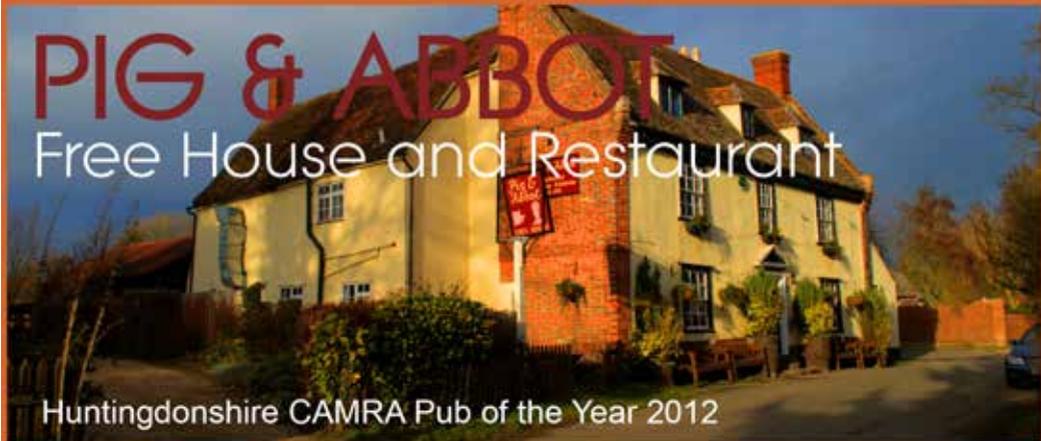
15 Jul Buckfest, Buckden Village Club, features a large selection of local ciders as well as real ale.

8-24 Jul Wetherspoons annual cider festival at the Swan & Angel in St Ives, the Sandford House in Huntingdon and the Weeping Ash in St Neots.

18-20 Aug Cock, Hemingford Grey beer festival. Around 20 beers and cider.

Ian Baptist

St Ives pub contact



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Local cider pubs

There are a number of good local pubs that sell real cider but few of these have sold the products of the many cider makers that operate in Cambridgeshire and surrounding counties, though an exception is Cromwell ciders, which have been available in many pubs in the St Ives/Huntingdon area for some years. In the past few months more ciders from local producers have made it into local pubs.

St Neots

In the past few months St Neots has become a great place for cider drinkers. At the Pig 'N' Falcon a good range of ciders is available. In late April there was a really good choice of ciders with a range of sweet, medium and dry cider. This included three from local cider maker Potton Press Cider (Sweetspot, Cox and Trip Hazard). Also on sale were Franklins Dry, Lilleys Cheeky Pig, Bottle Kicking Scrummage, Scumpy Wasp Overcast, and Abrahalls Thundering Molly. Two flavoured ciders on offer were Lilleys Mango and Farmer Jim's Rhubarb.

A recent and welcome addition to the small number of local pubs which sell traditional ciders is The Ale Taster in Russell Street. A range of ciders which are visible in a cabinet behind the bar. They have included Bottle Kicking Scrambler, Westons Old Rosie, Snails Bank Strawberry & Lime, and one from Broadoak when they first opened, as well as Celtic Marches Crackling Rosie perry. Currently, an increased range includes three from the local Cambridge Cider Company, Bath Cider Bounders and others.

The Olde Sun is a regular outlet for Westons Old Rosie. In nearby Abbotsley the local Hardings cider which is produced in the village has recently been seen on sale at the Eight Bells.

St Ives

Cider drinkers are well catered for here too. The Oliver Cromwell was recently selected as the branch cider pub of the year. Cider from the local Cromwell Cider of Hemingford Grey has long been a regular here. A number of other ciders are now sold with local Potton Press

Happy Medium and Hardings Three Piece Sweet (both favourites at our Booze on the Ouse festivals), along Gwatkins Yarlinton Mill, Millwhites Rum Cask and Oakham (Hogan's) Orchard Reserve in April. All at a reasonable £3.80 a pint. The Oliver Cromwell will be holding a Beer, Cider and Oyster festival from 23-25 June.

Gwent y Draig cider is sold at the new Wetherspoons pub the Swan & Angel, along with Thistly Cross Whisky Cask in April. They have an annual cider festival in July when several other ciders are available.

Other pubs in St Ives serving real cider are the Nelson's Head (Cromwell) and the Royal Oak (Westons cider and perry). Also look out for Simon's Cider who have recently been attending St Ives farmers market.

Huntingdon

The Falcon sells a selection of ciders which mainly concentrates on flavoured fruit ciders from Lilleys. Gwynt y Ddraig, Celtic Marches and Snails Bank ciders were also available April.

Nearby, the Market Inn sells Westons Old Rosie cider. Out of the town centre the Victoria has in the past sold cider from Cromwell and real cider may be available here in the summer months.

Wetherspoons Sandford House sells their usual range of ciders from Gwent y Draig and Westons. An annual cider festival is held in July.

The King of the Belgians in nearby Hartford is another outlet for Cromwell cider which is served alongside Westons Old Rosie.

Unfortunately the pubs in Houghton & the Hemingfords that used to sell real cider no longer do so.

Many other pubs in our area sell real cider which is often Westons Old Rosie. WhatPub gives details of pubs which sell real cider. Updates to pubs selling real cider can be submitted using WhatPub or sent to cider@hunts.camra.org.uk.

A number of local pubs will be holding beer

festivals in the coming months some of which will feature local cider. Also there will be other beer festivals in the local area that will include cider and perry. See the events listing elsewhere in this issue for details.

There has definitely been a resurgence for cider in Huntingdonshire recently. I encourage everyone to get out and try it in the coming months.

Cider Pub of the Year 2017

The voting for the county cider pubs of the year took place recently. The East Anglia area winners were;

Bedfordshire: Engineers Arms, Henlow

Cambridgeshire: Draymans Son, Ely

Essex: Woodbine Inn, Waltham Abbey

Hertfordshire: Mermaid, St Albans

Norfolk: White Lion, Norwich

Suffolk: White Horse Inn, Edwardstone,

Sudbury

Ian Baptist

Branch Cider Representative

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The long awaited new Wetherspoons pub the Swan & Angel opened in St Ives in April. The £2m conversion of

the Market Hill site previously occupied by the Discount Warehouse store opened its doors to invited guests in the week before the official opening. The pub is named after two pubs that stood near the site in the 18th century. The pub is typical of others operated by Wetherspoons with an open plan layout and several alcoves. At



the rear is a small outside patio area that is open until 9pm. It is fully accessible for the disabled and there is a disabled toilet on the ground

floor. The huge size of the pub is immediately obvious when you pass through the doors. Photographs of St Ives provided by the Norris Museum and paintings by local artists are displayed throughout the pub.

The long bar features a large selection of real ales including national brands Greene King Abbot, Ruddles Best Bitter (also from Greene King), Sharp's Doom Bar and Adnams Broadside.



These are augmented by up to eight rotating beers.

Local breweries are featured with Oakham Citra, Elgoods Greyhound Bitter, B&T Dragonslayer and Wells Bombardier being available in their first week. Two traditional ciders are from Gwynt y Ddraig and Thistly Cross. A range of craft

beers include bottled and canned beers from around the world including several in bottle from Meantime and Brewdog, as well as a selection of Belgian beers. Two beer festivals will be held annually in March and October, with a cider festival in July.



Good value food starts at 8am when their breakfast menu is served until midday. The extensive main menu is available from midday until 11pm. This includes pizza which is unusual for Wetherspoons. An interesting feature of Wetherspoons pubs is their app which allows you to order and pay from your table; your food and drinks are then delivered to you. This accounted for 10% of their sales in the first week.

Manager Mike Loveridge has moved to the St Ives area with his fiancé. He has worked for Wetherspoons for over 10 years and was previously at a Wetherspoons pub in Norwich. Before that he has worked at their pubs in Thetford and Bedford. He hopes to work with local landlords and has been spotted drinking in other St Ives pubs. His choice of Oakham Citra was so as not to duplicate beers already available in local pubs (JHB and Inferno being regular beers offered by other town centre pubs).

Some local landlords are reticent about the arrival of Wetherspoons but they attract new customers who don't frequently visit pubs and who may then also visit other local pubs. Most pubs in town concentrate on things that are not provided by Wetherspoons (locally sourced food, sports TV, live music, quiz nights etc) and can continue to thrive. In nearby St Neots only one town centre pub has closed since the opening of the Weeping Ash over six years ago.

The Huntingdon branch of CAMRA would like to take this opportunity to welcome Mike and his fiancé to St Ives and hope they enjoy their time on our lovely town.

Ian Baptist



10 Years Ago

The smoking ban was hailed by CAMRA in anticipation of a potential boost for real ale. Numerous surveys had predicted soaring real ale sales - a significant sector of the potential customer base had previously rejected smoky pubs as an attractive place for an evening out. CAMRA research had indicated that smokers in pubs were typically lager drinkers – only 25% of real ale drinkers were smokers, but 43% of lager drinkers were smokers.

Greene King reinstated Harveys real ale to its pub the Lewes Arms in Lewes, the Sussex home of the revered Harveys brewery, after a boycott by its drinkers saw sales at the pub drop by 90%.

CAMRA hosted a conference for UK brewers aimed at protecting them from further closures. Roger Protz, who hosted the conference, said 'Our role in the past has been a reactive one and what we're trying to do here is make sure we can be proactive in ensuring brewers can survive in this new age'. Delegates heard about the pros and cons of management and staff buyouts and heard examples of breweries that had been acquired and run as cooperatives.

CAMRA surveys showed that short measures in pints served in pubs were worth £1.3 million every day and that more than a quarter of pints served in pubs were more than 5% short.

CAMRA joined forces with pub trade paper the Morning Advertiser in campaigning against a proposed government ban on the use of glasses in pubs, after an increasing number of police forces had been seeking to impose a requirement for pubs to use polycarbonate glasses.

CAMRA was expressing concerns about Budweiser Budvar, the state-owned Czech brewer of the revered Budvar pilsner beer, as the Czech government announced that the brewery was to be privatised. There was also fear and suspicion about Budvar's deal for its beer to be marketed in the USA by Anheuser-Busch, the American brewers of 'the other' Budweiser.

25 Years Ago

Greene King launched a takeover bid for the Oxfordshire brewery and pub company Morland. In a familiar repeat of events elsewhere, the bid was sparked by the actions of national brewer Whitbread. Whitbread Investment Company owned large shareholdings in many independent breweries and in this case it had sold 28.5% of Morland to Greene King, a deal which precipitated the full takeover bid by the Suffolk brewers.

In 1992 most bottled Guinness Original Stout in England was real ale, naturally conditioned in the bottle, which provided many real ale aficionados with a useful alternative in pubs which did not stock real draught beer. But in the summer of that year it appeared the future of real Guinness in bottle was in doubt, with widespread rumours that it was to be discontinued, and Guinness refusing to comment on the matter to CAMRA. Bottle-conditioned Guinness had not been available in Scotland for a number of years.

On the other hand, national brewer Whitbread provided a boost for the fortunes of real draught porter with a competition between three of its breweries to produce the best porter based on an old Whitbread recipe, as a part of Whitbread's celebration of its 250 years of brewing. The winning beer, chosen by beer writers Roger Protz, Barrie Pepper, Michael Jackson and Peter Martin, was Castle Eden brewery. Whitbread test-marketed the new brew in 250 pubs prior to a national launch.

The body that represented pub tenants and free-house licensees, the National Union of Licensed Victuallers, was wound up after membership plummeted from 15000 to less than 7000 in around 15 months.

The outcomes of CAMRA's successful campaigning were reaching some outposts that had been dry of real ale as the island of Jersey began producing a real draught bitter, Ann Street brewery's Old Jersey Ale, and Scottish and Newcastle breweries began supplying its real ale to pubs in Northern Ireland.

Paul Moorhouse

Hunts CAMRA Pub Awards



Huntingdonshire CAMRA's annual pub awards aim to draw attention to pubs and clubs that operate in ways that CAMRA seeks to encourage - such as providing well-presented ranges of real ales of varied styles, high quality draught ciders and perries, premises with atmosphere and style, good service and welcome, a good community focus and good value.

Six awards were presented in March at the 'Booze on the Ouse' beer and cider festival at the Priory Centre in St Neots.

The 'Urban Pub of the Year' award went to the King of the Belgians at Hartford – an urban pub in a picturesque former village setting. Branch Social Secretary Juliet Ferris is seen below (centre) presenting the award to licensees Matthew and Jane Spicer (below):



The King of the Belgians is also well known as a genuine community pub, providing a real focal point for those living nearby and hosting regular activities in support of good causes in the locality. The 'Community Pub of the Year' award, presented by Dr Nick Ashley from Angles Ales, also went to the King of the Belgians (below):



The 'Rural Pub of the Year' award was won by quintessential English village pub the Mermaid at Ellington – a welcoming oak-beamed pub with real fires in winter, great food and a good range of local real ales. Festival real ale bar manager Kathy Hadfield-Moorhouse presented the award to Nicholas Marriott (above).

The Oliver Cromwell in St Ives is 'Cider and Perry Pub of the Year'. In addition to Cromwell cider the range of local real draught ciders has



been expanded and they now stock ciders from Potton Press and Hardings and two other ciders from further afield. Nicky Warnock, the festival's deputy cider bar manager presented the award to Richard Schonfeldt (above).



The Club of the Year award went to Buckden Village Club. Branch chairman Richard Harrison presented the award (above):

Finally, the overall branch Pub of the Year for 2017 is the King of the Belgians, the winner of the award in 2014 and 2015.

This will now go on to be judged in CAMRA's Pub of the Year award for Cambridgeshire. The county stage is followed by regional and final judging, and the overall national CAMRA Pub of the Year will be announced in February 2018.

The happy winners from the King of the Belgians of the branch Pub of the Year award, presented by Jo Coleman and Liz Louch from Oakham Ales, are shown below:



The nominations for the awards were as follows:

Rural Pub of the Year

Chequers, Little Gransden
Mermaid, Ellington
White Hart, Great Staughton

Urban Pub of the Year

King of the Belgians, Hartford
Nelson's Head, St Ives
Oliver Cromwell, St Ives

Community Pub of the Year

Cambridgeshire Hunter, Eynesbury
Haywain, St Ives
King of the Belgians, Hartford
Racehorse, Catworth

Cider and Perry Pub of the Year

Chequers, Little Gransden
Nelson's Head, St Ives
Oliver Cromwell, St Ives

Club of the Year

Buckden Village Club
Comrades Club, Godmanchester
Yelling Social Club

Paul Moorhouse

18th, 19th, 20th August



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18th, 19th, 20th August 2017





CAMRA is celebrating a government announcement that it will close a planning loophole in England which has allowed pubs to be demolished or converted to a wide range of retail uses without any planning application – this has previously made pubs a soft target for developers and contributed to a net loss of 21 pubs per week. The Government's decision will give communities the right to have a say in the future of their pubs - planning permission will now be required to convert or demolish any pub.

A planning application has been submitted for a proposed change of use of the Merchant House in St Ives from public house and 4-bed residential flat to 4-bed dwelling house. The application includes a completed CAMRA public house viability test and one argument supporting non-viability argues that 'the financial demise of the Merchant House is now sealed by the recent opening of the JD Wetherspoons public house'. This is a reference to the Swan and Angel, which was opened by Wetherspoons in April in a building not previously used as a pub - the former Warehouse Clearance store.

Ambury Developments have appealed over the refusal of their planning application to convert the Sun in Hartford Road, Huntingdon into housing. Huntingdonshire District council turned down the application after local concerns about a lack of parking in the immediate area around the former pub, and the inclusion of only four parking places in the development for five residential properties.

Heineken's bid to take over 1900 of Punch Taverns' pubs has been referred to the government's Competition and Markets Authority, which is seeking documentation from Heineken in order to assess whether the takeover could reduce choice and competition for customers. The result could spark an in-depth investigation. Heineken have jointly bid with Patron Capital for the Punch estate – the proposal would result in Heineken taking on 1900 of the pubs and Patron would take the other 1300 pubs.

CAMRA has unveiled its annual pub design awards. The Conservation Award went to the Scottish Stores in London, a Grade II listed building designed in 1900-01 when joints of venison used to hang from the bar to be bought by visiting Scotsmen. The Refurbishment and Joe Goodwin Awards have both gone to the Tim Bobbin in Burnley, Lancashire, dating to 1701. It was insensitively restored in the 1960s, leading it to look very tired and sad by the 1990s. Now Samuel Smiths' in-house architects have rescued this prominent pub through an excellent

refurbishment. The Ship Inn in Shalesmoor, Sheffield was also commended in the Refurbishment category.

A range of cask Courage beers is to be brewed in London by the Southwark brewery, close to Courage's long-closed London brewing site. Brewers from Charles Wells, who own the Courage brand, will provide supervision for the Southwark brewery in producing the beers. A limited-edition Courage beer will appear every two months until next February. The scheme is part of celebrations of the 230th anniversary of Courage brewing.

CAMRA membership has topped 185,000, reinforcing its place among some of the top membership organisations in the UK - and boasting numbers above political parties the Conservative Party, the SNP, the Liberal Democrats, the Greens and UKIP. CAMRA is still seeing nearly 10,000 new members join each year.

Cask Marque, the organisation that for ten years has been running a quality accreditation scheme for cask beer as served in pubs, has recently announced a new training scheme for cask ale cellarmanship. Around 10,000 pubs have achieved Cask Marque accreditation, and it is hoped that the new training scheme for cellar managers will help to boost that number in the future.

A new brewing apprenticeship standard has been proposed by a group of ten brewers, including nationals, family independents and microbreweries, supported by the British Beer and Pubs Association and the Small Independent Brewers' Association. The move follows the dropping by the government of apprenticeship frameworks and is hoped to enable brewers to offer high quality training and apprenticeships to a defined standard.

The two pence a pint increase in beer duty announced in the spring budget was the first rise in five years and, says CAMRA, has let down beer drinkers, pubs and brewers. Colin Valentine, CAMRA's national chairman, said the increase 'marks a return to the days when the much-hated Beer Duty Escalator contributed to 75,000 job losses, 3,700 pub closures and a 24% fall in beer sales in pubs.'

Cornwall's St Austell brewery has agreed a multi-million pounds investment scheme for a new brewhouse to be built for Bath Ales, which St Austell took over last summer. The new brewery is aimed at doubling brewing capacity for Bath Ales to 50,000 barrels.

A brewery owned by a Californian won CAMRA's

prestigious Champion Winter Beer of Britain award in February. Following over a year of local tasting panels and regional heats leading up to the finals, Old Freddy Walker (7.5 per cent ABV) from the Bristol-based Moor Beer Company impressed judges with its incredible balance of flavours. Moor brewery made CAMRA history earlier this year after producing the very first real ale in a can, which has been accredited by CAMRA after vigorous testing.

Heineken's Star Pubs and Bars group has become a part the Beerflex scheme, run by the Small Independent Brewers Association to enable small brewers to more easily sell cask beers to large pub companies. Cask Marque accredited pubs will be able to order real ales brewed within 30 miles.

The Cheltenham Motor Club has won CAMRA's annual national Club of the Year award for the second time. Since winning the title in 2013, the club has made significant improvements to its seating and bar area, demonstrating a clear commitment to improving the experience of its members and guests alike. This friendly and welcoming club, formed in 1906, usually has six real ales and three real ciders on tap, alongside its new bottled beer bar and a Belgian draught beer. It runs two beer festivals a year.

Crowdfunding schemes are providing boosts for a number of small UK brewers. A new scheme for Derby Brewing Company will enable investors to

acquire shares in up to 10% of the business. Somerset's Wild Beer Company has over 1500 new investors and raised over £1 million towards a new brewery. Other such schemes have included one for Bedlam brewery in Sussex, which acquired a new brewery at the end of last year following a crowdfunding scheme.

CAMRA's national Pub of the Year award was scooped by the George & Dragon at Hudswell in North Yorkshire, a village pub which was saved from closure by the local community. When closed in 2008 it left the small village with no facilities for its residents apart from a village hall. Within two years, the community had banded together to form the Hudswell Community Pub Ltd group and bought back the pub, re-opening in June 2010 after extensive renovations.

Manchester brewer and pub operator Joseph Holt has arranged a finance deal with the Royal Bank of Scotland to provide a £25 million boost to its pubs estate. Holts has bought five new pubs this year and now plans to obtain more pubs focussed on food.

The annual 'There's a Beer for That' campaigning event in support of British beer has linked up with 'Foodies Festival' to provide beer and food matching events at ten Foodies Festivals around the UK.

Paul Moorhouse



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On a sunny Saturday at the end of April most of the Hunts CAMRA branch committee members visited the four Cambridgeshire branch Pubs of the Year (POTY). The purpose was to assess each of the branch winners and cast our votes for the Cambridgeshire county Pub of the Year for 2017.

The first pub to be visited was the Peterborough branch winner the Letter B in Whittlesey. Not only was this the branch Pub of the Year for 2017 but it is also their Cider Pub of the Year. Located outside the town centre, the pub is normally only open in the evening but opens from midday at the weekend. Arriving shortly before their midday opening time we didn't have long to wait before the landlord opened the doors for us.

Among the selection of beers on offer were three from local breweries. Xtreme Ales Milk Stout was a popular choice, with Tydd Steam Piston Bitter and Digfield Chiffchaff being tried by others. Hop Back Summer Lightning and Sharp's Doom Bar were their other real ales. Ciders on offer included several from Lilleys and Angry Wasp. Visiting so early in the day we were the only customers. However we received a



warm welcome from the landlord who provided some nibbles for us. I am sure that the pub is popular with local drinkers

at busier times.

Our next visit was to the Ely branch POTY the Draymans Son in Ely. This pub was in total contrast to the Letter B. The Draymans Son is one of the increasingly popular 'micropubs' that have been appearing in most areas in recent years.

The pub is in a former shop unit in Fore Street and opened as the Liberty Belle in 2013. When new management took over it was renamed the Draymans Son in memory of the manager's

father who worked as a drayman for a local brewery. As with all micropubs it is small. With about 30 people in it (including some of the Ely branch committee) it was pretty full. The lack of size doesn't mean a lack of quality though.

Around 10 beers are served from a stillage in the back room. These include several beers from the local Three Blind Mice brewery (there beers were very well received at our Booze on the Ouse beer festivals). Other beers from East Anglian breweries were Two Rivers Happy Hopper, Boudicca Perfect Porter as well as beers from Grainstore and Hellhound. Other beers all from smaller breweries around the country are often on sale here - on this occasion Howling Hops (London) and Stockport (Manchester). There was a good selection of beer styles including pale ale, stout and porter.

The pub is also a supporter of local cider makers. These included Pickled Pig, Spinney Abbey, Duxford and Cromwell and several flavoured ciders from Lilleys were available. The excellent range of ciders resulted in the Draymans Son being not only the Ely branch Cider Pub of the Year but it also received the accolade of being judged as Cambridgeshire Cider Pub of the Year for 2017. As well as beer and cider the Draymans Son also sells a number of flavoured gins from the Ely Gin Company. Freshly made sandwiches and pork pies were available.



The next pub to be visited was the Cambridge branch POTY the Red Lion in Histon which was yet another

different type of establishment. One of a number of pubs in the popular village to the north of Cambridge the Red Lion is an impressive building dating from the 1830's and there is a large beer garden and car park. The landlord has been at the pub for over 20 years.



The inside of the pub has displays of brewery signs and artefacts from numerous defunct breweries both local and from

further afield. These include a Marshall Brothers of Huntingdon sign (they ceased brewing in 1954).

Two local brews were amongst the cask beers available here; Muck Cart Mild from our own Son of Sid brewery and Milton Pegasus. There were three beers from Lacons Brewery in Great Yarmouth (Affinity, Encore and % ABV barley wine Audit Ale). Other beers included regulars Adnams Ghost Ship, Batemans Gold, and Tring Side Pocket plus guest beer Burton Bridge Draught Burton Ale (DBA).

A small selection of real ciders including Aspoll Temple Moon were available although on this occasion these didn't include the local Pickled Pig cider that is usually seen here. A good selection of bottled beers including many from Belgium are available here. Unlike the first two pubs the Red Lion has an extensive food menu.

The final pub to be visited was our own Hunts CAMRA Pub of the Year for 2017 the King of the Belgians in Hartford.



Again a very different pub the King of the Belgians is very much a community pub situated in the centre of this urban village. Run by the same family for a number of years it is a regular award winner. It is much smaller than the Red Lion with a bar

area at one side and a separate restaurant area.

Four changing real ales can be found here which usually includes at least one beer from a local brewery; on this occasion this was Oakham Citra. Others were Milestone Black

Pearl Stout, Joules Slumbering Monk and Purity Mad Goose. One cider from the local Cromwell Cider and Westons Old Rosie are always available. Food is available at all times from a small but varied menu.

The winner of the Cambridgeshire Pub of the Year for 2017 will be decided by members of the four local CAMRA branches and will be announced later in the year.

All were top notch pubs as would be expected from the local branch winners and served many excellent beers with several from local breweries. A number of ciders were available in all four pubs.

They were also very different pubs which will make it a very difficult task to decide on a winner.

Whichever pub is the eventual winner the Cambridgeshire Pub of the Year award for 2017 the owners/managers and staff at all four pubs should be congratulated for their achievement in becoming their branch winners.

Ian Baptist

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Many people dream of running their own brewery, but for Jon and Jane Draycott they made the dream

happen in 2009 when brewing started at Low Farm in Buckden. Knowing that new ventures require 'something different', Jon has focused on producing bottle-conditioned beers in one pint bottles: 'a real proper pint' as he refers to it.



The brewery is a 1-barrel, (36 gal), 'plant' which is located in a small room of their house. All brewing involves using

whole hops, malted barley and commercial brewing yeast.

There are currently four beers on offer:

- Buckden Pale Ale at 4.0%
- Buckden Bronze, a 4.1% bitter;
- Buckden Black, a 4.5% porter;
- Buckden Ruby, a 4.6% bitter.

Brewing takes place on a regular basis and it is possible to have three different brews fermenting at the same time. Everything is very



labour intensive, especially bottling the beers, but this does enable Jon to focus on ensuring a high quality is maintained.



His beers are available locally from: Smiling Grape Co., St. Neots; Grafham Community Shop, Grafham Village; Marriott Hotel,

Huntingdon; Johnsons Farm Shop, Old Hurst. Alternatively, by prior arrangement, directly from the brewery. It is also possible to enjoy a pint of Buckden Ale whilst watching the 'Saints' play at St. Neots Football Club.



As to the future, Jon is planning to expand his range with a high gravity IPA and he is also looking to have firkins of beer available at local beer festivals. He was recently one of a group of East Anglian

brewers who displayed their products to a beer importer in Düsseldorf. This could lead him to becoming an exporter.

Here's to a continuing success in the future - cheers!

Andy Blagbrough

Draycott Brewery Liaison Officer

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Events & Socials

May

Fri 19th-Sun 21st Re-Opening of the **Royal Oak, Hail Weston** (Call in if you're free).

Thu 25th Beer Festival Committee Meeting, **King of the Belgians, Hartford**, 8.15pm

June

Thu 15th Open Branch Meeting, **Falcon, Huntingdon**, 8.15pm

Sat 17th Coach Trip, **Grain Brewery + pub stops**

July

Sat 22nd Tour around Cambridge pubs

August

Thu 17th Open Branch Meeting, **Anchor, Little Paxton**, 8.15pm

An up to date listing of events can be found at: www.hunts.camra.org.uk/diary, or contact the social secretary, Juliet Ferris, on socials@hunts.camra.org.uk, 07590 579283.



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Opening Times



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