

Opening Times

ISSUE 177
SPRING 2019



CAMPAIGN
FOR
REAL ALE

Huntingdonshire branch of CAMRA

hunts.camra.org.uk

INSIDE FEATURES

**NEW PUB OPENINGS
IN BRAMPTON &
GRAFHAM**

**ST NEOTS 'BOOZE
ON THE OUSE'**

THU 14TH – SAT 16TH MARCH

**EAST COAST RAIL
JOURNEYS - YORK**



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EDITORIAL

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

We have a packed issue this time, so
 a big thank you to all of our volunteer
 contributors for providing interesting articles.
 These include the opening of new pubs in
 Bampton, the Hare on the Green, and in
 Grafham, the Grafham Trout. We also have
 plenty of other local pub news starting on
 page 5 and reports from recent branch social
 events on page 14.

March will bring the St Neots 'Booze on the
 Ouse' Beer & Cider Festival at the Priory
 Centre where you can look forward to many
 cask and Keykeg beers, plus real cider and
 perry. Find more details on page 12 and
 please do come along to the festival. For the
 first time, we're opening from 11 am each
 day this year.

We also have a large Cider Section in this
 magazine and a feature article reporting on a
 visit to some of the great pubs in York. This
 is in the run up to a branch outing by train in
 April.

The Annual General Meeting of the Hunts
 branch will take place at 2 pm on Saturday
 18 May in the Falcon in Huntingdon. Please
 do attend if you are a local CAMRA member.
 More details of this and other meetings and
 social events can be found in the branch
 diary on the inside back cover.

So we hope you enjoy reading this issue and
 would be interested to hear any comments

you may have. If you have any pub, brewery
 or festival news, or would like to submit a
 relevant article for publication in Opening
 Times, please email to news@hunts.camra.org.uk
 or forward them to a member of the
 branch committee; contact details are shown
 below with more information on our website.

**Richard Harrison, Chairman of Hunts
 CAMRA on behalf of the Branch
 Committee, February 2019**



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

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HUNTS PUB NEWS

In the winter edition we reported that the new community pub in Grafham was due to open in time for Christmas. The **Grafham Trout** did open just before Christmas, followed by an official opening on 11 January. More details are reported on page 11.

There is more good news, this time from the south of our branch area where it is reported that the Guilden Morden Community Pub Ltd completed the purchase of the **Three Tuns** at the end of November after several years of campaigning. The task of refurbishing the pub will now begin, although this will take some time to complete. The community group behind the purchase are looking for a tenant to run what will be a free of tie pub. There has been no news from the **Three Horseshoes** in Wistow, where another community group are trying to save their local.

We understand that an offer has been made for the **Oliver Cromwell** in St Ives which was put on the market in late 2018. It is hoped to be able to bring you more news in our next issue.

Also in St Ives, the lease is available for the **White Hart** (El Group). The pub has been selling just two beers recently with Fullers London Pride being joined by a beer from Purity Brewery (this is usually Mad Goose, but UBU has also been seen on at least one occasion). The Purity beers are in 4.5 gallon barrels that hopefully means a faster turnover and more consistent quality.



'The Victoria in better times'

Whilst on the subject, we've heard that leases are falling due at the **Miller's Arms** and **George & Dragon** in Eaton Socon, as well as the **Snooty Tavern** in Great Staughton.

We welcome Neil Williams as the new General Manager of the **Golden Lion Hotel** in St Ives town centre who took over at the end of 2018. When we spoke to Neil he said the he planned to continue stocking locally brewed real ales. A recent visit found the regular Black Sheep Bitter on alongside Wadworths Old Timer winter ale and on a second visit Coachmans Premium Gold 4.0% which Neil told me is also brewed by Wadworths.

A premises licence has been applied for in the village of Toseland, although we believe this probably refers to a mobile unit. If we hear more, we'll pass on the information in an upcoming issue of Opening Times.

I have made visits to many pubs in our region during the past few months and these are reported below. If you are the landlord or regular customer of a pub in the Huntingdonshire branch area (see our website for details of which pubs are in our area) or even from one of our local clubs that sell real ale, that doesn't often get a mention in Opening Times and would like to see it mentioned please contact me at locale@hunts.camra.org.uk letting me know what real ales have recently been on sale and any other significant news from the pub.

In December many pubs have a Christmas beer or a stronger winter warmer on sale. The **Royal Oak** in St Ives had a number of beers from local breweries on sale during the period. A visit in late December found two beers from Oldershaw (Holly Daze 4.1% and Yuletide 4.7%), plus two from Brewster's (Snow Biz and Ho Ho Ho). There was also Slater's Blitzen and although not a seasonal beer, Colombia Coffee Stout from the same brewery. At the **Oliver Cromwell** there was one Christmas beer on that day with Woodfordes Tinsel Toes. Also on sale were Grainstore 1050 and Timothy Taylor Ram Tam

4.1%, the latter a strong mild that is described by the brewery as a winter warmer. An update on the real ale range following the pubs recent sale will be included in the next edition.

Up at the **Haywain** a visit found one Christmas beer Butcombe Plough On together with Redemption Big Chief, Hogs Back TEA, Timothy Taylor Landlord and Fullers London Pride. **Slepe Hall Hotel** had just one beer Oakham Jester on sale when visited.

At the **Seven Wives**, the landlords have a vision to turn it into a real community hub. The garden will be refurbished to include a cooking area with a pizza oven, a stage for live music and an outside bar. A catering trailer will be located in front of the pub from 6:30 am and a barber shop will open in part of the premises. These are great initiatives to get more of the community using the pub and we at Hunts CAMRA wish them every success.

A visit was made to St Neots before Christmas found some locally brewed beers and some stronger ale. The **Pig N Falcon** was selling several local beers with **Rocket Ales** Maverick and Papworth Crystal Ship on sale. Elland 1872 Porter was also available. Another Papworth beer The Whitfold Citrabortd was coming on next and we were given a taste of this new beer. A visit to the **Olde Sun** found Grainstore 1050, Marston's Old Peculiar and Greene King Abbot on sale.

Also in St Neots, we received a message from Anthea Kenny, manager of the **Weeping Ash**, thanking us for the write up in the winter edition of Opening Times. She added that they have had lots of local CAMRA members return to visit the pub since the article, many of whom have made a point of introducing themselves and complimenting the range of ales. The Weeping Ash will now be a "launch" pub for Wetherspoon's upcoming Ale Festival commencing on the 27 March. This means that they will have all 30 ales over the course

of the festival and not just the 10 that would normally be stocked. We plan to add the list to the pub beer festival section on our website.

A visit was made to several pubs in the west of our branch area early in December. The first stop was at the **Pheasant** in the village of Keyston which sells three real ales, with one or more always from a local brewery. Beers available were Nobbys The Guzzler, Nene Valley Bitter and Adnams Southwold. Along the A14 towards Huntingdon is the **Green Man** in Leighton Bromswold. Previously visited on a branch coach trip earlier in the year the **Green Man** is another pub which sells local ales. This is often from smaller breweries, but on this occasion was it was Young's Bitter (presumably brewed at Marston's in Bedford). Also on sale were Batemans XXXB and their excellent Salem Porter. One of our group, who is a cider drinker, was really pleased when the pub chef gave her a glass of his home made cider which we all thought was really good.

Our next calling point was to the **Mermaid** in Ellington just south of the A14 where two beers are normally on sale. On this occasion these were Greene King Abbot and a beer from Colchester Brewery which was not in the best condition, our group preferring to drink the Greene King beer. A planned visit to the **White Hart** in Great Straughton was cancelled because of it was closed in the early afternoon, so we chose to call in at the **Hare on the Green** in Brampton. The reopening of the former Harrier pub (which had been an Indian restaurant for several years) was reported in our winter edition. The two real ales on sale were Oakham Jester and Sharps Doombar. Bottled beers from nearby Draycott Brewery are also on sale here.

I have been visiting as many pubs as possible during January when some occasional drinkers choose to have a dry month after the Christmas and New Year celebrations. A visit was made to the **King of the Belgians** in Hartford where

a good selection of beers were available. Two were from Adnams, Broadside and Old Ale; alongside these were two beers from London breweries, Fullers London Pride and East London Brewery Foundation. While we were there two of these were replaced. The new beers were Oakham Southern Cross and Wickwar Cotswold Way, both of which were in excellent condition. We also enjoyed some of the ciders from the expanded range now available here (see the Cider News pages for details). The sheer number of CAMRA award certificates adorning one of the walls here is indicative of what a wonderful pub this is!



King of the Belgians

Back in St Ives I enjoyed Peerless Oatmeal Stout at the **Swan & Angel**. This was one of a number of excellent beers available here in January which also included our social secretaries favourite, Titanic Plum Porter, which I have to admit was better than the same beer sampled at another pub in our branch area. On

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the 9 January, a visit from Tim Martin (chairman of JD Wetherspoon) was expected, but it was reported that he didn't arrive, although he did visit The Regal in Cambridge. Grainstore 1050, Cairngorm Black Gold and Adnams Old Ale were the guest beers available. On the same day I visited the **Nelson's Head** which always has a dark beer on offer. On this occasion it was Grainstore Rutland Panther which was on offer at £2.90 a pint. Nene Valley Simple Pleasures was the other guest beer alongside Greene King IPA, Abbot and Old Speckled Hen.



Nelson's Head

On 17 January I visited a number of pubs on the way home from Huntingdon. First stop was at Greene King's **Hartford Mill** which is primarily a restaurant, although there is a small area for drinkers. On my previous visit I was informed that they were going to install a third hand pump. This is now in place and normally there are three real ales available. Greene King IPA and Abbot and a changing beer can be found here, on this occasion this was Greene King (Hardy & Hansons) Rock on with Rudolph. I was informed that there are plans to install a fourth hand pump. Sue the manager informed me that they are hoping to hold a beer festival this year. As soon as I have details they will be placed on our branch website.

In Houghton & Wyton I had a look in at the **Three Jolly Butchers** where on previous visits guest beers from Greene King have been

available. On this occasion there was just IPA and Abbot from Greene King and Sharps Doombar. Unfortunately, the pub was very quiet on this Thursday lunchtime. Along the road is the **Three Horseshoes**; a free house with a much wider and some would say better selection of real ales. These were Greene King IPA, Sharps Doombar, Oakham JHB and Green Jack Mandarina, which was really good, with Lacon's Encore coming on next.



Three Horseshoes, Houghton

Crossing over the River Great Ouse I arrived at **The Cock** in Hemingford Grey. The regular real ales are Adnams Broadside and Brewster's Hophead. A changing guest beer is usually from a local brewery which was Hop Stash (Mosaic & Enigma) 5.0% one of Nene Valley's series of beers brewed with different hops. This was in really good condition. We must say farewell to the pub manager here who is moving on to a new position.

A visit was made to the **Crown Inn** in the picturesque village of Broughton to check the beers on sale at this excellent free house. There were two real ales with Whispering Grass from our local Papworth Brewery alongside Nethergate Stour Valley Gold. The Papworth would be followed by Mad Jack which was in the cellar. The landlord told me that his real ales are always from local breweries. More reports from here are needed to tell whether the pub qualifies for accreditation under our Locale scheme for pubs permanently stocking at least one real ale from a brewery within 30 miles of the pub. The annual beer festival will be held on the late May bank holiday weekend.



Crown Inn, Broughton

As we went to press, we heard that a planning application had been submitted to Huntingdonshire District Council for the conversion of the Grade II listed **King William IV** in Fenstanton to a private house. Whilst there are two other pubs nearby (the **Duchess** and the **Crown & Pipes**), they are of quite different character and we do consider it would be a loss

of a local community facility if the conversion is approved. As a branch, we will be investigating this further and will take the actions we consider most appropriate. Please contact us (news@hunts.camra.org.uk) if you have any opinions on this or any other pub related issue.



King William IV, Fenstanton

Reports collated by Ian Baptist

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IS THERE A BRAMPTON WOOD EFFECT?

Tragedy Number One: In 2002, the Montagu Arms, the only pub in Grafham, closed its doors and the village became yet another to be dry with no pub to support the social needs of the local community.

Tragedy Number Two: In 2004, the Harrier, the only pub at the western end of Brampton village closed, leaving many of the good folk of Brampton with a long walk to the far end of the High Street to get to a pub.

Things were looking bleak if you lived anywhere near these two pubs, which were only 3 miles apart, equidistant from Brampton Wood.

Getting better!

The Hunts CAMRA Branch has been a loyal supporter (via the glasses stand at the Booze on the Ouse festivals) of the Wildlife Trust Hunts Local Group, whose flagship reserve is Brampton Wood. Could this be influencing the Real Ale scene in the area?

In 2009, John Draycott, a regular visitor to Brampton Wood, founded his brewery at his home in Buckden and continues to this day to supply a range of four bottle conditioned beers in full pint bottles to local outlets.



John Draycott

In 2010, a conversation took place between George Cottam (warden of Brampton Wood) and Bob Mitchell (landlord of the **Chequers** in Little Gransden and founder of the Son of Sid Brewery at the pub) about the origin of the pub name **Chequers**. This led to a

collection of berries from the wild service trees in Brampton Wood. These were then added to the mix for a special bottle conditioned beer produced by the Son of Sid brewery in Spring 2011 and named **Chequers** Past.

In late 2018, Roy Endersby (branch pub contact) and I collected another batch of chequers berries from Brampton Wood, so Bob can produce another special beer in Spring 2019. Before hops were used in brewing, most ales had the fruits of wild service trees added to the brew to add flavour and to preserve the beer for longer. Wild service trees have two possible connections to the brewing industry. It is believed that the word service comes from the Latin *cervisia*, meaning beer, as in the branch's logo "floreat cervisia". Secondly, wild service trees were popularly known as chequers trees after their bark pattern and this could well be the origin of the pub name **Chequers**.

Getting better still!

On the 5th October 2018, the Harrier re-opened its doors, with new leaseholders, Christopher and Lucy Hare at the helm. The pub is now named "The Hare on the Green", being directly opposite the picturesque Brampton Green. The building has been completely refurbished and now has a comfortable lounge/restaurant at one side and a public bar at the other, together with an outdoor area. The restaurant serves a varied menu of fresh and locally sourced food. Charlie Keene is the bar manager and both he and Chris are Real Ale fans.



The Hare on the Green

Apart from Doom Bar which is a regular, the pub is specialising in offering a changing variety of local ales. To date, beers from Papworth, Rocket, Oakham and Nethergate have all featured, together with bottled beers from Draycott and bottled Saxby's cider. Chris wants to support local breweries and is looking forward to offering beer from the forthcoming Grafham Brewery. The pub is closed on Mondays, but opens at 8.00 am the rest of the week for breakfast.

On the 21st December 2018, a brand new pub, the Grafham Trout, opened in Grafham (the formal opening was on the 11th January 2019).



Entrance to the Grafham Trout

This is the first community pub created from scratch in our area. It is housed in a new wooden building next to the village hall and community shop, on land offered by the Parish Council at a peppercorn rent. Costing £60,000 to build, money was raised from a share offer to the local people and a £10,000 grant from the A14 Community Fund. As much of the work as possible has been done by local volunteers and there are four local directors of the community company (Kevin Sharp, Chris Brown, John Draycott and Margaret Life.)



Inside the Grafham Trout

There are currently two hand-pumps and on the official opening night, beers from Digfield and Draycott were on sale, with changing local beers planned. No food is on sale, but a pizza van sometimes visits and customers are welcome to bring in their own food. The pub is currently open on Thursday, Friday and Saturday evenings and Saturday and Sunday lunchtimes.

Mon - Closed
Tues - Closed
Wed - Closed
Thurs - 18:00 - 22:00
Fri - 19:00 - 23:00
Sat - 12:00 - 15:00 / 19:00 - 23:00
Sun - 12:00 - 15:00

Opening Times for the Grafham Trout

Hot on the heels of the new pub in Grafham, a brewery is about to open. The Grafham Brewing Company is the brainchild of Paul Robinson, with the 1.8 barrel brewery situated at his house in Breach Road, Grafham. His first beer is in production and is a pale ale named Hodders Panama, which will be available soon. More beers are in development. I am sure that the Hare on the Green and the Grafham Trout will be offering his beers soon. This venture is a big step for Paul, who is a graphic designer, set designer and visualiser by trade. We wish him every success.

Since the demise of the Montagu Arms and the Harrier in 2002 – 2004, when real ale reached its nadir in this area of Hunts, the beer scene has improved – slowly at first and more recently put on a spurt with the establishment of two new breweries, two new pubs and new beers using Brampton Wood ingredients. Could it be that at the current rate, the Brampton/ Grafham/Buckden triangle will replace Burton on Trent as the new centre of British brewing?

George Cottam
(images courtesy of Andy Blagbrough)

ST NEOTS 'BOOZE ON THE OUSE' BEER & CIDER FESTIVAL

Venue

The Priory Centre, Priory Lane, St Neots PE19 2BH - close to the Market Square in the centre of St Neots.

Opening Times

- Thursday 14 March: 11 am – 10.30 pm
- Friday 15 March: 11 am – 10.30 pm
- Saturday 16 March: 11 am – 10.00 pm

The three Six Nations rugby matches will be shown on the TV in the Café Bar area

Families welcome until 8 pm. No entry or re-admission after 10 pm.

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

Real Ales

We hope to serve over the course of the festival around 66 real ales from all over the UK, both from well-established independent breweries and newer, smaller breweries, with a focus on local East Anglian and East Midland breweries. There will also be 6 beers served from Keykegs.

The wide range of beer styles available will cover traditional ales such as milds and bitters, newer styles like hoppy, refreshing golden ales, as well as speciality beers, brewed using ingredients such as wheat, fruit and coffee.

Cider and Perry

A selection of tasty traditional draught cider and perry will be offered sourced from both local and national producers.

Features

Food and Drink

A variety of hot and cold food, together with a selection of snacks will be available at all sessions. Free soft drinks will be available for the designated driver of your party. A selection of wines will also be offered.

Children at the Festival

Whilst lunchtime is the ideal time to bring the family to the festival, we do allow children into the hall up to 8pm in the evening. Under 18s must be accompanied at all times.

CAMRA Stand

Come along and chat to our staff and learn about CAMRA, beer, brewing and pubs. Here you will be able to join CAMRA and we will have a special offer for anyone joining at the festival.

Other Details

The Volunteers

The festival is organised and run by members of CAMRA who are all 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.

Contact Information

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

Also visit our web site for updates - www.hunts.camra.org.uk/festivals.

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. 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.

'Booze on the Ouse' BEER & CIDER FESTIVAL



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SOCIAL SCENES

Among other social events, the Hunts branch of CAMRA organises around four campaigning coach trips each year calling at pubs in parts of our branch not readily accessible for many of our members. We also organise walking tours and occasional trips outside of the branch area, often taking advantage of the rail network. The following articles report on a coach trip from November and our annual Christmas Beer Shopping tour of St Neots.

Campaigning Coach Trip

Well the day dawned and after a fry up to line the stomach, off I walked into St Ives to meet the coach at 10:45. I arrived at 10:30 to find coach already there – WHAT!!! This may bode well for us keeping to schedule throughout the day I thought. After an uneventful drive to Huntingdon to collect more branch members, we headed on to St Neots for the final pickup. The journey from Huntingdon to St Neots was spoilt by a road closure due to the A14 upgrade and Jan our coach driver did a marvellous job of reversing a 49-seater coach until we could find somewhere to turn around!

Anyway, back to the purpose of this campaigning trip – pubs!! First stop was the **Anchor** in Little Paxton and after some confusion caused by the pub having the pump clips reversed on the Plum Porter and Edinburgh Castle, everyone had the drink they wanted.



I asked for Plum Porter just to annoy our social secretary and got an Edinburgh Castle, but was happy with that as it was a typical sweetish and malty Scottish beer. Other beers on offer were the house beer Anchors Away (brewed by Marston's) and Wychwood Hobgoblin.

The next pub was the **Royal Oak** in Hail Weston and the joy of the St Ives people at being first off the coach for once was short lived; the cunning St Neots contingent found the back door of the coach! Adnams Ghostship was my drink of choice here, my only critique was that it was served a bit cold for me. Unfortunately, when instructions for the day were prepared, the beers that would be available on the day weren't known and I managed to lose my own notes!!

Off to the **Eight Bells** at Abbotsley and I thought I'd opt for something not too strong; Greene King IPA which was in good condition and a drinkable pint. The other beer choices were Sharps Doombar and Mauldon's Three Lions. Hardings cider was unavailable, but we were told it will be back in the summer.



Next stop was **Crown and Cushion** in Great Gransden. They had a Papworth Beer on and as one of the brewers was on our trip (branch chairman and magazine editor), I thought I ought to try a Whispering Grass. Very drinkable, but not enough citrus for me as a golden ale (Ed: I agree – try the new beer "The Whitfield Citrabolt"!). However, that's only my personal view (sorry boss!!). It must have been getting close to Christmas though as other choices were Hardy Hanson's Rocking Rudolf alongside Greene King IPA.



The final stop was the **Chequers** in Little Gransden; one of the reasons for the trip as after winning regional pub of the year, it is now one of the final four up for the national pub of the year. Today was the day that Bob and Wendy Mitchell were presented with their awards by Andrea Briers (CAMRA's East Anglia Regional Director) and we were joined by members from other local branches. By this time, I thought I'd better not mix my beers anymore, so stuck with the Son of Sid English Ale. After the award, the pub laid on some nibbles which were eagerly devoured by all present. Other beers available here were Muck Cart Mild, SID, Golden Shower, Brew House Blues and Die Lagerhasses (a cask lager). They also had four ciders and a perry from Barbourne cider on sale.



All too soon, it was time to leave and climb aboard the coach for the journey back. Many thanks to our very social secretary for organising, Hunts CAMRA members for supporting, Jan for driving and the pubs we visited being very accommodating when 49 thirsty drinkers all turned up at the same time.

PS – We were only off schedule by about 30 minutes at the end of the day, which is about the norm! See you on the next trip!

Christmas Beer Shopping

The annual Christmas Beer Shopping in St Neots took place on Sunday 23 December. The festive tour schedule took us around 6 pubs in the town: Barley Mow, Bridge House, Pig N Falcon, the Weeping Ash, Ye Olde Sun and the Ale Taster.

Everyone had a great time and enjoyed a number of festive branded brews as well some of the usual good ales. Festive jumpers and clothing were again encouraged and a few made an appearance. There were even some pubs games! The photos show some memories of the afternoon.





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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.

Award winning pub
for Doom Bar ale.



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The Wheatsheaf offers a fish and chip takeaway
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CIDER SECTION

Cider matters – and Perry too!

Yes, cider and perry do matter - after mead they possibly are the world's oldest alcoholic drink, enjoyed by a large and increasing number of people who are looking for a good quality drink which is an alternative to beer.



Up to 20 years ago there were only a few cider makers in Cambridgeshire with a number of individuals making it for their own consumption. Since then, there has been a blossoming of producers and we are well into double figures. The Huntingdonshire Branch have even had a CAMRA National award winner – Harding's "3 Peace Sweet" from Abbotsley. There is no doubting Cambridgeshire cider can compete against all comers.

Flavour

Being made from dessert apples, the flavour of Cambridgeshire cider is different to those from the West Country where they use apples and pears specifically developed for making cider and perry. In general, the ciders and perries from Cambridgeshire have a sharper, more refreshing taste. They are also lighter in colour.



This article is the first of what is hoped will be a regular feature which celebrates cider & perry as well as imparting information which will encourage people to seek it out and to drink it. Cambridgeshire will be the subject of this edition.

Why Cambridgeshire?

It's generally well known that cider comes from the West Country: the two counties of Herefordshire and Somerset account for more than half of the cider and perry produced in the UK. Fewer people realise that there are other areas with a long history of cider making such as Kent and East Anglia, as both these areas used to supply the bulk of the UK's dessert apples.

Where to buy

Finding local cider is not easy, but the Huntingdonshire Branch website does provide information on local outlets and some pointers are given in the following section. As usual, there will be a wide selection of ciders and perries on offer at our Booze on the Ouse Festival in St Neots (14-16 March). Please come along and try some of them!

Andy Blagbrough

CIDER NEWS

New producer

Just over the border in Bedfordshire, Potton has a new cider producer – ‘Russells’. This is not to be confused with the excellent ‘Potton Press’ cider and perry which is now made in Cambridgeshire. Currently, only the ‘Happy Jack’ bottled cider has been sampled. It was light, refreshing and available from Shumë in St. Neots – if there is any left!

Cider stockists

For a long time, the **King of the Belgians** in Hartford has sold local Cromwell ciders as well as Weston’s Old Rosie. Last year they increased the number of ciders on offer and are selling most of the Cromwell range. Tiny Rebel Protanopia cider from South Wales (actually made by Hogan’s) has been on sale recently. On a visit in early January the ciders on sale here were sampled and it was agreed that they were all really good, especially the Cromwell Last Gasp (dry) and Cromwell Peachy.

The **Nelson’s Head** in St Ives was recently selling the Cromwell Session cider at a reasonable £2.90 a pint. Also in St Ives, the potential sale of the **Oliver Cromwell** could mean that the Cromwell cider will no longer be available, although we are hoping that the new owners will want to keep the tradition going.

Simon of **Simon’s Cider**, one of our local producers based in Cambourne, tells me that

he is looking to get his products into more pubs or other outlets. This can be either bag in box or bottles, or both. Mixed cases of his award winning ciders are available. With a much longer shelf life than real ale, a real cider is definitely something that more pubs should be considering. Many pubs stock Old Mout or Kopperberg and many sell fizzy keg ciders. With the increasing popularity of cider, why not give the real product a try?

If any local free houses are looking to stock a real cider what is better than a local product made within a few miles of the pub. The local Papworth Brewery based in Earith can also supply local cider (currently Potton Press products are in stock) to pubs and clubs in the Huntingdonshire area and beyond. Cider contact details are info@papworthbrewery.co.uk and contact@simonscider.co.uk

Finally, the Huntingdonshire branch Cider Pub of the Year will be announced at the trade session of the St Neots ‘Booze on the Ouse’ Festival on Thursday 14 March. This year there are likely to be three nominated pubs and a framed certificate will be presented to a representative from the winning pub.

Please send any news about local cider to cider@hunts.camra.co.uk

Ian Baptist (Joint Cider Contact for Hunts CAMRA)



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EAST COAST RAIL JOURNEYS - YORK

Reporter: Ian Baptist



In the latest in this regular series, Ian Baptist reports on his visits to York

York is a popular destination on the East Coast main line for both tourists and beer drinkers. It is just over an hour north of Peterborough and is ideal for both a day trip and a longer visit. You may well find this article useful for planning your itinerary for the branch day out in April.

There are numerous historic pubs in York; CAMRA's Whatpub website lists nearly 200. A wide selection of real ales can be found, often including locally brewed ales. I made two trips to York in 2018 and visited some of the best establishments, including many outside the city centre, which are not so crowded with tourists.

There are three breweries which all have onsite tap rooms. York Brewery was founded in 1996 and has grown considerably. In December 2018, the brewery, along with four pubs, was acquired by Black Sheep Brewery, after the parent company (Mitchell's of Lancaster) went into administration. A more recent set up is Brew York, which was launched in 2016 and whose beers can also be found in free houses in the city. Spark York comprises a collection of shipping containers with a number of businesses based in them, one of which is the Cuckoo Brewhouse and taproom that opened earlier in 2018.

When arriving (or departing) by train, visitors should head into the **York Tap**; a Grade A listed Edwardian building with ornate ceiling and Art Deco stained glass windows adjacent to Platform 1. You will find around 18 real ales from all parts of the UK, together with a selection of ciders (mainly flavoured).



The York Tap

On leaving the station, head along Station Road to the **Maltings** on Tanners Moat, just before the river. It is a popular Good Beer Guide (GBG) regular; something of an institution within York's drinking scene. There are usually around eight real ales, featuring Yorkshire breweries and microbreweries across the country. When I visited, the guest cask beers were on the stronger side. I tried Turning Point Swerve Driver IPA 6.0% (unfined) and Signature Nightliner Coffee Porter 5.7%. All were good, although some of the unfined beers may have been more suited to keg or can. A small warning; the Maltings is a cash only establishment.



The Maltings

I then headed along North Street to the **Whippet Inn**; an upmarket dining establishment, but with a small front bar for drinkers. There were three real ales from local

breweries: Ainsty Bantam Best 4.2%, Bad Seed Kiwi 3.8% and Helmsley Howardian Gold 4.2%. All were in good condition.

Micklegate is around the corner with two GBG pubs, **Brigantes** and the **Falcon Tap** (sadly currently closed). First stop was Brigantes, which has nine real ales including some from local breweries (Brass Castle delivered while I was there). It is owned by Market Town Taverns who are associated with Okells Brewery; hence their Pale Ale is a regular in here. I tried the Hawkshead Red 4.2% and Fallen Chew Chew Stout 6.0%. Along the road is the **Artful Dodger** where three real ales are served. On entering the hand-pumps looked unused, but I was directed to the rear of the pub where the real ales are served. Again local beers are the flavour of the day, with Issac Pond All Four Yorkshire Red 4.2%, Hop Studio Vanilla Porter and Yorkshire Hart Rhubarb Dark 3.7% available here.

Just outside the city walls is the **Punch Bowl**, which sells the usual Wetherspoon selection of beers, including a couple of local beers and one or two ciders (Weston's or Thistly Cross). Around the corner on Nunnery Lane is the **Trafalgar Bay Inn** which sells good value Samuel Smiths Old Brewery Bitter. There are four separate rooms and many Victorian features can be seen. Also on Nunnery Lane is the **Victoria Vaults** with two changing beers. Continuing on you arrive at the **Old Ebor** on Drake Street. There are two rooms in this basic 'locals' pub, served by a central bar with John Smiths Bitter alongside a couple of guest beers; on this occasion Bosuns Brewery Unforgotten (commemorating the end of World War One) and Ossett Yorkshire Blond.



The Old Ebor

Continue down Drake Street to the **Angel on the Green** on Bishopsthorpe Road. This modern bar/restaurant is run by enthusiastic staff, with four hand pulls serving regularly changing beers from local breweries. I tried Kirkstall Dexter Chocolate Stout from Leeds. Other beers were Stodfold Pale, North Riding Moteuka and Vocation Pride & Joy. It was busy with both drinkers and diners. I passed the **Swan** on Bishopsgate Street which was York CAMRA Winter pub of the season 2017 with an unspoilt Grade II listed interior. On Clementhorpe is the **Slip Inn** which is an unspoilt local pub with a small front room and a larger back room. There are four regular beers (Leeds Pale, Rat Ratman & Robin, Timothy Taylor Boltmaker and Rudgate Ruby Mild), plus one guest which was Bristol Beer Factory Independence. There was also a guest real cider, Orchard Pig Navelgazer.



The Slip Inn

I stayed at the Travelodge on Piccadilly which is above the **Postern Gate** (Wetherspoons), which is a large modern pub overlooking the River Foss and a staunch supporter of Yorkshire beers. Ales included Saltaire No5, New World and Triple Chocolate Stout, as well as Daleside Blond and R&B. On a visit the following day, Kirkstall Three Swords and Partners Blond had come on. From there, I visited a number of pubs in the south of the city and the first stop was the **Masons Arms** on Fishergate. This Grade II listed and CAMRA Heritage pub was built in 1935 for Tadcaster Tower Brewery. Features include oak panelling from York Castle prison and a fireplace from the castle gatehouse. Three beers Yorkshire beers were offered; Westgate

Brewery Classic Blond, Black Sheep Bitter and Timothy Taylor Landlord.

Not far away on Fawcett Street is the **Sea Horse Hotel** which is another Samuel Smith establishment. There are four rooms in this well cared for unspoilt hotel, with two hand pumps serving Old Brewery Bitter at only £2 a pint. Real fires warmed the pub.



The Sea Horse Hotel

Nearby but not visited is the **Woolpack**, but a short detour was made to the **Victoria** on the corner of Heslington Road and Barbican Road. Owned by Old Mill Brewery, it was serving their range of ales including Traditional Mild.

Not far away is the **Rook & Gaskill** on Lawrence Street which is owned by Castle Rock brewery and is York CAMRA's Pub of the Year 2018 and their Cider Pub of the Year. Named after the last two people to be hanged in York, it is a very popular modernised pub that features a long bar with ten hand pumps and many keg taps, with three boxes of traditional cider on the side of the bar. Castle Rock Harvest Pale was accompanied by ales from Yorkshire and further afield, including Roosters 25th Anniversary Pale, Hawkshead Session and Lincoln Green Quarterstaff.

A large screen showed the beers on offer of which there were 8 real ales and 18 keg beers. Sadly, the keg products were clearly outselling the real ales, despite their higher price! The tastes of the younger generations are changing or perhaps keg products are of a more consistent quality than cask products – it would be interesting for readers to email Opening

Times with their views on this.

The next day I visited a number of pubs inside the city walls. I passed the **Phoenix** in George Street, another CAMRA Heritage pub, which is near Fishergate Bar (not a pub!) on the city walls, but which wasn't yet open. So the first stop was the **Red Lion** on Merchantgate. This has a Rudgate pub sign, but only one of their beers on which was Ruby Mild. For me, this was the one disappointment of the visits to York, with the beer choice being limited. Despite a black board showing several beers, only the mild, Timothy Taylor Landlord and Black Sheep Holy Grail were available. The **Walmgate Ale House** around the corner was recommended, but time did not permit a visit.

Heading further into the centre, I visited the **Blue Bell** on Fossgate; a real unspoilt gem of a pub with a small front Public Bar and a slightly larger rear Smoke Room with a hatch to the bar. This is a Grade II* listed CAMRA Heritage Pub dating from 1798, with the last intact 19th Century pub interior to survive in York. I was told that the brewery wanted to modernise the pub, but the landlady of many years opposed this leaving the pub that we still have today.



The Blue Bell

As for the beers, these were all from Yorkshire breweries. There were four regulars (Bradfield Farmers Blond, Timothy Taylor Landlord, Kelham Island Best Bitter and Rudgate Ruby Mild) and the guests included Brew York Secret Session SIPA and Revolutions/Swoon Chocolate Fudge Milk Stout; both were excellent. There were also four ciders from Weston's.

Across the street and in total contrast is Ossett Breweries **Hop Bar**. This is a modern open plan bar, with four Ossett beers and four guests including Ilkley Tribus Lupulus v3.10 and Salt Jute IPT – the latter from a new brewery in Saltaire set up by Ossett in 2018.

The **Last Drop Inn** on Colliergate is run by York Brewery and was their first pub having been converted from a solicitor's office in 2000. The modern pub narrows towards the rear where the bar is located. A range of real ales included four from York Brewery, plus Wander Peak Ale, Kirkstall Dexter and Fallen Platform C. There were also craft keg beers from Brew York, Verdant and Turning Point and a couple of real ciders.



The Last Drop Inn

Frequented by tourists in the summer months is the **Three Legged Mare** (known locally as the Wonky Donkey) on High Petergate near the Minster. It is a popular York Brewery pub, with three of their beers, plus guest ales and craft keg beers. I went for the guest beers including Brass Castle Rhuberlin 4.0%, a hazy rhubarb Berliner Weiss style beer. My main reason for visiting 'The Donkey' was to try their expanded cider range. They have two sets of racking containing boxes of 25 different ciders (of which only seven were of the flavoured variety) and 2 perries. Unfortunately these didn't include any from local manufacturers, but I did try Harefields Heavenly St Giles 5.8%, Hawkes Urban Orchard Cider 4.5% and Thirsty Farmer Dry.

Nearby is a Leeds Brewery pub, the **Eagle & Child**, which was selling five of their beers

including seasonal beer Doubting Thomas 4.0%. Most Leeds Brewery pubs are now owned by Cameron's and they usually sell at least one of their beers. Cameron Trial Brew 196 Contradiction Lactose Bitter 5.0% was I am told a mis-brew, but it tasted so good that it was put on sale. Two other guest beers were from Treboom and Saltaire. There are several other pubs on High Petergate which are worth visiting, including the **Three Cranes** on St Sampson's Square which has an impressive tiled mural pub sign at the front.



The Three Cranes

On Patrick Pool there are two bars which sell real ale, **Valhalla** and **Pivni** (the latter operated by Tapped Brewery from Sheffield). I visited Valhalla which is a small bar with a Viking theme and sells three beers, including house beers Odin's Judgement Pale 4.0% and Amber 6.0% brewed by Yorkshire Heart. For those whose tippie is mead, three were available. Across the street is Pivni which I didn't visit, but several beers are available here from Tapped brewery and other breweries nationally. Having been unsuccessful in finding a local cider, I popped into the **Henshelwoods Deli** at the corner of Patrick Pool and Newgate which was selling bottles of Ambleforth Abbey Cider, together with local cheeses and other products.

If visiting York on weekdays, many pubs outside the centre don't open until later in the day (often around 4 pm or later) and the central pubs can get very busy with tourists as well as locals. The three brewery tap rooms don't open early in the week. For more information about York pubs, check recent issues of Ouse Boozers on the York CAMRA website or visit the Whatpub website.

BREWERY NEWS

In this section, we will provide updates for breweries operating commercially in our branch area. These are currently Draycott Brewery (Buckden), Papworth Brewery (Earith), Rocket Ales (Great Staughton) and Son of Sid Brewery (Little Gransden). In this issue of Opening Times, we present an update for Papworth Brewery, with the other local breweries to be featured in subsequent issues.

Papworth Brewery Update

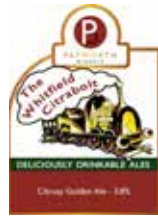
Papworth Brewery was founded in 2014 and was based in a domestic garage in the village of Papworth Everard. The brewery moved to new premises on the Business Park in Earith in 2017 and acquired an 11 barrel plant, significantly increasing its production. The new brewery site is licensed for on and off-sales, with a range of bottle conditioned beers available. Different offers will be available every month. The brewery is open for sales on weekdays from 10 am until 4 pm, but please call (01487 842442) before travelling, as there may be occasions when everyone is away from the brewery. The intention is to open a tap room at the brewery on Fridays and Saturdays later this year.



The Courtyard micropub opened in Papworth Everard in spring 2018 March and sells both cask and bottled conditioned beers from the brewery, often with a guest beer from other breweries.

Over the last few months, three new beers have been added to the regularly available beers. These have made appearances at several beer festivals including the second Papworth Beer Festival, the Peterborough Beer Festival and the Bedford Festival. A festival special "Well Eel'd" appeared at the Ely Beer Festival in January.

Regular brewing of the core range of beers has continued, with new seasonal and one-off brews (including beer festival specials) added to the brewing schedule. The latest beer to launch, with a special event at the Ale Taster in St Neots, was "The Whitfield Citrabolt". It is a single-hopped (Citra) golden ale at 3.8% ABV and was named in honour of a CAMRA member from Edinburgh, Giles Whitfield, who died in December 2017. The beer has been very well received and is likely to be added to the core range.



New beers are in development and both a mild "Mild Thing" and a porter "Pass the Porter" will be available soon. Look out for them in a pub or at a beer festival near you.



Sales of both cask and bottle-conditioned beers increased throughout 2018. New outlets for Papworth beers are actively being sourced and the brewery would be keen to supply local/regional pubs and beer festivals.

To finish, we thought you might like to see a couple of pictures of some happy customers. This time they're not drinking the beers, but they are tucking into the spent grain which comes out of the mash tun during the brewing process. Happy cattle indeed!



**Report by Juliet Ferris,
Papworth Brewery Liaison Officer**

**Images of the cattle courtesy of Matt at
Burleigh Hill Farm, St Ives**

IN OTHER NEWS

Here we present some beer, brewery, pub and CAMRA related news from across the UK.

CAMRA's New Chief Executive and Deputy

Tom Stainer, who has worked for CAMRA since 2006, will become the organisation's Chief Executive. Ken Owst, who joined the Campaign as Chief Support Officer and Company Secretary in 2018 will become its new Deputy Chief Executive.

CAMRA National Chairman Jackie Parker said: "I am delighted that Tom and Ken will be taking up their new roles early in 2019 and am confident they'll provide strong support for our volunteer leadership and lead our dedicated professional team at head office to build on our campaigning successes."

Tom Stainer said: "I've worked for CAMRA for more than a decade so it's an organisation I deeply understand and hold a great affection for. The Campaign is an incredible and unique organisation, entirely as a result of its dedicated and passionate volunteers. My job now is to help our National Executive develop the strategy to continue CAMRA's growth, support our branches and continue to deliver effective campaigning - especially to ensure the Pubs Code is working as intended, to protect pubs from unfair business rates and to ensure tax on beer served in pubs is reduced."

Ken Owst said: "Since arriving at CAMRA it has been apparent that all the CAMRA staff are committed and keen to be as effective as possible in supporting our members to organise great festivals and effective campaigns across the country. We need to make sure our systems and staff continue to develop to their full potential, so they can give the most effective help to our volunteers across the country."

Please join us in welcoming Tom and Ken to their new roles and we wish them every success.

f HUNTS CAMRA

Iron Age Beer Found in Cambridgeshire

The BBC news website recently reported that road workers have discovered what is thought to be the earliest evidence of beer being brewed in Britain. It is believed the find could date back as far as 400BC. Experts found "tell-tale signs of the Iron Age brew" during work on improvements to the A14 between Cambridge and Huntingdon. The fragments were similar to bread, but showed evidence of fermentation and contained larger pieces of cracked grains and bran, but no fine flour. It's well known that ancient populations used the beer-making process to purify water and create a safe source of hydration.

Fuller's Sells Beer Business

It was announced late in January that the London Pride and Dark Star brewer Fuller's is selling all of its beer business to Asahi for £250m. The family owned company is leaving its Chiswick brewery site in West London after almost 175 years to focus on its pubs and hotels.



Under the deal, the family run will sell the production and distribution of its beers to the European arm of the Japanese brewer, which already owns Meantime in the UK. The sale includes the historic Griffin Brewery in Chiswick, where the company was founded in 1845. Fuller's says the deal will allow it to concentrate on its pubs and hotels which generate 87 per cent of its profits.

The deal means London Pride and Dark Star Hophead, lager brand Frontier, as well as Cornish Orchards cider and soft drinks will join Asahi Super Dry, Peroni Nastro Azzurro and Meantime under Asahi Europe ownership.



Asahi-Europe boss Hector Gorosabel said: "Asahi Europe has already established a leading presence in the premium beer category. Welcoming these brands and operations to our business will further consolidate that position, enabling us to even better serve our customers and consumers."

"At the same time, our global footprint will enable us to unlock the potential in these brands internationally to significantly enhance their scale and value. It is another step towards realising Asahi Europe's vision of becoming a global brewing powerhouse built on our commitment to brewing excellence and quality."

CAMRA has raised concerns about the takeover and its consumer implications on choice and beer quality. CAMRA chairman Jackie Parker said: "CAMRA is always concerned about any consolidation in the brewing industry as it could result in a reduction in choice, value for money and quality for beer drinkers. We're also wary of one company increasingly controlling a larger and larger share of the market, which is seldom beneficial for consumers".

"Fuller's has been a family brewer in Britain for more than a hundred years, and it's a very sad day to see such a well-known, historic and respected name exit the brewing business. It would be very disappointing to see the character of Fuller's beers change as a result of the deal. While the Fuller's family has stressed it has sought to protect the heritage of the Griffin Brewery, we'd call on the new owners to pledge to continue brewing operations at the Chiswick site as well as show a commitment to not only continuing cask beer production, but to preserve the full range of Fuller's, Dark Star and Gale's beers."

Despite this, some commentators have suggested that the investment by Asahi is a massive vote of confidence in the UK real ale market. Beer blogger Martin Cornell wrote "Nobody bungs a quarter billion big ones at a business unless they think that business has a future and they're going to get a decent return on their money. Fans of cask ale and Fuller's beers should be cheering until the pint glasses rattle on the shelves at the confidence Asahi is showing in the sector."

Only time will tell how things work out, but it's likely that we'll still be seeing London Pride and other Fuller's beers on the bar in a number of pubs in the Huntingdonshire area for some years to come.

And finally ...



The Independent reported that Carlsberg, one of the world's biggest breweries, has taken a major step to combat the pollution choking the world's oceans by eradicating the plastic rings used in six packs of beer. Long viewed as a hazard, as evidenced by harrowing images of birds and turtles tangled in them, the rings have been replaced with tiny dots of glue binding the cans together.

Can anyone else think of another way to eradicate the use of such rings? And perhaps get a little more taste in your beer? Yes that's right; just head down to your local and sample some of the excellent real ales on offer there!

Reports collated by Richard Harrison

HUNTS CAMRA SOCIAL DIARY

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

Mon 25 Feb, 8:30 pm

Branch Meeting, **Falcon**, Huntingdon

The focus of this meeting will be on finalising the Good Beer Guide entries and Pub Awards. All members are welcome to attend and participate.

Thu 14 – Sat 16 Mar

St Neots 'Booze on the Ouse' Beer and Cider Festival,

The Priory Centre, Priory Lane, St Neots.

Sat 23 Mar, 2 pm

Post Festival Social in St Neots

Venue to be confirmed.

Sat 13 Apr, all day

Branch Train Trip to York

Times and other details to be confirmed

Sat 18 May, 2 pm

Hunts Branch Annual General Meeting (AGM)

Falcon, Huntingdon

All branch members are encouraged to attend the AGM which is expected to take about an hour and will be followed by a social

Sat 15 Jun

Coach Trip with details to follow

The trip will be subsidised for the volunteers at St Neots Beer Festival

Opening Times

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Please contact:

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

Deadlines

CAMRA

St Neots Beer Festival Programme: 28th Feb
Summer Edition: 1st May

THINKLOCAL

April issue: Monday 18th March
May issue: Monday 15th April

Opening times

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