

ale

Cambridge & District Branch Newsletter

Issue 359

Winter 2012



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Pub News

As per usual we'll begin with the nasty stuff.

I hope that the full (lack of) power of the City Council's new rules to protect our pubs from demolition isn't reflected in the recent demolitions of **The Dog and Pheasant**, Chesterton, and **The Greyhound**, Coldhams lane. To be frank, the fact that a recent application to demolish the **Rosemary Branch**, Coldhams Lane, looks set to go through, and an appeal against the refusal for demolition of **The Penny Ferry**, Chesterton, is pending, would suggest the new rules aren't up to much.

Reports that **The Bird (in Hand)**, Newmarket Road, might be saved seems to have been premature as I'm told it is set to become a Chinese restaurant. Continuing the fashion for changing pubs into restaurants, my correspondents tell me that **The Three Tuns** at Willingham is now an Indian restaurant, and that the conversion of **The White Horse**, Pampisford, should the application be approved, will increase the number of Chinese food outlets in the Sawston and Pampisford area to four.

Meanwhile, the on line petition to save **The Flying Pig**, Hill's Road, from demolition is gathering pace. The number of signatures is now nearing 2,000, but 5,000 should be easily achievable. If every member of CAMRA Cambridge branch were to sign it would add 3500 to the total. Go to www.change.org/petitions/cambridge-city-council-to-refuse-conservation-area-consent-to-demolish-the-flying-pig-public-house and help try to save this city gem.

The White Horse, Conington is up for sale. It carries a 265,000 pounds price tag.

Branch Diary

January 2013

Don't forget that all Branch members are very welcome to attend the monthly business meetings. Those upcoming are (all 8pm)

Sat 5-Jan-2013 : 1:00, Branch GBG Selection Meeting, St Radegund, King Street

Tue 8-Jan-2013 : 8:00, Open Branch Meeting, Live & Let Live, Mawson Road

Thu 17-Jan-2013 - Sat 19-Jan-2013 : 17th Cambridge Winter Ale Festival, University Social Club, Mill Lane

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Pub News Continued...

And from our correspondents:

The Alexandra Arms, Gwydir Street, has



re-opened with much deserved aplomb. This is a Greene King pub, but four of

the eight beers on offer are free of tie. The awful, modern bistro bar look has been replaced with a comfortable "Local pub" interior.

Craig, the manager, who also looks after **The Free Press**, Prospect Row, has promised to make several family friendly improvements to the pub, including the introduction of a children's entertainment garden. Imitating The Free Press, beer is served in lined glasses so customers are assured of receiving a full pint.

The Earl of Beaconsfield, Mill Road, has installed a 4th hand pump. Rumour has it that this will offer one real ale free of Punch tie. **The First and Last**, Melbourne Place, has now been taken under the wing of Mark Mosely of the 'Simply Thai Food' chain. Six real ales are available and Lee



Havers is staying on as manger .



The Jolly Scholar, King St, has been bought by the owners of The Mill, Mill lane, and is set to re

-open, complete with microbrewery, as **The Cambridge Brewshed** in late January.

The Mill has announced its own beer festival featuring strong ales and a special



cheese board running from 22nd to 28th January, with a 'Meet the Brewer

Evening' featuring Joe Kennedy from Black-Bar brewery on the 26th .



Congratulations, to **The Portland Arms**, Chesterton Road, on the opening of their new gig room. It is a very professional set up, which will surely make the pub one of the premier small entertainment venues in the city.

A continuing rise in real ale sales in **The Maypole**, Park Street, has justified an increase in the number of pumps serving ale



to 16, up from 8. The front bar now concentrates on stronger and unusual ales whilst the

session beers can be found in the rear bar.

Well done to **The Granta**, Newnham Road, for their effort and the success of their first ever beer festival held in November; and another Greene King pub, **The Bath House Hotel**, Ben'et St, is to lose manager Veru, who is moving to London. Whoever takes over faces an uphill task if the brewery con-

tinues to treat the pub as the poor relation to **The Eagle**, (Ben'et St.).

Further a field, **The Green Man**, Grantchester has sent us dates for their 2013 beer festivals. 4 in total, the first runs from 29th



March to the 1st April.

I recently enjoyed a very good pint of Timmy Taylors Landlord (4.3%) in **The Blue Ball**, which is another pub in Grantchester well worth a visit.

Terri and Jethro of The Cambridge Blue, Gwydir St, have taken on the lease of **The Longbow**, Stapleford. The pub will be



re named The Three Horseshoes, and if the Cambridge Blue is anything to go by it promises to become the real ale Mecca the area really needs.

The Three Horseshoes, Comberton is temporarily closed, no reason given as yet.

I've had several excellent reports about **The Crown**, Linton, and not only because they offer a 10% discount to CAMRA members



on production of a membership card. One correspondent describes it as a "haven for real ale" in a "country pub atmosphere". Unfortunately, ALE 359 will be published after their Winter Beer festival

on 7,8,9 December.

Another correspondent reports that in **The Pear Tree**, Hildersham, Sholto is consistently coming up with good quality ale – Church End Vicars Ruin (4.4%), a light



hoppy bitter, on the last visit. An area of the garden has been

given over to some fashionable decking and patio furniture, augmented by a curious boat full of pot plants. A newly installed wood burner helps to ward off the winter cold. Spirits continue to be dispensed with a measure rather than optics and include the Dr J's range from Dullingham.



In **The Fox**, Burwell, Bob and Louise Taylor have just past the magical figure of 1,000 different ales served

in their time at the pub.

Realising the needs of the community, **The Chestnut**



Tree, West Wrattling, now doubles as a library and a prescription collection/drop-off point.



The Carpenters Arms, Great Wilbraham, is now home to **The Crafty Brew-**

Pub News Continued...

ery. This home-brew pub is a long-overdue addition to the Cambridgeshire brewing scene. The brewer, Robert Beardsmore, a local man fresh from the wine trade, is producing the pub's first beer, Carpenters Cask (4.1) a tawny bitter, ready for the Christmas period.



Good News in Sawston, where **The Black Bull** has re-opened as a pub, whilst still accommodating a Chi-

nese take away business.

Even better news in Willingham where a new micro pub, **The Bank**, promises to challenge **The St Radegund**, King Street Cambridge, for the title of smallest pub in the Cambridge CAMRA district.

Congratulations to The Horningsea Community Interest Company who have just



been awarded £46,500 from The Big Lottery Fund. The money will

enable them to ensure that **The Plough and Fleece**, Horningsea continues to serve the needs of the whole community.

Welcome to Mark and Sandy, who have



taken over the **The Boot**, Dullingham. It is unclear at the moment whether or

not they are retaining The Bull, Burrough Green – more news in the next issue

And finally, I'd like to thank those correspondents who noted my geographical blooper in ALE 358. **The Tickell Arms** is indeed in Whittlesford, not in Willingham as reported.

Will Smith

Correspondents: Clive Coole, Carl Woolf, Matthias Miller, Paul Treadaway, Ali Cook, Ian Kitching, Michael Martin

Keep in Touch

Up to date news and pub talk is available on the Cambridge CAMRA Facebook site: www.facebook.com/CambridgeCamra or keep up with events on Twitter: twitter.com/CambridgeCAMRA

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Heart(s) of the Community:

Situated just north of Cambridge and nestled in a corner of the junction between the busy A10, and even busier A14 it is easy to drive by and forget that the village of Milton exists. There is no doubt that the South end of the village, where the tranquility of Milton Country Park is juxtaposed to the hustle and bustle of a large supermarket is the most visited area of the village. Venture northwards however, and you discover that Milton is more than just the collection of housing estates that raised the population from around 2000 to over 4000 in the 10 years between 1981 and 1991. It is a village with a real sense of community. Nowhere better is this reflected than in the four pubs that now serve the community, all thriving, and each serving the community in their own way.

All four pubs are visible from the High Street though only two, **The White Horse** and **The Lion and Lamb**, both Grade II listed, are actually situated on the road.

The **Waggon and Horses** and the third Grade II listed pub, The **Jolly Brewers** are set back off the road towards the north of the village.

My first visit was to **The White Horse**. I'd read some good reviews about this pub, especially the quality of the beer and of the food. There are three rooms, two very large rooms either side of the bar serve as a pub-



lic bar, complete with pool table and bar billiards, and a lounge. The lounge has been extended to make a large dining area. The third room, set to one side of the lounge is used as a meeting room, or to accommodate large dinner parties. It was a Saturday afternoon and I chanced upon landlady, Ava in conversation with a handful of regular customers seated around the bar. She and her husband Alan are passionate about the food and drink they offer and believe that the way to maintain customer loyalty is to combine quality with good value.

There were four beers on offer, Adnams Southwold Bitter (3.7%), Sharp's Doom Bar (4%), Oldershaw's Heavenly Blonde (3.8%), and Adnams Broadside. I opted for the Heavenly Blonde. It is a light refreshing beer with grapefruit and citrus overtones. It is well kept, the right temperature – cool but not cold - and I liked it.

The White Horse is an Enterprise tied pub,



and the couple regret not being able to introduce Locale such as Milton Brewery and Cambridge Moonshine. They try to compensate by supplying as many SIBA rated beers as they can.

Ava explained that they pay a premium for these beers, which hits their profit margin, as they do not pass that cost on to their customers. This sacrifice seems to have paid off as Ava reported that sales of real ale have rocketed, with York Brewery Guzzler (3.6%) being their most popular regular beer.

Milton

Ava is a big fan of real cider; especially after discovering Pickled Pig during the beer festival they held back in September. Unfortunately, Pickled Pig products aren't on the Enterprise cider list –Weston's Old Rosie, however is and will be on sale over the Christmas period.

As you would expect, food is also an important part of the business. Their son is the chef, and food sales have been so successful that they have recently taken on a junior chef to help out. The menu ranges between nourishing pub grub such as steak and ale pie and more exotic "specials". The Indonesian, Penang Curry is very popular. All food is locally sourced, and Ava was very keen for me to report that the pub had just received a 5 star elite award for kitchen hygiene from the Council.

The White Horse is a children and dog friendly pub. Look out for the balti and quiz night, which is very popular on Thursdays, and there is likely to be another beer festival next summer.

Just a little further northwards and across the road and I entered another Enterprise Pub, **The Lion and Lamb**. A quick glance in passing and you are under no illusion that this is not a very different pub to the others in the village. A banner sprawled across the Grade II listed building proudly offers SKY SPORTS 3D. The magnificently decorated Christmas tree in the car park is almost but not quite gaudy, and the clean lines of painted timber and paint washed walls, give the pub a feel of professionalism and enterprise. You feel that the landlord has targeted his customer range and it doesn't include real ale drinkers.

Imagine my surprise, then, when I walked in to find not one but three hand pumps dispensing Adnams Southwold bitter (3.7%),



Fuller's London Pride(4.1%), and Shepherd Neame Spitfire(4.5%). Landlord Lawrence is honest about his customer base, "We sell more lager than anything," he told me. But as I sip my half pint of Southwold bitter I can tell he also knows a thing or two about keeping ale.

He and wife Sally took over The Lion and Lamb around six years ago after selling up their stake in the celebrated foodie pub, The Pink Geranium, Melbourn, and together have managed to create a real sense of bustle in a pub that caters for both elder and younger age groups. The couple sponsor the local football team; they have recently serve mulled wine and soup to local carol singers and have played a part in helping to organise the village street party.

It has to be said that the TV's, two of them hung in the long comfortable bar area, are



more than evident. Groups of customers were watching the football results on a Saturday afternoon as I slipped by them to sit in the quieter dining room. It was only 5 o'clock so the only people in this room were Bev, the bar manager and myself. She kindly volunteered further information. Food is very im-

Heart(s) of the Community: Milton ... continued

portant here and is sourced from local providers. The award winning sausages are from Cambridge Quality Meats, Arbury Road, the vegetables from East Anglian farms. The Sunday roasts and the 8oz burgers are very popular. Food is all prepared in the pub kitchen. There is an outdoor TV area with a heated patio used mainly in the summer...

In a short time I was joined by Lawrence, who was keen to tell me about the success of the beer festival they had held back in June. With the help of Milton Brewery he and Sally had managed to present 25 different ales, all in good condition. He was especially proud of the festival glasses the logo for which had been designed by Sally.

This festival had been so successful they would be repeating the experience in May 2013.

I left feeling that perhaps The Lion and Lamb isn't just a lager pub after all.

Further along the High Street and then looking left I came across **The Waggon and Horses**. This is an Elgood's pub, previously run by CAMRA stalwart and ex chair, Nick Winnington, who retired earlier this year. It has been taken over by new tenants, David and Louise who have spent the last few months taking the pub right back to its 1930's origins. The dark and dusty bar area once cluttered with dried hops and hats has

been replaced with a 1930's country kitchen look, complete with a tiled mantelpiece and coal fire. To be honest, at the time of my visit it looked a little minimalist, but it is a work in progress and the changes the couple plan to make, including complete refurbishment of the back bar, will in future, I'm sure, create an authentic 30's atmosphere. This pub offers the largest number of real ales of any pub in the village. On my visit, three were from the Everard range: E.P. (4.3%), Cambridge Bitter (3.8%) and Black Dog Mild (3.6%). and two guests were both Mauldon seasonal ales, Blackberry Porter (4.8%) and Dickens (4%).



I opted for the Blackberry Porter, a dark beer, with more than a hint of malt and an overwhelming taste of blackberries. It was nicely kept but a little sweet for my taste. I noted that both Duvell and Birra Morretti are available on tap for discerning keg beer drinkers. In common with other Milton pubs, David, Louise and their chef, Robert place a high value on food sales. All food is locally sourced and freshly made on the premises, and Robert is happy to tailor make meals to customer requirements.

The Waggon and Horses is very much a going through a transitional period. I look forward to returning in a few months time to see how successful the transition has been.



Leaving the Waggon and looking across the high street I soon spotted the fourth and final pub on my short tour.



The Jolly Brewers is a chocolate box picture of a pub, set just off the road and fronted by a wooden seated garden. Having remained closed for two years the pub was saved by a group of 8 businessmen who wanted to keep their village local and it re-opened in May this year.

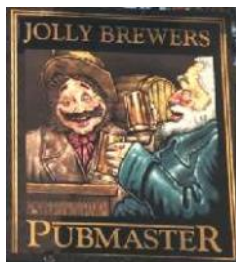
I met Ady Hill, one of the shareholders, and landlady Caroline over a pint of Milton Pegasus early one Wednesday evening. The Jolly Brewers is a free house and is the only source of LocAles – ales from local breweries - in the village.

I left the Jolly Brewers, as indeed I did every pub on this mini tour, feeling that I would be happy to return

There are four pumps and the beers available were Greene King IPA (3.7%), Greene King Golden Hen (4.1%), Fellows, Full English (3.8%) and their regular Locale, Milton Pegasus. (4.1%) The latter, which won a bronze certificate in the CAMRA Champion Beer Of Britain Awards 2012 is, I think, my favourite of the beers Milton produces. Complex, lightly hopped with a malt finish. This was a good example, and I sipped as Ady told me of all the work that had gone into bringing the pub up to the standard

they required. It took 9 months of solid work to complete the interior alone. "We thought that if we were going to take this on, we would make sure we do it well," he said. And that philosophy seems to have paid off.

From the small crowded, but comfortable public bar to the leather seats and oak tables in the separate dining area, there is a professional finish to the pub. The décor is



uncluttered but not cold. The dining area is especially pleasant and I note that most of the dozen or so tables have reserved signs on them. Caroline is proud of their food, which she told

me has "no airs and graces, it's just decent food". Signature dishes include Pot Roasted Beef Brisket and Confit of Pork Belly, but less sophisticated menu items such as Fish and Chips, and Steak and Ale Pie are also available.

The management team is keen to make sure that the pub appeals to local villagers so they try to listen to what their customers want. The TV in the small bar is there because the regulars asked for it. When I return, early on the Saturday evening, there is a gentle hum of chatter as a crowd of locals are gathered around watching the sports channel.

As well as good dining and LocAle, The Jolly Scholars also has the advantage of being able to offer accommodation. As part of the refurbishment work, the pub stables were converted into 4 separate bedrooms each fitted with an ensuite bathroom, decorated in the same simple but professional standard as the main bar areas.

I left the Jolly Brewers, as indeed I did every pub on this mini tour, feeling that I would be happy to return.

Destination: Norwich

Another page from the diary of our Real Ale Explorer, Matthias Miller

Norwich is dubbed The City of Ale and now has 15 entries in the Good Beer Guide (2013), making it the perfect destination for anyone seeking real ale. We chose 5 pubs from the good beer guide to visit on this trip, all situated close to the heart of the city and within easy walking distance from each other. This was the following day after our Friday night session at the Norwich beer festival (we'll print this at a later date – Ed) so we were in need of a bit of a pick me up...

Date: 03.11.2012 after noon

Nice crisp Saturday afternoon, **The Murderers /Gardeners Arms** on Timber Hill is our first port of call. Busy place and full of drinkers.



The wooden bar is on the right as we go in. It stretches to the rear of the pub. Opposite the bar are 3 semi-

separate drinking areas that are worth a look with aging wooden beams and a cosy fire.

Plenty of staff working and we are quickly served.

At least 9 real ales are available including Woodforde's City (4.1%) and Wherry (3.8%), Buffy's Norwegian Blue (4.2%), Newby Wyke Brewery Treason (4.2%), Growler Brewery G.B. Growler Bitter (3.9%) and one "brewed especially for the pub" Murderers Ale. These are all on sale in at the lower level bar we worked out must be

the Gardeners Arms*. Up the stairs (in the Murderers *) there is a beer festival with beer served straight from barrels through a small hatch in the wall.

Round the corner from this is an area for diners. We tuck into a few fresh and tasty beers from the beer festival. Humpty Dumpty Porter (5.4%) is proclaimed to be the favourite.

Our second stop is **The Vine** on Dove Street. (We actually don't spot this pub when we first walk down the street and have to resort to GPS to find it. It's at No.7



for the record). It's a small Thai restaurant. We enter and receive a warm welcome. The first question being, "are

you here for food or for drinkers". Four pumps at the bar, with 3 beers available. These are Woodforde's Norfolk Nog (4.6%), Oakham JHB (3.6%), and a third beer called "Genesis," brewery unknown. We settle for the Nog, a top dark beer that slips down very nicely. The upstairs area is the main dining area. The downstairs caters for both drinkers and diners, and is very welcoming though we all agree that the smell of Thai food could be off-putting for people only after a drink. The staff are friendly and happy to talk about their beers, food and any local gossip.

Our third stop is **The Plough**, at St Benedict's. Two level bar inside, wooden floor throughout and candle lit. There are 11



beers available 7 of them from the Grain brewery. The range of beers stretches from sweet to bitter, including blonde, pale ale through to black stouts and porters. There is also a "Winter Spice" ale. Should be a beer here to suit everyone, I say.

I first try for the Grain, Blackwood Stout (5%) and it's a cracking pint. The Grain Porter ((5.2%)) is also declared to be perfect pint, fresh with substantial aroma and taste. The beers here is so good we just have to have another round. This time I go for the Grain Redwood (4.6%) and this also goes down nicely.

Next **The White Lion**, Oak Street. We enter the pub through the left hand door and are facing 7 real ales and 18 ciders and Perrys. We are told that the Nero Stout (5%) from Milton brewery is the top seller here, so I



opt for a pint of that. Many of the real ales are from the Milton brewery. Bar staff are very knowledgeable about all their beers and they are happy to offer customers a try before you buy service. Not surprisingly,

this pub won the 2012 CAMRA cider pub of the year award for East Anglia. It's a fairly large pub with 3 rooms, one of which has a bar billiards table in it. Food is served until 9pm, so we opt for a bowl of chips (with homemade mayonnaise) to help the go beer down.

Not ones to pass an open pub, we call in to **The King's Head**, Magdalen Street, on the way back to the train station. This pub initially appears to be very small. When we enter it from the main road we encounter a small front room and a tiny bar, but we then



step through a doorway into impressive large rear room with a second larger bar that accommodates most of the pumps. An iron girder supports the ceiling across the middle of the rear room, presumably where a divide in the room once split it into two smaller ones. 8 beers are available including a dark mild, which is just what we need. Beer is served in oversized pint glasses to ensure that as a minimum we get at least a pint of beer (usually more) in every glass.

Matthias Miller

The Gardeners Arms was, in fact, given the gruesome nickname of the Murderers in 1895 after a former landlady's daughter, Millie, was murdered by her estranged husband allegedly with a hammer from a local brewery. The death sentence was commuted to one of life imprisonment due to the mitigating circumstance of "extreme provocation" (Ed.)

CAMRA Good Beer Guide 2014: The short list

As you can imagine it is a mammoth task collecting nominations, reviewing pubs, collating information, and finally writing the CAMRA Good Beer Guide. The whole process takes over a year, so it will come as no surprise that we have already started the process of finding the deserving pubs we would like to include the 2014 edition

Throughout 2012 branch members have been telling us of the pubs in our area they think should be in the guide. We have reviewed those recommendations and have come up with the short short list of 45pubs listed below. There are actually 260 pubs in our area, so to get to this stage this alone has been a difficult task.

Over the next month we will be taking online votes from CAMRA members. Please go to www.cambridge-camra.org.uk/gbgvote.php.

Barton: Hoops; **Burwell:** Fox; **Cambridge:** Cambridge Blue, Carlton Arms, Castle Inn, Champion of the Thames, Clarendon Arms, Devonshire Arms, Dobblers Inn, Elm Tree, Empress, Flying Pig, Free Press, Geldart, Green Dragon, Hopbine, Kingston Arms, Live & Let Live, Maypole, Mill, Pickerel, Radegund, Tivoli, Wrestlers, **Dullingham:** Boot; **Fulbourn:** Six Bells; **Girton:** George;

For votes to be registered a correct membership number must be supplied in the appropriate box. The password is your post-code. This is case sensitive.

A final, paper vote will take place at 1.00pm on 5th January 2013, in The St Radegund, King Street, Cambridge. Again, an up to date membership card must be produced before a vote will be registered.

Take a look at the list below and register your opinion. One stipulation is that you must have visited the pub within the last 6 months to be eligible to vote

If you aren't a member we'd still like to hear your views. Visit our Facebook and Twitter pages and let us know what you think.

www.facebook.com/CambridgeCamra
twitter.com/CambridgeCAMRA

Grantchester: Blue Ball Inn, Green Man; **Great Abington:** Three Tuns; **Hildersham:** Pear Tree; **Histon:** Boot Inn, Red Lion; **Linton:** Crown Inn; **Newton:** Queen's Head; **Quy:** White Swan; **Rampton:** Black Horse; **Stow-cum-Quy:** White Swan; **Swavesey:** White Horse; **Waterbeach:** Sun Inn; **West Wratting:** Chestnut Tree; **Whittlesford:** Bees in the Wall; **Woodditton:** Three Blackbirds;

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Cambridge CAMRA Winter Ale Festival

University Social Club, 17th – 19th January 2013



A Greeting from the Winter Ale Festival
Organiser Winter is here...

Spurred on by the amazing turn out of last year's Winter Ale Festival I have been allowed to organise another one (Hurrah) so obviously it has to be bigger and better! Well bigger is difficult with the same venue of the University Social Club but better is easier to aim for, and aim we most definitely have!

So what have we got planned so far for you lovely people? For starters we have worked hard to equal, if not better, our amazing beer and cider selection from last year with added perks for everyone. We have organised a special appearance of the welsh Black Dragon cider, a Milton brewery special, and a few more key kegs to add to our foreign beer bar as well as lots of beers making their first appearance at a Cambridge festival.

That isn't all though of course! Last year I told you we wanted to promote the atmosphere as well as the beer and so this year the message is the same but with an added twist. The atmosphere last year was amazing and I want to personally thank all those who made it possible, staff and you lovely drinkers alike, but now I have a challenge for you. This year I want to promote Real

Ale to those that don't think it is the right taste for them. We are having a brilliant collection of Porters at the Winter Ale Festival, which we are hoping to tempt people to try and love. Porters are a dark spicy, slightly chocolaty flavoured beer that are often over looked but in my opinion are especially tailored to people who don't usually like the bitter flavour of beer. Basically I am pushing to see more lovely ladies at my beer festival to enjoy the aspects that I, and my deputy organiser especially, do...I mean chocolaty flavoured beer!

Finally as a special treat for those of you who join us every year we are creating a series of collectible logos on our festival glasses, this year will be the first of a five piece collection finishing with the 21st Winter Ale festival in 2017.

So come on down to the University Social Club between the 17th and 19th January and join me for a porter and a chat, and if you weren't there last year maybe a good excuse!

Nicola Evans-Bailey

Winter Ale Festival

University Social Club
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Fri 12-3pm

5-10.30pm

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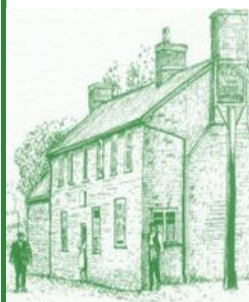
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TWO Writers TWO Pubs

Every couple of months ALE asks two contributors to review two different pubs.

This month Fred Laband visits **The Five Bells** at Burwell, whilst Will Smith travels out to **The Ickleton Lion** ...

DON'T PANIC!!

Fred Laband discovers a pub that is reinventing itself.



On the recommendation of a fellow ALE magazine correspondent, I decide to take my vegetarian friend for a treat. It has been a long week and we all deserve it. Let's go to the pub. Well, it is a pub and it isn't...

It is quite a mild evening and The Five Bells in Burwell is brilliantly lit. It is inviting and the welcome is warm. There are 3 parts to this pub. On the right is the drinkers' bar, with Sky Sports. In the middle is the lounge and on the left is the main eatery. We hedge our bets and go middle. Fay has a large Pinot Grigio (13.5%), Keith asks for a lager I have never encountered by the name of Staropramen (Czech, 4.8%) and Nicola, who is kindly the driver, has Diet Coke (0%). Keith's lager is frothy and is served in a tall bell shaped glass. Keith becomes nostalgic and he explains how the tulip shaped rim delivers aroma to the nose.

The hand pumps deliver Greene King IPA (3.6%) and guest Brain's Merlin's Oak (4.3%) from South Wales. I opt for St Ed-

munds (4.2%) and must say that this is as good a pint as I have had in a while; zesty, crisp and quenching.

We are ushered to our table which garners a giant red wooden R. Only I decipher that this signifies that we reserved our table. There is no paper menu. The choices, most between £8 and £10, are on slates dangling from the wall. The men both opt for steak and ale pie. Fay, the non-meat-eater, salivates at the prospect of roasted butternut squash and dolcelatte tart. This, we are told, is made by the landlord's wife who is also a vegetarian. Nicola finds it impossible to look beyond gammon, egg and chips.

The food takes a while, but we are not in a hurry. I go to the bar for further drinks, this time taking a pint of the Merlin's Oak (4.3%). It is rich and treacly and deeply satisfying. I get chatting to Stephen, the landlord, who tells me that if I had come yesterday, I could have had Timothy Taylor Landlord (4.3%) which apparently sold out in record time! In times where pubs are closing all around us, Stephen has brought about many changes at the Five Bells. In his first 6 months, food has become more important, with an increasing reputation for vegetarian fare. In the daytime, the lounge becomes a café where teas, cakes and light meals are available. Stephen has tremendous plans for the barn area to the rear of the pub, where conversions are well under way to make a function room and wait for it...a CINEMA! Early as 2013 we should be able to go for a pint and a movie! This is courageous and will no doubt involve some investment. I have no doubt that this pub is reinventing itself and could prove a blueprint for others...

We could talk more, but the food is here. The gravy is as dark as tar, and pours like it too. The piecrust is very buttery and there are large chunks of beef. Fay's tart looks wonderful, but I am alarmed when she steals a brussel sprout from Keith's plate. For some reason, I thought that a vegetar-

ian would not go for sprouts?! She informed me that the vegetables were al dente; I must agree that they were on the firm side. We all liked them though. Nicola's gammon was very attractive, the egg had lovely runny yolk and the side salad was colourful.

Of the half dozen or so desserts, I go for bread and butter pudding, while Fay, Keith and Nicola conspire to order 3 brownies. I find mine rich and steaming, but ultimately my portion is over generous! The brownies are a moist and rich chocolate hit with outstanding Cornish ice cream.

Suitably filled, Keith relaxes and remarks how lovely the furniture is. Indeed, this could make an entire article in itself. Our host Stephen tells us that the "settle" hails from Romford and it was an absolute bargain. If you need quirky furniture, then Stephen knows where to go!

The Five Bells has plans for a beer festival in early 2013. Clearly, not all pubs are in a downward fight against destiny, so in the words of Corporal Jones, "DON'T PANIC!"

Warm Beer

Grumpy Landlord

Cold Food

If you don't believe me come in and find out



This challenge, chalked on a blackboard by the entrance of to The Ickleton Lion, could not be further from the truth. The fact that

they feel able to poke fun at themselves in this way is perhaps indicative of the confidence and success that tenants Chris and Mirela currently enjoy.

The 300-year-old roadside building is a joy to the traveller's eye. On a winters day I would recommend first entering through the roadside doorway into the tiny snug where blazing log fire awaits. Turn right into the low ceilinged, half-timber panelled seating area and then to the rear of the pub, where a small bar appears to be constantly populated by regular customers.



The welcome is warm and the beer is cold – perhaps a little too cold, but then this is a Greene King tied pub that has won both Cask Marque, and the coveted (by Greene King tenants) Head Brewers awards. I've noted that the judges for these awards would appear to like their beer cold.

The ubiquitous Greene King IPA (3.6%) is on offer, but fortunately so are three other beers, two from the Greene King list (Old Trip and St Edmunds) and one guest beer St Austell, Proper Job (5.5%), I opt for the latter and am not disappointed.

Based on a 19th century recipe, Proper Job was awarded Gold by the Society of Independent Brewers (SIBA) in their National Beer Competition 2010, and I can tell why. It is a refreshing dark golden beer, full of citrus, with a hint of pineapple, the dry hoppy finish is not overwhelmingly bitter, but is balanced with a malty sweetness – just the way I like it! I have another.

In a rare quiet moment I get a chance to talk to Mirela about the pub and their future plans. There is no doubt that getting the

TWO Writers TWO Pubs ... continued



beer right, both in quality and in variety, is one of their main objectives. We edge around the limitations of the Greene King tie. It appears that the brewery is loosening its grip just a little. In the summer the pub held a successful beer festival, and the likelihood that the 3 guest ales will all be from other brewers in the near future seems quite high.

Food, of course, is another priority, and I've got to say this is the area in which the pub excels. A timber framed extension, also warmed by a log fire has been converted into a dining area, which spills out into the bar area during busy periods.



The Lion caters for those who prefer traditional food; the fish and chips is extremely good value, and for those who like to be a little

adventurous; tempura prawns is my favourite starter, all at reasonable prices and all in generous portions. The puddings list displays similar variety, ranging from spotted dick with custard to the chef's speciality cheesecake of the day.

The Sunday two and three course menus are proving to be very popular so it is advisable to book in advance.

The Ickleton Lion is the sort of pub that I imagine going to after a long winter ramble, when snow is on the ground and ice in the air. A place to warm, dry out and relax. It feels almost like home

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ALE but not so Hearty

Do we have reason for Christmas cheer?

Ali Cook Cambridge CAMRA Political Officer takes a look at two different ways Cambridge CAMRA are campaigning to save pubs.

In ALE 358 I noted the success that Cambridge CAMRA, together with our colleagues Cambridge Past, Present and Future had had in helping to convince Cambridge City Council to adopt the Interim Planning Policy Guidance (IPPG). I said that, we hoped that this would be a significant step towards the saving of local pubs that were under threat of development, but also warned that we thought the IPPG did not offer enough protection to pubs outside of conservation areas.

We have a mandate to ask local MPs to take our arguments to the House of Commons

Since then we have lost the Dog and Pheasant, Chesterton, and The Greyhound in Coldhams Lane, both to the bulldozer and never to return. The Flying Pig and the Rosemary Branch remain under threat, with the latter facing an application to be demolished, leading to one city councillor, Rob



Rosemary Branch

Dryden, publically describing the new measures as "totally worthless".

I also understand an appeal against the refusal of permission to demolish The Penny Ferry in Chesterton has been launched by the developers.

Clearly the IPPG on its own isn't working and we need to look at other means of both publicizing and then preventing the loss of pubs in our area and all over the country. We need to go beyond the city councils and local media and take our arguments to central government and the national media.

In April 2012 CAMRA launched its "Manifesto for Saving Pubs". More than half of the issues listed in this manifesto were national issues. As a branch we have a



The Penny Ferry in Chesterton



The Flying Pig



Darling, and has resulted in the duty on beer rising by inflation plus 2% every year since. More than £1 of the cost of every pint you buy in a pub now goes to the treasury. It has been calculated that further increases in duty won't increase the money going to the treasury as it is suppressing sales and undermining the viability of pubs and breweries.

More than £1 of the cost of every pint you buy in a pub now goes to the treasury

During the summer CAMRA ran an on-line petition to have the escalator debated in Parliament. In the autumn the petition reached its 100,000 signature target and the debate saw the call for the government to review the escalator pass unopposed, with many MPs calling for it to be scrapped.

Not surprisingly the government have chosen to ignore these demands but the knock on effect is that another issue of CAMRA national concern is likely to be addressed.

The April manifesto also clearly berates the fact that supermarket chains are able to use their buying power and tax advantages to offer below cost sales of alcohol in order to encourage customer footfall. This severely undercuts the prices pubs have to charge to be able to remain viable. The government has proposed to address this issue (and it has to be said, the other issues of under age drinking and alcohol abuse) by introducing a minimum price of 45p per unit of alcohol. Cambridge CAMRA would have preferred 50p per unit minimum price, but we admit that a 45p minimum will certainly help. It will have no effect on the price we pay in pubs - unless you happen know of a pub selling beer at less than £1 a pint. If you do could you let me know?

mandate to approach local members of parliament, both collectively as a branch and individually, asking them to take forward our arguments to the House of Commons.

Following CAMRA guidance, Cambridge CAMRA contacted the 3 MPs on our patch.

At that time Andrew Lansley (S Cambridge-shire) and James Paice (SE Cambridge-shire) were both government ministers so were limited in what they would commit to. However, Cambridge MP, Julian Huppert, was much more positive. He agreed to meet with us to both discuss and support the manifesto. Further than this, he took up and tried to alleviate many of our concerns by introducing his Local Services (Planning) Bill, which is awaiting it's second reading, now scheduled in January. Unfortunately, as a Private Members Bill it is very unlikely to reach the statute book but it has certainly raised the profile of the CAMRA campaign and will, we hope, influence future legislation.

The power of the Petition



One of the biggest national issues for CAMRA, also included in our manifesto, is the "Beer Tax Escalator". It was introduced in 2008 by the then Chancellor, Alistair

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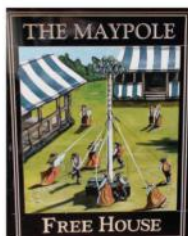


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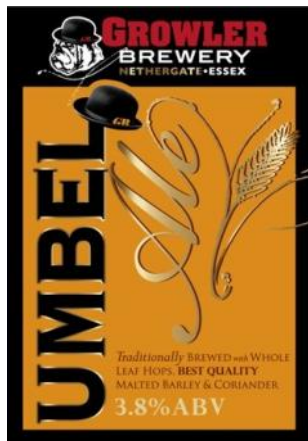
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Tucking Inn - Will's Foodie Page



After the success of the Beef and Ale Pie recipe printed in ALE359 I felt I just had to return the The Maypole in Park Street to try the celebrated Umbel pie. I wasn't to be disappointed; succu-

lent chicken breast and savoury leek, with an Umbel Ale gravy, yum!

The good news is that the Maypole has recently increased its number of real ale pumps from 8 to 16 – giving chef Nathan Phelps plenty of opportunity to dream up new recipes.

My thanks to him for sharing this one

UMBEL PIE RECIPE (Makes 6-8)

Ingredients for the filling

1. 1 pint of UMBEL ALE from the Growler Nethergate brewery.
2. 1 kg of diced chicken breast
3. 1 kg of diced leeks
4. A few sprigs of fresh thyme and fresh rosemary
5. 2 cloves of garlic
6. Worcester sauce
7. Olive oil
8. 2 oxo chicken stock cubes.

Method

1. Marinate the chicken with a generous splash of olive oil and Worcester sauce

along with the fresh herbs and crumbled stock cubes for 1 hour.

2. In a large pan add all chicken, the marinade and the leeks on a high heat and stir for five to ten minutes.
3. Add ALL the UMBEL ale and bring to the boil and simmer.
4. Make up 1 pint of very very thick chicken gravy from granules add to the pot and cook for 1-2 hours making sure every piece of chicken is cooked thoroughly and very tender.
5. Drain all the contents into a large colander and use the liquid as gravy.
6. Roll out puff or short crust pastry (I prefer Jusroll puff pastry) into 0.5 centimetre thick sheets and cut into 15x15cm squares.
7. Place a healthy amount of the chilled filling into the middle of each square and fold the four corners up so they overlap to form a sealed parcel.
8. Brush liberally with egg wash and bake in a pre-heated oven at gas mark 6or 190 degrees centigrade or 400 degrees Fahrenheit. For 15-20 minutes or until they are golden brown.
9. Serve with a pint or three of UMBEL ALE



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