

ale

Cambridge & District Branch Newsletter

Issue 369 September 2014



CAMPAIGN
FOR
REAL ALE

Fred Laband visits The Black Horse Inn, Swaffham Bulbeck



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Pub News

With 31 UK pubs closing a week the new CAMRA campaign calling for the government to make it more difficult for developers to convert pubs for other use by introducing legislation requiring planning permission to be gained before development can take place is, as the saying goes, a "no brainer".

<http://camra.org.uk/camra-urges-55000-festival-goers-to-lobby-government-over-failure-to-close-planning-loopholes-as-pub-closures-rise-to-31-per-week/>

Loopholes in current planning law mean that a developer can demolish a pub or turn it into a retail business with very little notification, and there appears to be very little that local councils can, or will, do to prevent this from happening.



In 2012, **The Osborne Arms**, once on Hills Road was closed and eventually knocked down whilst

Cambridge City Council were still debating whether or not they should try to save it.

On Chesterton High Street the **Dog and Pheasant** was demolished against the protests of an opposition group supported by the local councillor.



Further afield, the villagers of Hildersham are gathering to protest against the latest move to have **The Pear Tree** turned into residential

property.

Branch Diary

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

September Tuesday 9th Open branch meeting, The Carpenters Arms, Great Wilbraham.

October Friday 17th and Saturday 18th, Octoberfest beer festival, University Social Club, Mill Lane.

October Tuesday 14th Open branch meeting, University Social Club, Mill Lane.

November Tuesday 25th Annual General Meeting, University Social Club, Mill Lane.

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Pub News

Continued...



The locals of the **The Little Rose**, Haslingfield, are hoping that the property developers who bought the pub from Greene King will have a sympathetic approach towards their hopes of maintaining what is the last pub in the village.

There is no evidence that a strengthening of planning laws would have prevented the outcome of either of these first two examples, but we can be pretty sure that the residents in the villages of Haslingfield and Hildersham would welcome a change in legislation.

Haslingfield resident and campaigner, Keith Murray, has been in touch to tell us that **The Little Rose** is now in the charge of village residents, Sue and Neil, who have taken the pub on a short lease. Improvements have already been made to the dining room, and it is hoped that a traditional British menu will be introduced over the August bank holiday weekend. Neil is more than happy to talk to local breweries with a view to selling local brews.

Meanwhile, the villagers have registered the pub as an "Asset of Community Value", which means they should be given first refusal should the property developer decide to sell.



Congratulations to two local pubs that have been voted best in region by the 2014 Great British Pub Awards. **The White**

Horse, Barton, owned by Admiral Taverns took the "Best Community Pub" award, whilst Punch Taverns' **The Earl of Beaconsfield**, Mill Road, was joint regional winner of the "Best Newcomer" award.



Beer festival season is very much with us. Well done to **The White Swan**, Conington, and the **The White Swan**, Quy for the success of their recent festivals, the latter hosted a CAMRA beer tasting training event at which Oakham brewery and Milton brewery beers performed very well.



The Green Man, Thriplow, has shown its continuing commitment to local beers by holding a festival offering no fewer than 15 ales from Cambridge and District area breweries.



The Cambridge Blue, Gwydir Street, and **The Hobine**, Fair Street, both celebrated the late August bank holiday with a Cider and Perry Festival.





Upcoming pub beer festivals, include The Histon Festival 1st – 6th September (**Red Lion**, Histon), and **The Chestnut Tree**, West Wrattling, 25th-28th September, which will include a Thursday Quiz (with “easy” questions), live music on Friday and Saturday, and will feature 15 beers never before seen at the pub. 50 pence



of every pint will be donated to The Rosie, Addenbrookes Hospital, to help in its work to save premature babies.



Bill Johnson, landlord of **The Plough**, Duxford, will be celebrating two years of tenancy with his first ever beer festival, 3rd-5th October. 12 real ales and 6 real ciders will be on offer; music and food will feature throughout the weekend.

Bill who says The Plough has been his local since he was a teenager, is rightfully proud of his achievement with the pub, which is truly at the heart of the community.



Whilst in the Duxford area, I popped into **The Ickleton Lion**, Ickleton, which is about to get a Greene King makeover. The pub will remain open throughout most of the refurbishment, closing for a short while at the end of September and opening with a party, featuring a Hog Roast and live music on the 4th October.

Not strictly pub news, but in aid of the NSPCC, so I thought I'd include:

Mark Proud of Manor Farm in Bourn has asked us to let you know about the 2nd Bourn Beer and Cider Festival (20th September). He describes it as a “rustic beer festival held on the farm in front of the medieval Great Barn”. There will be live music provided by 10 bands and musicians. For further details contact Mark: 01954713971.

And from our correspondents:



Ali got on his bike and took in some of our rural pubs. He found the newly re-opened **King's Head**, Dullingham, to be a food oriented enterprise where there was “not a lot of scope to drink without eating”.

Fortunately, there was plenty of opportunity for a drink at **The Boot**, which is nearby.

Pub News Continued...



The Bull, Burrough Green, now belongs to Hawthorn Leisure, Greene King having sold them a large portion of its estate. New tenants Emma and Simon are working to create a community pub atmosphere. It is unclear on whether or not the company will eventually allow them to introduce local beers – but at the moment it looks like they are limited to ordering from Matthew Clark. London Pride, Doom bar and Greene King IPA were on offer.



Ali found **The Admiral Vernon**, Over, to be a welcoming pub. It is a Wells and Young's pub, so London Gold (4%) and Eagle IPA (3.6%) were both evident. The guest beer was St Austell Liquid Sunshine(3.9%), which Ali described as having "a hoppy edge".



The Wheatsheaf, Duxford, has new owners. Louise Green and Mick McLoughlin have removed

the Greene King pump and replaced it with 3 hand pumps. The regular offering is Woodfordes Wherry, but Ali tried the St Austell Proper Job (4.5%), which was in excellent condition.

Fred has been visiting pubs in the east of our region:



"The Red Lion in Swaffham Prior goes from strength to strength. My recent visit found the

pub busy with happy locals who are clearly proud of their pub being such a rare outpost for Bateman's ales. I tried the guest ale Timothy Taylor's Golden Best (3.5%), which slipped down a treat. The pub garden to the rear was the place to be on this lovely Friday evening!



The Five Bells in Burwell is also a pub that is making strides. Guest ale Thwaites Magic

Sponge (4.1%) was very popular indeed – quite biscuit and lemony.

The Dyke's End, Reach, and **The Fox**, Burwell, were so busy that it was difficult to get near the bar! The latter served Thwaites Original (3.6%)...



Lastly, **The Anchor**, Burwell, hosted its own beer and cider festival over the weekend 18th -

20th July. 4 beers were served in the main pub, 3 Greene King plus a guest from Cambridge Moonshine Brewery. In the garden 10 beers and 6 ciders were available. I tried the Orange Wheat Beer (4.2%) from Green Jack Brewery,

Lowestoft. It was very soft and I thought more of an apricot brew? Jolly good and moreish though! Colchester and Cambridge Moonshine Breweries were both also well represented.

There is much happening at this vibrant pub. Forthcoming events include live music on 26th September. Late October has a Hallowe'en Party Night and Dinner. Also there is live music from The Harvs on 28th November. These are all in addition to their normal weekly pizza deals on Mondays, Wednesday quiz and Friday Fish and Chip specials. Also on Thursdays, ladies receive a free glass of house wine when they are dining. This seems to me a little unfair on male diners?! “

Pub News - Last Orders!

Last orders please! Stop press news from around the Cambridge district.

Some mildly interesting, some very interesting, and some humorous snippets of information and anecdotes heard by our CAMRA team as they travelled around the Cambridge and District Area.

CAMRA members who are interested in the history of pubs may like to take a look at the following website: <https://sites.google.com/site/greatshelfordhistory/village-life/demon-drink/the-drinking-mans-guide-to-victorian-shelford>

“Black Pepper Ale has proved particularly successful, which we think is due in part to the drinking experience it provides – the beer comes with a small sachet of ground black peppercorns, which are swirled into the beer and sprinkled on top. This creates a real sense of theatre and truly brings out the beer's flavour.” A quote from Stuart Bateman, managing director of Batemans Brewery whose Black Pepper Ale, won a silver award in the Beer Bottlers Institute competition, and a bronze medal in the 2014 International Beer Challenge awards.

The tenant of a not to be named ex-Greene King pub, was reported to have the

following conversation with his new supplier:

“Can I order some Oakham Inferno?”

“Pernod?”

“No, Inferno.”

“What is that?”

“A real ale....”

“A real what...?”

“The conversion doesn't have to be from a pub to domestic housing. It could be a doctors, a dentists or a veterinary clinic bringing a different asset to the community. Each case is different on it's own merits.”

Martin Caffrey, Operations Director at the Federation of Licensed Victuallers Association, quoted in the Cambridge News.

“Popular and profitable pubs are being left vulnerable by gaps in English planning legislation as pubs are increasingly being targeted by those wishing to take advantage of the absence of proper planning control. It is utterly perverse that developers are able to demolish or convert a pub into a convenience store or many other uses without any requirement to apply for planning permission. A pub is an entirely different proposition to a convenience store, estate agent or funeral directors and the planning system needs updating to reflect this fact.” Tom Stainer, CAMRA Head of Communications.

Congratulations to The Gardeners Arms/ Murderers of Norwich, which won a Great British Pub 2014 award for having the best loos in the region

And seriously well done to Oakham Brewery, whose Citra was awarded silver in the Supreme Champion category of the CAMRA Champion Beer of Britain awards, beaten into second place by Timothy Taylors, Boltmaker.

The Black Horse Inn



Back in ALE issue 361, Fred Laband visited 6 pubs along the B1102 Cambridge to Burwell road. Today, he returns to The Black Horse Inn for a less hurried pint and some food.

As I enter the pub, I am welcomed by the rich velvety tones of The Floaters and their laid back soul classic Float On. The music is loud enough to hear but remains in the background. An hour or so of soul music is alright by me, and I head for the bar. It is a Monday evening and the pub is quietly busy, ticking over nicely.

The Black Horse Inn has 6 handpumps of which 5 are in use today; the sixth pump is about to serve Young's London Gold. Charles Well's Bombardier, Eagle IPA and Courage Directors are regulars here. I initially go for St. Austell's Liquid Sunshine (3.9%) which is crisp and sharp. This beer leaves a real bitterness on the tongue, and there is a longing aftertaste of marmalade.

My girlfriend Nicola arrives a few minutes later, and she opts for a diet cola (0%). We are pleased to see that the Monday night special offer is 2 burgers for a singular price. There are ten variants to choose from. Nicola cannot look past The New Yorker, which contains large

amounts of "special" cheese, BBQ sauce and smokey bacon atop a substantial slab of locally sourced beef. I am brave and go for the "Game On" burger (venison). Aretha Franklin's "Respect" is the soundtrack to the burger ordering which with a side order of gourmet fries, rings in at a very respectable £10.95!

Carl, long time CAMRA campaigner, arrives just in time to pinch a few chips and to deliver ALE

magazine issue 368. He settles down to his pint of Liquid Sunshine, but Nicola and I are busy eating. McFadden and Whitehead surely weren't writing about eating burgers when they jointly penned "Ain't No Stoppin Us Now" sometime in the 1970s?! I am delighted by the quality and vastness of my burger. The meat is superb, well done yet moist, the Swiss cheese is only outdone by the thick layer of slightly burnt crisp red onions which are a key feature of this dish. The bucket of chips is double cooked in the Belgian style we think, and the only negative is the fact that our meals are served in/on plastic baskets. (My Grandad - also Fred - would not have stood for that!) When I mention this, Sharon points out that this only happens on Monday evenings, which I think is fair enough given the excellent value for money!

It seems to take an eternity to munch through our meals, but we finally emerge triumphant and satisfied. Nicola goes to freshen up and returns reporting that the ladies' facilities boast a variety of toiletries including hand lotion. While she is out, Carl and I strike up a conversation and he surprises me to report that the tenants of this pub are soon set to leave. Yes, in early 2015, Paul and Sharon will vacate The Black Horse and will be

Swaffham Bulbeck

venturing elsewhere. Sensing an opportunity for some investigative journalism here I decide that it may be in the interests of keen ALE readers to discover more...

But first, another pint: The Directors (4.8%) is both fruity and chalky and Nicola adds that it has burnt overtones. Carl is also pleased: "You don't see Directors as much as you used to."

Marvin Gaye interrupts, but soulfully, by posing the timely question, "What's Goin' On?" So, what is happening? Let's find out:

Until nearly 6 years ago, The Black Horse Inn was a free house. Charles Wells bought the pub in January 2009, with Sharon and Paul Crossley its first tenants. Previously, they had been at The Wheatsheaf in Exning and also The Chequers in Stotfold (Bedfordshire). They have now been in the pub trade for 15 years and but have recently decided to call it a day.

The first year or two went very well, with solid sales, but Sharon believes that the recession was slower to hit our area. The pub became quieter and despite trying all sorts of offers and promotions, sales fell.

In the last 12 months or so, trade has picked up again; the 8 en-suite rooms to the rear are rarely empty. Sharon is proud of their efforts with a rich variety of Spanish, Thai and Greek themed evenings and organizing live music on the last Saturday of each month. Sharon reports that one of her favourite events was "Man vs. Food"... "Basically this involved attempting to eat 3lbs of burger with chips, onion rings, etc. all washed down with... a milkshake! If this wasn't enough the whole event was combined with a VW Camper Van rally." I cannot quite picture all of this coming together, but Sharon vividly retells how in addition to of all this, her Mum was in the middle

of the pub reading out winning raffle ticket numbers! This all sounds like a lot of hard work, which leads us nicely onto Sharon and Paul's reasons for leaving.

After 15 years behind the bar, Sharon states, "The hours are long, and although the work may not be that hard, it is non-stop. It is very difficult to find any time to switch off."

Sharon and Paul also say how difficult it has become to get staff in a village that is a little remote from the larger catchments of Cambridge or Newmarket. Something else that has prompted them to hang up their beer towels is perhaps a decline in community support for pubs in general. They note how live music is not allowed in the garden and how they are not encouraged to put up signage on the splendid village green to attract passing trade.

They also note (with a little resignation) that although Charles Wells offers up to 4 guest beers every month, it is in practice very hard to get hold of them as they tend to sell out very quickly. They were only lucky enough to get a barrel of the St. Austells Liquid Sunshine as it had to be delivered by courier!

In between questions, I enjoy a pint of Charles Well's Bombardier (R.I.P. Rik Mayall), which at 4.1% is a super balance of malt, fruit and hops – BANG ON!

So, what lies around the corner for The Black Horse Inn? Nothing is finalized yet, but Sharon and Paul say Charles Wells will be sure to bring in new tenants. Sharon does not know yet what is next for her, but her dream would be to run a kind of shop that sells beer straight from the barrel and while Paul produces more of his superb burgers. "Just a small shop with a few tables, called Beef and Beer," comments Sharon. I would certainly be at the front of the queue and can only wish them every luck!

BikeBus Explorer



The BikeBus Explorer



www.scambs.gov.uk/bikebus-explorer



Of course the one thing that pubs can't do without is you, their customers. But getting to some pubs isn't always easy. That is especially so of some rural pubs if you are a city resident. Even the keenest cyclist may think twice about some trips out.

Well, South Cambridgeshire District Council has come up with an idea

that will allow cyclists to visit several pubs along the A603 corridor west of Cambridge without wearing the seat out of too many pairs of lycra shorts: the BikeBus Explorer.

This service, launched at the end of July, is available on Sundays and bank holidays (except Christmas Day, Boxing Day and New Year's Day). The bus tows a 20 cycle bike trailer (you don't have to have a bike to use the service) and allows you to easily reach fifteen pubs and a couple of Indian Restaurants.

An adult can hop on and off any BikeBus Explorer bus all day for £5 (plus £2 a bike). Great value!

There are two BikeBus Explorer A trips and two BikeBus Explorer B trips each day.

Both routes leave (at different times) from Cambridge Rail Station, travelling via Fen Causeway, Barton (The White Horse and The Hoops) and Orwell (The Chequers) to the Wimpole Estate. The A route then loops through Arrington (The Hardwicke Arms), Croydon, The Hatleys, Gamlingay (The Wheatsheaf and The Cock), Waresley (The Duncombe Arms), Great Gransden (The Crown & Cushion), Little Gransden (The

Chequers, home of the Son of Sid Brewery. Bob Mitchell is willing to give brewery tours to those who arrive by BikeBus), Longstowe and back to Arrington before returning to Cambridge. The B route does the loop in the other direction. The pubs at Comberton (The Three Horseshoes), Harlton (The Wheatsheaf and The Hare & Hounds), Haslingfield (The Little Rose), Barrington (The Royal Oak) and Bourn (The Willow Tree) also lie close to the route.

The service has been given a 12 month trial, so we at Cambridge CAMRA urge you to give it your support

For more details, including the timetable, check on the SCDC website www.scambs.gov.uk/bikebus-explorer.



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(with the purchase of an adult main meal)**

**Mexican themed food night on the 26th of
September, £12.50 per person**

Heart of the Community: The Blue Ball, Grantchester



Winner of the Cambridge branch "Rural Community Pub of the Year Award, 2014", and a regular entry in the CAMRA Good Beer Guide, the Blue Ball has long been prized for its eclectic clientele, its "village pub" atmosphere and the quality of the beer it serves.

Regular readers may recall that in ALE 368 we reported a rumour that the pub had been purchased by a resident of the village. Call us cynical but, in today's economic climate, pubs, especially pubs in sought after villages close to Cambridge, are seen as easy targets for developers with their "get rich quick" schemes, and we feared the worse.

New owner Toby Joseph e-mailed me and, I'm pleased to say, completely put an end to our fears.

I asked if I could report some of his statements, and he suggested that I copy the whole e-mail and address it to CAMRA members. So here it is:

Hi There,

I just wanted to drop you a quick line as in your last edition of Ale, in the pub news you mentioned the recent sale of the Blue Ball to a local resident.

I thought I should introduce myself as the resident in question, as I became the proud owner of the Blue Ball in June. I wanted to assure you and your readers that we are planning no changes in the traditional offering the pub currently has.

I have been using the pub for almost 40 years, and wanted to secure the freehold from Punch to protect my favourite pub for future generations.

The only visible changes customers, new and old, will see next September will be a basic pub food offering, a lick of paint and possibly the chance to stay at the Inn, as we will also be providing B&B once again when we have renovated the upstairs.

Please rest assured that the priority will remain one of offering fine ales to a discerning and eclectic crowd of locals, visitors, real ale enthusiasts, sportsmen, walkers, dogs, tourists and anyone else who would enjoy the unique environment of a wonderful pub looking over Grantchester meadows.

I look forward to welcoming you and other members of CAMRA through the door in the future.

Kind regards

Toby Joseph

So the Blue Ball will remain at the heart of the Grantchester Community for many years to come. Did I hear a collective sigh of relief?

Invitation to members of **Cambridge and District CAMRA**



Harvest Fair 2014

28 September, 11.00-17.00

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£1.50 children (5-16yrs)
Under 5s free

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See out the summer with a special heritage event at Burwell Museum, supported by Cambridge and District CAMRA.

-
- CAMRA pop-up pub featuring local real ales*
 - 'Pubs of Burwell' exhibition
 - Live folk music
 - Children's' craft activities
 - Edible treats and gifts
 - 'Best in show' harvest model competition
 - Master classes in home brewing, chutney and jam making, baking bread and more...
-

**One free pint or soft drink per visitor*

www.burwellmuseum.org.uk

Want to buy some local beer?

Listed below are contact details for the LocAle breweries in our branch area.

BlackBar Brewery, Unit B3, Button End Industrial Estate, Harston. CB22 7GX. 01223 872131. <http://blackbar.co.uk> info@blackbar.co.uk Like most microbreweries it's a one man show. The brewer is Joe Kennedy.

Calverley's Brewery, 23A Hooper Street, Cambridge, CB1 2NZ. 01223 312370. <http://www.calverleys.com> sam@calverleys.com The brewer is Sam Calverley.

Crafty Beers, The Carpenters Arms, Great Wilbraham, CB21 5JD. 01223 813938 <http://www.craftybeers.co.uk> The brewer is Richard Beardsmore.

Fellows Brewery, 2 Leopold Walk, Cottenham, CB24 8XS. 01954

250262. <http://www.fellowsbrewery.co.uk> Ales@fellowsbrewery.co.uk The brewer is called Mark. He now brews mostly at the Cambridge Brewhouse with Fellows being his sideline.

Lord Conrad Brewery, Scotland Road, Dry Drayton. 07736739700. <http://www.lordconradsbrewery.co.uk> The brewer is called Mark.

Moonshine Brewery, Hill Farm, Shelford Road, Fulbourn, CB21 5EQ. 07906 066794 <http://www.moonshinebrewery.co.uk> mark@moonshinebrewery.co.uk The brewer is Mark Watch.

Milton Brewery, Pegasus House, Pembroke Avenue, Waterbeach, CB25 9PY. 01223 862067 <http://www.miltonbrewery.co.uk> enquiries@miltonbrewery.co.uk This is our largest local brewery. Richard Naisby is the main man.

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CHEQUERS ^{LT} GRANSDEN

BEER



FEST

FRIDAY 3RD OCTOBER - SUNDAY 5TH OCTOBER



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SATURDAY - THE COTTENHAM BRASS BAND - 3PM TO 6PM
SUNDAY - DR BUSKER - 4PM TO 7PM

30 BEERS AND CIDERS

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Pub Protection Requires Changes in Planning Law

The last edition of ALE (368) reproduced the text of an address by Paul Ainsworth, our group's former pubs officer, to CAMRA's AGM. It highlighted the flaws in planning law that allows valued and viable pubs to be lost without scrutiny by local authority planning departments.

Unless a pub is in a listed building or a conservation zone it can be demolished without the need for planning permission. Pubs can be converted to shops, restaurants and many types of offices and again no planning permission is required. Paul called for a hard-hitting campaign to get these loopholes closed.

What can the average pub user do to help the campaign? Mark Newcombe, a CAMRA member from the Slough, Windsor & Maidenhead branch, has set up a petition on the Government's website <http://epetitions.direct.gov.uk/petitions/66572>. Please sign it.

Something else you can do is to lobby your MP about the issue. To help you do this CAMRA has set up an on-line method for you to contact your MP. <http://campaign.publicaffairsbriefing.co.uk/emailsupport.aspx?cid=42b44b68-a8e1-480f-a71a-93b0d4989a1f>

It even suggests things you might wish to say. Some MPs have already shown their support by signing Early Day Motion 208 which has cross party support and calls for planning policy changes that will protect pubs. At the time of writing 44 MPs have signed EDM208.

None of our three MPs have signed Early Day Motion 208 calling for planning policy changes that will protect pubs.

None of our three MPs, Julian Huppert (Cambridge), Andrew Lansley (South Cambridgeshire) and James Paice (South East Cambridgeshire), have done so.

The changes in planning law that we are campaigning for if implemented won't stop pubs being lost but they will allow your elected local councillors to assess if a pub is valued and viable before a loss could occur. Greedy developers, pubcos with dire finances and individuals who make a hash of running a pub are currently exploiting these loopholes. As a result communities are losing pubs that in the right hands could thrive. It's time for these loopholes to be closed.

Alistair Cook

WATERBEACH SUN

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South Cambridgeshire Promotes Pub Protection and Patronage

Free Community Pubs Event.

I have certainly been fairly candid with my criticism of South Cambridgeshire District Council in recent months. The tragedy that befell the people of Hildersham, when the Pear Tree was lost, highlighted the threat facing every single pub. Councillors were shocked but seemed unwilling to do more than wring their hands. They really should have been going even further than trail-blazing Cambridge City Council have gone but so far not one Article 4 Direction has been forthcoming.

East Cambridgeshire, though lacking an example like the Pear Tree, have been similarly inattentive of the threat.

But credit where credit is due, South Cambridgeshire councillors have charged their officials to encourage communities to take other routes that offer some degree of pub protection.

On 10th July they ran a "Community Pubs Event" at the Plough and Fleece, Horningsea. The line-up of speakers and topics covered were impressive. The morning speakers included Tony Philips from the Plough & Fleece Community Interest Company, Nicole Hamilton from the Plunkett Foundation and Terry Stork from The Pub is the Hub campaign.

After a networking lunch the afternoon consisted of two workshop sessions from a choice of four available (Creating a Quality Product and Quality Employment, Ingredients of Success, Finding Funding and New Communities, New Opportunities).

The event was free to attend for South Cambridgeshire residents and representatives from several communities whose pubs are threatened attended. Hopefully they learnt things that will enable them to progress their campaigns to save

their pubs. Perhaps inevitably there was a very low attendance from communities where there is no perceived threat to their pub. But with 31 pubs a week closing across the country can any community really be sure that theirs won't be next?

One thing that any group fighting to save their pub will tell you is that you can't act soon enough.

It is important that you get your pub listed as an asset of community value, and investigate the possibilities of a community buy-out should it prove necessary, at the earliest opportunity. If you value your local, do it now.

Alistair Cook



The Chestnut Tree, West Wrattling

**As featured in the CAMRA
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25th – 28th September**

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Tuesday to Saturday

Evening Menu served 6pm till 9pm

Thursday to Saturday

Traditional Sunday Roast served

Noon till 2:30pm

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Pub garden. Discount for CAMRA members

5 Stars for hygiene(SCDC)



Beer Topping at The White Swan



The White Swan, Stow-cum-Quy, is, according to the CAMRA pub guide, “a 17th century, timber-framed, village pub that combines well kept real ales, an extensive wine list and modern British cuisine while maintaining a welcoming community spirit.”

It is the community spirit I first notice as I approach the right hand, “drinkers”, bar where a number of local residents are enjoying gentle banter and some goodly beers.

On this occasion I don’t stop to chat or drink because it is Friday August the 22nd, and the Quy beer festival, which just happens to be situated in the garden to the rear of the pub, is in full swing.

I don’t normally need an excuse to attend a beer festival, but my presence here this evening, along with that of fellow CAMRA members, Steve, Paul, Helge and Carl, is not just down to wanting a few good beers. Landlord and festival organiser Gerry Skews had arranged for a good number of local ales to feature in the festival, with most of the 30 ales on offer sourced from within 50 miles of the pub. These ales needed tasting – and indeed judging – and we five adventurous souls had volunteered to take on the task. I know, but someone has to do it...

In truth, this was a branch tasting panel-training session, so there weren’t any awards to win. However this didn’t mean we didn’t rise to the challenge with some relish – and of course professionalism.

When judging beers, CAMRA panels must not know anything about the beer before they come to

taste it. This is known as blind tasting. The beer is served in unmarked jugs, which is given a letter or number, and is then poured into an unmarked glass for tasting. The person who is delivering the jugs to the tasting table also has no knowledge of the beer he or she is serving. This is called a double blind tasting.

Each beer is served in a fresh glass, and the tasters can return to their jugs for another taste should they so require it – I know, it’s hell...

And so to the judging:

On this occasion we are set to taste seven beers from breweries local to The Swan. As this is a practice run we do not delve too deeply into the complexity of the beers but judge each beer on 6 categories. We look closely at the beer, firstly, trying to determine its **Clarity** and, secondly, to decide what colour we think it might be. This sounds easy, but some beers styles are meant to be hazy, and there are so many different shades from straw to ruby, and a difficult judgement has to be made.

We then place our palms over the top of the glass and give the beer a good swirl. If the beer looks lively, and has plenty of head and froth, we declare it is in good **Condition**. We then thrust our noses deep into our glasses (though not far enough to get the

tips wet) and have a good sniff. If you haven't tried this with real ale, could I suggest you give it a go? You can do it when no one is looking if you like. There is such a variety of aroma, ranging from bitter grapefruit and summer fruits to dark coffee, toffee, and chocolate, to be enjoyed. For obvious reasons we call this "**The Nose**".

And then, at last, comes the moment – we taste the beer! Surprisingly enough, this can be the most disappointing part of the whole exercise. Sometimes – only sometimes – we have come across a great looking ale, which is as clear as day; sparkles like sunshine in a glass and smells like a newly mown field only to be let down by a watery **Body**, an insipid **Flavour**, and a non-existent **Aftertaste**.

I'm pleased to say this isn't the case with any of the beers we taste in Quy.

Taking all of these aspects into account, we then mark each beer out of 10 – totting up

all of our scores to decide the outright winner.

So, I hear you ask, which beers did you taste? And which one was judged the best?

Well, it wasn't an official tasting, so I don't think it would be fair to announce the results. And yes we were only told which beers we had tasted after the tasting had finished and the scores added up.

I will say that our local brewers are doing a fine job in representing the Cambridge and District branch; that the competition was closely run, and that, echoing the results from the recent Champion Beer of Britain tasting, Oakham Brewery fared very well.

Our thanks to Gerry and to Carl Woolf for looking after us on the evening, and to the Friday night locals in The White Swan for putting up with a group of real ale geeks, practising their tasting skills, in the middle of their festival.

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PUBS that Offer Discounts to CAMRA Members



The following local pubs offer a discount to CAMRA members on production of a signed and up to date CAMRA membership card:

The Blue Moon, Norfolk Street, 50p off a pint

The Maypole, Portugal Place, 20p off a pint

The Mill, Mill Lane, 10% off a pint

The Cambridge Brewhouse, King Street, 10% off Cambridge Brewing Company Beers

The Hopbine, Fair Street, 10% off a pint.

The Kingston Arms, Kingston Street, 20p off a pint

The Pickerel, Magdelene Street, 10% off a pint

The Fox, Bar Hill, 10% off real ale.

The Portland Arms, Chesterton Road 10% off a pint

The Golden Hind, Milton Road, 10% off a pint

The White Swan, Conington, 10% off a pint

The Crown, Linton, Happy Hour at all times for CAMRA members

The Three Tuns, Fen Drayton, 20p off a pint and 10% off food

The White Swan, Quy

The White Horse, Barton

Please ask at the bar for further details

Tucking Inn - Will's Foodie Page

I'm not generally a fan of "speciality beers". To my taste, beer tainted with fruit, vegetables or any other organic addition is generally a real turn off and I avoid them with almost as much conviction as I avoid most lagers. But as with all of my personal prejudices there are exceptions that prove the rule. I am for instance a great fan of Cambridge Moonshine Chocolate Orange Stout, and I surprised myself (and my friends!) by taking a great fancy to Batemans Black Pepper Ale.

This award winning 5.1% amber ale has a malty pepper aroma, and a caramel after taste edged with pepper. It comes with a sachet of ground black pepper – which is sprinkled over the pint to add heat and depth of flavour.



It is a taste I very much enjoy, and as I was looking for a new recipe for my foodie page, I saw the opportunity to use this unique beer as a base liquid for this savoury tart.

Black Pepper Ale, Onion, Mushroom and Feta tart

Ingredients:

- 3 tablespoons vegetable oil
- 2 brown onions, peeled and sliced
- 2 red onions, peeled and sliced
- 3 garlic cloves, crushed
- 250g mushrooms, sliced
- 2 tablespoons Demerara Sugar
- ¼ pint (125ml) Black Pepper Ale (hang on to the black pepper sachet, you'll need it)
- 1 sheet (375g) ready-made puff pastry
- 120g Feta Cheese

Heat half the oil in a wok or large frying pan over a medium heat. Add the onions and stir-fry for a couple of minutes ensuring that the onion is well coated with oil. Reduce the heat and cook for half an hour, stirring regularly. Put to one side

Heat the remaining oil in another pan, add the garlic and mushrooms and cook gently for 10 minutes.

Add the Black Pepper Ale and Demerara Sugar, raise the heat a little and cook for another 5 minutes.

Pour the mushroom mixture into the onions, mix well, and cook over a medium heat for 10 minutes. Season to taste, and cook for a further 5 minutes or so until most of the liquid has evaporated.

Roll the pastry onto some baking parchment placed on a baking tray.

Take a sharp knife and score a line 1cm in from the edge of the pastry.

Spread the onion mixture evenly over the pastry, being sure to keep the mixture within the scored lines.

Crumble the feta over the tart as haphazardly as you like.

Take the sachet of pepper provided with the ale and sprinkle it over the tart.

Bake at 200 degrees F (400F/Gas 6) for 15 minutes, or until the pastry is golden brown.

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*We are staying in the village
and hope to meet up with
many of our old friends
at the local Beer Festivals
and maybe other CAMRA
events*

*"Time Ladies & Gentleman
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Cambridge & District CAMRA Pub of the Year 2009

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