

# ale

Cambridge & District Branch Newsletter

Issue 370 November 2014



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# Pub News

As many CAMRA members will be aware, September brings the annual launch of the pub-goers bible, the CAMRA Good Beer Guide.

This launch always raises a high level of comment and response, both in social media and in correspondence to local CAMRA branches. The messages we receive, some from CAMRA members, others from non-members, usually express exasperation as the senders cannot understand why their pub, in their opinion, the best pub in the region, has not made the cut and is not included in the guide.



Hence we have had some feedback from regulars of **The Champion of the Thames, King Street**, letting us know that they are not happy with the exclusion of this excellent pub from the 2015 edition.



Similarly, a fan of **The Navigator, Little Shelford**, who is not a member of CAMRA, has

written to CAMRA head office, telling them that the pub serves 4 “impeccable” real ales and that he can only think that the reason this pub isn’t in the guide is because local CAMRA members haven’t bothered to visit.

Whilst the first part of this statement is true, The Navigator does indeed offer 4 real ales, usually in good condition, the latter supposition is incorrect. Those of you who read Ale regularly will, I hope, agree that we visit as many pubs as we can, as often as we can – The Navigator was mentioned briefly in Pub News in issue 369.

## Branch Diary

Don't forget that all Branch members are very welcome to attend the monthly business meetings.

Tuesday 11th November Open Branch Meeting, Carlton Arms, Carlton Way, 8pm.

Tuesday 25th November Annual General Meeting, University Social Club, Mill Lane, 8pm.

Saturday 22nd November Cambridge and District Pub Tour: East of Cambridge. Details from [contact@cambridge-camra.org.uk](mailto:contact@cambridge-camra.org.uk).

Saturday 29th November CAMRA Regional Meeting, Maypole, Portugal Place, 12noon.

Tuesday 9th December Open Branch Meeting, Earl of Beaconsfield, Mill Road, 8pm.

22nd-24th January Winter Ale Festival, University Social Club, Mill Lane.

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# Pub News

Continued...

There are well over 200 pubs within the CAMRA Cambridge and District Branch boundary. Many of them in our opinion are good enough to get into the guide; but it is an unfortunate fact that our allocation of entries for the guide is restricted to 26. I'm not a mathematician but I think this means slightly more than 1 in every 10 pubs has a chance of getting into the guide.

Of course, choosing which pubs are successful is a great responsibility; one we feel we cannot take on our own, which is why we ask CAMRA members to be our judges, and to vote for their most deserving pub, either online or by attending a special meeting in February. If you would like to see your pub in the next guide, please join CAMRA and take the time to vote.

On the flipside of the coin, September also brings thanks and messages from pub landlords and owners who are delighted that their pub has been included in the guide. Congratulations to new entries: **The Jolly Brewers, Milton, The White Swan, Conington, The Bank Micropub, Willingham, The Three Horseshoes, Stapleford, The Carpenters Arms, Great Wilbraham, and The Haymakers, Chesterton.** Special congratulations to **The Queen's Head, Newton**, which appears in the guide for the 42<sup>nd</sup> consecutive time.

We are currently gathering a shortlist of pubs for the 2016 edition of The Good Beer Guide. CAMRA members can nominate online ([gbg@cambridge-camra.org.uk](mailto:gbg@cambridge-camra.org.uk)) or by attending the Branch AGM (further details are in the branch diary)

Good news this month as BEER magazine carries the story we all knew: beer is good for you! The article, penned by Britain's Beer Sommelier Jane Peyton, uses evidence quoted from Charles Bamforth, Professor of Malting and Brewing Sciences

at the University of California (Davis): "a regular moderate intake of alcohol is good for the heart and blood circulation. Real ale is a great choice – relatively low in alcohol and made from natural raw ingredients." Unfortunately, it's not all good news; any potential benefit from moderate consumption of beer can be "wiped out by binge drinking". Oh well...

The Cambridge pub beer festival season appears to be slowly coming to an end as our pubs prepare for the Christmas rush.



Recent successful festivals include **The Plough, Duxford.** Landlord Bill Johnson says

he has had some great feedback and his festival went much better than he'd ever expected. The self-named Mitcham's Triangle pubs (**Portland Arms, the Old Spring, and The Jolly Waterman, Mitcham's Corner**), enjoyed another successful autumn festival; the **Red Lion**, Histon's annual festival raised money for local causes, and **The Alexandra Arms, Gwydir Street**, retrospectively celebrated its re-opening with a beer festival which also raised money for a children's cancer charity.



Ed, the tenant of the Alexandra Arms, has also taken on **The County Arms, Castle Street** having been head hunted by pub owners Everards, who hope that he can "turn the pub around". We understand that the brewery has offered incentives that include a more extensive beer choice, which will include the opportunity to

introduce local ales.



**The Mill, Mill Lane**, has made a special commitment to dark ales by announcing at least 2 of its 7 hand pumps will serve the dark stuff throughout the run up to Christmas and into the new year.



Sister pub and microbrewery, the **Cambridge Brew House, King Street**, is reporting record sales of its own

brewed real ale. Brew House ales are named after members of staff. I'm looking forward very much to the promised Carlton's Dark 'n' Dangerous, a 6.2% stout!



Gerry Skewes the leaseholder of **The Brunswick Arms, Newmarket Road** has closed the pub and the lease is up for sale. We

understand that there are a number of interested parties. The lease for Gerry's second pub **The White Swan, Quy**, is also on the market.



Elgoods, the owners of The Waggon and Horses, Milton, have given the pub a complete make over. It is now an Italian

restaurant, and is called Osteria. Elgoods assured us that we are still welcome to pop in for a pint - though local residents tell me they have been turned away...

Meanwhile we have received notice that tenant Sam Adams has moved on from **The**



**Green Man, Thriplow**. In our view this is a great

shame. Sam certainly served a good pint of beer, and we hope he finds opportunities elsewhere in the Cambridge area.



Goodbye too to Will Wright ex-landlord of **The White Horse, Swavesey**, who retired in

October. If you have a spare few minutes and like assertive language, ask Will what he thinks of Pubcos, especially Enterprise Inns.



The **Rupert Brooke, Grantchester**, will have re-opened before ALE goes to print. Ali tried to get a glimpse of the refurbishment, but was warned off by the security system when he tried to peer through the window, but as I'm writing (mid October) there appears to be a lot of work to be done.



**The Black Bull, Willingham**, now belongs to Barry and Fran, landlord and lady of the Greene

King owned **Duke of Wellington**, also in Willingham. The Black Bull has been re-named **The Porterhouse**, and is opening limited hours until a full refurbishment has been completed. They are still committed to the Duke, which is an excellent locals pub,

# Pub News Continued...

serving 3 guest beers beside Greene King mild and IPA, straight from the cask.



Also in Willingham, Chris Warren has given up his day job as village postmaster to concentrate on running the **Bank Micropub**. Local

drinkers told me that they hope very much this would mean an increase in the micropub's opening hours, perhaps to include Saturday lunchtimes.

Welcome to Stel Andreou and Eddie Cumberland, the new tenants of **The Hop Bind, Cottenham**. The Hop Bind is very much a locals' pub, which offers football on TV and a weekly meat raffle. The beers are from the Greene King list, which is quite limited, but I did enjoy their standard Greene King house ale called (in this pub) Smooth Hoperator (3.9%).



I'm hearing good things about **The Red Lion, Swaffham Prior**. Locals tell me that the beer quality has

improved a great deal since new tenants have arrived. I look forward to visiting the pub on the next branch campaign tour (22<sup>nd</sup> November, see diary dates for more details).



**The Red Lion, Kirtling** has announced the arrival

of 3 new members of staff: Lucie, who works front of house, Kit who is a waiter and Henry an apprentice chef.

The pub was also pleased to announce that

"Trip Advisor" had placed them as one of the top 10 places to eat in Newmarket.

And whilst we are talking about recognition, congratulations to **The Pint Shop, Peas Hill**, which has just been recognised with runner up position in two categories



(Best place to drink and Best Sunday lunch) of The Observer Food Monthly Awards

And from our correspondents:

Ali cycled out to **Hartton** where he found **The Hare and Hounds** had a robust early



evening trade, he then went on to the **Wheatsheaf** and was surprised to discover he knew the landlord, Tony, who used to run the City Stop

restaurant at Cambridge City football ground. The Wheatsheaf is free of tie, and on this occasion both Lacons and Black Sheep beer were on offer.

He also offered a good report on **The Cock, Castle Camps**,



describing it as a "very friendly community pub", The Cock now has 4 hand pumps, serving Greene King IPA

and Abbot, because that's what the regulars want, and two guest, often local, beers.

The **Old Red Lion, Horseheath** also has 4 hand pumps, but on his visit only two from the Greene King range, Speckled Hen and IPA were available. This, he claims, is a great improvement. When he was there 3 years ago he'd had to drink lager!

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# The Red Lion

Back in ALE issue 369, Fred Laband visited The Black Horse Inn in Swaffham Bulbeck. After 15 years in the licensing trade, Sharon and Paul are leaving soon. Just a few miles away, in Swaffham Prior, David and Toni have only just arrived...

It is Saturday lunchtime and a perfect day for a pint or two, some nice food and good company. The Red Lion is a beautiful village pub with hanging baskets and a splash of Batemans brewery post box red making it really stand out on the High Street. We enter the main bar over the quarry tiled floor and see 4 handpumps with 3 Batemans beers on tap: XB, XXXB and Yellabelly Gold. The Red Lion is the only outpost for Bateman's ales for many miles and is I believe a treasure in the Cambridge area. The guest ale is Thwaites Lancashire Bomber.



The XB (3.8%), which looks bright amber and frothy, is light and malty; very drinkable.

Nicola treats

herself to a glass of Kissing Tree Rose from California. We settle down at a table to the left and grab a food menu. While scanning the lunchtime baguettes and omelettes, we detect the strains of Rod Stewart wafting across from the bar. I am no fan, but Nicola perks up. It is "Young Turks." Undeterred, I order the prawn option and Nicola the sausage.

One reason for visiting on Saturday lunchtime is that we hope to have a chat with the good people that run this friendly pub. Landlady Toni is buzzing around, but smiles and agrees to an interview. We eat first though. The baguettes are lengthy; more baton or torpedo?



My food is enhanced by a light, peppery salad. The prawns bathe in a slightly lemony Marie Rose sauce

with hints of paprika.

I am amazed that Rod Stewart once teamed up with soul legend Ronald Isley to crucify "This Old Heart of Mine", but find I am happily munching along. Nicola has 3 mighty porkers (from Eric Tennant's butchers in Newmarket) which are awash in onions.

I pop out to the toilet, which has pot plants and incense sticks – so pleasant I think I could take my drink in and spend an hour or two. On returning I see Toni changing the CD. "Disc two!" she chuckles.

Not discouraged we settle down for a chat. Although Toni has only been at the helm of The Red Lion since March this year, she is a familiar face in the local pub trade. Since the 1980s she has worked at The White Swan in Stow-cum-Quy and The Dyke's End in Reach before taking her first step into pub management. I jump in to ask how difficult it must have been starting up. Toni and partner David found it "relentless hard work" at first, with cellar/kitchen machinery playing up; some appliances particularly in the kitchen needed replacing. (The pub in recent times has had a few ups and downs, but in my opinion the beer has always been good.) After a week closed to sort everything out and set up they went for it. "You get out what you put in," comments Toni. "It was daunting at first, as we tried to rebuild the clientele, persuading locals to return to the pub."

Batemans brewery (according to the reverse of their beermats "Run by brewers,



# Swaffham Prior

not accountants”) helped with training and also contributed towards other upgrades, such as a new fence in the lovely rear garden. David joins us from the kitchen, and greets us with a firm handshake. Other investments have been made initially at Toni and David’s own expense – I note again the really very pleasant toilets which must have cost a few quid!



They have been surprised how quickly things have turned around. With Batemans ales from 90 miles away, and quality food cooked by David, (with help from trainee chef Josh) it is no mystery. However, the main ingredient for

me is the welcome. Toni has lived in this area for many years, and indeed lives in the village, and it is perhaps this that makes the Red Lion so successful. The food side of the pub is very busy, often fully booked out from Thursdays to Sundays, with special occasions like Paella Night. On Fridays, after the main service, at around 9.30pm there is a supper which is usually a curry or chili, or in the most recent example, buffalo chicken. (I really must join the supper... soon!) Every 6 weeks or so there is live music, and also a music quiz on the last Sunday of each month. The pub also has a ladies’ and a men’s darts team. But there is more...

Possibly by the time this article goes to press, The Red Lion will be proudly unveiling arguably the largest pumpkin in Britain! It currently lives behind the pub and will take 7 men to move it onto its scaffolding. Hallowe’en will be quite something at The Red Lion! Look out for live music from The Duellists, with quite a lot of pumpkin soup, cakes, etc...

Talking always creates a thirst, so Nicola doubles up the rose and I go for the XXXB (4.5%). It has hints of berry and biscuit. Nicola is drawn to the display of chocolate bars (Crunchie, KitKat, Bounty, etc.), but resists. I like to see chocolate on sale in a pub; nothing goes better with a beer. One of the locals points out that Swaffham Prior has been without a village shop for at least 15 years, giving the pub even more reason to sell the odd Dairy Milk.

Rodney’s rhythmic “Downtown Train” is good darting music. Toni kindly puts the lights on, rolls out the oche and provides a well stocked darts box, with spare stems/ flights, etc. Game on! Nicola, who is recovering from dartistis, flukes the occasional treble 18 and double top. However, I retain my nerve with a check out of 4. The next leg is a formality, but Nicola (Unicorn, 90% tungsten 21g darts with Terry Jenkins flights) then claws her way back into the match with a double 15 finish. Eventually I triumph 4 legs to 2, but we are distracted by 4 men who are using a spirit level mobile phone app to balance the newly restored clock.



Another beer follows, this time the chalky Lancaster Bomber (4.4%). When poured there is a marvelous crown, sign of a beer in great condition. There is a lovely raisin aftertaste – this is really a

very good pint! We agree that this is a most friendly pub. It is a good job that Toni and David did not take any advice from Rod Stewart who, as we leave, barks “I Don’t Want To Talk About It...”

# Burwell Museum: Popping into History

Mel Worgan, formerly of The Museum of Cambridge and now of Burwell museum and Windmill asked if we would mind running a pop up pub during their Harvest Festival celebration. The event showcased beers from 3 local breweries, Crafty Brewery, Milton Brewery, and Black Bar Brewery and was a great success.

Pints and Pubs blogger Adam Walker produced a booklet of lost pubs, which, as you can tell from Mel's letter was also well received.

*Dear Will,*

*Thank you to everyone at Cambridge and District CAMRA for your support and enthusiasm at today's Harvest Fair event. We had 159 visitors in total and although the final numbers have to be crunched, expect to have made around £600 for the museum.*

*That is a huge sum to a little museum like Burwell and will allow us to do some great work. We had amazing feedback and everyone asked was keen to see similar events at the museum in future, especially promoting real ales, heritage recipes and local pub history. Adam's wonderful booklet of Burwell pub research also had people talking about lectures and oral history projects so we will follow-up on that soon. Again, a huge thank you from all at the museum and please do keep in touch.*

*All the best, Mel Worgan.*

Burwell Museum

The Burwell Museum is an intimate collection of edge of fen village memorabilia and village history. [www.burwellmuseum.org.uk](http://www.burwellmuseum.org.uk)



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# Heart of the Community:

The village of Toft, which lies 6 miles west of Cambridge, appears in the Domesday Book as Toft and today has a population of just under 600. In the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century it had three pubs, The Sun, The Black Bull and The Red Lion. Tighter regulations in 1869 probably led to the loss of The Sun. In 1966 The Black Bull was converted to residential use. In 1991 Toft's last pub, the Red Lion, was converted to a Chinese restaurant. It is a sad tale that has been paralleled many times, before and since, across the country.

So Toft is now dry? Well, actually no. In 1999 a group of residents formed the Toft Social Club (TSC) to help fill the void. As part of the village's Millennium celebrations, with the help of grants from the National Lottery and South Cambridgeshire District Council, the village hall, which holds up to 100 people and is known as the People's Hall, was refurbished. This included installing a bar and updating the kitchens and toilet facilities.

Toft Social Club is an entirely volunteer run limited company. It was intentionally set up to be separate from the People's Hall, which is a registered charity, although it does have an occupation agreement with it. Village residents are encouraged to join TSC which charges £1 for life membership for residents and people employed in the village. Membership for others is £10 per annum.

TSC uses the People's Hall every Thursday, Friday, Saturday and Sunday evening from 8 until 11pm (10:30 on Sundays) and runs many events including film nights, quiz nights, bingo, bowls, darts, concerts, pantomimes and themed food nights. Initially the bar served keg Greene King IPA and lager but demand from members, some of whom were also CAMRA members, resulted in the introduction of cask ale in 2002.

Being free of tie allowed them to buy from local breweries. The Cambridge Hash House Harriers (they claim to be a drinking club with a running problem) held their 2002 AGM at the People's Hall after their run and put a huge dent in the beer supplies.



This became an annual event and in 2005 it evolved into TSC's first

Beer Festival. Draught ciders were added in 2008. The sixth beer & cider festival in 2010 featured 13 real ales and over 1,000 pints were sold over the weekend.



In early September I attended the tenth Toft Beer & Cider Festival and amongst others I met Martin Sebborn and Roger

Thorogood who were serving their ales direct from the cask for £2:20 a pint.



Martin, deputy chairman of TSC, is a long-term member of CAMRA and helped ensure that this year's 13 ales included some from the Brandon,

Buntingford and Tring breweries.



The four ciders included ones from Potten and Cambridge. Of the beers, I particularly

enjoyed the Brandon Red-i (4.0%) and the Tring Kotuku (4.0%). Unfortunately, being a coeliac, Martin was unable to enjoy all that he had laid on for the festival-goers but the

# Toft - Trying to Cope Without a Pub

inclusion of gluten-free Wold Top, Against the Grain (4.5%) ensured that he didn't miss out entirely. As well as the liquid refreshment, food was also available.

On Saturday evening this included a three-meal menu and on Sunday lunchtime a



roast dinner. They also had live music on Saturday and Sunday evenings. Not

surprisingly the hall was busy and the warm evening ensured that the outside tables were also in heavy use. The first weekend in September is already pencilled in for Toft in my 2015 diary but I may well drop by before then.

As well as paying a monthly rent to the People's Hall, TSC also passes on any



surplus it makes. At a time when many village halls are millstones round the necks of parish councils

Toft has found a way to ensure that their People's Hall is a true community asset. It's certainly not the same as having a pub as it is completely dependant on hard work, freely given, but it is the next best thing.

Many thanks to the Toft Historical Society [www.tofthistoricalsociety.org.uk](http://www.tofthistoricalsociety.org.uk) and the Toft Social Club [www.toftsocialclub.org.uk](http://www.toftsocialclub.org.uk) whose web sites I mined heavily for this article.

Alistair Cook

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# CAMRA Ale Trails 2014

Many thanks and accolades to those of you who managed to complete the ale trails this year. T-shirts are now in the nominated pubs, so please ask at your chosen bar. It may be useful to have proof of identity when asking.

Our Ale trails are run over a two-month period, April 1<sup>st</sup> to May 31<sup>st</sup> each year. We ask CAMRA members as well as the general public to visit and drink beer at least 12 of the pubs listed in one or all of the trails.

Those who manage to complete this mission are rewarded with an exclusive Ale Trail T-shirt, which is left for them to collect at a pub of their choice.

First introduced in 2012, the trails were warmly greeted by both pub goers and by publicans; the former because it brought to their attention pubs they may never have thought to have visited, and the latter because it encouraged people to try, and hopefully return to, their pub.

But the trails also have another, equally important, use. They are a means of gathering public opinion about the pubs and beers available in our district.

Those of you who completed the ale trail form will have noticed that it asks you to name your favourite beer and the pub it was served in. A large number of people complete the trails and as we sift through the returns we are able to determine patterns of recommended pubs and ales. The pubs then go on to be shortlisted for the Good Beer Guide, and the beers are taken forward for judging by the branch tasting panel.

Some branch members follow the trails and then offer an opinion on every pub they visit. These opinions are very welcome and valued, and they too have a bearing on the pubs we shortlist for branch awards and

Good Beer Guide short listing.

This short list, of around 50 pubs is then presented to CAMRA branch members whose vote will determine which pubs will go into the guide.

So what did we learn this year?

It was good to see that the newly introduced pubs were enthusiastically received. There were good reports from people who had visited The Pheasant, Great Chishill and The Reindeer, Saxon Street. The Crown, Ashley and the Golden Hind, Milton Road, Cambridge, also received a special thumbs up.

Of the regular inclusions, The Blue Ball, Grantchester, The Queens Head, Newton, and the Haymakers, Chesterton did well.

On the brewery side, a lot of people enjoyed Crafty Beers ales, Sauvignon Blonde, and Carpenters Cask ales being mentioned more than any other local beer. Perhaps not surprisingly given the number of local pubs they supply, Adnams took the title of "most mentioned brewery", with Ghost Ship and Broadside sharing the honours as the favourite beers of the tour.

## *The Ale Trail Special Prize*

*Congratulations to Mr D Elborn who was among the many people who managed to visit every pub on all of the trails and who went on to win the special draw prize of a meal for two, kindly donated by The Mill, Mill Lane, Cambridge.*

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# Meet The Landlord: Mario Castiglione

## The Maypole, Park Street Cambridge



bars have 8 hand pumps, doh!), me sipping my pint of something dark and tasty, him having a half of the same and Mario began his story.

He was brought up on a farm in Sicily, the youngest son of a family of 8 children. His parents wanted him to stay on the farm, but Mario had other ideas. It wasn't that he didn't enjoy being a farmer, though he admits looking after livestock was a challenge, it was just – well to be honest, it was difficult for him to meet girls. He did have access to a social life but that was usually out of season when he was allowed to work as a waiter in a local hotel. He noticed how much respect and social contact the hotel bar managers enjoyed, and realised that this was a life he would like to pursue.

In 1962 he moved to England and soon was contracted to the Grosvenor Hotel Chester. These were the days when immigrants were expected to enter contracts and keep to them, so when, later that year, Mario moved to Cambridge in order to support a brother who was struggling to acclimatise to England, he was hauled before the local police and given a firm slap on the wrist. Thankfully, there was less officialdom in those days and Mario was allowed to stay in Cambridge, securing a position as bar tender in the Garden House Hotel.

In 1965, he was given a job with Berni Inns, which eventually led to him moving to King's Lynn, where he met Christine, the lady he describes as his "rock". They married within a year of meeting,

The job in King's Lynn didn't work out, so Mario returned to his old post in The Garden House hotel, but things weren't quite the same. The hotel suffered from a massive fire in the early 1970's, and then was severely damaged in a political protest in 1973. The Hotel was sold and the original family atmosphere was lost, so Mario decided to

I guess this title is a bit of a mis-leader really, because Mario, who this year won a CAMRA Lifetime Achievement award, has actually passed the reins of The Maypole to his son Vincent. I make no apologies for this. He still keeps, as he says, "a 10% interest" in the business, taking on bar duties several times a week and greeting customers old and new with the same welcoming smile and the occasional Italian style kiss on both cheeks.

Much has already been written about Mario: In 1984, when he had just moved into The Maypole he represented Great Britain in an International Cocktail Competition, coming a respectable 12<sup>th</sup> out of 43 contestants, and in 1985, with the help of the University Arms Hotel, he undertook a record breaking charity cocktail making marathon, creating 3568 cocktails in remarkably few hours.

But I wanted to, and he let me, delve a bit deeper. We sat together in the public bar, the one with 8 hand pumps (my mistake, both

move on.

He was friendly with the local Tolly Cobbold representative, so asked if they had any city pubs requiring a tenant. A lot of pubs were brought to his attention, but he was adamant that he wanted to stay in the city, where he felt his specialist knowledge of cocktails and real ale could be put to best advantage.

Eventually, in the early 1980s, The Maypole became available, and after that, the formality of an interview. Within 15 minutes of that interview, Mario and Christine were offered the tenancy, and so began, as he says, "The happiest 33 years of my life."

This happiness was increased ten fold when in 1988, their son, Vincent joined the business and, according to Mario, "Took it to another level."

Ironically, if Vincent, who is now such an astute businessman, hadn't been a spendthrift at University – Mario says, "he had a flexible friend (credit card) and he used

it," - he may never have joined the business. It was at the end of term, when presented with a large credit card bill, Mario had told his son. "This isn't a problem, I'll pay it, but you'll have to work in the pub to pay me back."

Vincent went further than that. His interest was piqued, and after finishing college, he got a job with Bass Charrington, determined to learn all he could about the trade. He then returned to The Maypole and business began to soar. Vincent was awarded the title of CAMRA Real Ale Champion in 2010, and the pub has won many accolades since, including Locale and Dark Beer pub of the year titles in consecutive years.

But, with the pub in such safe hands, is Mario ready to fully retire? It doesn't seem likely: "One of the reasons I stayed in this country was I found I had more friends in England than I'd ever had in Italy. I make new friends every day. We often have 3 or 4 hundred people drink in the Maypole over a weekend, and more than likely we will know them all."

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# Taste For The Dark Side:

## Fellows takes the honours at The Red Lion Histon, Festival

There is a good reason why The Red Lion, Histon is the Cambridge CAMRA Dark Ale Pub of the Year 2014. It would be a rare day indeed that you would not see at least one dark ale available to try. More than likely there will be two or more on offer, even more on special occasions such as the annual Histon Beer festival, held every September in a marquee in the Red Lion's garden.

We beer tasters in training often attend the festival of a weekday evening. Our aim is to taste and score as many dark beers as we can, all in the name of practice of course.

This year we decided to up the game a little bit. We'd practised long enough and now it was time to do some actual scoring. With the permission of landlord Mark, and with the help of long suffering festival volunteer, Roger, we set up a long table in a corner of a marquee, and our panel of 8 eagerly awaited the first ale.

This was to be a blind tasting; the only person who knew which beers we were to score was Roger who was not a member of the panel. The beer was poured straight from the cask into a glass jug and then brought to our table just before we were to taste it to ensure each beer was as fresh as it could be.

It was not until we had completed the tasting and announced the winner that we were shown the beer list.

Beer tasting is a very personal thing. We each of us have our preferences and our dislikes and it is always interesting to compare notes after a tasting, which are invariably different. For this reason I haven't listed the scores that each beer received. Instead I've added a few of my own tasting notes – which other tasters may, or may not agree with, but which I thought you might be interested to see, and to compare them

with the CAMRA national beer style notes which are listed below.

Beers in order of tasting;

### **Vale Black Swan Mild 3.9%**

Clarity: Clear#

Colour: Very Dark Chestnut

Condition: good, condition

Nose: Hints of liquorice, roasted malt

Flavour: Bitter sweet

Aftertaste: Strong smooth lasting follow through

### **Welbeck Abbey – Portland Black 4.5% (Dark Mild/Porter)**

Clarity: Clear

Colour: Dark Ruby/Black

Condition: Good condition

Nose: Chocolate, hint of liquorice,

Flavour: Toffee /Chocolate

Aftertaste: lacks body, and taste does not linger

### **Five Points Railway Porter 4.8%**

Clarity: Clear

Colour: Black, cream coloured head

Condition: good,

Nose: Hints of chocolate. Coffee. Treacle? ,

Flavour: not quite rounded enough, dry upper palate

Aftertaste: bitter aftertaste, lingers

### **Binghams Vanilla Stout 5%**

Clarity: Clear

Colour: Chestnut brown/Dark chestnut

Condition: Good,

Nose: Strong Vanilla, Hints of chocolate.

Flavour: Very rounded, vanilla, dark malt.

Smooth

Aftertaste: bitterness lingers and lingers and lingers in a pleasant way

### **Oakham Hause Buckler 5.6% (Foreign Stout)**

Clarity: Clear

Colour: Red/ Chestnut, white head

Condition: good,

Nose: Citrus, lime, grapefruit?

Flavour: Very bitter, biting hops break through the malt

Aftertaste: very bitter, very bitter, bitter, bitter

### **Fellows Double Stout 7.4%**

Clarity: So black I can't really see

Colour: Black, strong head

Condition: good.

Nose: Glucose? Lozenges, sugars,

Flavour: Very rounded. Strong. Balanced fruit and bitterness

Aftertaste: Lingering fruit, enjoyable sweet/ bitter balance

### **Black Sheep Imperial Stout 7.5%**

Clarity: Clear

Colour: Dark Ruby /Black. Brown head

Condition: quite good, head falls quickly

Nose: Spicy, coffee, Cloves? Syrup,

Flavour: Sweet syrup, spice, strong

Aftertaste: Sweet bitter aftertaste.

As I mentioned, scores are personal so I don't think it would be fair to disclose how each beer fared. But we did manage to find a winner.

Fellows Double Stout was declared the CAMRA dark beer of the festival.

## **Know your beer style**

### **STYLE: MILDS**

**Milds** range from black to dark brown to pale amber in colour. Malty and possibly sweet tones dominate the flavour profile but there may be a light hop flavour or aroma. Slight diacetyl (toffee/butterscotch) flavours are not inappropriate. Alcohol levels are typically low. **Pale milds** have a lightly fruity aroma and gentle hoppiness. **Dark milds** may have a light roast malt or caramel aroma and taste, often with liquorice, chocolate or burnt flavours. The milds category includes Scottish **60 shilling** beers; these have mild characteristics with a dominance of sweetness, smooth body and light bitterness.

*Original gravity: less than 1043*

*Typical alcohol by volume: less than 4.3%*

### **STYLE: PORTERS**

**Porters** are black or dark brown from the use of dark malts. They should have a full mouthfeel, firm roast malt character (often coffee-like) with raisin- or sultana-like fruit flavours and a pronounced finish through moderate bitter hopping.

*Original gravity: 1040 or more*

*Typical alcohol by volume: 4.0 or more*

### **STYLE: STOUTS**

**Stouts** are typically black. **Dry stouts** have an initial roast flavour with a distinctive dry roast, often coffee-like, bitterness in the finish. The dry roast character is often achieved by use of roasted barley and can dominate the flavour profile, masking other flavours. Some astringency and a medium to rich mouthfeel are appropriate. **Imperial Russian** stouts can have some or all of these characteristics with more intensity and much higher original gravities and alcohol levels than other stouts. **Sweet stouts** are distinctively sweet in taste and aftertaste through the use of lactose and may have a cloying body.

*Original gravity: 1040 or more*

*Typical alcohol by volume: 4.0% or more*

*Taken from "CAMRA Tasting Guidelines May 2014"*

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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, 30p off a pint.

The Golden Hind, Milton Road, 10% 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, Magdalene Street, 10% off a pint.

The Portland Arms, Chesterton Road 10% off a pint.

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

The White Horse, Barton.

The White Swan, Conington, 10% off a pint.

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

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

The White Swan, Quy.

The Black Bull Sawston, offers 10p off a pint.

Please ask at the bar for further details.



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# The Architect opens according to plan



Sam Calverley, owner of Calverley's, the youngest brewery in Cambridge contacted us earlier this week: "We are excited to announce that we have teamed up with local landlord Ed Barker to re open the County Arms as 'The Architect'.

Expect lots of local real ale from ourselves and the other microbreweries around the area to be show cased here, the main focus of food will be chicken from our rotisserie, but we have also installed a 1950s haberdashery counter built into the bar which will contain traditional pub food such as scotch eggs, pork pies and other ready to eat snacks". We were invited to a "soft" opening on Wednesday 29<sup>th</sup>. How could we refuse?

The Architect, situated at the top of Castle Hill, is tied to Everards Brewery. Like most pub-owning breweries Everards usually insist that the majority of ales sold by their pubs should be their own brand. This became something of a millstone for the then County Arms. Whilst Everards is a perfectly sound, middle of the road, drinking beer, it is not viewed as very exciting. Personally, I like Everards Tiger (4.2%), an award winning best bitter, which at its best can be a perfect balance of toffee malt, and spicy bitter. But, I can understand that, these days, people want to be excited.

More than that, they want variety. This is perhaps why The County Arms struggled a little, and why Everards approached Ed Barker, the landlord who has so successfully revived the Alexandra Arms, Gwydir Street, and asked him to take it on. After some negotiation, Ed agreed and the pub was completely refurbished.

Unfortunately, to the chagrin of some of our traditionalist colleagues, it is totally unrecognisable from its previous incarnation. The traditional wood panelling has been painted grey. The furniture, ranging from a glass-topped table constructed from a gigantic recycled panelled door and (what looks like) scaffolding, to the types of metal framed chairs you'd expect to find in a school assembly hall, has been thrown together following the current fashion I would define as "sparse with gloss".

On the plus side, the bar area has been opened out to create a large airy, and clean drinking- cum- dining area. The slightly seedy feel that had lingered in the old pub has gone. Everything is bright, sparkling and new.

It is early days yet, but I had the feeling that The Architect has not yet worked out its identity and really doesn't know which type of clientele it wants to attract. At least, thank goodness, they have retained the pump clips, so I can actually tell which beer I am ordering!

But whilst I may be slightly scathing about the décor, which I freely admit is down to my personal taste and is a judgement made in the early evening, when the pub had very few customers, I was primarily there to sample the beer, and here is where Ed, in collaboration with Sam, has made the greatest improvement.

5 hand pumps provide a variety of real

ales. On my visit, 4 were working. Of the beers on offer, only one was from Everards; The Tiger taking pride of place in the centre of the bar, but the remaining three were from local breweries: Calverley's Citra, Moonshine October, and Buntingford Hurricane.

The Tiger was as mellow as any I've tried outside of Leicester, and the October, a wheat beer, served as a sharp aperitif. Both beers were in excellent condition and left me wanting more. Fellow drinkers were magnanimous with their praise for the Calverley's and the Buntingford,

Simon, once of the Blue Moon, Norfolk Street, and now the manager of The Architect, explained that there were plans afoot to extend the beer range, incorporating more guest ales from local breweries and installing more hand pumps in the near future. A guided tour of the well-ordered and spacious cellar showed that this ambition would not be thwarted by a

lack of space.

Did I enjoy my visit to The Architect? Yes, I did, and with it being not so very far from my route home from work I am certain to return. It is in my view a welcome addition to the CAMRA recommended Magdalene Street/ Castle Hill area pub tour which is one of the self guide tours we will print in future issues of ALE.



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# Tucking Inn - Will's Foodie Page

Continuing with our beer themed recipes created by chefs from local pubs, this dish provided by Dale Griffiths, Head Chef of The Mill, Mill Lane, Cambridge, can often be found on their Specials board.

**Smoked Chicken + Chestnut Mushroom Pie with Potato + Pesto Croquettes & a Beer, Bacon + Thyme cream. Serve with seasonal vegetables of your choice.**

Serves 4 people

## Ingredients

### **Pie Filling**

2 Chicken breasts  
2 Sprigs of thyme  
1 white onion  
2 cloves of garlic  
1 tbsp vegetable oil  
Wood chips for smoking  
Savoy cabbage  
Ready made Puff Pastry  
100ml Double Cream

### **Croquettes**

500g Peeled Potatoes  
100ml Basil Pesto  
1 large egg  
Bread Crumbs or Panko

### **Beer Cream Sauce**

1 pint of bitter (we used Adnams Southwold)  
3 Rashers of bacon  
2 Sprigs of thyme  
1 Bay Leaf  
1 stick of celery  
1 white onion  
1 carrot  
100ml Double Cream  
200ml Water

## Recipe

Pre heat your oven to 190°C (fan) or 200°C (non)

**For Croquettes:** Boil and mash potatoes, mix in Basil Pesto (we make our own with fresh Basil, Olive Oil, Pine Nuts, Parmesan & Garlic in a blender). Form into 8 cylinders and put in the fridge to chill for 30 mins. Beat an egg to make a wash in a flat-bottomed bowl. Pour the breadcrumbs into dish. Wash the potato cylinders in egg, then roll in the breadcrumbs; repeat this twice to build up a nice crust. Pan fry

for a few minutes till the crust is browned then remove from the pan and put in the oven for 7-10 mins

**For the Pie:** We smoke our own chicken in the kitchen; you can make a smoker easily at home with a deep oven tray, a steamer insert & foil or buy one for £20. We use alder wood chips for a neutral flavour but you can get quite a variety (try Cutlacks on Mill Road). Smoke the chicken for 10 minutes then move breasts to an oven tray and cook for 5-10 mins in the oven. Remove the chicken from the oven and let cool. Finely chop the chicken, mushrooms, thyme leaves, onion & garlic. Fry these in a pan with a little vegetable oil over a medium/high heat. Once the onions & garlic have softened, season with salt & pepper to taste, add the double cream. Simmer gently for 5 minutes until the liquid has reduced. Leave the filling to cool. Roll out puff pastry to 2-3mm thickness or a thin as you can handle. Cover the inside of a large ramekin or medium cappuccino cup with cling film to use as a mould. Shape the pastry around the inside of the mould leaving plenty of extra pastry over the side. Blanch some Savoy cabbage leaves, dry them thoroughly and line the inside of the pastry with them. Fill the pie with the cooled chicken mixture to just below the lip of the mould. Pull the edges of the pastry together and seal using a little egg wash or milk. Pull the cling film from both sides and your little pie should pop out. Cook on its side with the seal underneath, prick a few holes in the top for steam to escape and wash the top with milk for a glaze. Cook for 15-20 minutes.

**For Beer Cream Sauce:** Sweat down finely chopped Onion, Celery & Carrot with a Bay Leaf over a medium heat. Once the mixture starts to caramelise throw in the finely chopped bacon & thyme leaves. Once the bacon is cooked through add all the beer and 200ml of water. Put on a high heat until the sauce has reached a rolling boil. Reduce the amount of liquid by half, stirring often to stop the ingredients sticking. Reduce heat to medium, add 100ml double cream and simmer for a further 2 minutes.

Enjoy!

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# Cambridge Beer Crossword - Number 3 by FRED

1.		2.		3.			4.		5.		6.		7.
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Across: 1 and 5 across. Village that is home to The Red Lion, a Bateman's pub that provides supper at 9.30pm on Fridays! (8,5) 8. If you have a jacket potato, it will have been _____. (5) 9. _____ Revenge, a fine beer from Woodfordes near Norwich. (7) 10. This bitter was first brewed by Calverley's of Cambridge in September 2013. (4) 12. Village (----- cum Quy) that is home to the 17 <sup>th</sup> century timber framed White Swan. (4) 13. A Charles Wells pub found floating in Arbury? (4) 16. The Portland Arms garnishes its superlative burgers with at least one onion _____. (4) 17. If you visit the Liberty Belle in Ely, then try this beer, which is from the South Pole (but did not fly here)! (7) 20. Son of Sid's English _____ was brewed to celebrate the Royal Wedding in April 2011. (3) 21. The Tally Ho is along The High Street here. (11) 23. _____ Rivers Brewery; based up the A10 in Denver. (3) 24. Traditional winter beer from Adnams. (3) 25. Villagers in Haslingfield have been trying to save this Rose. (6)	Down: 1. Market Deeping brewery that makes Meteor and Dark Matter. (4) 2. Great village where we can get Thai food from The Three Tuns. (8) 3. The chaps at Cottenham characterful brewery. (7) 4. Fulbourn brewer that collaborates with Hot Numbers café to make the popular Coffee Stout. (9) 6. The Lion roars again after a refurbishment in this village south of Cambridge. (8) 7. The Bull in Newnham is appropriately the same colour as the middle of a dart board. (3) 11. Everards pub nestling between The Grafton Centre and police station in Cambridge... (4,5) 14. This fruit dominates in Banks and Taylor Porter. (4) 15. Beer from the Carpenters Arms in Great Wilbraham is certainly as its name suggests. (6) 18. Name of pub in Burrough Green that recently welcomed new tenants Emma and Simon. (4) 19. Cambridge pub that has a radiogram! (4) 22. Screech _____; strong American style IPA from Castle Rock, Nottingham. (3)
--	--

Answers to Crossword 2: Across: Cambridge, Ball, Adnams, Let, Swan, Eagle, Hopbine, Devonshire, Railway, Pear, Salisbury, Arms Down: Clarendon Arms, Manage, Game, Bees, Lion, Meet, White, Spring, Everards, Fen, Inn, Mill, Lamb, Beer, Quy

# Cambridge Oktoberfest



The Cambridge Oktoberfest took place on the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> of October. The eighth outing for this festival saw around 1600 people come through the doors. Between them they got through about 2500 pints of 36 different

real ales, mostly from the Cambridge area. The other side of the hall saw a similar amount again of Bavarian beer drunk, with 20 different draught beers served over the weekend – including all six of the Munich Oktoberfest special beers.

As in previous years many of those visiting the festival got in to the Bavarian spirit, opting to get out their Bavarian outfits –



ranging from a feathered hat to a full dirndl. This all contributed to the relaxed and friendly atmosphere

throughout the festival.

None of this would have been possible without the 50 or so volunteers organising and running it – so a big thank you to them.

The next Cambridge CAMRA beer festival is the 19<sup>th</sup> Winter Ale Festival, taking place again at the University Social Club. It opens on Thursday 22 January and runs until Saturday 24.

*Bert Kenward*

*Deputy Oktoberfest Organiser*

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## Christmas at The Old Red Lion

Friday 12th December - Gary Winters with Jazz Quartet Singing the American Songbook.  
Tickets £30 per person

Saturday 13th December - Card Trick Magician. Tickets £30 per person.

Friday 19th December - A stunning classical soprano singer with live classic guitarist singing Christmas classics.  
Tickets £30 per person.

Saturday 20th December - Tribute evening to Michael Buble & Dean Martin.  
Tickets £30 per person.

**All entertainment nights include a 3-course meal.**

## The Old Red Lion

[www.theoldredlion.co.uk](http://www.theoldredlion.co.uk)

The Old Red Lion Inn, Horseheath, Cambridge, CB21 4QF  
**01223 892909** [info@theoldredlion.co.uk](mailto:info@theoldredlion.co.uk)



# 19<sup>TH</sup> CAMBRIDGE WINTER ALE FESTIVAL

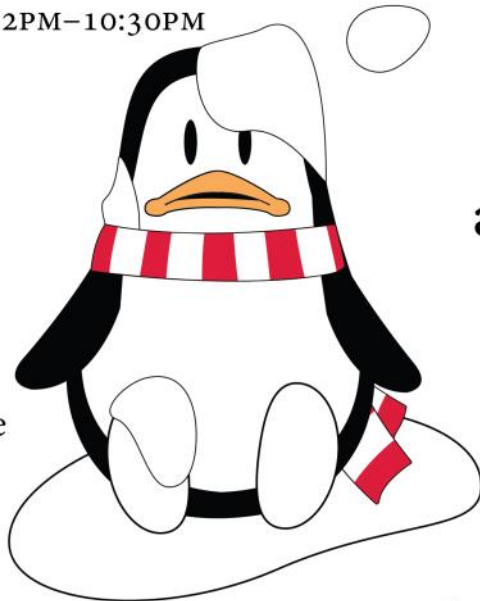
Thursday 22–Saturday 24 January 2015

Thursday 5PM–10:30PM  
Friday 12PM–3PM  
5PM–10:30PM  
Saturday 12PM–10:30PM



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