

ale

Cambridge & District Branch Newsletter

Issue 373 June 2015



CAMPAIGN
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**The Queen Edith:
Milton brewery open
another winner**



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Pub News

Regular readers will be aware that I usually like to begin Pub News with a summary of all that is going wrong in the pub and brewery world. Maybe it's because I'm writing this in the reflective afterglow of yet another fantastically successful Cambridge CAMRA beer festival, (our thanks to the Beer Festival Committee and every one of our volunteers; it wouldn't work without you!), or maybe I'm still suffering the shock of the unexpected Tory victory in the recent election (only time will tell whether or not they live up to their promise to support small businesses, including pub owners and tenants, or will just look after their big business buddies), but I thought on this occasion I'd leave the political stuff (well most of it) till the end.



It looks very much like Milton Brewery is on to another winner with The Queen Edith, Wulfstan Way. Cited by

local newspapers and bloggers as the first new build pub since The Ancient Druids opened its doors in 1984, the "Edith", risen from the ashes of the demolished estate style pub which it replaces has received universal praise. Sadly, The Ancient Druids closed 12 years after opening and is now a Chinese restaurant. Judging by the response from the local community this is not a fate that awaits our newest pub. Chris Rand, resident of Queen Edith's ward and writer of Queen Edith's Online, welcomed the pub, saying that he'd found "a great line up of beers". He also enthused about the outside seating, which is "... set far enough back from the road to make it very pleasant on a sunny day".

CAMRA members who live in the area have been equally as enthusiastic in giving praise; one of them noting that it had the makings of a "real community pub". Guest beers are tweeted in advance:
The Queen Edith @QueenEdithPub.

Branch Diary

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

Tue 9 Jun: 8:00, Open Branch Meeting, Plough, Duxford

Tue 14 Jul: 8:00, Open Branch Meeting, Plough, Shepreth

Tue 11 Aug: 8:00, Open Branch Meeting, Cock, Castle Camps

Tue 8 Sep: 8:00, Open Branch Meeting, Histon Beer Festival, Red Lion, Histon

Fri 16 – Sat 17 October: Cambridge CAMRA Octoberfest, University Social Club

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Pub News continued



Another pub shut for a long time and due to re-open is The Royal Standard, Mill Road. I

received a text from Tom Canning, formerly of The Plough and Fleece, Horningsea, telling me that things hadn't worked out for him there, but that he was looking forward to managing The Royal Standard when it re-opens "sometime in August". Meanwhile, The Plough and Fleece has returned to selling mainly Greene King listed ales. The local community continues to support the pub, and we wish the new tenants every success.



The Burleigh Arms, Newmarket Road has announced that it is keen to lose its "sports bar" reputation.

The pub is now owned by the owners of The Old Spring, Ferry Path, who have "re-decorated", "refitted the kitchen" and "reworked the bar area". Sports on show will be restricted to "key rugby games and the Boat Race". Disappointed football fans could do worse than to move to The Dobbler's Inn, Sturton Street. This Charles Wells pub has a TV in every room and an enthusiastic, sports following, clientele.



Chatting to a customer at the Cambridge beer festival, I was persuaded to check out The White Horse,

Milton. I gave the pub a call and learned that it is faring very well. Real ale and food sales are up so much that they have increased number of real ale dispensing pumps from 4 to 6 and employed an additional chef. The White Horse, which has just been awarded a Casque Mark, is

owned by Enterprise Inns, so beers supplied are from the SIBA list with an occasional local beer, sometimes Lord Conrad's, being allowed. Sharp's Doom Bar (4%) is a regular offering whilst the other 5 pumps are used for guest ales. The annual White Horse beer festival, their 9th, will run from 9th to 13th September. whitehorseilton.co.uk.

CAMRA award winning pubs, The Live and Let Live, Mawson Road, and The Three Horseshoes, Stapleford will also be holding festivals this summer.



The "Live" which won the title Cider Pub of the Year is celebrating by holding a cider festival 26th – 27th June.



Dark Ale Pub of the Year, The Three Horseshoes, Stapleford has a beer festival 28th-31st August

Two beer festivals I'm sorry to have missed are The Black Horse Rampton, the dates of which, unfortunately, clashed with our own beer festival, and The Flying Pig, Pigfest. Locals in Rampton tell me that The Black Horse is well worth a visit, not only for the quality of its beer but also for its generously portioned Sunday roasts. The Pigfest is an annual event bringing together local beers and local musicians in a celebration of all that's good in the world, and all for charity. This year over £300 was donated to the MS Society.



Another pub famous for its charitable fund raising is The

Red Lion, Histon. This will be the 17th year that it has hosted The Histon Beer Festival (7th – 11th September), the proceeds from which are donated to local causes. theredlionhiston.co.uk

Three pubs situated in the Bridge Street area of Cambridge, The Mitre, The Baron of Beef and The Pickerel will be providing beers for the Bridge Street Beer Festival (11th – 14th June). Customers will be able to enjoy a selection of ales in each of the pubs. Funds raised will be donated to the Arthur Rank Hospice.

A number of newspaper articles have covered Cambridge pubs since the April edition of Ale. The Cambridge News continues to write about local pubs in its Restaurant Reviews, and The Guardian recently ran an article naming The 10 Best Craft Ale Pubs in Cambridge.

Congratulations to The Architect, The Blue Moon, The Brew House, The Pint Shop, The Grain Store and The Kingston Arms for getting on the list. I won't comment on the merit of the article, after all any such list has to be seen as subjective, but I will say that had I been inclined to make this list I might have included The Cambridge Blue, Bacchanalia (shops are allowed too) and The Mill.

Which leads me to the political stuff I said I wouldn't mention till the end.

Widespread reports that the Greene King takeover of Spirit Pub Company would result in a challenge by the competition regulator were scotched at the end of May when The Competition and Markets Authority announced that, in its view, Greene King would need to divest only 16 pubs to meet local competition concerns. Two Cambridge pubs are affected by the merger, the Pickerel, Magdalene Street, which is currently under new management, and The Golden Hind, Milton Road. Neither pub is on the list of pubs to be divested. The Golden Hind has recently increased its number of hand pumps from 6 to 8. Cottage Brewery beers seem to be a favourite here (which is a shame considering that the landlord currently has the whole SIBA list to choose from), though Tydd Steam, and Timmy Taylors are also sometimes on offer, alongside 7 ciders and perries. The

Pickerel and The Golden Hind are both very popular managed pubs. There should be no reason for the new owner to change them.



The future of the ex Greene King pub, The Tree, Stapleford is looking more and more insecure. Rumour has it

that the current owner, who is itching to demolish the whole site and replace it with a house is threatening to knock down the pub's outhouses. The Tree has been registered as an Asset of Community Value (ACV), and as such is protected by planning restraints, but it is unclear whether or not this protection extends to the outhouses.



Another rumour suggests that, after several failed attempts to gain permission to convert The Pear Tree,

Hildersham into a house, the owners may be willing to put the pub back on the market. The Pear Tree has been registered as an ACV, which means that Hildersham villagers should get an option to buy should this be the case.

Cambridge CAMRA Rural Community Pub 2015, The Little Rose, Haslingfield, has been purchased by the current landlord and landlady, Neil and Sue. The couple have used their life savings and sold their houses in order to buy the pub. We wish them every success in their venture.

Brewery News

Congratulations To Cambridge Moonshine Brewery, Fulbourn who would have been the first of the Cambridge Beer Festival brewery bars to sell out of beer, had they not been able to return home to get some more. Moonshine used our festival to showcase the first 5 of 13 special edition "Moon" beers; beers brewed on the night of each full moon throughout 2015.

Pub News continued

Lord Conrad's Brewery, Dry Drayton, also enjoyed a successful festival. Owner Jon Neale spent a great deal of the festival filming for a documentary, which is apparently destined for Channel 4. I hope they cut my bit out!

Cambridge Brew House reports that sales are increasing across the whole of its range. Brewer, Mark, says he is considering the possibility of producing craft ales in the future.

Fellows Brewery, Cottenham continues to make an impression with its well-crafted high gravity beers. The Old Fellow Double Stout at 7.4% is rare to find but well worth the hunt.

Crafty Beers Brewery, Great Wilbraham, Sauvignon Blonde golden ale gained the record for being the fastest beer to sell out during a

Cambridge CAMRA gala evening when in April this year a cask was sold in just over an hour. Owner/ brewer, Rob Beardsmore says he is looking for larger premises, but is too busy brewing to look very hard.

And finally....

The Scotsman newspaper has reported that Scottish brewers Arran Brewery have bought The Devil's Dyke Brewery, Reach. The article quotes Arran's Gerald Michaluk saying that the microbrewery will be a "staging post to get into London" and that it will be a "distribution hub". Fortunately it also says that Arran will add Devil's Dyke beers to its existing Scottish range. I called The Dyke's End pub: as far as they are aware, it is unaffected by this sale.

Beer Festival Diary

Cambridge Bridge Street Festival	11th - 14th June
The Green Man, Grantchester	12th - 14th June
The Cambridge Blue	16th - 21st June
The Quay Mill Hotel, Stow-cum-Quy	19th - 20th June
The Live and Let Live Cider Festival	26th - 27th June
The Alexandra Arms	3rd July
The Chequers, Cottenham	3rd - 5th July
Shelford Feast, Shelford	11th July
The Anchor, Burwell	17th -19th July
Three Horse Shoes, Stapleford	28th - 31st August
The 17th Histon Beer Festival	7th - 11th September
The White Horse, Milton	9th - 13th September
CAMRA Booze on the Ouse, St Ives	8th - 10th October
Cambridge CAMRA Octoberfest	16th - 17th October

Dates verified by Adam Walker, Pints and Pubs (<https://pintsandpubs.wordpress.com>)

Lost pubs of Cambridge(shire)

Last issue's 'mystery' lost pub was correctly identified by David Elbdon, Emma Metcalf and Geoff Thornley as the former **Hat & Feathers** on Barton Road.



It first appears in the directories in 1855, the same time as the nearby Red Bull, in what was then sometimes considered Grantchester rather than Newnham. Geoff, who was present at the formation of Camra in Cambridge and worked at the very first Cambridge Beer Festival, remembers how it was in the early 1970s when it was a Tolly pub: with carpet on the floors it attracted a more upmarket set (with prices to match) than the more basic Red Bull.

David remembers going there with his teammates after playing cricket on St Catharine's College cricket ground.

Your humble correspondent used to visit occasionally in the late 1980s when he was living in Newnham; the carpets were still there, but most memorable was a framed collection of WW1-era 'French' postcards hanging on the wall by the door, under the banner 'Sgt Gary 'Snapper' Williams's Barrack-room Belles'.

By the beginning of the present millennium the pub had become popular with students – indeed there was talk at the time of Robinson College taking it over to be their college bar – but fortunes evidently waned and it finally closed in 2009.

Here's another one to test (and hopefully elicit) your memories:



Where is/was it? What was it called? Do you remember it when it was a pub? We'd like to find out more about all our lost pubs, so if you have any memories of it – and even better, photos of when it was still open – please get in touch with pub-history@cambridge-camra.org.uk. Answer, hopefully some stories about it, and another teaser, next issue.



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Cambridge & District CAMRA

Each year CAMRA Cambridge and District Branch celebrate the best pubs in the area with their annual awards. Pubs are nominated by branch members and voting takes place at one of the monthly open meetings. Some individuals are also recognised for their support and commitment to real ale. Find out more about the pubs listed here at www.whatpub.com.

Pub Of The Year 2015

Winner: The Mill, Mill Lane

The Mill, Mill Lane is one of those very rare things, a pub that attracts a very healthy tourist trade but at the same time manages to keep its identity as a typical British pub. Whilst Adnams Southwold Bitter is ever present, possibly to cater for the less adventurous drinkers, and one or two of the pumps usually provide an example from the City Pub Company's own Brew House Brewery, The Mill remains committed to small and local brewery beer.



Congratulations to, Andy, Lauren and their dedicated staff, who are not only running an excellent pub, which provides

invariably excellent beers, but are also providing a much needed service to the Cambridge tourist industry in helping to introduce the uninitiated to the wonderful world of real ale.

Real Ale Champion 2015

Winner: Tim Ward

This award is in recognition of the steps taken in the last few years by Cambridge City Council to protect pubs in the city. Although we still firmly believe that there is more that can and should be done,



Cambridge City Council's Interim Planning Policy Guidance on the Protection of Pubs in the City of Cambridge in 2013 and its use in 2014 of Article 4 Directions to prevent unregulated pub demolitions went beyond what any other local authority had done at that time and remains at the forefront of local authority pub protection measures. It is great credit to all city councillors at that time that these policies had cross party support but they still required formulating and effecting. Opposition to the policies came not from our local politicians but from those who stood to gain financially from pub closures. The city council's policies had been robustly structured such that they were able to stand up to the threat of judicial review. Tim Ward was an Arbury councillor and held the City Council's Planning portfolio from 2010 to 2014 when these policies were developed and introduced. Ali Cook

Cider Pub of the Year 2015

Winner: The Live and Let Live, Mawson Road

A pub that has long had a reputation for the quality and range of its ales, especially its dark ales, and its rum festivals, is now earning a reputation for the quality of its real ciders.



Pete & Haggis have kept the pub in every edition of the CAMRA Good Beer Guide from 2001 onwards. It was

our pub of the year in 1999 and 2006, and our Dark Ale Pub in 2012, and Happiest Licensee 2015 (OK that bit I made up). Ali Cook

Most Improved Pub of the Year (Rural) 2015

The Plough, Shepreth

12 months ago this pub was derelict. It had been derelict for 5 years, and prior to that it had been a failing high end restaurant. Now it is a

Award Winners 2015

pleasant, open spaced area divided into three distinct areas. The Spitfire snug, so called because Douglas Bader is said to have drunk there, The Plough bar, The Mandolin music and concert area, and the Meadow Bar, which leads to an expansive garden. It serves real ale –



more often than not a local real ale. It has an exhibition room and art gallery and meeting rooms used by groups ranging

from school charities to local business. It is the dream come true for owner Nick Davis and his family.

Red Lion Dark Ale Beer Tasting

Winner: Fellows Old Fellow Double Stout



Presented by Mark Donachy, Landlord of the The Red Lion, Histon.

Lifetime Achievement Award

Winner: John Roos and Karolin Rejniak, The Blue Ball Inn, Grantchester



John, who has been described as “as old as some of the fittings in the pub” has worked in pubs all of his life – or

at least since 1964. Karolin joined him 18 years ago and together they built up a community trade and a loyal following in the Blue Ball Inn. Karolin absolutely loves the pub, memories of

which, she says, will see them both through their old age. Together they made The Blue Ball a very special pub. They will be greatly missed when they retire later this year.

LocAle Pub of the Year 2015 (City)

Winner: The Architect, Castle Hill



This pub is a LocAle paradise. Five handpumps, all but one serving locally brewed beers. It is hard to believe that

the pub is tied to Everards Brewery. It is a traditional pub hidden behind an ultra modern decor, designed to attract clientele old and young. The beer is always in excellent condition – and in most cases hasn't had far to travel.

LocAle Pub of the Year 2015 (Rural)

Winner: The Bank Micropub, Willingham



Local beers feature strongly in this friendly little pub which was once the village bank. Although not a full size pub,

‘micro’ is perhaps a misnomer here. The space has been very well used, with an L-shaped drinking area around a shortish bar that, along with some of the furniture, was rescued from a closed pub and renovated. You literally feel that you are walking into someone's front room for a chat

Community Pub of the Year 2015 (City)

Winner: The Flying Pig, Hills Road

Just look at the walls and ceiling, adorned with a

Award Winners 2015



pastiche of old posters and pig paraphernalia, and you'll recognise the community aspect of this city pub. Live

music, intimate lighting, enhanced by candles on the tables; beers from local breweries and eclectic, always loud, conversations from the clientele. It is a pub you feel at home in as soon as you walk through the door.

Community Pub of the Year 2015 (Rural)

Winner: The Little Rose, Haslingfield



The pub has two darts teams on Tuesdays, pétanque on Wednesdays and cribbage on Thursdays.

Bingo on

second and fourth Wednesday of every month and a quiz the last Friday of each month.

It serves well-kept beer, traditional food and has a vibrant community pub atmosphere.

The pub was recently purchased by the current landlord and landlady, Neil and Sue. The couple have used their life savings and sold their houses in order to buy the pub.

Dark Ale Pub of the Year 2015

Winner: The Three Horseshoes Stapleford

The Three Horseshoes is one of the two remaining pubs in the village of Stapleford. During the two years since its reopening (and renaming) under the current management it has established itself firmly as a well-respected real ale outlet on the southern fringes of Cambridge.



It is a local community pub and serves as one of the main local hubs.


While the mainstay of the customer base

is local, it also draws many regulars from the surrounding villages. It received the award of "Most improved Rural Pub" from the local Camra branch last year, and has also been included in the 2015 edition of the Good Beer Guide.

The pub regularly serves 7 real ales and 2 real ciders/perrys, and takes pride in serving an interesting range of beers, including at least one dark beer at all times. The beer is good, the atmosphere is friendly and the bar staff know their business.

The Horrible Helge

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Pub of the Year, The Mill



I asked manager and assistant manager Andy and Lauren Hodges of the 2015 POTY.

“What does being Cambridge CAMRA Pub of the Year mean to you?”

Andy: It has increased trade. We are certainly seeing more people who know a thing or two

about real ale. We get asked a lot of questions about the our beer. It keeps us on our toes.

Lauren: Our trade is very seasonal. We are now preparing for the summer rush, but this year April and May were exceptionally busy months too.

Andy: There has been an increased interest in the pub. We had a TV crew filming here a couple of weeks ago.

Lauren: We are now an established real ale destination pub! That gives us a good feeling.

“And”, I asked, “do you have any plans for the future of the pub?”

Andy: More of the same, really

Lauren: We can be even more selective about our beers. We would like to provide more beers from our local breweries.



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The BikeBus Explorer brings South Cambs pubs in reach

South Cambridgeshire District Council would like us to remind you of their BikeBus service. What an ideal time of year to remind you! Summer is here, country pubs are beckoning, and two of the pubs that are reachable by this service, the White Horse in Barton and the Chequers in Orwell, were included on the Cambridge CAMRA 2015 Ale Trails.

Sadly, entries for the Ale Trail competition ended on 31st May, so you won't be able to claim a CAMRA Ale Trail T- shirt, but that doesn't mean you shouldn't give this innovative service a try.

To quote the South Cambs advert: "[You can] Savour the pubs of South Cambridgeshire on Sundays and bank holidays – courtesy of the BikeBus Explorer, a novel bus service which tows a 20 cycle bike trailer. Whether you wend your way by foot or cycle the BikeBus can get you closer to the host of country pubs along its route. The BikeBus travels from Cambridge rail station through Newnham and out to Gamlingay via a circular route, taking in Wimpole Estate. For details of the route map and timetable see www.scambs.gov.uk/bikebus-explorer."

"Along the way you'll find The White Horse and The Hoops at Barton, The Wheatsheaf at Little Eversden (actually in Harlton –ed.), The Willow Tree at Bourn, The Chequers at Orwell, The Hardwicke Arms Hotel in Arrington, The Wheatsheaf and The Cock in Gamlingay, The Duncombe Arms at Waresely, The Crown and Cushion in Great Gransden and The Chequers in Little Gransden, where owner Bob Mitchell is happy to conduct tours of the Son of Sid microbrewery for those arriving by BikeBus. Make an advance booking to view the brewery by phoning 01767 677 348. It's only five pounds for a day explorer ticket, and you can get on and off the bus as many times as you like. So why not seek out and try a new watering hole this week end?"

Sounds good to me!

Other villages with pubs you might like to visit include, Croydon, The Hatleys, Comberton (The Three Horseshoes), and Harlton (The Hare & Hounds).

Haslingfield (The Little Rose), Barrington (The Royal Oak) and Bourn (The Willow Tree) also lie close to the route.

For further information about these pubs visit the Cambridge CAMRA website pubs.cambridge-camra.org.uk or the CAMRA WhatPub website whatpub.com

Ali Cook



CAMRA Beer Tour. April 2015:

"The problem with starting a tour of village pubs at 11.00 on a Saturday morning," admitted Clive Tregaskes, Cambridge CAMRA Social secretary and tour organiser, "is that most of the village pubs don't open until 12.00." And so it was that we sat for several minutes in our completely full 16 seat mini bus attempting to find a pub to go to before the beginning of the planned tour.

Fortunately we in CAMRA are resourceful chaps and after a bit of googling and much perusal of the CAMRA Whatpub website, we headed out towards The Green Man, Grantchester.

www.thegreenmangrantchester.co.uk



Pub manager, Rachel, was completely unfazed by the arrival of 16 thirsty travellers and we were soon tipping a selection of the ales, including Sharp's Doom Bar, Buntingford's Twitchell and Cameron's 4% flagship beer, Strongarm. I opted for a half pint of the latter and wasn't disappointed by its caramel/bitter balance.



White Horse Inn, Barton.

www.thewhitehorseinnbarton.co.uk

As we entered the pub we were immediately struck by how busy it was – busy and noisy! There was a certain amount of banter being

shared amongst the locals, some of it aimed at us, but it was of the good-natured kind, and when things settled down, they were very interested to learn about CAMRA and about our tour. The White Horse is a Greene King pub, which on this occasion could provide only two beers, Greene King IPA, and (Greene King) Morland Old Golden Hen (4.1%). Most of us opted for a half of the hen, which was, to my taste, a little bland.

The next stop in our mystery tour turned out to be a very different kind of pub.

I was very pleased when our bus pulled up outside of The Chequers, Orwell.

www.thechequersoforwell.co.uk



Confession time: I'd never been to this pub before this visit. For some reason I'd thought it was just a fine dining restaurant and of no interest to a discerning beer drinker such as myself. I couldn't have been more wrong. We were welcomed by Jade Long, the assistant bar manager who, once she'd got over the shock of thinking that we 16 were a lunch party someone had forgotten to tell her about, was happy to serve us only drinks.

The selection of beers on offer was both varied and, with the exception of the ubiquitous Sharp's Doom Bar, from relatively local breweries. Many of our party opted for Milton Brewery Sparta (4.3%). I preferred the recently revived Lacons Brewery Legacy (4.4%). Both beers were judged to be served a little on the cold side, but in good nick. Whilst there is no

In Search of Northern Lights

doubt that The Chequers, Orwell has ambitions of becoming a fine dining restaurant (even the bar snacks looked posh to me), the front bar, with it's open fire and wooden furniture maintains a distinctly pub-like atmosphere.



The next pub on our tour, another Chequers, but this time in Little Gransden, certainly shows no ambition of becoming a fine dining establishment, but we couldn't fault the beer. Indeed, we liked it so much we stayed much longer than we had intended – and I dare say drank more than we intended too! This Chequers is the home of Son of Sid brewery. www.sonofsid.co.uk

Landlord and brewer, Bob Mitchell, was in residence and he gleefully gave us an impromptu guided tour of his brewery. The pub is a typical workers drinking hole, and as I sat in the middle bar, perusing the dozens of CAMRA award certificates that adorn the walls, I imagined that muddy-booted farm workers' were sitting beside me. Not surprisingly, all Son of Sid beers were on offer, alongside one guest ale from Church End Brewery and a Pickled Pig cider.



Humphreys, formerly of The Poacher, Elsworth

Next we came across The White Swan, Conington, where new tenants Neil and Caroline

were enthusing about the welcome they had received from the Conington villagers. They had, they told me, managed to increase sales of both ale and beer, mainly by keeping consistent and longer opening hours.

Their intention is to further increase sales by making the pub more welcoming, perhaps by reintroducing the open fires, and to maintain a high quality of both food and beer. The White Swan sells Adnams beers straight from the cask. On this visit the Ghost Ship (4.5%) was in excellent condition.

whatpub.com/pubs/CAM/217/white-swan-conington



Trying not to get tongue-tied, we moved on to the second White Horse of our tour, The White Horse,

Swavesey. Celebrated ALE contributor Fred Laband has written quite a lot about this pub, both in this edition and in ALE 372. Suffice to say that Fred's assertions that it is an excellent and up-and-coming pub are both true. I especially liked the bar billiard table; mainly I think because my partner and I beat all comers on the day.

whatpub.com/pubs/CAM/212/white-horse-swavesey



The final village, but not the final pub, of our tour was drawing near and as we wobbled in to The

Duke of Wellington, Willingham I was feeling decidedly squiffy. Fortunately I don't think anybody noticed.

CAMRA Beer Tour. April 2015

I know "The Duke" quite well and always look forward to going there because it is one of the few pubs in the area that sells Greene King XX Mild (3%) straight from the cask. There were of course plenty of guest beers on offer, I understand that the Skinners Splendid Tackle (4.2%) was extremely nice, but that mild just seems to hit the spot.

www.dukeofwellington-willingham.co.uk



Willingham, which was voted Cambridge CAMRA Rural Community Pub of the Year 2015. Entering this pub really is like stepping into your own front room. It's not just the fact that it isn't

And so to the last pub of our tour, the CAMRA award winning Bank Micropub

much bigger than your average front room, but something about the pub creates an immediate feeling of well-being as soon as you walk through the door. On top of that, you get to try, and to talk about, some very unusual beers. On this occasion the Moor Beer Company, RAW 4.3% was dividing opinion amongst our group. www.thebankmicropub.co.uk

As is our wont, and thanks to a very tolerant bus driver, we spent much longer in The Bank than we had anticipated, and by the time we climbed on the bus to make the journey home I began to suspect that I wasn't the only person feeling slightly inebriated. We were sober enough however to compare notes and to vote for our favourite pub and beer of the tour. The favourite pub, by a large majority was The Bank Micropub, and the favourite beer was Son of Sid, Muck Cart Mild (3.5%) served in The Chequers, Little Gransden



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Another craft ale debate

I've always said that I wouldn't get dragged into the Real Ale/Craft Ale debate, but am terribly confused and hope that by writing this I might achieve some sort of clarification.

I first became aware of craft ale a few years back when I visited London's Euston Tap. I was taken aback a little with the novel setting, and not too enamoured with the basic décor, but it was the first time ever I tried Thornbridge Jaipur, which unusually was available both from cask and keg. I enjoyed both versions, and it has since become established as one of my favourite beers.

I have revisited the Tap several times since, but will admit to preferring the more comfortable and familiar surroundings of the traditionally styled Doric Arch, a pub which sits close by in Euston Station, and which also serves some very good beers.

Anyway, the point of my story is, I happened to pop into one of Cambridge City centre's top 10 craft ale outlets (as defined in The Guardian) the other day. (I won't name the bar, because it might be embarrassing for both of us). I was approached by a friendly bar person who asked if they could help and did I need any help in choosing a beer?

This was pretty good so far. I was impressed with the welcome and the offer of help. I then noticed the prices of said beers, both keg and cask – and couldn't help but comment on them. They were, I felt, very high even for Cambridge – in one case in excess of £10 a pint.

The bar person, who I must say remained polite and professional throughout the conversation, explained that the high prices reflect the high ABV of the beer. They had a point: HM government beer duty charges make up a significant proportion of the cost of a pint (for a 5% beer at 63p, a 7.4% beer at 93p and a 7.5% beer at 122p due to the High Strength Beer Duty). But I'm afraid in this case the argument really didn't stand up to scrutiny. The beer list

featured a number of different beers with strengths hovering around 5%, in fact some of the 6% cask beers were significantly less expensive than the 5% keg offerings.

"That", explained my helper, "is because craft ale uses almost twice as much ingredients as cask ale".

I'm afraid I may have let out a mild expletive at this, and probably should have been evicted from the pub, but my polite companion served me – the cheapest beer I could find – and went about their business as if nothing had happened.

So I sat and enjoyed the beer, which was of pretty good quality, and thought back to a conversation I had had with a local brewer only a few days earlier, when he had maintained that making keg craft beer was "much the same as making cask beer right up to the point of deciding whether to cask the beer or condition it for keg".

Had I been right to believe him, or was I being naïve? Was the bar person correct in their assessment that more ingredients were used in the keg version of "beer with taste"? Or had they been misled?

Clearly I needed to know more about the phenomenon called craft ale. How does it differ to what CAMRA calls real ale? And why does it cost so much? I turned to The Net.

At first it wasn't very helpful. The concept of craft ale it seems originated in America. The US Brewer's Association defines a craft brewer as "... small, independent and traditional". I'm ok

**Does craft
ale really
use twice
as much
ingredients
as cask
ale?**

Another craft ale debate

with this so far, but surely that can apply to all small breweries, including those that restrict their production to cask ales?

And it doesn't really tell us what craft ale is.

Brewdog Brewery gave us a much more helpful definition in its 2011 blog entry:

"For us the distinction should be as simple as beer brewed for taste versus beer brewed for volume."

<https://www.brewdog.com/lowdown/blog/craft-beer-v-real-ale>

Unfortunately the blog goes on to have a bit of a rant about CAMRA, but it does have one more useful insight to offer:

"And we really don't care if that CO2 comes from bottles conditioning (like Sierra Nevada), primary fermentation (like BrewDog) or the beer is carbonated prior to packaging (like Three Floys or also our barrel aged beers)."

So here's a difference. One I already knew of, of course: craft ale as defined by craft ale brewers is carbonated. But does that account for the extra cost? The following is from an American website:

Primary Fermentation:

The first stage of fermentation carried out in open or closed containers and lasting from two to twenty days during which time the bulk of the fermentable sugars are converted to ethyl alcohol and carbon dioxide gas.

<http://www.craftbeer.com/beer-studies/beer-glossary#P>

So, CO2 is created naturally, along with alcohol, when yeast "eats" sugar. Craft beer brewers maximise the CO2 in their product by using closed containers, ensuring that none of the naturally occurring gas can escape. This may account for some initial extra cost, sealed containers are surely more expensive to buy.

And what if the resultant beer isn't carbonated enough? Perhaps more sugar has to be added? That could account for some extra cost – but I don't think it adds up to "double the ingredients."

Let's go on to compare those ingredients. I'm lucky enough to own a copy of Roger Protz and Clive le Pensee's book *The CAMRA Homebrew Classics IPA*. In it there is an original recipe for Burton East India Pale Ale. In order to make a 5 gallon brew of Burton IPA at 6.5% ABV we would require 10 pounds of malt and 10 ounces of hops, 2.5oz of dry hops would be added towards the end of the brew

I searched the web for an American IPA recipe and found over 40,000 of them on Brewtad.
<https://www.brewtad.com/recipes/therapy>

Choosing a random 6.5% recipe I noted the ingredients needed to make 5 gallons of beer: 8.5 pounds of Malt, and 3.5 ounces of Hops. Further hops would be added towards the end of the brew. I haven't listed the yeast, but these quantities were very similar.

I'll admit that findings based on two recipes aren't conclusive, and that there is a large variety of ingredients that can be added to making both cask and keg versions of ale. It is also likely that were Burton to be properly reproduced today it would require far fewer hops to meet our current taste, but I think the suggestion is that, taking these arguments into account, the quantity of ingredients is more or less the same for both brews.

So why is keg craft beer so much more expensive than cask real ale?

I wondered if it was the cost of the ingredients.

**So why is
keg craft
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craft ale debate

For instance, many craft ales use very aromatic American hops to give their beer that distinctive citrus aftertaste. These can be hard to get, and can cost twice as much as English hops. But then I thought of local breweries that also use American hops to flavour their beers. Oakham and Buntingford immediately spring to mind. There isn't a premium to pay for these beers.

And so I'm stymied. I have no idea why we pay a premium for carbonated craft ale.

I thought I had answered my first question: What is craft ale? It is a carbonated ale with taste!

But then I came across a 2013 blog entry by beer writer Mark Dredge who at the time was trying to mend the rift between craft ale brewers and CAMRA

"The thing which annoys me the most is creating a distinction between a cask beer (I'm using 'cask' instead of real ale throughout because it's the actual container which seems to be causing the issues here) and a craft beer. Some people seem to think that if it's in a keg then it's craft and if it's on cask then it isn't. That's just bullshit (where did that even come from?!) There are some breweries who are frequently mentioned – Thornbridge, Magic Rock, etc – because they make both cask and keg beer. Does that mean cask Jaipur is not craft yet the kegged version is? Where does the bottle then fit?"

<http://www.pencilandspoon.com/2013/04/cask-and-craft-time-to-stop-fight.html>

So real ale is craft ale when it has taste and is made by small independent brewers?

Craft ale and real ale are one and the same thing?

For the record, I do buy and enjoy craft ale (of every definition) when I can afford it.

But I'm still very confused.

Will Smith

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It was with some excitement that Ali Cook circulated this photograph to his CAMRA colleagues.

Could it be that Wells and Young's brewery had followed the lead of Everard's Brewery' who

have loosened their beer tie with The Architect, Castle Street, and allowed The Dobbler's Inn, Sturton Street to sell local beers alongside their standard brews?

Unfortunately it isn't to be. We contacted Sam Calverley of Calverley's Brewery, who explained that this is a once (perhaps twice) a year occurrence when he supplies beers for the Dobbler' Inn beer festivals.

The good news is that Calverley's Brewery, which is based in Hooper Street, Cambridge, has installed a brewery shop and off licence. Sam recently tweeted that the shop will be open between 11.00 and 16.00 every Saturday when customers are invited to sample his beers, and will also be able to watch Calverley brews as they are crafted.

<http://www.calverleys.com>

Histon 17th Beer Festival: 7th -11th September 2015

Eagle eyed readers will have noticed the beer festival list we have introduced at the end of Pub News.

In our view beer festivals are to be encouraged, so if your pub has a festival planned please let us know and we'll add it to the list. (Contact details are at the front of the magazine). Better still, if you have photos of old festivals and would like to send them in, or if your pub is having music at their festival and you want to let us know who's playing, send the information to us and we'll try to get the information into the mag.

Music for 2015 Histon Beer Festival

Mon – The Psych-o-bombs

Tues – Sure-Can Playboys

Wed – The Cyriacs

Thurs – Cottenham Brass band



Tucking Inn (Will's Foodie Page)

Beer Bread



This recipe is based on a common American bread recipe. I've replaced the light lager of the original recipe with Moorhouse's Blond Witch, a 4.6% pale ale. This lends a

moist sourness to the bread which I find goes particularly well with strong cheeses. Those who have a sweet tooth simply need to add more sugar.

Ingredients:

150g self raising flour
15g sugar
1 teaspoon salt

12 fl oz Moorhouse's Blond Witch
50g grated strong cheddar
2 tablespoons melted butter
1 tablespoon chopped chives

Pre-heat the oven to 180 degrees C/375 degrees F

Butter a 100mm x 200mm loaf tin with ½ the melted butter

Take a large bowl and thoroughly mix all other ingredients together.

Pour into the pan and place into the oven for 55 minutes. Remove from oven, brush with the remainder of the melted butter and return to the oven for a few more minutes, until the butter has browned.

Serve with butter and/or a lump of strong cheddar and pickles.

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The Red Cow

An Asset of Community Value that can't be saved

Alle contributor Steve Linley recently suggested that the Red Cow, Guildhall Street would soon be lost to us as a pub (ALE 372; Red Cow for the Chop?) He reported that an application had been put in for a change of use from A4 (public house) to A3 (restaurant). He suggested that were this to be permitted Cambridge would be losing “not only another pub, but also a last link with a piece of ‘town’ history going back to the Middle Ages.”

We had high hopes for “The Cow”. Ok, it wasn’t exactly a mecca for beer drinkers. It gave the appearance of being both poorly managed and under invested. But if, as The Cambridge News recently suggested, Cambridge pubs are building up to something of a renaissance, surely, we hoped, a worthy company like the City Pub Company, or the Independent Pub Company would be prepared to take it on and would reintroduce a traditional pub into the city centre?

Surely there was something we, as a local branch of CAMRA could do to ensure that The Red Cow remained a pub?

Well we tried and we failed.

Perhaps in recognition that city pubs may not have the same intense community following that can be enjoyed by village pubs, a legal ruling introduced on April 6th enabled action groups like CAMRA to apply for city pubs to be registered as Assets of Community Value (ACV).

Previous to this ruling, the government had introduced enhancements to ACV legislation that were designed to close existing loopholes that allowed developers to use “permitted development” (PD) rights to demolish a pub or change its use to a shop or restaurant.

On the 8th of May Ali Cook, branch pubs officer, registered The Red Cow as an Asset of

Community Value. Before he did so he checked the planning applications web page to be sure that a decision on the original planning application had not already been made. It hadn’t.

But then it had.

An application for a certificate of lawfulness for the conversion of the Red Cow from pub to restaurant was issued on the 7th of May.

<https://idox.cambridge.gov.uk/online-applications/applicationDetails.do?activeTab=summary&keyVal=NL5WRVDXLBX00>

The CAMRA submission registering the pub as an ACV has been listed as received on the 11th of May.

I am not suggesting any underhandedness here. Clearly meetings are held and it takes time to put decisions on websites. But isn’t it a shame?

In the long term what will this mean for the pub? It is housed in an historic building, and the registration as an ACV should remain valid, so we could hazard a guess that it is unlikely to be demolished. But will it ever return to being a real pub?

Are we going to be a city of expensive wine bars, restaurants and trendy modern beer outlets? Will the city centre traditional pub survive?

If there is to be a renaissance of drinking and dining in our city centre let’s ensure we maintain a diversity of pubs and bars. Yes, there may be a chance for more expensive outlets to shine, but let’s not forget the traditional pub.

Let’s make it a renaissance we can all enjoy.

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42nd Cambridge Beer Festival



Despite the cold and wet (including at least one hail storm) at the start of the week, the 42nd Cambridge Beer Festival ended up with the second highest attendance ever, with over 38,600 coming through the door. Between them they got through just over 100,000 pints of beer and cider.



The beer of the festival was Humpty Dumpty brewery's festival special, the Pan Galactic Gargle Blaster. In

second place was Table Liquor from Ely's Three Blind Mice brewery. The volunteers also choose a beer of the festival - this year it was The Porter from Anspach & Hobday of Bermondsey. As well as the beer of the festival, there's also a cider award - this year it was Biddenden Strong, from Kent. Congratulations to all those winners.

This year's festival charity was SERV Suffolk & Cambridgeshire, a team of volunteers who transport blood and other vital medical products around the region. They managed to raise nearly £12,800 - a new record for the

festival. That money represents a substantial portion of their annual income, so they'll be able to continue doing the important work they do.



None of this would be possible without the efforts of the nearly 500 volunteers who organise and run the festival,

some of whom put in many weeks of their time. We still need more volunteers though - on Saturday afternoon we had to close a bar temporarily due to not having the people to run it. Next year's festival will be the 23-28 May 2016 - please consider helping out, even if you can only do a few hours.



As well as the festival in May, Cambridge & District CAMRA also organise two smaller festivals. Our Octoberfest is 16-17 October and our Winter Ale Festival is in

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Bert Kenward, Festival Organiser





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