

ale



Campaign
for
Real Ale

Cambridge & District Branch Newsletter Issue 403 May 2023



The Geldart - Cambridge CAMRA Branch Pub of the Year 2023

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Pub News

Welcome to ALE 403

Before we catch up on Pub News, I'd just like to give a big shout out to the Cambridge CAMRA Beer Festival organisers. It is great that the festival is making a welcome return, running from 5pm on Monday 22nd May to when we run out of beer on the evening Saturday 27th May. Please come along – and bring your friends; better still, why not volunteer to help for a session or two? It really is a fun thing to do. You can sign up on line <https://www.cambridgebeerfestival.com/event/cambridge-beer-festival-2023/>. Mention ALE and I'll get you a beer!

And now for the news:

Congratulations to Elvis, the licensee of our Cambridge CAMRA Pub of the Year, the **Geldart, Ainsworth Street, Cambridge**, and to the management



team of the Three Hills, Bartlow for being named National Pub and Bar awards Best Pub in Cambridgeshire for the second year in a row.

Picking up from ALE 402, confirmation that Caragh and Jim will be leaving the **Three Horseshoes, Comberton** reached us in the form of the advertising of the lease by pub owners Stonegate Group. Guide rent price is £654 a week.



At the time of writing, the **Blue Lion, Hardwick** remains closed. Greene King are seeking new tenants.

Branch Diary

Don't forget that all Branch members are very welcome to attend the monthly business meetings, as well as our socials.

Mon 22-Sat 27 May: Cambridge Beer Festival, Jesus Green

Thu 8 Jun 19:30-22:30: Thursday Throng Social at the Pickarel

Tue 13 Jun 20:00: Open Branch Meeting - White Horse, Swavesey

See branch website cambridge-camra.org.uk for more details.

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ALE is published by the Cambridge & District Branch of the Campaign for Real Ale.

The views expressed are not necessarily those of CAMRA Ltd or its Branches.

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Copy date next edition 12 June 2023
Publication date 10 July 2023



The **White Lion, Sawston**, has reopened. We held a branch meeting there on Tuesday 9th May.

The **Square and Compasses, Great Shelford** has been taken on by experienced landlord Hans and his partner Justine. Their former pub, the



Rose and Crown, Ashdon, had a reputation for good beer and traditional pub food. Assuming owners Greene King do not interfere too much, things are looking good.

Robert Short, landlord of the **Queens Head, Newton** told us that he has withdrawn the latest version of plans for alterations to the pub because he has already



received permission to make most of the changes in a previous application, so work will go ahead.

The developer that requested and was refused permission to knock down all but the facade of the **Emperor, Hills Road, Cambridge**, has appealed. Cambridge CAMRA maintains its objections to the proposal.

A perhaps less invasive planning request, put forward by the new licensee of the **Bull, Burrough Green**, involves the trimming of nearby trees.

The opening of the **St Radegund, King Street** has been mooted for "the end of May".

The **Waggon and Horses, Milton** is planned to re-open in early May

As usual, there is a mixture of both good and bad news within the branch area.

We were very sad as we drove by to see the current state of the **Crown, Ashley**. A former branch pub of the year, it looks quite run down and was very quiet. If anyone can tell us what is happening, we would be pleased to know.



A very bright note from **Shepreth**, though. Owner Nick Davis has let us know that his cracking pub the **Plough** will be re-

opening in May. A beer festival is promised for September.

A beer and music festival too, in the **White Swan, Conington** (27th -29th May).

The self-acclaimed Cambridge Beer Quarter pubs, **Cambridge Blue, Alexandra Arms, Calverley's Brewery, Geldart**, the **Blue Moon** and the **Petersfield**, will be joined by the recently opened **Kingston Arms** in offering a multi pub beer festival in the Mill Road area. (3rd-8th July).



The **Maypole, Portugal Place**, will be holding its traditional May festival (22nd-27th May), offering Cambridge beer festival

customers a warm welcome during the afternoons when the latter is closed.

We like to see village news sheets and websites that promote their local pubs. Can I draw you attention to this nice piece about the **Red Lion, Histon** by Amanda Borrill in the hihub newsletter www.hihub.info/

Pub News continued

features/a-local-with-great-beer-at-its-heart/

Another message, this time from the



Pampisford Facebook Group, invited villagers to attend an April meeting to discuss the future of the **Chequers,**

which was severely damaged by fire and then was demolished and sold on by then owners, Admiral Taverns, in 2021. The pub is still registered as an Asset of Community Value, and there appears to be a real appetite for a community buy out. Under ACV guidelines, the village has 6 months grace to agree a price and find enough money to buy the plot.

Local councillor Will Wright has told us that Swavesey Parish Council has unanimously agreed to re-register the **White Horse** as an Asset of Community Value.

Shock news reported by the Cambridge News, told us that one of our favourite village pubs, the **Bank, Willingham** is on the market, with a guide price of £250,000.

Perhaps less shocking news from the **Guy Mill Hotel, Stow-cum-Guy**. Management here have decided to stop selling real ale due to a lack of demand.

Even more shocking is the news that landlord and lady Rachel and Peter Causten are



considering leaving the multi award winning **Chestnut Tree, West Wrattling**. The couple have worked incredibly hard

to create an excellent village pub. I hope the rumour isn't true.

And finally. Sometimes we hear rumours and stories about pubs that we can't really publish as fact.

One such rumour surrounds the **Wheatsheaf, Stow cum Guy**. One of our correspondents contacted us to say he'd heard the long-closed pub is destined to become a spiritual centre for a faith or healing group. This would be a change of use that has not as far as we are aware been registered - yet. As always, if you know more - please get in touch.

Upcoming Beer Festivals/Branch events

- Sat 13 May. Wicken Beer Festival on Wicken Recreation Ground.
- Thu 18 – Sun 21 May. Haymakers, Chesterton High Street. 10th Anniversary Beer Festival.
- Mon 22 – Sat 27 May. Cambridge Beer Festival on Jesus Green.
- Mon 22 – Sat 27 May. Burleigh Arms, Newmarket Road. Beer Festival.
- Mon 22 – Sat 27 May. Thirsty, Chesterton Road. Beer Festival.
- Mon 22 – Sat 27 May. Maypole, Portugal Place. Beer Festival.
- Fri 26 & Sat 27 May. Three Tuns, Fen Drayton. Beer Festival.
- Fri 26 – Sun 28 May. Tickell Arms, Whittlesford. Beer Festival.
- Fri 26 – Sun 28 May. Boot, Dullingham. Beer Festival.
- Sat 27 – Mon 29 May. Hare & Hounds, Harlton. Beer Festival.
- Sat 27 – Mon 29 May. White Swan, Conington. Beer & Music Festival.
- Thu 1 June. Blue Moon, Norfolk Street. Tap Takeover. Brewery to be confirmed.
- Thu 8 June from 7:30. Thursday Throng Social hosted by Helen at the Pickerel, Magdalene Street.
- Fri 9 – Sun 11 June. Pantan Arms, Pantan Street. Beer Festival.
- Tues 13 June from 8pm. Open Branch Meeting at the White Horse, Swavesey.
- Thu 15 – Sat 17 June. North Hertfordshire CAMRA's Hitchin Beer & Cider Festival at Hitchin Rugby Club.

Midlands Meanderings: Walsall

Ah, the glamorous places I get to visit!

In fact, since the demise of the Walsall Beer Festival a few years ago I'd thought I would probably never have cause to visit the town of my birth ever again. But as I was flicking through the Good Beer Guide in February looking for places in the Black Country I hadn't properly explored yet I found a good half dozen pubs listed under Walsall, most of which I'd never even heard of. Well, once I'd got over my astonishment I simply had to go and see for myself. And here, dear reader, is what I found.

I started my meandering just north of both bus and railway stations, a little beyond the ring road, at the

Pretty Bricks, a name derived from the glazed brick frontage. This is a cosy little Victorian back-street two-bar pub, done out in standard Black Country Ales style, offering 8/9 beers and two ciders. I

went round to the lounge bar at the back, more comfortably appointed than the front bar and with a nice open fire, where I settled down with a pint of BCA's Pig on the Wall (normally £3.60, but £3.10 as it was happy hour), a fine way to start the crawl.



Such a friendly place, too: although I've never been to this pub before in my life, I was welcomed like a regular who hadn't been in for a while, and before I'd even got to my seat I heard the barman say 'Alexa: play 70s rock'. Well, what more could I ask for! Of course, I had to stay for another, this time a fine pint of Saltaire Triple Chocolate Stout.

On a historical note, the description in WhatPub includes this:

"This is one of the few pubs from where CAMRA was launched nationally in 1972, driven by early campaigner the late Peter Linley [*no relation as far as I'm aware - SL*]. In that same year, Walsall CAMRA was formed with an initial brief to cover the country from here north to John O'Groats."

A fine pub, and I could happily have stayed there all afternoon (I might, too, one day), but I had an itinerary and a sort of schedule that I was already falling behind.

To make up a bit of time, I decided to miss out the next pub on my list, **Butts Tavern**; two weeks later I was kicking myself when I found out it had just closed for good! Lesson of the trip: never take any pub for granted, it might not be there next time you go looking for it.



From there it was back towards the centre to the **Fountain**, sitting somewhat forlornly

at the brow of the hill surrounded by wasteland. Inside, however, it was thriving, not neglected at all. This is the Backyard Brewery tap, though as far as I could see none of their excellent beers were to be seen. I had a Mercia IPA from Derby Brewing (£3.80), a decent pale bitter.

The pub is family-run (a rarity these days), with one large room and a snug to the side which is as big as some pubs! Live music and vinyl nights are a feature, too. It may not look like much from the outside, but definitely worth going into.



Lyndon House Hotel, photo from WhatPub

Hotel, the bar of which is the former Royal Exchange pub, which was incorporated into a former Salvation Army hostel and an old leatherworks to create the current 4-star hotel.

I can't better the description on WhatPub:

"The comfortable bar has a coal-effect fire, an island counter, cosy corners and plenty of exposed wood and brick giving it a traditional feel. With the dining room and outdoor terraces, it is unexpectedly spacious."

It was busy, too: I had to sit at one of the shelves running along the back wall to sup my pint of Landlord. As I seem to be commenting on the snacks as well as the beer, I should note that the dry roast peanuts were particularly fine here, too.

And finally, the **Black Country Arms**, where I always used to have a couple of warm-up pints before the now-defunct beer festival. Formerly the Green Dragon, this Grade II listed pub is probably Walsall's oldest (it dates back to at least 1627) and also probably its biggest, with many high-ceilinged rooms on many levels, all connected by a labyrinth of stairs, gangways and balconies that M C Escher would be proud of.

Two beers here for me, from the selection of well over a dozen: North Cotswold Moreton Mild (£3.60), which I must say was a little past its best; and Beartown Polar, a 'black



Much the same can be said of my next pub, the **Victoria**, which is as basic as you can get, like a trip back to the late 1970s/early 1980s (for those with memories that long), or the Durham Ox on Mill Road back in the day. The ceramic figures of Statler and Waldorf on a park bench seemed perfectly at home on their window sill. Beer-wise the Church End Gravediggers was the best I've ever tasted – and I've tasted a *lot* of it over the years. It was so good, in fact, that I had to have a second pint just to make sure! (And a mere £3.50 a pint.) The onion rings were terribly moreish, too...

By way of contrast, at least as far as décor goes, the next stop was the **Lyndon House**

Midlands Meanderings: Walsall



Black Country Arms

treacle and burnt toffee stout' (£3.90), winner of multiple SIBA awards, apparently, but I think it would be a lot better with less black treacle and more burnt toffee. Still, it's a gorgeous pub and I was glad to have an excuse to find myself back there for a bit.

So there you go. Should you ever find yourself in Walsall, whether by mistake or even deliberately, there are a few places to wet your whistle in.


Steve Linley

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Lost pubs of Cambridge(shire)

I was looking at another empty inbox, astonished that no one recognised the away fans' favourite, the Greyhound on Coldham's Lane, so thanks to Laura (who tells me she once applied for a job there but turned it down when she found out about the dress code) for restoring my faith in my lovely readers.



Our story begins back in 1867, amidst a small, remote cluster of cottages sited on the edge of Coldhams Common, separated from the rest of Cambridge by fields and more recently, the railway tracks. A public house known as the Greyhound makes its first recorded appearance in June of that year, when Esau James, an old offender, was charged with picking the pocket of his drinking companion, Edward Parker, when the latter had nodded off while settled into the settle of the tap-room. Giving evidence, landlord John Smith said that he saw the accused put his hand near Parker's pocket, and when he returned from drawing some beer he noticed the pocket turned out. The quick-thinking publican roused the slumbering victim and asked him to stand for a pint of ale as a means of testing whether he had lost his money. He had. The perpetrator was sentenced to three months' imprisonment, with hard labour.

Smith is last heard of in 1869, and by 1871 we find Thomas Summerfield, a 45-year-old former agricultural labourer from Bedfordshire, in charge. With him was his 29-year-old wife, Elizabeth, and four

children. Three years later, in June 1874, he was in trouble with the law, charged with opening his house for the sale of intoxicating liquors outside of permitted hours (specifically, at 3.00 a.m. on 18 June). The four customers who were found there at this remarkably late hour were three prostitutes and a chap who was obviously only there by accident... All were fined £1 plus costs.

Perhaps not surprisingly, Summerfield was gone by the following year, moving on briefly to the Thatched Cottage on New Street, whose charming name belies a dreadful reputation for serial mismanagement. He doesn't seem to have lasted terribly long there, either, and died at the beginning of 1881, leaving his widow pregnant and with four other children to bring up.

His replacement at the Greyhound was Owen Cambridge, of Chesterton, formerly foreman at the coprolite works in Comberton, along with his first wife, Phoebe. Phoebe died at the beginning of 1888, and before the year was out Owen had married again, this time Mary Maria Marsh, widow of David Marsh who had kept the William IV on Newmarket Road.

Owen's sole claim to newspaper notoriety came in September 1889, when he was charged with furious driving of a horse and cart in Chesterton. Said P.C. Mason: He drove at 16 or 17 miles an hour – as hard as ever the horse could go. What a menace! He was quite rightly fined 10s plus 10s 6d costs.

Upon Owen's death in 1896, Mary went back to the William IV to live with her sister, Jane, who was now married to her late brother-in-law's successor at the pub, Thomas Worland; he too died a couple of years later.

A new century dawns: enter Will Sandford and his wife, Elizabeth, formerly of the Bell, Coveney, whose family – or you might say dynasty – kept the Greyhound for the next

three-quarters of a century! You don't get that kind of continuity very often. They seem to have kept their noses clean, too, the only time any of them troubled the courts was in 1906, when Will brought a charge of assault against non-paying customer Charles Leech.

From the *Cambridge Independent Press*, 2 November 1906:

San[d]ford's story was that Leach visited his house on Oct. 20th and called for a pint of beer and half a gallon in a jug. Complainant served him with the pint, and told him he did not possess a half-gallon jug. Accused drank the pint, and said he would have a pint in a bottle. Witness fetched this, and accused was about to put it in his pocket and leave the house when witness reminded him that he had not paid for it. Accused said it would be all right, he was working close by, and would want some more during the day, but witness and his wife stood in the doorway and refused to let him pass. A struggle ensued, and accused then ran to the back of the house and tried to get out that way. Witness followed, and caught hold of his coat collar. Accused dragged him all over the house and into the yard, where witness kicked up the man's heels and caused him to fall on some rails. (Laughter.)

The Mayor: It appears to me the assault was on the other side. (Laughter.)

The Bench stopped the case and dismissed it.

Will died in harness in March 1930, at the grand old age of 80, and was succeeded by his son, Walter William, who up to that point had been living a few doors away and working as a bricklayer. Unfortunately he was not to enjoy his new career for very long, dying himself four years later.

His widow, Annie Elizabeth, proved more tenacious, clinging onto life – and the licence – until her own death in 1963, with her son Francis George Sandford doing the

actual management for most of that time.

He had his own stint in charge during the 1960s before the pub passed to the gloriously named Sethur Vernon Ellson, who was married to Elizabeth Annie, sister of Francis George and daughter of Walter William and Annie Elizabeth. Confused? I certainly was for a bit!

Finally the Sandford dynasty and its stability came to an end during the 1970s, to be followed by quite the opposite: a succession of new licensees who arrived full of high hopes, only to be replaced a couple of years later by another optimistic couple. Even improvements from an extensive 'Laura Ashley' makeover in 1986 and the arrival of Peter and Monica Howes (fresh from 14 successful years at the Pickerel) didn't reverse this trend.

The pub did remain popular through the following decade, however, with music most nights being a major draw: live, disco, and even the famed karaoke sessions of Billy & the Peanut. By the mid-2000s, however, the Greyhound was getting increasingly run-down and shabby, disdained by some, very much loved by others, depending on one's taste in pubs. Comments on We're All Neighbours and Cambridge Online present both points of view if you want to see, but be prepared for some fruity language at times.

Almost inevitably, and despite the optimism of yet more new tenants, the pub finally closed for good in 2008. There were hopes that it would reopen under new ownership, but apparently serious structural problems put off any interested buyers.

Lost pubs of Cambridge(shire)

In 2012 permission was given to demolish the pub and erect warehousing and retail units in its place. And what an asset to the Cambridge streetscape it now is:



Something a bit different for next time: a guest columnist! My fellow pub history enthusiast, Mark Tinkler, has agreed to give me a break from writing (and you a break from reading it), so please be nice to him and send him lots of stories about his chosen mystery lost pub at tinklercambidge@gmail.com:



(Yes, this is a very old photo, but the pub didn't close all that long ago and should still be recognisable. I'll even be generous and give you a clue: Romsey Town.)

Any other pub history queries, offers of drinks, proposals of marriage etc. to me at pub-history@cambridge-camra.org.uk.

Cheers!
Steve Linley



Paws for thought

There is nothing I enjoy more than joining my male human and his CAMRA colleagues on their minibus tours to village pubs.

(Actually, there are quite a lot of things I enjoy more; chasing my ball; swimming in the Cam, running on Norfolk beaches; eating roast chicken; staring at cows on Stourbridge common. Nevertheless, I do look forward to our minibus rides with all our friends and meeting all the lovely humans).

The latest tour took in eight village pubs, one of which was not dog friendly, so I won't mention it.

We started in the **Queens Head, Newton**. This pub is famous for serving home-made sandwiches and its varying shades of brown soup. My human said it is well known for good beer, and to show it he gulped a big mouthful of Frothblowers Stout. He really has no manners. I don't understand why humans don't gently lap up their beer from a bowl like me.



As you know he is camera (and CAMRA) crazy. He soon had his Canon out and was clicking away. Here I am with a pub employee called Georgie – a perfect start to the tour.

The next pub on the tour was the **Green Man at Thriplow**. It was crowded, and everybody said how pleased they were that it was doing so well. Most customers were dining, and the food smelled lovely. We only had time for a swift half, so no pictures here. Once again, the beer, this time from Buntingford brewery, was declared good.

The pub stands close to a lovely village green. I signed it in joined up writing before I left.

A short trip along the A505 and up a steep hill and we reached our third pub, the **Pheasant, Great Chishill**. It is the highest pub in the Cambridge CAMRA area. I am too short to see the view, but the humans said that it was lovely. The pub was taken on in 2021 by Meg, pictured here, and her team from Nutwood Pub Company. They served us a buffet of chips, the biggest whitebait I have ever eaten, and spam fritter fingers – yum! My human said the beer, London



Pride, was “a good example”, which, I think meant he liked it, (pretentious twaddle!). The Pheasant is a stone's throw from Royston, which is famous for the chalky hills of Therfield Heath – a

lovely place to chase your ball. The humans voted the Pheasant as the favourite pub of the tour.

Driving down the hill we entered **Melbourn** and visited the **Dolphin** which was voted as the 2022 Cambridge Branch Dog Friendly Pub of the Year. The Abbot Ale on this visit was in such good condition it was acclaimed the best beer of the tour. Unfortunately, Jaquie, the pub landlady, was not very well, so I had my picture taken



with tour newbies James and Molly. Hope they come again!

The wonderings of a pub going dog

James is local to the Dolphin, so when it was time for us to take the few minutes walk to the **Black Horse**, he led the way. (Though even then some of us got lost. I can't think why - I had just been drinking water). The Black Horse is a small locals pub which has a comfortable garden and sells good beer. My human's notes are getting a



little muddled by now. I think he had something called Tribute in this pub, which he gave a star. He could still hold a camera, so we took this lovely shot of me with bar person Jade.

Two pictures from the **British Queen, Meldreth** which is the 5th pub on our tour. First of Callum, who loved to give me dog treats, and the second of Shyanne, who my human spotted as we were about to leave. He held up the tour for 10 minutes so he could take this photo.



This pub has a huge garden complete with a child size goal. I had taken my ball, so we played football for a while before getting a drink.

Once again, the beer was, my human said, very good. I would tell you what he drank, but by now his note taking had fizzled down to nothing.

The final dog friendly pub on the tour was

the **Royal Oak, Barrington**. Now owned by CambsCuisine, this pub is very dog friendly. It was incredibly busy though. (Humans love to queue!) so I was grateful that it was a sunny day, and we could take advantage of the garden seats which look out over the massive village green. Lots of other dogs had persuaded their humans to sit outside



too. I was so pleased to meet them. We had a good barking session to take in some air. CAMRA Pubs Officer Ali Cook

introduced me to the CambsCuisine founder and managing director, Oliver Thain.



It goes without saying - according to my, by now, very "happy" human the beer was very good! We often return to the **Kingston Arms, Gwydir Street**. This time we found Mark Donachy's daughter Amy serving beer. Just had to take a picture.



Carol and Alan pictured here are regular customers of the **Three Horseshoes, Stapleford**. They recognised me as I entered the pub. I love it when that happens!

See you all at the Cambridge Beer Festival!

Gladys Emmanuelle

The Floor's The Limit

I was delighted recently to hear that the **Cambridge Tap** in St Andrews Street has introduced a couple of hand pumps. On my visit I have an excellent frothy pint of Harlequin, a 4.5% golden ale from Rivertown Brewing. There is only one real ale choice today, but I would rather a good pint than have lots of sub-standard offerings. It is crisp and has a lovely dry mandarin finish.

I still find downstairs a bit dark (see review in ALE 398), somewhat on the noisy side, but upstairs I think is marvellous. While sipping, I am struck by the beautiful design and craftsmanship of the flooring. The interlocking

hexagonal tiles are rather fun, but the way that they are recessed into the wooden floor is really



very clever. I do admire attention to detail. I start to wonder how many other pub floors can get near this, and naturally begin to think that I have the makings of another ALE magazine article here...

My mind is blank. Off the top of my head, I can't think of any outstanding floors. And why would I? I could start an internet search, but *surely* the best way would be to try some pubs. A couple of days later, I am not far off the **Royal Standard** on Mill Road, directly next to the No. 2 bus stop. I enter, faced by an impressive tiled U-shaped bar, and am immediately welcomed and served. I go for Hurricane (4.0%) from Buntingford Brewery. At £4.20, this copper-hued bitter is a real malty toffee treat, and I can only describe it as toothsome.

The pub is quite busy and has a friendly bubbling atmosphere. But I am only interested today in the floor. And I am not disappointed. Is this a parquet floor? A quick internet search reveals that it is, and it



David will be on hand for the next few pubs to get the *lowdown*!

And so to work. First up is the **Pickrel** on Bridge Street. From 9 real ale choices, David and I both choose Wantsum Brewery's Millers Mirth Bitter, a 4.2% nettly and peppery ale at £5.25. The front bar has planks that are each nailed with brads all ground down just above the surface. Each plank almost looks caulked like on the decking of a ship, no doubt highly polished from the footfall of the soles of thirsty Magdalene College students.



Soon after we visit Prospect Row. Here lies the **Free Press**, a warm local with lots of dark wood. I choose Twickenham Spring, a very sharp, dry, almost tongue curling pale straw bitter at 4.4%. David goes for the Butcombe Bitter,

also 4.4%, which he comments has travelled well from the South West. "It's warm, it's comforting and it moulds itself to your

innards.” This is a pub full of character with a real community feel. Two wood burner stoves with quarry grey tiled hearths provide the heat. Disappointingly there is only grey linoleum flooring here, although the heat-sealed joins are a plus. A great pub but the flooring is much underrated, often overlooked.

Just around the corner is the **Tram Depot**, with 5.2% Everards Old Original in good form at £4.85 a pint. Our beers both boast sweet toffee.



To the left are, we suspect, Cambridge or Burwell White bricks, well-polished to a smooth and even floor. Each brick is well sealed and has its own patina. This is undoubtedly David's favourite floor of the day...

Lastly we visit Milton Brewery's **Devonshire Arms**. We both order a Pegasus which is a balanced malt and caramel treat with just a bit more bitterness. New manager Natalie tells us all about the traditional pine flooring and there is much more to it than appears... 13 years



ago the back area was a dancefloor, with blue linoleum heavily stapled/tacked to the boarding. It is now bare floor, but each individual board has been turned over with no trace of the staples. In the words of one of the regulars, it most definitely retains the spirit the pub.

A more mundane subject it would be harder to find. We stand on the foundations of each pub every time we visit. Perhaps next time, maybe I will look at the floor for a few seconds longer.

Fred Laband

DYKE'S END



A Free House in the idyllic village of Reach
Situating at one end of the Devil's Dyke, a popular 7.5 mile walk
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Elvis is still in the building

The Geldart - Cambridge CAMRA Branch Pub of the Year 2023

It was in ALE 336, published in the Autumn of 2008 that then editor Paul Ainsworth celebrated the arrival of a new tenant, in The Geldart, Ainsworth Street, Cambridge, with the stirring headline: "Elvis Has Entered the Building".

I am pleased to say, said tenant, Elvis Joncevski, is still in the building and it is doing very well.

The 2008 article noted that The Geldart, Cambridge had rarely (if ever) featured in ALE. Once a Tolly pub, then Pubmaster, followed (and still owned in 2023) by Punch, Ale 336 noted "it never sold much by way of real ale with a single handpump for Greene King IPA".

The article was full of hope and Elvis related puns as it announced that the pub had been "all shook up" by the new licensee.

And shook up it was. Elvis has used the ensuing 15 years to hone and develop a pub which has become a destination for enthusiastic beer tasting, combined with definite leaning towards a local back street meeting place, but which also offers an atmospheric dining area and good food.

The real ale bar is still on the left as you enter the pub. Now serving three regular beers and up to five changing guest beers, which always includes one, sometimes two dark beers. The beers are mostly from the Punch list, but also include examples from local breweries notably Cambridge Moonshine Brewery, and from the SIBA list. A luscious stout from Settle Brewery took my fancy on this occasion. Local ciders are also showcased – Simon's cider being a regular.

Elvis is a great supporter of local brewers and cider makers.

Simon Gibson of Simon's Cider hosted a one day pop-up cider bar in the Geldart garden during the 2022 Beer Quarter pub festival.

Another day was hosted by Mark Watch of Cambridge Moonshine Brewery.

The Geldart is a founding member of the festival which sees 7 pubs in



Elvis Joncevski (left) with Ali Cook, Cambridge branch Pubs Officer

the Mill Road/Gwydir Street area each offering a mini beer festival for a week, beginning this year on 8th June.

Elvis introduced food to the pub in 2008. The hot rock meals, heralded as an innovative offering in Ale 336, are still available, and the menu still includes a variety of veggie options and snacks. Dining is generally in the right-hand bar, which is candle lit in the evenings and in the large garden. This bar is also where you'll find the 6 craft ales and keg beers. This room sometimes doubles as a music venue for local acts on a Tuesday evening.

The importance of music is reflected in the pub décor. The hand pumps are musical instruments, and the lightshades are drums. An illuminated piano lights up the comfortable snug.

Ale 336 also noted that prior to taking on the Geldart Elvis had served 4-1/2 year stint as cellarman/bar manager of the nearby Kingston Arms, which was then, as now,

one of our premier real ale pubs. It didn't mention his earlier experiences of running bars in Sydney, Australia – we've put that right now – showing that he has a lifetime experience of running pubs.

That experience has helped him to develop a pub which appeals to all tastes. It is a community pub, supported by and supporting the community – no more so than during lockdown when take away beer was served to grateful customers through a half open doorway.

Elvis and his pub are deserved winners of the Cambridge and District CAMRA's highest award. The 2023 Pub of the year. His current lease runs until 2028 – and he says that he hopes to extend it after then. We promise not to leave it another 15 years before we write about the Geldart again.

Currently, the Geldart is closed Mondays, open Tuesday - Friday evenings from 5, and all day Saturday and Sunday from noon.

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Apples & Pears

Farewell to Simon Gibson

(14th May 1968 - 13th March 2023)



I was greatly saddened by the recent death of Simon Gibson, who will be known to many as the man behind the multi-award-winning Simon's Cider. Simon was a staunch supporter of Cambridge CAMRA and its festivals. Not only did he spend the summer festival serving on the cider bar, helping drinkers find the ciders and perries that most suited their tastes, but he also spent many hours helping to set the festival up and take it down afterwards.

He was always keen to engage with people and during lockdown played a key role in our online beer festival producing mixed cider boxes and guiding people through an extended online tasting session. Simon's skill and enthusiasm in producing and promoting cider and perry was recognised by CAMRA nationally when he received the 2020 Pomona Award for promoting real cider and perry.

I first became aware of Simon when I took on the role of Cambridge CAMRA branch Cider Officer.

It must be said I didn't know a massive amount about real cider - but the role needed filling and, as you know - the world loves a volunteer!

I needed to find out as much as I could about the process of making real cider as

quickly as possible. Simon was my go-to man.

I couldn't have chosen a better teacher. Within a couple of hours of meeting him at his home in Cambourne, which was also his cider making facility at the time, I felt I had a much better understanding of what it takes to make a truly delightful cider.

We immediately struck up a friendship and over the years Simon continued to educate me in my knowledge of the greatest drink on the planet.

He helped and encouraged me to set up the now annual Swavesey Cider Festival for which I, and all our visitors, am extremely grateful for.

He often visited me laden with copious amounts of different varieties of ciders he had made. We would spend ages putting the world to rights - Simon did love a good chat.

I only really knew Simon for seven years, but it feels as if I have known him all my life. I think that is a testimony to the type of lovely chap he was.

Thank you, Simon, for being my friend, and tutor, may you rest in peace sir. The world is a poorer place without you.

Wassail!
Jerry Ladell



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