

ale

Cambridge & District Branch Newsletter

Issue 371 February 2015



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Pub News

Hello, and welcome to the first 2015 edition of ALE.

We hope we find you “ale and hearty” (ok, first bad pun of the year- probably won’t be the last!) having enjoyed a very merry festive season.

January, that bleakest of months, usually heralds a feeling of hope and renewal as we say goodbye to the old year and welcome the new. This is not the case I’m afraid for the supporters of The Tree, Stapleford. An application for this community pub to be converted to residential use has recently been launched.

The Tree has been registered as an Asset of Community Value, and a residents committee has been formed, which aims to challenge this change, and hopes to retain the pub under local management.

Meanwhile, after an unsuccessful few months of failing to run a pub as a furniture shop, the owners of The Pear Tree, Hildersham, have put



in an application to turn it into a house. Local villagers are challenging this. Some are saying that the furniture shop did not in fact open, and that the

transition was a ruse to facilitate smoother access to planning permission. The Pear Tree was the last pub in the village and we have every hope that the villagers will win their argument and the pub will return, but I’m afraid there is a great deal of work to be done for this to become a reality.



There would seem to be no hope of saving The Railway Tavern, Great Shelford, which is destined to become a block of flats.

Branch Diary

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

Sat 7-Feb : 12:00, Branch Good Beer Guide Voting Meeting, Elm Tree, Orchard Street

Tue 10-Feb : 8:00, Open Branch Meeting, Rock, Cherry Hinton Road

Tue 10-Mar : 8:00, Open Branch Meeting, Lord Byron, Trumpington

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Pub News continued



The Rosemary Branch, Coldham's Lane, and that historic pub, The Penny Ferry (formerly The Pike and Eel) Chesterton

have both been razed to the ground. We have lost the Penny Ferry, planning permission for residential use having been awarded last year,



but we are still challenging in favour of replacing The Rosemary Branch with a pub, and to save The Zebra, which

is also subject to an application for change of use.

Other losses to the Cambridge and District pub scene include The Brunswick Arms,



Newmarket Road, which is now an Indian restaurant, and The Osteria,

(formerly Waggon and Horses) Milton, which, it now has to be acknowledged, does not welcome drinkers unless they are prepared to buy food.

Meanwhile, Hawthorn Leisure, the company that bought a large tranche of pubs from Greene King in May 2014, and is now the owner of many Cambridge and District village pubs, has shown it is not afraid to close them by seeking permission to convert The Beehive, Horringer, into a house. Our colleagues in the CAMRA West Suffolk and Borders branch are organizing a challenge, but it is clear that, even more than last year, our traditional village pubs are under threat.

And from our correspondents:

We have been contacted by several customers of The Poacher, Elsworth; all of them saying how sorry they will be to lose their landlord and landlady, Neil and Caroline



Humphreys, who are leaving to take up residence in The White Swan, Conington.



Fond farewell to former Swan tenants, Sarah, and Chris, who have overseen major changes to the pub, including the installation of

a new cellar/bar area, and whose good management earned the pub a place in the 2015 Good Beer Guide.



Farewell too to Paul and Sam of The Three Tuns, Fen Drayton, who are leaving the pub to spend more time with their young

family.



I understand that, The Green Man, Thriplow, reopened on the 15th January after closing for some minor renovation work.

The Green Man is now in the hands of new tenants, Chris Sergeant and Rebecca Mantle, who will be serving food and drink from Tuesday lunchtime till early Sunday evening.



Sam Adams formerly of The Green Man is to take over The Salisbury Arms, Cambridge. Sam knows how to keep his beer, so

things could be looking up for this traditional pub. The Salisbury is to close for "a huge refurbishment" and will, we understand, be opening in mid March.



Horningsea CIC, the management team that owns The Plough and Fleece, Horningsea has informed us that the pub has new

tenants. Disappointingly, for a free house, the beer range has moved back to a Greene King list, though we believe guest ales may be on offer in the near future.



It is refreshing, amidst all of the bad news, to be able to report that locals of The Little Rose, Haslingfield are happy with the

plans proposed by property developer, Wrenbridge. The pub will lose a large tract of garden to housing, but there will still be enough ground remaining to install a family area. Landlord Neil, whose current contract lasts until February, will have an option to buy the pub should Wrenbridge decide to sell it.

Our wandering reporters, Ali Cook, and Helge the Horrible have been on his bike, and the bus respectively and have offered the following information:

Ali took a cycle ride to a couple of Histon pubs, eschewing his usual visit to The Red Lion, 27, High Street in favour of The King William IV, Church Street, and was pleasantly surprised. It



Sharps Doom Bar, St Austell Tribute, and Adnams, Ghost Ship; "All in good nick!" A



is, he says, "a lovely old building", and was, he felt, well suited to the Christmas festivities. Beers on offer included

gathering of younger villagers made him very welcome in The Barley Mow, 7 High Street. The Thai food was highly

recommended.

His second cycle ride took him to Duxford, a



village south of Cambridge where he stopped for a chat with Bill and Sandra, the landlord and landlady of The

Plough, St Peter's Street. The Plough is tied to Everards, but Bill has negotiated an arrangement, which not only allows him to sell local beers, but means that he can employ the help of their son Ben, to do the books. The Plough is planning a Spring menu which will include "Artisan Food and Local Beers."



After a short ride along the same street, Ali came to The Wheatsheaf, where he was greeted by Landlady,

Louise. The Wheatsheaf has one pump for regular beers, usually Woodforde's Wherry or Well's Eagle Bitter, and two for guest beers. The Wheatsheaf is a "wet" pub, and doesn't serve food.

Pub News continued

Helge, took advantage of local buses and headed northwards towards Willingham, his primary intention to visit The Bank. There was plenty of time however to visit the other pubs (note from Helge - The Bank opens at 5.30pm on a Saturday) he made a welcome visit to The Duke of Wellington, Church Street where he rediscovered the joys of beer from the cask. The Thwaites "13 Guns", which he sipped whilst chatting with landlady, Fran, was, he says, "... the best pint of the day."

Stop Press - Last minute news

Black Bar Brewery, Unit B3, Button End Industrial Estate, Harston is now open every Saturday from 10am until 2pm for sales of bottled beers and and mini casks

Calverley's Brewery, 23A Hooper Street, Cambridge, is also planning to offer an off sales service.

Brewed to coincide with the 2014 'Movember' fund raising initiative, Wolf Brewery's, Wolf Whiskers 4.5% raised £327.50 in aid of a Prostate Cancer Charity. The initiative was supported in the Cambridge district by The Hopbine, Fair Street, and The Admiral Vernon, Over.

Greene King pubs The Avery, and The Castle, Regent St, are closed for refurbishment.

Greene King pub The Tally Ho, Trumpington has now opened after refurbishment.

The Radegund, King's Street is also closed pending renovation.

The Fountain, Regent Street has applied for permission to install an outside terrace.

The new replacement for the Queen Edith is on schedule to open in a few months.



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On Two Wheels

It is mid-November and I have another day off. It is high time to jump on the bike as the temperature is still in double figures. I decide to take the old Ridgeback on the train to Cambridge to visit a few pubs.

Arriving in Cambridge, it is so sunny and mild that I opt to clock up a couple of miles before starting the lunchtime pub tour. I head south past Addenbrooke's Hospital, and end up at one of my favourite pubs, The Railway Tavern in Great Shelford. Alas, where I once used to enjoy Adnams, Wherry and Wadworth's 6X and dominate the pool table, there are now 10 foot high weeds and metal sheets covering the windows.



This pub closed about 5 years ago, but it still has a little place in my heart. This is where I was first introduced to Thai food, and every week or so landlord Tony would try to kill me with ever increasing quantities of chili. Happy days...

I cycle on to another old favourite, The Square and Compasses. This pub in my memory was always busy at lunchtimes. There is tangible warmth to this pub. Feeling right at home, I opt for Greene King IPA (3.7%), which is followed by a pint of Reverend James (4.5%) from Brains of South Wales. Both pints are excellent, the latter full of fruity bite with a melon aftertaste. Landlord Bill has been running the pub for about 10 years and he finds time to chat while pulling through the next guest beer.

He now runs three pubs, adding The Plough in Great Shelford and The Queen's Head in Harston to his portfolio. As I am about to leave, Bill pushes under my nose a half of Colonel's Whiskers (4.3%) - the first drop out of the barrel! This "Movember" beer from Batemans has a



very malty nose, and tastes somewhere between ginger and rhubarb to me. The pub is now doing a roaring trade. I am tempted to stay longer but must depart to visit another Shelford institution: Barkers butchers. Sadly, I am too late for a hot Cornish pasty, which I was really looking forward to. However, a sausage roll at £1.50 is a more than adequate substitute.

Time for a new pub. Heading north, slightly wind assisted, it is less than ten minutes before I arrive at what was once The Unicorn in Trumpington. Before visiting, I had misgivings about this pub, now named The Lord Byron Inn. It is a very large pub with substantial dining areas. The garden is huge, and there are also 9 bed and breakfast rooms around the back. Nevertheless, to my surprise, this popular family friendly pub has 6 handpumps, 4 of which serve real ale, the other 2 real ciders. I don't often see Shepherds Neame's Spitfire (4.2%) in a pub, so it is an easy choice. It is treacly and brilliantly balanced and has a spicy aftertaste with a hint of raspberry. Also available are Wadworth's 6X, Woodforde's Wherry and Portobello Market Porter.

I join Phil, a local CAMRA member, to try the Portobello Market Porter (4.6%), which we both find quite vinegary. Phil reassures me that this is not typical of the beers at the Lord Byron. (Last time I saw Phil, he recommended The Ostrich in North Street Peterborough – a cracking local...) It is clear that this is certainly a beer drinkers' pub, often championing local brews.



The next pub has painful memories for me, and I want to extinguish the ghost. I was at The Globe back in 2005. Clan Royal was cantering in the lead of The Grand National. I had a modest wager riding on that horse at 9-1, but he was blocked and brought down by a loose horse at Becher's Brook.



Today, I secure my bike in the back yard then as I enter the roomy bar of The Emperor in Hills Road, Cambridge, a slight tingle runs down the spine. There are 4 handpumps here serving two Buntingford beers, Thwaites' Wainwright and Hook Norton's "Lion". Barman Richard pours me a pint of Lion at 4%. It is a distinctly honeyed beer, probably an acquired taste, but I really like it. I nip out along Hills Road to make my horse selection only to find that the bookies is gone! It seems that it is not only pubs that are feeling the pinch?! Unable to exact vengeance for my 2005 travesty of justice, I return for a pint of Buntingford Brewery's "92 Squadron" which is as the pump clip suggests a first class premium bitter of 4.5%. It is sweet yet bitter (dandelion?) – what a great pint! The pub has two immaculate dart boards (apparently thanks to the paint/

chalk skills of "Tiggy") and a pool table. There are twelve or so malt whiskeys. The whole décor is bright. Richard, who also pulls pints at The Boot in Histon, asserts that the large windows that run along the front of the pub really give a feeling of openness.

The Emperor is considered something of a student pub, but I don't see why I wouldn't be attracted to it regardless of age. (I would however personally steer well clear of the Jagerbombs!) Although financially I do not avenge the past, my future with The Emperor seems assured.

The final pub is another that I haven't been to for many years – The Salisbury Arms in Tenison Road, Cambridge. This Charles Wells pub has been stripped down of its many characterful additions (I seem to recall cyclists and rowing boats hanging from the ceiling) and now is light and very contemporary. Notwithstanding, the pub still possesses a sense of awe with the high chapel like main bar. 7 out of 8 handpumps offer beer mainly from the Charles Wells/ Youngs



stable from Bedford. I go for Wells' Golden Cauldron (quite flowery at 4.1%)

and Thwaites' Handsome Devil at 4.3%. Both are very good indeed.

As I settle back to reflect on the successes of my second bicycle tour (see ALE issue 354 for the first), I note how quiet the pub is and I am drawn to the TV which is broadcasting... Countdown! The delightful Rachel Riley selects the letters and numbers, but the man in the main seat is no Richard Whiteley. It is not easy to play along after several beers and no paper but I manage to make 538 from 10, 7, 6, 9, 2 and 8. (Hint: I did not use the 7 or 8.) From SAEVCTLOE, I conjure up AVOCETS, but feel that there should be an ALE reference here somewhere...

And so back to the railway station.

Lost pubs of Cambridge(shire)



The current rate of pub closures is a regular news item these days, but it's by no means a recent phenomenon. In this new regular feature we'll be publishing a picture of somewhere in the Branch area that used to be a pub in days gone by, and see if anyone recognises it. Here's the first one.

Where is 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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Nicola's Best Places to Drink in 2014

The challenge had been set, during Christmas dinner, to write an article about our favourite pubs of the year. Regular ALE readers may be familiar with Fred Laband's adventures on his bike, delivering this magazine, etc... His regular drinking partner on these occasions is me, his girlfriend Nicola, but to write said article is something Fred is reluctant to do as he does not want to show favouritism to particular pubs...

The last time I attempted to write an article was in Mr. Hawker's English lessons at secondary school, some 18 years ago and if memory serves me correctly it was about Women's Rugby! My ideas for what makes a good pub probably differ from most ALE readers; I enjoy going to pubs with interesting bar tenders and good food. I decide the right time for this attempt is whilst around the in-laws on Boxing Day, so here goes, my favourite pubs this year, in no particular order.

The Belgian Monk, Norwich

One of the few pubs we go to usually by train, so the chance for me to have a drink! The beer menu here is extensive and very informative. I find the world of Belgian beers a bit of a minefield so it is nice to have staff who are able to recommend a drink based on things I like. I went for Blanche de Namur, a witbier at 4.5% which accompanied my crayfish and prawn



salad brilliantly. During the week 2 meals can be obtained for £11.95 and excellent value this is too. This pub is always busy and if your taste is for mussels

this is the pace to go, just behind the Maddermarket Theatre.

The Portland Arms, Cambridge

I like this pub. It is as simple as that. An interesting building located on Mitcham's Corner. I always sit on the side with the wood panelling and generally at a lunchtime because the Cajun Big One otherwise known as the 'murdered burger' is marvellous. I have even been known to go to this pub with my friend Jane. My Chemical Romance is often played and I like a bit of music. The landlord Steve has always been friendly and the Greene King XX Mild is good as is the diet coke!

The Drunswick Inn, Derby

This pub could be in the list for many reasons but for me it is Chris, the barman. I am sure that a lot of people would like this pub if they had the chance to visit; the beer is superb and there are 16 on tap! When we walked in I noticed a large collection of whiskey and a bottle of Vermouth and having recently developed a taste for Manhattan cocktails asked if they made them. I know this will horrify most ALE drinkers but we can't all be the same. Chris had no idea how to make the Manhattan but said he would 'give it a go' if I told him what to do.



At £10.90 it is one of the most expensive drinks I have ever had but the entertainment value of seeing the ice being strained with a fork was worth it! Chris was very apologetic at the lack of

cherry. Much to my surprise at the end of his shift he disappeared to the local Bargain Booze in search of the cherry. However, he returned with a packet of Chewits!! This is the first time a man has ever bought me Chewits (Fred take note) and one was deposited in the Manhattan as a cherry substitute. More Chewits were shared and drinks bought all round. (Derby is normally a very cheap place to drink!)

I plan to return to this pub in the future. Fred and I enjoy sitting in the Directors' Room; it is usually quiet and has 'old fashioned' high back leather chairs. Very comfy!

Sun King Brewery, Indianapolis, USA.

Fred and I were very lucky this year to visit America and on our travels we met people who were kind enough to recommend places for us to visit. This is a very unusual place as it is basically a warehouse. Upon entering, ID is checked then 6 tokens given and drinkers are pointed in the direction of a 'bar'. There is a choice of 4 regular beers and 2 "seasonals". Hand over a token for a 'taster' about a 6th of an American pint. (16 oz.) No money is exchanged unless you buy a 'growler' to go. (American take out).

Speaking to the barman about writing for ALE magazine, we were introduced to Dave Colt, owner and 'Beer Ninja'. He very kindly offered to take us for a tour. We discovered special barrels



of goodies... and how cold a walk in a giant cellar really is! At the end of our personal tour Dave took us to the vault! He then opened a bottle of Lonesome Dove (10%, aged in Rip Van Winkle bourbon barrels). I broke my golden rule of not

drinking when driving but I did have 2 hours to recover! An excellent drink, made all the more special by the fact you can't buy it... anywhere! Thank you, Dave.

The JAFB Wooster Brewery, Ohio, USA

I have to thank Matt, a fireman I met, who sent me to a restaurant in Wooster and whilst waiting for a table we were directed to this pub. Again I thought I'd walked into a warehouse (must be an American thing) with a high ceiling, guitars hanging off the walls and bar stools. We like sitting at the bar. Two beers were ordered



(Wooster Pale Ale, 5.4% and Red Ale 6%) but as I was driving I asked for a diet coke only to be told it is beer or water! I approved of this and took the ice water offered. I do have a feeling I would soon get bored

if every time I went into a pub my only driving option is water!

In this pub we met Bear and Hank, very friendly people going to see golf at Akron the following day while went to the Indy Cars... They are a couple who clearly enjoy their beer. More recommendations came our way and were duly noted.

I must also mention Cafe Bruxelles in Leicester (great cocktails), The Bartons Arms in Birmingham (the bar maid knew what I wanted before I did) and The Fulton Pub in Portland, USA. All thoroughly great places!

So we come to the end of my 'Pubs of the Year'. These pubs are more than just somewhere to drink, they are places with interesting people and it is thanks to these people sharing their experiences that Fred and I have things to write about.

Here's to 2015 and new discoveries.

Nicola

Cambridge CAMRA pub tour 1

This, the first of a series of mini pub tours, is designed to give both tourists and curious locals a guided tour of pubs in the Bridge Street area of the city.

As you would expect in the city of Cambridge, the tour takes in some significant buildings and reminders of Cambridge history. Whilst some of these, The Round Church, or the Great Bridge of Cambridge for instance may be mentioned in passing, this guide is primarily about traditional pubs. There simply isn't enough room to include a potted history of the whole area. For the same reason I haven't mentioned any of the wine bars, restaurants and eateries which abound in the tourist magnet that the area has become.

The Start

The Maypole, 20a Portugal Place, CB5 8AF

This tour is intended to be a walking tour. If your party has a designated driver the Park Street car park is situated next to The Maypole. Cyclists will find cycle racks adjacent to the front of the pub.



Don't be put off by the rather 1960s looking exterior, The Maypole is a family owned pub, and you are sure to

get a family welcome. Purchased in 1982 by CAMRA award winning landlord Mario Castiglione, the pub now offers up to 16 real ales, and is famous for the consistent quality of the beers served. It has two bars, both of which are furnished in a traditional style, and offers a menu which includes both Italian and traditional English food. In 2010 Mario elected to share the management of the pub with his son Vincent, who was named Cambridge CAMRA Real Ale Champion in the same year.

The Maypole offers a 20p discount to CAMRA

members.

On leaving the Maypole turn left into Portugal Place. Where the passage forks, turn left again and follow the path to Bridge Street. On reaching Bridge Street turn left and head towards the Baron of Beef and The Mitre.

Comparison of the two, which are separated only by a cul-de-sac footpath called Blackamoors Yard, will show just how different pubs can be.

The Baron of Beef, 19, Bridge Street, CB2 1UF



In the 1970s and 1980s, "The Baron" was well known as a traditional pub. The then landlord, Bob Wass, a

larger than life character who boasted the most enormous handlebar moustache and had a personality to match, ruled the pub. It was a magnet for local celebrities, including former Daily Mirror journalist Michael Jeacock, and inventor Clive Sinclair. In those day the long bar was divided into two rooms. Now one long bar, it is now very much a students pub, but thanks to a recent refit still manages to keep some of its traditional feel

Beers on offer are Greene King IPA and Abbot ale, supported by up to 3 guest ales.

Leave the Baron by the door situated opposite the long bar; cross the Blackamoors yard and enter The Mitre through the door opposite.

The Mitre, 17, Bridge Street, CB2 1UF

The Mitre is part of the Nicholson's chain, and, as such has been renovated with great care. According to the pub's own literature, it stands on the grounds of two former pubs, which date

Bridge Street and Castle Hill

back to the 18th century.



The Mitre is very much a tourist pub. Food is very evident, fish and chips being a speciality,

and if generally unexciting, is of a good quality.

There is always a good selection of real ale on offer.

Leave the Mitre using the Bridge Street entrance and cross the road. Look left and you will notice The Round Church; ahead of you is St John's College. Turn right and head towards the river. Cross the river via "The Great Bridge", the site of the original crossing and the reason why the Romans first settled here, and in a short while turn left into the entrance of The Pickerel Inn.

The Pickerel Inn, 30, Magdalene Street, CB3 0AF



The Pickerel is possibly the oldest pub in Cambridge. There is some confusion to just how long it has been a

pub. Some claim it has been around since the 16th century, others say it opened in 1608. There is no doubt that parts of the building are very old. The low ceilinged, small dark rooms would not be amiss if described in an historic novel. The glass frontage is a later addition, having been installed by a Victorian owner.

The Pickerel usually has 5 ales on offer. Regular beers include Woodforde's Wherry and Nelson's Revenge, though the pub has recently been bought by Greene King and the beer

selection may be subject to change.

There is currently a 10% discount on a pint of beer for CAMRA members.

On leaving The Pickerel, cross the road. In front of you is Magdalene College. Turn left and head towards the traffic lights on Chesterton Road. Cross the road and head on up the hill until you chance upon The Castle Inn.

The Castle Inn, 38, Castle Street, CB3 0AJ



Described by Cambridge CAMRA as Adnams "flagship pub in Cambridge..." this pub consists of a

large bar with comfortable rooms set on two levels, including a snug on the ground floor, and the more recent addition of a patio garden. Adnam's beers are prevalent. They are invariably in good condition.

The Castle offers a varied menu. It is closed between 3pm and 5pm, Mon-Thu.

As you leave The Castle, you will be able to see the next pub, The Architect, directly across the road.

The Architect, 43, Castle Street, CB3 0AH



Formerly the County Arms, The Architect is not what you'd expect of a traditional pub. The mock-Tudor frontage has

been painted grey. The traditional English country pub interior has been opened out and

Cambridge CAMRA pub tour ... continued

refurbished with stainless steel utility furniture. It's all a bit steam punk, but don't let that put you off.

The Architect, owned by Everards, is the main outlet for the city's youngest brewery, Calverley's, of Hooper Street. Other beers choices include a good selection from local breweries and Everards Tiger is always on offer.

Just to the left of The Architect there runs a footpath, which leads on to Whyman's Lane. Follow the road to St Peter's Street, turn left and then immediately right into Pound Hill. Follow Pound Hill until you come to The Punter.

The Punter, 3, Pound Hill, CB3 0AE

The Punter is a former coaching inn, records of which date back to the 19th century when it was known as The Rose and Crown. Recent years have seen many changes of name and of target clientele, but the pub now seems to have found

its niche as a gastro pub; though drinkers are also welcome.



The Punter has a very interesting interior. Not so much rooms as hiding places, and it is a very romantic setting, especially in the evening, should the occasion require it.

Two Adnams beers are on offer.

The food is excellent.

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Tucking Inn (Will's Foodie Page)

Beer Toddy

Tom Canning who is the former manager and chef of The Plough and Fleece, Horingsea introduced this toddy to me in April 2012. A number of CAMRA members met in the pub in preparation for the Tour of Hope, during which we planned to visit every community owned pub that existed in the Cambridge and District area. We were not allowed to leave until we had each sampled a warming beery cupful.

For best results use a sweet/heavily malted beer or sweet stout. I've used Cambridge Moonshine Brewery's Chocolate Orange Stout.

You may need to adjust the amount of sugar used depending on the type of beer.

Ingredients

- 1 pint beer
- 0.5 pint milk
- 3 teaspoons sugar
- 2 egg yolks
- 1 stick cinnamon
- 1 inch peeled ginger root, grated
- 2 star anise
- 0.5 tablespoon cornflour

Salt to taste

Place the beer, cinnamon, star anise, ginger and sugar in a saucepan, bring to boil and allow to simmer for 15 minutes.

Pass the mixture through a sieve to remove the ginger cinnamon and star anise and return the liquid to the pan.

Combine a little of the warm beer with the cornflour and make into a paste.

Add this to the pan and cook on a low heat for another 10 minutes, stirring occasionally.

Meanwhile mix the egg yolks with the milk and stir with a fork until well combined.



Remove the saucepan from the heat and pour the milk/egg mixture into the beer, stirring as you pour.

Reheat gently, but do not boil.

Salt to taste – it really does add depth to the flavour.

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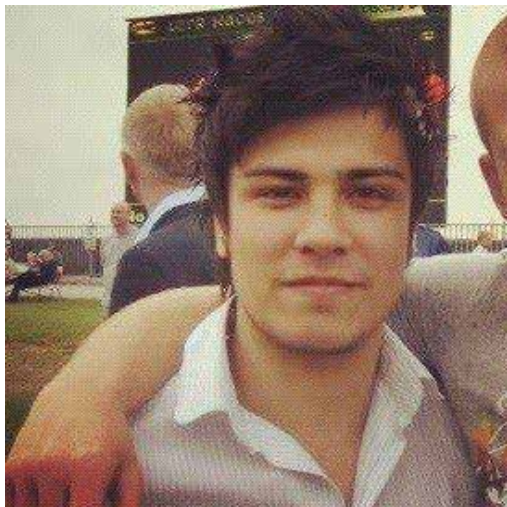
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Meet the Landlord

John Arnold

**The Bath House, Benet Street,
Cambridge**



The first thing that strikes you about John is the incredible enthusiasm he has, both for his work and for real ale. This will come as a surprise to some critics, for John is what is seen by certain circles within CAMRA as the antithesis of good real ale management: a Greene King trained manager, running a Greene King public house.

John will have nothing said against the company, which he joined as a barman shortly after leaving St John's University, York. His first pub was The Lendal Cellars situated in the heart of York, close to York Minster.

Determined to learn all he could from this experience, he soon rose to supervisor level and then, together with his partner, Hayley Mossop, moved to Sheffield for a successful stint in The Shepley Spitfire, a community pub which had hit on bad times and "...needed turning around."

In 2013, perhaps acknowledging that the couple had the ability to save a pub suffering difficulties, Greene King asked them to take on The Bath House, Cambridge.

At that time the Bath House was in a poor state. A string of interim managers had succeeded in losing practically all of the local custom and, being less attractive to tourists than its neighbour, The Eagle, it could not count on tourist trade to boost the takings. When John and Hayley arrived sales had declined so much that the pub had been placed on the Greene King "Red Alert" list.

Unsure of how successful they would be, they agreed to take it on for a year, with an option to move on if things didn't work out.

As soon as they arrived John got to work. An extensive cleaning program of the neglected pipes and a careful watch on cellar temperature ensured that the beer he served was in tip-top condition. He reduced the number of hand pumps from 4 to 3: "I'd rather serve fewer ales in good condition than have more and let the quality suffer", and most importantly, he scoured the Greene King beer lists looking to provide a stream of more unusual beers.

The beers on offer when I visited were, Okell's Ail (4.7%), Hook Norton Hooky, and Purity Pure UBU (4.5%). Keg Greene King IPA was also available on tap. He also introduced Old Rosie cider (7.4%), which has now become one of his best selling lines.



But it is not just the beer that has changed.


He manages, he told me, with always three rules in mind. Firstly, the business must focus on

the customer. A landlord needs to supply what the customer needs. Secondly, a landlord should have a good knowledge of the product he is selling; and lastly, the service should be consistently good.

I suspect this may be a Greene King mantra. If it is, then it is a good one. But the infectious enthusiasm is all Johns, and it is because of his and Hayley's hard work that many of the Bath House locals have returned. The pub, which has also become a lunchtime meeting place for female customers, is now performing at levels last reached in 2008 when the then landlady, Vicky Beer ran it using exactly the same values.

Greene King has a reputation for moving their managers around the estate. I hope in the case of the Bath House, they see sense and allow John And Hayley to stay there for as long as they like.

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South Cambridgeshire District Council

Over the years our branch has been active in campaigning for pubs as well as for real ale. Partly as a result, our local councils have attempted to address the issue of pub losses. For several years both East Cambridgeshire and South Cambridgeshire District Councils have had "last pub in the village" policies but, as was illustrated by the Pear Tree in Hildersham a year ago, these are all too easily circumvented.

In 2012, in response to our campaigning, Cambridge City Council produced its Interim Planning Policy Guidance for the Protection of Public Houses. Last January it went further than any other local authority nationwide and adopted Article 4 Directions (A4D) to prevent pubs from being demolished without first obtaining planning permission. It applied these A4Ds to 20 pubs that aren't in conservation areas or listed buildings (these already require planning permission before demolition).

Although we applauded Cambridge City Council for its progressive approach we pointed out that they hadn't gone far enough. Pubs could still be converted to shops, restaurants or offices without the need for planning permission. Nationally we have seen a growing trend for pubs to be converted into supermarket convenience stores.

Now, following the outcry over the Pear Tree, South Cambridgeshire District Council (SCDC)



looks set to take that extra step. From 5th January they have been running a public consultation

on whether it should adopt Article 4 Directions to prevent pub losses in South Cambridgeshire through demolition and/or through change of use without planning permission having first been obtained. It must be stressed that even with an A4D in place a pub can still be lost. But it

can only happen after planning permission has been obtained and this will give you the chance to object and put your case to your local councillors and those on the planning committee.

Although it is possible that SCDC could adopt A4Ds to prevent demolition and change of use without planning permission for all its pubs it will be looking at each on a pub by pub basis and on a demolition and change of use basis. The decision on whether an A4D should be adopted for a pub will be evidence based and that is why the opinions submitted during the public consultation period are crucial. The public consultation period ends on 23rd February so it is important that communities and individuals work fast.

The Cambridge & district branch of CAMRA will review all South Cambridgeshire pubs in our branch area and will put in numerous

submissions but it is extremely important that we are not alone in doing this. We need individuals to give SCDC their views. Can you help? You don't need to live in the village or even in the district, so long as you use the pub.

Social groups such as walking groups, book clubs, knitting circles, sports teams etc. can

all contribute, as can parish councils. Some may solely want to prevent unregulated demolitions but for us change of use as well as demolition is a big issue.

There are basically two types of A4D. One takes 12 months to come fully into force and is less controversial but clearly if a pub loss is imminent this may be of little or no use. The second, immediate A4D may be the best way to protect some pubs but it could lead to SCDC facing

Are there any drawbacks for pub owners? If they plan to keep the pub as a pub nothing changes. Only if they wish to demolish or convert or sell it will an A4D affect things.

gives you a say in the future of your pubs

compensation claims.

So are there any drawbacks for pub owners? Well if they plan to keep the pub as a pub then no, nothing changes. Only if they think they may wish to demolish or convert it or sell it on to someone who might wish to do so will an A4D affect things. It will mean that they will have to apply for planning permission. By adopting A4Ds SCDC will be able to regulate but not necessarily stop pub losses. If the planning committee decides that a pub is not viable or valued they can grant planning permission just as they currently do if someone wishes to convert a pub to residential use.

For more information and links, visit this page of SCDC's website <https://www.scambs.gov.uk/content/consultation-greater-protection-public-houses> Written submissions to SCDC should be sent to The Sustainable Communities Team, South Cambridgeshire District Council, South

Cambridgeshire Hall, Cambourne Business Park, Cambourne, Cambridge, CB23 6EA. Alternatively, completed forms can be returned via a South Cambridgeshire Parish Council. However you respond, your submission must be at South Cambs Hall by 23rd February.

Ideally we would like the Government to realise the importance of the need for planning permission before pubs could be lost but this is unlikely to happen before May's general election and maybe not for years after that. The Government has the power to introduce this nationwide. Maybe you could raise that with the candidates when they come knocking. As a group, we won't be resting on our laurels. If South Cambs DC can take this step then so can East Cambs and Cambridge City.

Alistair Cook
Pubs Officer



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