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Cambridge & District Branch Newsletter Issue 377 June 2016



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**The Crown, Ashley -
Heart of the Community
and Branch Pub of the Year**



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Pub News

Steering away from the doom and gloom (but not forgetting that reports tell us the UK is still losing 27 pubs a week) we are trying to concentrate on the positive aspects of pubs and pub life.

Congratulations to all at **The Crown, Ashley**, who have deservedly won the title of Cambridge CAMRA Pub of the Year. Congratulations too, to all of the publicans who received an award at the fun filled Cambridge CAMRA Gala Evening.

Thanks, very much, to Liam and the team at The Hopbine, Cambridge for hosting the evening. Without their hard work the evening could not have been a success. A list of winners of the various categories is listed after this shortened edition of Pub News.

Tenants Jethro and Terri Scotcher-Littlechild are now running **The Royal Standard, Mill Road, Cambridge**. Former manager Tom Canning has moved to the **Royal Oak, Barrington**. Tom, who has also previously managed **The Plough and Fleece, Horningsea** and **The Alma, Cambridge** tells us that The Royal Oak will continue to serve Woodforde's Wherry alongside beers from Adnams Brewery. He hopes to introduce regular LocAle guest ales in the near future.

The Little Rose, Haslingfield reports that their first beer festival, held in April, was very successful. 12 ales on offer included examples from Lacons and several from local breweries, including Moonshine Night Watch Porter.

All change at **The Red Lion, Brinkley**, where new licensees Gwen and Morris have reversed the positions of the pub bar and restaurant areas. The couple met in America; Gwen is American, Morris was born in Ireland. Gwen, who has some brewing experience, is planning to brew a house beer. Woodforde's Wherry is a regular offering. On our visit the guest ale was Wolf Brewery's Edith Cavell. For every pint sold the brewery donates 5p to the Cavell Nurses Trust.

Another successful Spring beer festival was held in **The Chestnut Tree West Wratting**, which

Branch Diary

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

Tue 14-Jun : 8:00, Open Branch Meeting, Crown, Ashley

Sat 2-Jul : 12:00, CAMRA Regional Meeting, Brewery Tap, Peterborough

Tue 12-Jul : 8:00, Open Branch Meeting, Bees in the Wall, Whittlesford

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Pub News continued

featured a choice of seven real ales and four real ciders, and an amusing mummings play, based somewhat loosely on the fabled story of George and the Dragon.

Welcome to Simon and Christine, new landlord and lady of **The Bell, Balsham**. Bowing to local demands, the couple plan to keep Greene King IPA as their regular beer.

The Swavesey Mayfest, held in **The White Horse**, featured a traditional barrel rolling competition, which was compered by Cambridge CAMRA's cider officer Jerry Ladell. The accompanying beer festival was very successful, popular beers being Nethergate's Abbey Mild, and Robinson's Beerdo.

The Railway Vue, Impington now serves a guest ale. On our visit Milton Dionysus accompanied the all too familiar, Greene King IPA, Sharp's Doom Bar and Charles Wells Bombardier. Regular Blues music evenings are proving to be very popular.

The Lion and Lamb, Milton has introduced a children's play area called The Pirates Lagoon. The pub, which held its own beer festival featuring forty real ales and ciders at the end of May, is clearly aiming to please all of the family.

City Pub Company's **The Old Bicycle Shop, Regent St. Cambridge** opened to tumultuous praise from both media and public. The pub, which is heavily biased towards food sales, does have a few seats for drinkers, but don't expect to be allowed into the garden unless you order food (we understand that this may change once trade has settled down). Meanwhile, there is ample seating across the road in Greene King's **Grain and Hop Store**. This pub has recently upped its game and now offers a larger selection of real ale, including guest ales from outside the Greene King brewing lists.

The Old Bike Shop's much more drinker friendly stable mate, **The Mill, Mill Lane** continues to offer an exciting range of local beers, and is in my opinion a much better pub.

The pub formerly known as The Cock, Castle Camps is now advertising itself as **The Cockerel, Castle Camps**. Pictures on the pub's Facebook page suggest that, thankfully, the pub interior has not lost any of its quirky charm.

The Three Hills, Bartlow has been saved. New owner Chris Field, quoted in the Cambridge News, has promised that the pub, which dates back to 1847, will regain its reputation as a friendly country pub.

Those of you old enough to have fond memories of The Cambridge Arms, King Street, will have been intrigued by the announcement that the pub's most recent incarnation, **D'arry's**, has resurrected part of the former brewery tap brewery, which has miraculously remained intact since 1866. Now functioning as a bar, the owners have re-named it **D'arry's Liquor Loft**.

Sad news from Over, where **The Exhibition** has served its last pint. The pub is currently closed and it looks likely that the housing project, passed by the planners several months ago, will be taken forward.

Let's hope that the village's only other pub **The Admiral Vernon**, doesn't suffer the same fate.

The Anchor, Burwell will be holding its annual beer and cider festival from 15th to 17th July this year. There are over twenty beers and ciders planned. It will also feature a BBQ with live music. The Anchor will also be a great place to celebrate The Queen's 90th birthday on 12th June as part of a local street party.

Having agreed a new five-year tenancy with Greene King, Rick and Nikki have given the **Five Bells, Burwell** a "major refurbishment". The slightly smaller bar in the lounge area allows room for more tables. An extra hand pump for guest ales can now be found in the main bar. In addition to the internal upgrades, they are looking to erect a small picket fence out front with some shaded seating. The couple plan to open the pub all day every day throughout the summer.

From our correspondents:

Tenants new to the pub trade have taken over at the **Tharpe Arms, Chippenham**. Richard and Bev Turner have embraced this career change to the evident enthusiasm of the local clientele. They are holding their second beer festival on Sat 13 August when an Irish band will set the mood.

Chris and Sue Smith, back in harness at their pub, the **Three Ways** (previously the Three Tuns), **Cowlinge** are holding a beer festival on 17, 18, 19 June when all beers will be £3.20 a pint. Not too far away, the Cambridge CAMRA Crown at Ashley have their beer festival at the same time.

On Thurs 16 June, the **Red Lion, Kirtling** are hosting the Morris Men. A fish and chips supper has proved very popular lately and will be repeated for this event.

And finally, congratulations to **Moonshine Brewery, Cambridge** on winning the Champion Speciality Beer of East Anglia award for their extraordinarily wonderful Chocolate Orange Stout.

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2016 Pub Awards

LocAle pub of the year (Rural)

Nominations: Chestnut Tree, West Wrattling and Carpenters Arms, Great Wilbraham.

Winner: Chestnut Tree

The Chestnut Tree is no stranger to winning awards, having won the most improved pub award in 2013 and the Cambridge CAMRA Branch Pub of the year award in 2014, but Landlord and Landlady have not rested on their laurels, continuing to make improvements both to the building and to the selection of their guest beers, which feature beers from local breweries, including from Brandon Brewery, and Crafty Beers Brewery.

Runner Up: Carpenters Arms

You couldn't get more local than in your own back garden. Up until early this year Crafty Brewery was housed in the Carpenters Arms' outhouse. The brewery has moved to Stetchworth but the pub, which dates back to 17th century, and has been nominated for its second LocAle Pub of the year award, having won it in 2014, still regularly serves 2 Crafty Ales alongside an occasional guest ale.

LocAle Pub of the Year (City)

Nominations: The Hopbine, Fair Street (our hosts) and The Mill, Mill Lane

Winner: The Hopbine

Sold in 2011 by Admiral Taverns and now leased to Hayley and Steve, who are also tenants of the Portland Arms and The Alexandra Arms, and ably run by pub manager, Liam. The trio take full advantage of their freedom from tie, with up to five ever-changing real ales available. East Anglian micro breweries, many of them from Cambridge area, predominate.

Runner Up: The Mill

Since re-opening in 2012 The Mill has never once missed an awards evening. This year's nomination is in recognition of Lauren's continuing support for local breweries. The pub runs regular, "battle of the brewers" events,

during which customers are encouraged to taste and vote for their favourite local ales. The winning brewery is then featured as a regular supplier to the pub.

Community Pub: Rural

Nominations The Bank, Willingham and The White Horse, Milton

Winner: White Horse

This is very much a community-focused pub. Landlady Ava, like so many good landladies, presents a maternal figure as she chats with regular customers, organises charitable events, Karaoke and quiz evenings. The pub welcomes families, singles, couples (and dogs), drinkers and those who like to dine, with equal pleasure.

Runner Up: The Bank

Once a village bank, walking into this micro pub is as close to walking into your own living room as you are likely to get. Frequented by a lively and friendly local community, all of whom are happy to enter into meaningful discussions, whether it be about real ale, who saw what on telly (BBC 2, mostly), or conversations about the delicious scotch eggs. It is impossible to drink in this pub and not make friends.

Community Pub: City

Winner: Earl of Beaconsfield, Mill Road

When Landlady Sue took over "The Beaky" her over-riding ambition was to create a community pub that "beer for all tastes". Fortunately for us she succeeded. In an area that is well known for its choice of pubs, the Earl of Beaconsfield stands out for its very tangible sense of community.

It houses events ranging from poetry readings (once a traditional pub activity) to unusual musical events including cigar box banjo weekends, as well as catering for regular sports viewers.

Most Improved Pub (Rural)

Winner: Green Man Thriplow

Chris & Rebecca took over the tenancy in January 2015. Diane has been there a few years longer. Chris is the chef, Rebecca runs front of house and Diane is the bar manager.

The team have kept the community owned pub at the heart of the village, by playing a big part in the annual Thriplow Daffodil Weekend and also running regular theme nights. The Green Man has a great reputation for its food but not at the expense of beer sales. Dogs are welcome in the bar, which has a log fire in winter. Chris has been known to run customers home to nearby villages in his Landrover.

Most Improved Pub (City)

Winner: Royal Standard, Mill Road

12 months ago The Royal Standard was a building site. Before that, it was a charity shop, and before that a failed Indian restaurant. The days when the Royal Standard had been a premium pub had been long forgotten.

Under the watchful management of Jethro and Terri who took the tenancy when the pub opened in October 2015, the pub has become a fine addition to the Cambridge drinking scene

The dance floors and most of the garden may be lost to the developer, but never-the-less the transformation has been nothing but astounding.

Dark Ale Pub of the Year

Winner: The Maypole, Portugal Place

Run by the Cambridge institution that is the Castiglione family for over 30 years it is always a pleasure to give an award to The Maypole. The pub is a showcase for quality beers of all styles, and whilst this award is for the quality of dark ales, it could quite easily apply to golden, ruby, straw coloured or brown ales, which are all served in immaculate condition.

Couple this with a very warm welcome, whether it be from Vincent, Mario or Anastasia, and we are celebrating another Cambridge premium pub.

Real Ale Champion

Winner: Mark Watch, Moonshine Brewery

When Mark started a brewery in his garage in Radegund Road Cambridge, only he knew how successful he would be. He named the brewery "Moonshine" because at the time he had a full time job, and the only time left for brewing was at night, literally, when the moon was shining. His first year saw him win beer of the festival at the Cambridge Beer Festival. This was to be the first of many awards presented both locally and nationally, the latest being a Champion Beer of East Anglia Gold award for Cambridge Moonshine Chocolate Orange Stout.

But this award isn't just for brewing good beer. It is for the passion and enthusiasm that Mark brings to the pub and brewing community. He is a long-standing member of CAMRA, and has shown that he is not afraid to offer robust, and constructive, criticism on more than one occasion.

But he is also lavish with his support for local brewers, and there have been a number of up and coming brewers thankful that their products have improved after following Mark's advice.

Lifetime achievement award

Lawrie Childs: Bees in the Wall, Whittlesford

Situated on the village's northern edge, the Bees in the Wall pub really does have bees in one wall and has had since 1950. The public bar oozes atmosphere, especially with the fire blazing, and tends to be where the locals gather. Diners favour the long split-level lounge, which opens onto a patio, huge paddock-style garden and the pub's own wood. Two guest beers normally stocked. Evening meals are served Wednesday to Saturday only. The pub may stay open all day during the summer. As well as the folk club, customers may also play unamplified music at times. In 2014, owner and Landlord Lawrie Childs marked his 33rd year at the pub and he's still there now.

2016 Pub Awards *continued*

Cider Pub of the Year Winner: Cambridge Blue

It is ironic that a pub that is known for the quality and the diversity of the beers it offers, should win an award for its cider. Owned by Jethro and Terri, the Blue is a former CAMRA county pub of the year and it is no surprise that the couple show the same care for their cider as they do for their beers. There are a number of pubs in the Cambridge area that offer a larger number of different ciders, but few show the consistency of quality and condition enjoyed at The Cambridge Blue.

Cambridge CAMRA Pub of the Year The Crown Inn, Ashley

This is friendly village community local with two bars separated by open doorways. The front bar houses the dart board, pool table and TV as well as simple tables, chairs and stools while the rear bar is given over to comfortable seating. There are tables out front while at the

rear there is additional parking, a covered smoking area and a sunny enclosed beer garden.

The pub is home to darts, pool and petanque teams. Simple pub fare, including locally produced pork pies, is available at all sessions with a more extensive menu at weekends. Family friendly, it also has a water bowl for its canine guests. The book club, film and music nights, as well as its two beer festivals, keep the Crown Inn at the heart of the community.

It is first recorded as a pub in 1712 though parts of the building predate this. Until recently owned by Greene King, the Crown became free of tie when purchased in January 2014 by Sarah and Larry McCabe. Mighty Oak IPA is its regular ale and they have up to three others. The beer choice is always interesting and it frequently includes a dark ale. Real ciders, direct from the box, are also available.



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Lost pubs of Cambridge(shire)

Last issue's mystery pub was the former Durham Ox/Chariots of Fire. Well done to David Elbdon, Merv Hughes, Ye Gerbish, Rob Richmond, Pete Davis, and doubtless plenty of others who identified it but didn't get in touch.



The earliest record of the pub is from 1855, when a Thomas Carpenter is listed as a beer retailer. He is still there in the Census of 1861, along with his wife, Mary Ann, three daughters and one son (all age 6 or under) and a 'general servant', which must have been cosy! He was no longer there by 1869.

No licensees seem to have stayed there very long, though: almost every directory and census for the next 60 or 70 years has a different name in charge. These include William Bye, formerly of the Portland Arms, interrupting the five-year reign of Thomas Twinn in 1881; John James Jay, formerly of the Empress, in 1916; and Frederick William Leavis (1887), who then went on to a lengthy stint at the Six Bells, Covent Garden.



The Durham Ox in 1982, with the old Kinema beyond. Photo: Simon Knott.

Long a Lacons pub, it fell into the hands of Whitbread, who ended up selling it to the then landlord, Neville Lindsay. I only got to know the place in the late 1990s, and to my mind it was very much a time warp back to 'the way pubs used to be': it was described in ALE 284 (Spring 1996) as "one of the very few unspoilt locals left in Cambridge. Bare boards and unfussy fittings may be familiar now in designer re-creations of the 'traditional pub'. Here they're genuine! There

is an unpretentious front bar and a small rear lounge. A permanent Christmas tree sits next to that increasing pub rarity, a pinball machine. And there is no food. The single real ale, always well-kept, is Flowers Original." (By 1999 this single real ale offering had been augmented with guests from Everards and Ridleys.)

In October 2000, after nearly 30 years running the place, Neville sold it to the owner of the newly built student flats next door. Originally the plan was to convert the 'Durham Ex', as Gerbish puts it, into a cyber café, but instead it reopened later that same month as the Chariots of Fire, completely stripped out, bare bricks inside painted a motley collection of garish colours, and aimed at the younger end of the market. The bar had an increased range of real ales, from Milton and Everards, and also a kitchen, providing a good range of pub grub at student-friendly prices.

In the summer of 2002, however, the Chariots of Fire became the Chariots on Fire, when a serious fire inside rendered the building unsafe. It was boarded up and its licence was revoked that July. And that was the end. It remained empty for some time before the front extension was removed (thereby widening the pavement) and it was converted into two take-away outlets which Mill Road had been notably lacking up to that time.



OK, here's another one. As usual: Where is/was it? What was it called? Do you remember it when it was

a still 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 contact pub-history@cambridge-camra.org.uk.

More next time.

Meet the Maker

The following is the final of a series of three articles on local cider maker, Simon Gibson.



If you weren't making cider, what do you think you would you be doing to earn a crust?

Fencing, as you know, I also run a fencing business; in fact I've kept the same logo for my cider that I use for my fencing company. I will always have this to fall back on but if I fulfil my ambitions, cider and perry making will become my mainstream income source.

Here's an interesting question for you – please answer as candidly as possible – do you think CAMRA currently does enough to promote Cider and Perry?

Yes, considering CAMRA is a real ale organisation – I know they have the APPLE group, which is great and they do a lot of good work with festivals and campaigns and the like, but CAMRA's main reason for being is real ale, so quite rightly they focus their attention on beer. I think it is unfair of people to expect and demand CAMRA to do more to support real cider.

Cider-makers have their own national association but that is made up solely of the big multi-million concerns such as: Bulmer's, Thatcher's, Aspell's etc. They don't represent real cider makers like me, which is a shame.

It would be nice if CAMRA did more or the Apple group worked independently. I would like to be involved more but running two businesses means I'm too busy to do more than I currently

do but without CAMRA I probably wouldn't be making the cider, so yes I am happy with the support they give through the Cambridge Beer Festival, GBBF and other festivals. But, I also think that if CAMRA are going to be involved in cider and perry they need to do it properly and not take a half-arsed approach; either embrace it, or leave it alone - and let somebody else take it on. This is the ideal, something is better than nothing, so I am grateful for what CAMRA do.

OK, now is the chance for you to make a shameless plug – tell us about the products you currently have available for purchase and what do you have in the pipeline.

- **As it comes** – is a natural real dry cider, nothing has been done to it, the apples have been taken from one orchard, the apples are turned into cider, left to mature and then into tubs and then off to beer festivals for sale.
- **Barton Perry** - was a second in class (silver medal) winner at the East Anglian Bottled Perry Competition – it will be going to Norwich to go up against the draughts as well. It's lost a bit of its sparkle but maturation has added complexity to the taste, so hopefully it will do very well
- **Short Stirling** – a medium to dry cider, I've blended some Bramley cider for acidity and



a little bit of apple juice back in to flavour it and give it a little bit of sweetness – I don't like using sucralose (artificial

sweetener) as I don't like the flavour it gives. – it's off next to Huddersfield and Milton Keynes beer festivals, it has gone down very well

- **The Dark Side** – a dark dry cider supplemented with molasses, can be drunk as a mulled cider or slightly chilled – you can add spices such as cinnamon, ginger cloves – don't add any more fruit though, it already has plenty of fruit in it, warm it up

Simon Gibson – Simon's Cider

gently – this is targeted at the autumn market

- **Offord's Drop Perry** – a sweetened version of the Barton perry, taking it back to the award winning perry, giving it a real party like feel to the taste

Finally, where can consumers get hold of your produce?

Beer festivals really, I've not had a lot to go on sale elsewhere this year but from next year the plan is to set up an online sales market, getting my product into pubs etc. as well as festivals. – So it should become much more widely available. If you follow 'simonscider' on Facebook and Twitter I post details of where my ciders will be appearing.

I would like to thank Simon for his time, I'm sure he would have preferred to be getting on with his pressing than taking time out to talk to me – I hope you agree the article has given a great

insight into the ways of a small independent cider maker and the trials and tribulations they have to face on a regular basis.

One of Simon's ciders, Short Stirling, is an interesting brew, as I mentioned earlier but cider apart what also interested me was the actual naming of the cider – The Short Stirlings were regularly seen across the East Anglian skyline during the second world war, they were tasked with doing some of the more less glamorous duties, such as bombing missions on dock areas – they were the first bombers based at Bourn airfield which is at the centre of Simon's apple collecting area, they flew out of quite a few local airfields, including Waterbeach.

Footnote: Over the last 2 weekends we've collected over 2 tonnes of apples and pears from Cambridge and surrounding areas, which means the next pressing session should double last year's production.

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Heart of the Community



Cambridge CAMRA Pub Of The Year - The Crown, Ashley

There is a traditionally comforting warm welcome waiting for you at The Crown.

According to the pub website (www.thecrowninnashley.co.uk), which quotes historian Clive Moffat, the earliest record of The Crown as a pub is 1712, though the building dates back a lot further than that.

Greene King brought it in 1890, and sold it as a “going concern” to current owners Sarah and Larry McCabe in 2014.

Larry is a project manager, currently working for University College London.

Sarah was a primary school head teacher. She became disillusioned by the education system and needed a new outlet for her natural skill of entertaining (the couple’s London home is affectionately called “Club 30”). Sarah had previously enjoyed working as a volunteer pulling pints for Millwall rugby club (which Larry helped to found) so the obvious solution was for them to buy a pub.

But what attracted them to this particular pub?

“It was a ‘fill in’ on our list of pubs to look at” Sarah said, “There were a couple other pubs in the area, and we came here to use up some time between visits.”

But it was The Crown that impressed them the most, “I fell in love with the pub even before I had walked in the door.”

It is easy to see why.

The red brick structure, which is fronted with floor to ceiling sash windows and an imposingly solid door is rather grand. The walled garden, complete with two petanque courts, is reminiscent of a grassed country house courtyard.

The contrast between exterior and interior is quite marked. Rather than grand, the interior is traditionally functional. A central painted tongue and groove faced bar is flanked to the left by an open fire and comfortable seating, and to the right by a pool table and games area. The furniture in the rest of the large bar area is functional and wooden. A separate room to the rear of the bar features a smaller fire, now decorated with candles, but looks as if it might at one time have been an oven for making bread.

The atmosphere inside the pub accurately reflects Sarah’s desire to run a community pub with community values. I visited at five o’clock on a Thursday, and the bar was filled with local customers. I stayed, chatting, for a couple of hours during which time, various groups of locals came in for a drink or two.

In addition to the already mentioned Petanque and Pool the pub offers the opportunity to play all of the traditional pub sports including, darts, dominoes and crib. Sunday is meat raffle day, and keeping with tradition, roast potatoes are placed on the bar and customers help themselves.

When I asked Sarah what they had improved about the pub since they had moved in, she offered a very self-effacing, “Not very much”. Fortunately, one of her customers, Wayne Owen was on hand to put her right. “You removed the sticky carpets and the grubby red velvet curtains,” he said. In fact, the pub has had a full interior refurbishment. The décor too, designed by Sarah.

Food in The Crown is simple and traditional. Pork pies, sandwiches and perhaps less

The Crown, Ashley


traditional, pizza, but they do hold occasional and very popular themed evenings, over which Wayne as part time chef, presides.

Beer, of course, is of utmost importance. Both Sarah and Larry enjoy a pint, and they are very aware that beer should be served in tip top condition. Sarah travelled to St Austell (unfortunately, she says, not the brewery) to attend cellar management training. She made an early decision to phase out Greene King IPA, and moved in Mighty Oak IPA as the

regular bitter. Three more hand pumps supply guest beers; on this occasion examples Mauldons, Shortts and Nethergate. All in excellent condition – and worthy of a pub which has just been recognised as the Cambridge CAMRA Pub of the Year.



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I'm Alright, Jack

Central Cambridge. It is January. I am drinking a beer that I have never tried before from a brewery I have never heard of. The beer is around 5%; it is citrus heavy and hoppy. I then choose another beer, also around 5%; a new seasonal ale made with a new American hop that I have never encountered. This beer is also good. But somehow I am dissatisfied. I have tried large numbers of these very fashionable hoppy ales, which all have that bite and zest that many of us are now in constant search of.

I then go for a walk, and pop into **The Castle Inn** in Cambridge and find that there is a choice of 5 or 6 Adnams beers. I know all of these. One large sip later I find myself transported to an earlier time in my life where I used to enjoy a pint of "the usual." Adnams Southwold Bitter at 3.7%, a chestnut coloured beer that needs no introduction – I would know this beer anywhere. Fuggles hops, East Anglian water and the Adnams strain of yeast have combined to make this beer for decades.

I instantly know there has been something missing. I do like a good hoppy beer (the aromas are often amazing), but find so many new brews completely unbalanced, lacking sweetness or maltiness - missing any real depth. I believe that I am looking for beer with more character.

In March I am lucky to attend an Adnams tasting event in Saffron Walden. I try a dozen or so beers, all of which are in top condition; the only beer I cannot stomach is the 1659 Smoked Ruby (4.7%) which to me is like drinking mackerel. At the end of the tasting, the brewer asks which of the beers is our favourite. Some punters opt for Explorer (4.3%), a few for Broadside (4.7%), but the most popular by far is Ghost Ship (4.5%). Nobody, except me mentions good old Southwold Bitter. Somebody comments, "Oh, I'd forgotten about that." I am staggered that among such seasoned drinkers, it seems that this great beer is held in such low esteem!



Something needs to be done about this! So, in a tribute to one of Britain's greatest beers, and to that

plucky little fellow (Southwold Jack), I find myself now embarking on a mini quest to find the best places around Cambridge to quaff what I shall simply call *Bitter*.

It is now May, and I return to **The Castle Inn**, which is the only Adnams tied house in Cambridgeshire. The pub is actually made up of 2 adjacent buildings, mainly Victorian with wooden flooring, but it still has a bright airy modern feel to it. There are 4 Adnams ales on handpump plus 4 guests. I also note that there are at least 4 Adnams varieties in keg too, including the new *Ease Up I.P.A.* I order Bitter and am pleased when the barman does not ask, "Which one?" At £3.60 it is delicious, a rich malty balanced bitter and not bad at central Cambridge prices these days. In my 20 minutes or so in this splendid pub, I note that Ghost Ship seems the fastest selling beer on offer...



Next, **The Six Bells** in Fulbourn. This pub has 3 beers on each side of the bar, so it pays to ask or check what they have – there is a chalkboard around the back. It is referred to as *The Bitter* here, and at £3.35 is served in a branded Adnams

glass. Undoubtedly the star feature is the garden which is nearly big enough to get lost in!



Grantchester's **The Blue Ball** Inn is a new pub to me, but comes strongly recommended by Jeremy from The Cricketers in town. This

pub nestles in a row of cottages overlooking the meadows and is listed as one of CAMRA's *Heritage Pubs*. This is the oldest and smallest pub in Grantchester and what a friendly place this is. Locals are chatting to me before I have even entered. My Bitter is poured and presented with a tangible pride.



In September 2015, new landlord Toby Joseph took over the pub from Punch. As he chuckles, "It has not been refurbished; it has been refreshed." Toby adds that they stock only East Anglian

beers, mainly Adnams of course. This two roomed pub has recently had a third handpump added, which usually offers ales from Woodforde's or Elgoods. In the room to the left, a model pays tribute to the original 1785 balloon that the pub is named after. Also, with no obvious purpose, there is a hook and length of wire with a metal ring. A fellow drinker then explains that this is a game called *Ring The Bull*. The object is to propel the wire through an arced trajectory to deposit the ring on the hook. It looks impossible and I have 6 goes and only manage to get remotely near it once. My host then "hooks home" on his second attempt. I suspect that more practice, or more beer is the key here.



The Queens Head in Newton is one of only a handful of pubs to feature in every edition of CAMRA's *Good Beer Guide*. Bitter (£3.10) is served on gravity (straight from the barrel) here and what a treat it is. The crown of foam is tremendous – this is surely Bitter served at its very best? The beer is sublime, but the woody smell of the place I find strangely enchanting too. Over the past year or two, new racking for up to 8 barrels has been added so this national institution can serve more guest beer. Today they have ever present Bitter, Broadside, Jester (Adnams, 4.8%, made with a "new British hop") and Timothy Taylor Boltmaker on offer. Why they need guest beers is beyond me, and I am happy to stick with Jack.

At only 3.7%, Southwold Bitter can only be described as a classic beer. Southwold Jack was a similarly plucky little fellow, only 4'4" tall but a defender of the Suffolk town for centuries.

If you sometimes grow tired of the seemingly endless wave of new hoppy ales appearing in our pubs, why not reach out for an old favourite? To one East Anglian hero, I raise my glass and declare, "I'm Alright, Jack."

In my lifetime, the number of breweries in Cambridgeshire has increased from 1* to 40. (For an informative article entitled *Cambridgeshire Old and New*, do pick up CAMRA's excellent *BEER* magazine issue 32/ Summer 2016.) I am not against hoppy beers, and I am certainly not against the ever growing choice that we drinkers now are lucky to have. I am just concerned that we need to remember our old favourites too.

Fred Laband

(*Elgoods of Wisbech)

Now you can organize a

More and more micro breweries are opening their brewery taps to the public. Two of Cambridge and District CAMRA's favourite breweries have followed the trend...

Calverleys Brewery

23A Hooper Street, Cambridge. CB1 2NZ.



Calverley's is housed in the former garages situated not far from the railway lines at the end of Hooper Street. For those who'd like a combined pub and brewery mini tour, it is just a short walk to

Kingston Arms or the Cambridge Blue.



Established in 2013 by brothers Sam & Tom Calverley, it has been opening on Saturdays for off sales for over a year. Their recent move to supplying an on-sales venue is proving to be very popular. The brewery tap is open each Saturday from 11am until 4pm. Some weeks, when a gourmet food van parks outside, they stay open until 11pm.

The small bar is located in the same room as they brew their beers in. In an adjoining room they have tables and benches for customers to sit and drink. For those hardy individuals who prefer the fresh air, there are also tables and benches outside.



On my visit in early April they had three of their ales available. There was a steady average of 10-20 customers drinking, plus others dropping in for the 4 and 8 pint take away service. If you haven't been yet I'd recommend dropping in one Saturday.

BlackBar Brewery

Unit 3 Button End, Harston CB22 7GX



BlackBar can be found on the Button End industrial estate. Joe Kennedy started brewing here at the end of 2011 having

learned his craft brewing for Harviestoun in Clackmannanshire and at the Old Cannon Brewery in Edinburgh.



For the past couple of years he has been opening on Saturday mornings selling mini-

P*** Up in a brewery!



casks of his ales as well as bottled beers. Now, on the last Friday of the month, Joe is opening his brewery tap from 4pm until 9pm.

On my visit at the end of April there was Blacklight (4.0%) and Theory 219 (4.5%) on cask plus Dove Step (3.8%), MTFU (5.6%) and Elusive Digit '15 (9.5%) in bottles. Custom was a bit slow to start with but was pretty busy from 7pm onwards. The imposing wooden bar sits in

front of the brewing area. There is cast iron wood burning stove and a comfortable sofa though most of the customers tend to stand at the bar and chat.

Joe is a keen cyclist and there are several bikes and bike parts on view. Why not cycle out one last Friday? You can drink beer, chat about beer, and if you fancy, learn about bikes, aikido (Joe also runs classes) and much, much, more.



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Beer Festivals Page

JUNE:

- 4** Thirstyfest, Thirsty, Cambridge
- 9-11** Hitchin Beer Festival, Herts
- 9-12** Bridge Street Beer Festival at the Mitre, the Pickerel and the Baron of Beef, Cambridge
- 10-12** Three Horseshoes, Comberton Beer & Cider Festival.
- 10-20** Blue Moon Craft Beer Festival, Cambridge
- 11** Pheasant Family Fun Day and Beer Festival, Great Chishill
- 12** Burwell Beer Run
- 16-20** Solstice Beer Festival, Hill House Inn, Happisburgh, Norfolk
- 17-19** Crown Inn Beer Festival, Ashley
- 17-18** Green Man Beer Festival, Grantchester
- 17-19** Up the Creek Beer & Music Festival, Ship Inn, Brandon Creek
- 17-19** White Swan Beer Festival, Conington
- 18-19** Wilburton Beer Festival
- 24-25** Jolly Millers Sausage & Cider Festival, Cottenham
- 25-26** Willowfest, Willow Tree, Bourn

JULY

- 1-3** Haddenham Beer Festival
- 1-2** Grafham Beer Festival, Grafham Village Hall
- 4-10** Cambridge Blue Beer Festival, Cambridge
- 7-17** Pig n Hog Birthday Beer Festival, St Neots
- 8-10** Chequers Beer Festival, Cottenham
- 10-12** Three Horseshoes Beer Festival, Comberton

- 15-17** Anchor Beer Festival, Burwell
- 16** Billfest, King William IV, Histon
- 16** Shelford Feast Beer Festival
- 28-30** Sutton Summer Beer Festival

AUGUST:

- 4-6** Angel Inn Beer Festival, Larling, Norfolk
- 4-7** Cambridge Rock Festival, Haggis Farm, Barton
- 13** Tharp Arms Beer Festival, Chippenham
- 19-21** Cock Beer Festival, Hemingford Grey
- 19-20** Soham Staploe Rotary Club Beer & Music Festival
- 23-27** Peterborough Beer Festival
- 26** Railway Vue Beer Festival, Impington
- 26-28** Reephams Beer Festival, Norfolk
- 26-29** Jolly Millers, Cottenham Beer Festival
- 28** Red Lion, Kirtling

SEPTEMBER:

- 2** Toft Beer Festival
- 5-9** Red Lion Beer Festival, Histon
- 9-11** Plough Beer Festival, Shepreth
- 22 Sep - 2 Oct** Cask Ale Week

OCTOBER:

- 6-8** Booze on the Ouse, St Ives
 - 14-15** Cambridge CAMRA Octoberfest, University Social Club, Mill Lane, Cambridge
 - 24-29** Norwich Beer Festival
- With thanks to the Pints and Pubs Blog,
<https://pintsandpubs.wordpress.com>

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Bristol Trip and Alistair

This Easter I and a group of friends decided to combine a birthday celebration with a trip to Bristol. The plan was for us to watch Cambridge United play Rovers and to also visit some of the city's finest pubs. I checked out the 2016 *Good Beer Guide* (GBG) for pubs within a mile and a quarter of our hotel, the Travelodge on Anchor Road, and discovered that there are two dozen to choose from. It promised to be a good weekend!



Friday evening, after the game, we headed to the nearby **Bag o' Nails** on St George's Road. What a great start!

This small free house has an array of hand pumps for ales and a box of cider on the bar. The pub has a strict "no dogs" rule as there are four pub cats. Two were curled up in cardboard trays on the bar while two others wandered about. The music policy is vinyl only and whilst we were there they were playing some 80s/90s Madchester music that for some reason didn't seem out of place with the pictures of jazz greats on the walls. My first ale was Vibrant Forest Session IPA (3.5%). It was fresh and hoppy with a tangerine edge. We also all went for one of their "hand reared" pork pies, a bargain at £2 each. My second ale was Liverpool Organic Josephine Butler Elderflower Ale (4.5%). It had a subtle floral, slightly sweet taste. Though we had opted for the pork pies other customers were more adventurous. Masala Café next door was delivering plates, cutlery and curries to some of the other customers.

A few yards along St George's Road we entered the **Three Tuns**, which had been the branch Pub of the Year in 2012. They had 6 cask ales and 2 real ciders. I opted for the locally brewed Arbor Motueka (3.8%), a pale beer made with

New Zealand hops, as it was one I'd served many times at our May 2015 beer festival. I followed it up with something much darker. Mumbles Oystermouth Stout (4.4%) that was made with real oysters.

In our first two pubs I had seen posters advertising the St George's Road Spring Beer Festival which was to take place two weekends



after our visit. The festival featured a third pub, the **Lime Kiln**, which wasn't on our list as it isn't in the 2016 GBG.

My curiosity had been triggered so, leaving my friends behind, I crossed the road and went down the hill to check it out. It turned out that it had only reopened in May 2015 so couldn't have made it into the 2016 GBG. From what I saw on my visit it will be a strong contender for the 2017 GBG. They had 5 hand pumps for ales and a box of cider. I chose halves of Tickety Brew Jasmin Green Tea (3.8%) and Staggeringly Good Post Impact Porter (5.4%) before re-joining my friends at the Three Tuns.

Saturday started out grey. The forecast was for light drizzle that would later develop into rain. We decided that this was our best time to visit the Clifton Suspension Bridge and Avon Gorge



was so we walked up the hill for views of these wonders of engineering and nature. It was a windy day and the bridge was visibly flexing. On the way down we called in at the Dawkins owned **Portcullis**. This

small pub, situated in a Georgian terrace, consists of two rooms connected by a steep narrow staircase and can be accessed either at street level or from the walkway above. Here I opted for halves of the Dawkins Bristol Best (4.0%) and the liquorice flavoured Acorn Old Moor Porter (4.4%).

Back down to river level, we next called in at the **Grain Barge** at Mardyke Warf. Large bow to stern windows give views of the SS Great Britain. Here I chose halves of Bristol Beer Factory Sunrise (4.4%) and unfinned Wild Beer Bibble (4.2%). Both were pale, hoppy ales.



Moving on, and after a 15 minute walk we descended into the **Beer Emporium** on King Street which consists of three

parallel tunnels. Here we had 12 ales to choose from. I selected Beerd Chamber Rauchbier (4.6%), Boss Boss Bliss (4.6%), Alechemy EH54 (5.7%) and Captain Cook Grenville (4.7%).

Our next stop was back on the river this time on Welsh Back and it was somewhere that isn't in the Good Beer Guide because it doesn't sell



cask ales. It was the **Apple Barge** that, as its name suggests, specialises in ciders. I asked for advice on which to

choose and was offered a taster of Rich's Medium but for me it was too sweet. Instead I had halves of Wilkin's Medium Dry (6.0%) and Heck's Kingston Black (6.5%) which being slightly dry were much more to my taste.

We then headed to the **Seven Stars** on Thomas Lane where we were in time to catch the end of an old school blues set by a band called The



Whiskey Headed Buddies. They certainly helped to give this back street pub a lively atmosphere. The pub had been the branch Pub of the Year in 2010 and 2011 and we were faced with a choice of 8 ales. The halves I had were the rich

Bridgehouse Cherry Choc Stout (6.0%) and the Gloucester Apocolypso (5.0%) which, I felt, for an un-fined beer, was somewhat disappointing.

Our final pub was the **Cornubia** on Temple Street. This small, two roomed pub is heavily



adorned with patriotic memorabilia. It also has large fish-tanks housing terrapins as well as fish. Again we were faced with a choice of 8 real ales. I was unable to resist one of my favourites, Sarah Hughes Dark Ruby mild (6.0%) and followed it with Yeovil Posh IPA (5.4%).

Our two days in Bristol (aside from Cambridge United's 3:0 defeat) had been very enjoyable, It was enough to convince us that a return trip would definitely be needed; though with Rovers going on to gain promotion whilst the U's missed out we'll have to find an alternative excuse. On our next trip I'll be keen to return to the pubs I now know but would also love to track down others we didn't manage to get to.

Ali Cook

April Coach Tour

It was the last day of April and we set out on our latest tour of rural pubs. The first stop was in the community owned **Plough & Fleece, Horningsea**. It is now being run by Mary &



Jamie Corless, formerly of the Three Kings in Haddenham, which appeared in the CAMRA *Good Beer Guide* in 2014, and their

son James Cassidy. We chose to drink in the traditionally rustic front bar which boasts exposed beams and brasses, a wooden settle and a black brick fireplace, the grate of which was lit with candles. A bine of hops above the bar added to the traditional feel. The Plough and Fleece has four hand pumps offering on this occasion a choice of Cottage St George's Ale (4.1%), Shepherd Neame Spitfire (4.2%), Charles Wells Bombardier (4.1%) and Belhaven Golden Bay (3.8%). Whilst some bemoaned the lack of dark ale I opted for halves of the first two. Mary generously gave us bowls of cheesy chips to set us up for the journey ahead.

Our second stop was also in Horningsea, just along the road in the **Crown & Punchbowl**.



This, sister pub to the Tickell Arms in Whittlesford, has been lovingly renovated and

now has a good-sized front bar, which like the previous pub has exposed beams and a brick fireplace, but also has terracotta walls. At the back of this room is the central wooden bar exhibiting a stillage capable of holding six jacketed casks. Usually three beers are on offer, but unfortunately this time the regular dark ale wasn't available so our choice was reduced to two; Brewster's Hophead (3.6%) and, from the brewery just along the A10, Milton Pegasus (4.1%). It is to the landlord's credit that the pub always has a LocAle on offer. Based in Waterbeach, Milton brewery is their closest

brewery. Halves of each beer confirmed their good condition. I found the Hophead to be especially refreshing.

We then moved on to the **Sun Inn, Waterbeach**



which, luckily for us, happened to be holding a beer festival. Five of the twelve festival beers were locally brewed. They were Milton

Forum (3.7%), Lord Conrad Tangerine Dream (3.8%), Moonshine Cambridge Best (4.1%) and BlackBar Theory 251 (5.2%) from our branch area and from Little Downham, Three Blind Mice Whisker Twister (7.7%) which counts as LocAle for most of our pubs. I sampled the tangy Tangerine Dream and the Bartram's Coal Porter (4.5%). It wasn't just the ales that were memorable at the Sun Inn. Licensee Andy proudly showed us a poster advertising the 1980 6th Cambridge Beer Festival. I have never previously seen this poster. That year the festival was a 4 day event held in July in the Corn Exchange. The red-nosed, balloon bodied character depicted on the poster wouldn't be viewed favourably nowadays. Andy also donated one of his beer festival t-shirts as one of the prizes for our raffle, the proceeds of which contributes to the cost of the coach and driver for the tour.

Our next stop was the in **Old Forge**, the Sports and Social Club in **Landbeach**. It is a modern, single story building in the corner of Landbeach recreation ground. It serves only one ale; Charles Wells' Young's Bitter (3.7%). We had only enough time to enjoy a swift half and a chat with local customers before we moved on to the **Waggon & Horses**, an old-fashioned free house which we found in a back street in **Cottenham**. Due to the high water table in the area the cellar here is only partly underground and is the reason why you must climb three steps to the area housing the pool table. Licensee Sam McReavie has been here for 29 years. On our visit we could choose between Charles Wells'

Bombardier (4.1%) and Marston's Help for Heroes (4.2%).

We then travelled North to the **Jolly Millers, Cottenham**, which was our food as well as our beer stop. The beer selection at this Admiral Taverns pub was Otter Bitter (3.6%), Adnam's Ghost Ship (4.5%) and Sharp's Doom Bar (4.0%). I chose halves of the first two to wash down our lunch of sausage roll, pasty and salad. Local girl Vicky and partner Graham, who have been licensees here for almost a year, have plenty of events lined up including a sausage & cider festival (24th-26th June) and a beer festival (26th-29th August). On our visit they were preparing for that evening's burlesque evening.

We then drove across country to the **Red Lion, Stretham**. This pub is the last in the village, the Lazy Otter being in the parish but not in the village itself. The Red Lion is an impressive 17th century building and is listed as an Asset of Community Value (ACV) having been nominated by the parish council. The pub sign advertises local food and ale but on our visit the ale choice was Burton Ale (3.8%) and Pedigree (4.5%) from Marston's and Adnam's Ghost Ship (4.5%).

Carrying on, we had better LocAle luck at the aptly named **Five Miles from Anywhere No Hurry Inn, Upware**. This pub sits on the bank of



the Cam and has large gardens and mooring for several boats. We had a choice of four ales, Old Speckled Hen (4.5%) and Old Hoppy

Hen (4.2%) from (Greene King) Morland, Mauldon's George's Best (4.4%) and LocAle Brandon Rusty Bucket (4.4%), as well as a choice of three local ciders, two from Spinney Abbey, (Nun Behaving Badly and Monk & Disorderly), and one from Pickled Pig (Porker's Snout).

Returning to more familiar territory we called in at the **Dykes End, Reach**. Here our ale choice was Woodforde's Wherry (3.8%), Twaite's Wainwright (4.1%), Adnam's Southwold Bitter (3.7%) and Timothy Taylor Landlord (4.3%). The pub is renowned for its food but it shouldn't be overlooked for its ale. On our visit the village was gearing up for its highlight of the year, Reach

Fair.

Our penultimate stop was in Cambridge CAMRA's only Bateman's pub, the **Red Lion, Swaffham Prior**. Like the previous Red Lion on our trip this pub is also listed as an ACV having



been nominated by the parish council. The Bateman's beers available were Gold (3.9%), XB (3.7%) and Silver Hare (3.8%).

They also had Nethergate Suffolk County (4.0%). I chose the Silver Hare and soaked up the sun at the top of their beer garden, whilst looking across the countryside to the villages two churches sharing one churchyard.

Our final stop was at the **Six Bells in Fulbourn**. It too was holding its annual beer festival. This gave us a choice of 22 ales from across England and Wales, including LocAle Moonshine Night Watch Porter (4.5%), and 5 ciders. I chose halves of the Porter and the Tiny Rebel Cwtch (4.6%), a beer that was judged to be Champion Beer of Britain in 2015, (no mean achievement for a brewery launched in 2012).

As is our custom the party voted to choose our favourite beer and the pub of the tour. It took a second round of voting to select our Beer of the Tour. The Brewster's Hophead and the Bateman's Gold tied in the first round with the Brewster's Hophead at the Crown & Punchbowl eventually winning out. It again needed two rounds of voting to select our Pub of the Tour, with the Sun Inn in Waterbeach finally winning the vote.

Cambridge CAMRA pub tours is free to CAMRA branch members. A £5 raffle helps to pay for the tour. Spaces are limited and are available on a first booked first served basis. The next tour, which will once again visit a number of villages around the Cambridge and District CAMRA branch area, will take place on Saturday 20th August. If you would like to attend please send an e-mail listing your name, address and membership number to social@cambridge-camra.org.uk

Ali Cook

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The following local pubs offer a discount to CAMRA members on production of a signed and up to date CAMRA membership card: Please ask at the bar for further details.

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The Architect, 20p off a pint

The Blue Moon, Norfolk Street, 30p off a pint.

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

The Emperor pub and Latin Tapas bar, Hills Road (20p off a pint)

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

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

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

The Maypole, Portugal Place, 20p off a pint.

The Mill, Mill Lane, 10% off a pint.

The Pickerel, Magdalene Street, 10% off a pint.

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

The St Radegund, King Street, 30p off a pint

The White Horse Inn, Barton.

The Three Tuns, Fen Drayton offers 20p off a pint.

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

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

The White Horse, Swavesey, offers 20p a pint.

The Bridge, Waterbeach. 10% off a pint

4th - 7th August - Cambridge Rock Festival, Haggis Farm, Barton - 10% off ticket prices on certain nights

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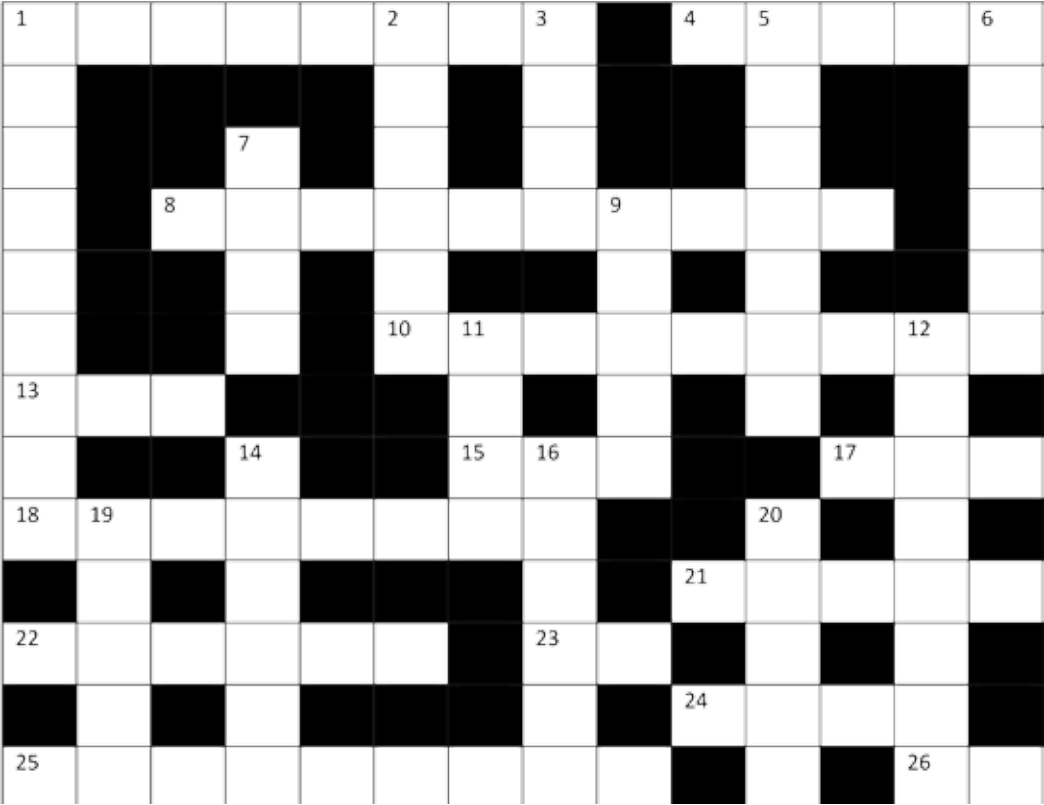
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Cambridge Beer Crossword Number 5 by FRED



- Across:
- 1. The Moonshine Brewery is near this village, East of Cambridge. (8)
 - 4. The Six _____ is a pub in the centre of 1 across. (5)
 - 8. Brand new pub built by Milton Brewery! (5, 5)
 - 10. Guardians go to the Ancient _____ in Fen Ditton. (9)
 - 13. The public should be able to get a drink in here! (3)
 - 15. Vermin from Yorkshire Brewery? They make the 4% Raturday Night Fever! (3)
 - 17. Unusual brewing used initially to make Purity ale from Warwickshire, named after a faithful old dog. (3)
 - 18. Six Mile Bottom has a pub named after an envious fellow... (5,3)
 - 21. The secrets of DNA were announced in this Bene't Street pub, also popular with US pilots in WWII. (5)
 - 22. The _____ Arms; place to buy beer (or bread?) in Fulbourn. (6)
 - 23. 7% winter ale: Adnam's Tally _____! (2)
 - 24. Dark _____: Sussex brewer of Hophead, an ever present in The Cambridge Blue. (4)
 - 25. Another pub in Fulbourn where a cowardly deer may be found? (5, 4)
 - 26. A small kiss that sounds like the county where The Hope Brewery Dark is produced. (2)
- Down:
- 1. Cambridge City Community pub of the year for 2015 along Hills Road. (6, 3)
 - 2. Wiltshire brewer that no longer exists, although its Founders Ale is still brewed by Wychwood. (6)
 - 3. _____ Valley; Northamptonshire brewery that produces the excellent Release The Chimps! (4)
 - 5. Name of pub in Orchards Street, Cambridge. (3, 4)
 - 6. The CAMRA Booze on The Ouse beer festival takes place in this town, early in October. (2, 4)
 - 7. The _____ of Wellington pub is in Willingham. (4)
 - 9. Everards pub near Grafton Centre: The Tram _____. (5)
 - 11. Does Zeus' wife drink this 4.5% golden bitter from Evolution Brewing, North Brink, Wisbech?! (4)
 - 12. Charles Wells pub in Sturton Street: The _____ Inn. (8)
 - 14. So dry here - there is nowhere to get a drink! (6)
 - 16. Pub just behind Burwell House with pizza promotions on Monday nights. (6)
 - 19. The Dyke's End pub is on the village green here. (5)
 - 20. Different types of this will add colour or flavour to a beer. (5)

Answers to Crossword 4 (Issue 375): Across: 1 Architect, 6 Six, 7 Square, 9 Hot, 10 Waterman, 13 Reel, 14 Mitchams Corner, 19 Thriplow, 21 Test, 22 Moon, 23 Navigator Down: 1 Anchor, 2 Castle, 3 Green, 4 Warm, 5 Emperor, 8 Queens, 11 Alma, 12 Ajar, 14 Milton, 15 Tuns, 16 Merlot, 17 Copper, 18 Newton, 20 Hind

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