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Cambridge & District Branch Newsletter Issue 379 November 2016



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Pub News

It is fashionable, some would almost say traditional, as Autumn nights draw in, for the anti drink lobby to demonise alcohol. This year it started early with the government's Chief Medical Officers' August announcement that drinking more than 14 units of alcohol a week can severely damage your health. This assertion, according to CAMRA Good Beer Guide editor, Roger Protz, is based on dodgy 'scientific' information, emerging from research sponsored by a company that supports the American temperance movement. As a contradiction, it has long been suggested, and scientific research would seem to support the suggestion, that alcohol taken in moderation can be beneficial to health. The Government has since back tracked a little, issuing a statement saying that drinking moderately is no more dangerous than driving a car, but the sub 14 unit recommendation still stands, and the damage has already been done. Quite frankly, our government, which claims to be a supporter of pubs, should know better.

I have more sympathy for the Macmillan Nurse charity. Not for its misguided Go Sober October campaign, which urges people to undertake sponsored abstinence for the whole of October and in doing so portrays drinkers as sorry figures, and compares them to their sober, and rather gaudily dressed "soberhero", but because they are worthwhile charity. The campaign has received a mixed reception. Many people seeing it as an attack on pubs, something from which the charity was keen to distance itself, saying on Facebook that the campaign is a means of raising funds and that no such attack was intended. The message goes on to thank the pubs industry for all of its generous donations.



This thanks is well deserved by pubs such as **The Red Lion, Kirtling**, whose 2016 Macmillan

coffee morning raised £472 for the charity.

November 2016

Branch Diary

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

Tue 8-Nov : 8:00, Open Branch Meeting, Geldart, Ainsworth Street

Tue 22-Nov : 8:00, Branch Annual General Meeting, University Social Club, Mill Lane

Sat 26-Nov : 11:00, Branch Good Beer Guide surveying trip

Tue 13-Dec : 8:00, Open Branch Meeting, Maypole, Portugal Place

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Pub News continued

Being an archetypal community pub, The Red Lion is no stranger to fundraising. The August beer and gin festival raised nearly £400 for the charity Riding for the Disabled.



Another wonderful community pub, **The Chestnut Tree**, West Wrating, also held a bank

holiday beer festival, raising over £1600, which was shared between Balsham Meadow School, helping to save their pool, and a local charity raising funds to help fight breast cancer, in the process.

Thank goodness there are a lot of us still going to pubs!

As I write this I am enjoying a pint of ElmTree



Beers Best Bitter (4.2%) in **The Maypole, Portugal Place**. The copper coloured

beer from Snetterton, Norfolk is in excellent condition, as is the pub. The Maypole is family owned and with up to 16 real ales available on a normal day it is a thriving concern. October 27th—30th sees a tap takeover by Newport's Tiny Rebel, when 15 examples of the Welsh brewery's 'Craft' and 'Real' ales will be available.



Situated around the corner, and not to be outdone, Nicholson's owned pub **The Mitre, Bridge**

Street is advertising a 'pop up brewery' event, featuring Rogue Beers for October 17th.



The Mill, Mill Lane has completed another successful 'Battle of the Brewers'

event. The most favoured local beer, voted for by the pub's customers, was the selection from Stetchworth based Crafty Beers brewery. The Mill will feature examples of Crafty Beers as guest ales until January 2017.

The City Pub Company, owner of The Mill and its sister pubs **The Cambridge Brew House**,



King Street, and **The Old Bicycle Shop, Regent Street**, has announced the

The Cambridge Brew House

acquisition of two more Cambridge outlets: The Back Street Bistro, Sturton Street, and Teri—Aki, Quayside, which we understand will be renamed 'The Punt Yard'.

Fellow entrepreneurial outfit Cambscuisine, which owns 6 bar-cum-restaurants in the Cambridge area, including both **Cambridge and St John's Chophouses**, Cambridge and the excellent **The Cock, Hemingford Grey**, is to open a new restaurant in October. **The Millworks**, complete with working water mill, is situated on the mill pond, Lammas Land, Cambridge. Cambscuisine establishments are known for serving a good pint of ale. Many of their restaurants incorporate a public bar area where customers are welcome to drink. Let's hope the Millworks does too!



The Bakers Arms



The Boathouse



The Bath House



manager having announced that he is now running a pub in Boston.



Nathan has resigned. The new landlord, Ben, was very welcoming, and it was notable that the only Saffron Brewery beer on offer was the Craft

Greene King has once again been playing merry-go-round with its pub managers. We understand that the landlord and lady of **The Bakers Arms, Fulbourn** will be moving to **The Boathouse, Chesterton Road**, whilst the landlord of **The Bath House, Benet St**, has moved to **The Prince Regent, Regent Street**. We understand that new managers have been found for

The Bath House, but we have no news on the fate of The Bakers Arms. Bateman's owned, **The Red Lion, Swaffham Prior** also has new management, the former

All change too at **The St Radegund, King Street**, where former manager

version of Citra. I enjoyed a fine example of Billericay Brewing Company Woody's Wag Porter (4.2%). Saffron beers will feature in the future, but he is expecting to be able to offer a wide selection of interesting guest ales too.



The White Horse



The Queen Edith



The Queens Head

September heralds the introduction of the new CAMRA Good Beer Guide and as always there are a number of new additions to our list of favourite pubs. Congratulations then to GBG debutants **The White Horse, Milton**, and **The Queen Edith, Wulfstan Way**. Congratulations too, to **The Queens Head, Newton**. In the guide for the 44th time, it is one of only a handful of pubs that has been in every

edition of the guide.

The Queens Head recently hosted a Poets Evening. Organised by local poet Colin Shaw, the evening included readings from both enthusiastic and appreciative poets from all over the Cambridge area.

The next reading is scheduled for 17th October in the Cambridge CAMRA city community pub of the year, **The Earl of**



Beaconsfield, Mill Road.

Pub News continued



Congratulations to **The Black Bull, Sawston**, which held its first ever beer festival at the end of August, and to the villagers of Swavesey who held their first ever cider festival, housed in the sports pavilion, to raise funds to benefit the village sports field and pavilion.



A big thumbs up to the tenants of **The White Horse, Swavesey**, who not only supported the event, which must have affected custom on a busy Friday Night, but also sponsored a cask of cider. Now that's what I call a community pub!



The Hare and Hounds

Talking of community pubs, I hear that things may be looking up for the villagers of Harston who would like to keep their local pub **The Hare and Hounds**. We understand that a steering group has formed with a view to buying the pub as a community asset.



The Pear Tree

No news though, from **The Pear Tree, Hildersham**, and **The Tree, Stapleford**, and both pubs remain closed and under threat. Staying in Stapleford, the lease for **The Three Horseshoes** is up for grabs. No further news at this time.



The Tree, Stapleford



Better news in Cambridge, where work on **The Seven Stars, Newmarket Road** looks to have begun.

Hopefully, it and the other pubs, **The Wrestlers** and **The Corner House**, along Newmarket Road will



The Wrestlers

benefit with custom from the hotels which have sprouted across the road.

Brewery News



Both **Black Bar, Harston** and **Calverley's, Hooper Street** breweries have reported great success with their licensed status. Calverley's in particular reporting

over 50% of their sales served directly from the brewery tap.

Moonshine Brewery, Fulbourn has announced via its Facebook page that it can provide 36 pint pins and 72 pint firkins for home use and parties.

Dry Drayton based **Lord Conrad's Brewery's** website advertises an opportunity to hire or buy everything for your party including stillage and beer.

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Lost pubs of Cambridge(shire)

Well, despite my clue, only Pete Davis and John Pink got in touch to identify the former Golden Rose on Emmanuel Road. Well done to them. It is a rather unobtrusive building, admittedly, and for those without long memories or an observant eye it could very well escape notice as a former pub.



A sales catalogue of 23 October 1845 includes the Golden Rose amongst the properties of the (presumably) late Charles Humphrey Esq. He owned a number of other houses and building plots in the New Square/Kite area – and also, interestingly, the Tiger on East Road. The first named licensee, in the 1850s, is a John King. After him, no one seems to have lasted there very long until the late 1880s. One of these was Alfred Palfrey, who had previously spent a short time in charge of the Duke of Cambridge (the first 'lost pub' in this series), just along the road on Short Street.

Some stability arrived in the form of Henry Steel, recently ousted from the now-demolished Castle Hotel, Guildhall Place (back of the Guildhall on the corner opposite the Red Cow), who was there for around a dozen years from c.1887.

At the beginning of the 20th century the licensee was a Mrs Mary Jane Harvey, who had previously been at the Waggon & Horses (more recently the Boat Race, now the Snug), East Road. She had moved to the Oak (now the Oak Bistro), Lensfield Road by 1913.

By 1920 the pub had come into the hands of Samuel Birne, who remained there until at least 1948, at which point names of licensees are no longer regularly included in directories. He also seems to have had an interest in the Tiger on East Road from around 1936, restoring (if it had been broken) that connection of a century earlier.



Eventually, though, the building was delicensed and, on 22 October 1971, 126 years almost to the day after its first appearance, it was sold at auction for the princely sum of £8,800. An

attempt was made in the mid 1990s to reopen it as a pub, but sadly the Council refused planning permission.



Fortunately for lovers of pub history, despite subsequent renovations and redecoration, some of the external fixtures remain as a quiet and unobtrusive testimony to the building's

earlier incarnation.




OK, here's another one, somewhat more noticeable than the Golden Rose:

As usual: Where is/was it? What was it called? Do you remember it when it was still 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 contact pub-history@cambridge-camra.org.uk.



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A Real Surprise by Fred Laband

One venue where I would never expect to find real ale is Peterborough Greyhound Stadium. Yet in late September I hear that they are holding their 3rd Annual Beer Festival...



In advance (and after minimal research) I download a voucher for a "Green Diner Meal Deal". On arrival at the impressive stadium, we surrender the voucher for which 2 people are admitted for only £7 including free fast food meals.

We also submit a £5 drinks voucher which is duly approved and stamped. And so, to the dogs...

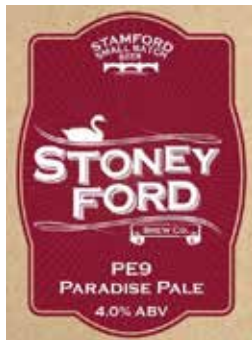


There is plenty of seating here, take your pick. The view is great; we can see the whole track and only a few steps away are 15 beers, all at £3 per pint! (The festival started with about 25 beers.) I go for the award winning Locale "Release The Chimps"

from The Nene Valley Brewery from nearby Oundle. This 4.4% brew is described as an everyday IPA but it is far from it: crisp, sweet, tangy – the best beer I have had so far this year! Nicola stays with the dark side (as usual) going straight for the 6% Proper Black from St. Austell; another memorable beer - rich and chocolatey. Using the £5 voucher, these drinks are almost free.

I queue for half a minute and then am swiftly and cheerfully served with cheeseburger/fries (x1) plus chicken strip/fries (x1) at no cost! The food is piping hot. Together with the beer, things cannot get much better...

The hare is on the move. We duly lose the first and second races. Perhaps this is where we start paying! My next beer is from the new(ish) Stoney Ford Brewing Company, another Locale brewery based just north of Peterborough near Stamford. The PE9 Paradise Pale (4%) is a lovely balanced bitter with a smattering of honey.



For the third race the dog in the orange race jacket (Number 5) is the clear pick and although short priced as 4/5 favourite, earns us a small dividend. Things

continue to get better as we next go for halves of Xtreme Ales "Bones". This 5.8% pale ale nicknamed after the now extinct British Rail class 58 locomotive is very dry and has the pine hallmarks of American hops. A fine beer from Turves in deepest Cambridgeshire!



There follow a few more canine losses, and after the number 2's progress is impeded in the eighth race it is sadly time to leave.

As beer festivals go, a big plus for me is the availability of seating. The beer choice is super, and the quality of each beer is excellent. Add the enterdoggiement and this is one of the best beer festivals I have ever attended. I will be sure to return next year. If only there could be a lasting legacy whereby a few real ales could be available in the other 11 months... Watch this space!

Fred Laband

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The George Inn, Babraham by Fred Laband



Set back from Babraham High Street, The George Inn is a pretty pub with large surrounding gardens boasting many picnic tables shaded with umbrellas and leafy horse chestnut trees. This must be quite a sight in high summer! But we are here on a chilly evening in early October. A few pints and a big warming meal are needed. As we are soon to discover, The George can provide both...

On entering through the Greene King green front door, the bar is to the right with 3 hand pumps to the fore. I start with a GK IPA (3.6%) which is in very good form indeed. Nicola, who is driving this evening, has a diet cola. We go through to the substantial left hand side of the pub unsurprisingly named "George's Restaurant." It does take some effort to locate but after a few left and right turns we have a table in what does feel like a dining room... Nicola chooses ham, egg and chips. I am tempted by the steak and stilton pudding.

Talkative barman George pours me a pint of guest Bath Ales Gem which at 4.1% is a proper balanced best bitter. I do wonder if everything is called George here, only to be reassured by the other barman, Charlie!

Somewhat ignorant of the history of this busy village local, I hear that this 18th century coaching inn was victim of a "significant" fire back in 2004 and has since been rebuilt. Apart from the relatively modern dining area, effectively designed to look like a barn from the exterior, I would never have guessed that this warm and friendly pub had suffered such a devastating past!

I return to find my hearty meal has arrived so I tuck in. The steak is tender and has a slight blue cheese flavour which makes it

quite exquisite. There are 3 other highlights on my plate. The mashed potato is beautifully creamy with a good sprinkle of fresh parsley to add to the aroma. The green beans taste like they have come straight from the garden and the side portion of bacon and cabbage add a novel twist to the whole meal.

Nicola's ham is thickly cut, and with a generous helping of chunky chips this is another big meal! The eggs are just fine; Nicola's plate is enhanced with a delicately cubed onion, pepper, celery and cucumber salad.

As we are both full, we have little appetite for a dessert but I do find room for a pint of the other guest: Mordue's Workie Ticket, the 4.5% Champion Beer of Britain in 1997. The first two beers tonight have been spot on and the third does not disappoint, with a real malty core.

Altogether an excellent evening, with fine ales and food at a pub that looks great and hopefully has a bright future.

Fred Laband

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Swavesey Cider Festival 2016

Whilst interviewing Ben Ackers of the Cambridge Blue following their award as the Cambridge and District Cider POTY (pub of the year), we chatted about the possibility of CAMRA running a dedicated cider festival sometime in the future, we chewed over a few ideas and decided it is something we could look into a little more deeply.

This got me thinking as to whether I could get a small scale festival on in our local village, running it as a charity event for our local community pavilion. The pavilion has lost a lot of its income over the last year or so due to the village green football pitch being out of commission for some much needed drainage work, so a few hardy volunteers answered my call to arms and we set about planning what we could do.

We decided that we'd attempt to source eight local ciders and that we would run the event in October (recognised by CAMRA as cider month). I got in touch with the cider producers from a list supplied to me by Chris Rouse who is the East Anglian regional cider and perry representative of CAMRA.

We settled on the dates of Friday 7th October through until Sunday 9th October, all the cider was ordered so we then set about our advertising campaign and how we could maximise our fundraising. One idea, shamelessly stolen from the Red Lion (Histon) beer festival was to look for local sponsors for the ciders – Swavesey has a very strong community spirit and it was little trouble in convincing local companies to help us.

We had decided that we were going to keep things simple for ourselves, we would only be selling cider and wine, food would be packets of crisps or slices of Ascot or Gala pork pie and we also had soft drinks for nominated drivers or children.

DAY ONE

Social media helped massively in getting our

event promoted - CAMRA did a great piece for us on their Facebook page and word spread quickly – we still weren't too sure whether anybody would actually come – but those fears were allayed on a wet and miserable opening session – the local villagers seemed curious and popped across to the village green to see what was going on. As the cider intake grew the volumes of the conversation were also rising by quite a few decibels, a good sign that people were having fun.

DAY TWO

The Saturday was going to be a long shift, opening at 12 noon and going right through until 11pm. Business was slow to begin with; our first customer of the day was our very own Will Smith who paid us a whistle-stop visit whilst making his way across to the St. Ives real ale festival. This was going to be a slow burner as we only had a few visitors until late afternoon, but from that point on, we were busy right through until closing at 11:00 – at one point during the football, it was standing room only.

The ciders were all going down well and although some were not quite to some people's taste but one man's meat is another man's poison – there was something for everybody to enjoy. We received a large number of compliments on the ciders we had on offer and customers were rather surprised to discover that all ciders were produced within 15 miles from Cambridge, all using local produce.

Alongside the cider, the Ascot and Gala pies were going down incredibly well, they were the perfect accompaniment.

DAY THREE

The final day saw the festival open again at 12 noon – a number of the ciders were very close to being sold out so a slight adjustment to the configuration of the bar area was required prior to opening, all 'bag in the box' ciders were now on the counter and out of the fridges, to allow for tilting as and when required.



We had live music during the afternoon and evening provided by the very versatile Ben Squires - another produce of local talent.

We sold out of five ciders on the final day; one further cider is 'running on empty' with just a pint or so to go and the other two need a bit of 'further research'!!! The first to sell out was Much Merriment, very closely followed by East Meets West and not far behind were Oliver's Session along with Monk and Disorderly.

The success of this festival has convinced the organisers that this is an event that should become an annual event – we dipped our toes in and tested the water and decided that it was safe to swim! Next year we may look to introduce a perry or two to compliment the ciders.

The ciders we had on offer were:

Cider Maker

Spinney Abbey
Harding's
S O Cider
Duxford Scrumpy
Simon's Cider
Cambridge Cider
Cromwell's Cider
Cromwell's Cider

Cider

Monk and Disorderly
3 Peace Sweet
Hedgerow Circus
Incider Trading
East Meets West
Much Merriment
Oliver's Last Gasp
Oliver's Session

The event would not have been possible without members of the local community stepping up and assisting with the logistics of hosting this event – hopefully Swavesey Community Pavilion will now be in a position to carry out some of the internal maintenance that is required for the general upkeep of the building.

Reserve the date: Friday 6th October – Sunday 8th October 2017 – Swavesey's 2nd Cider Festival!

Jerry Ladell

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Cambridge City versus Assets of

The following is taken from an official CAMRA bulletin:

"The future of the British pub has long been uncertain. Buffeted by recession, approximately 7,000 pubs closed between 2008 and 2013 with closures peaking at 45 a week in 2009. In response, the previous and current government have made a concerted effort to arrest this decline.

"Last year ministers legislated to prevent community pubs being demolished or converted into different uses by allowing local people to register them as an Asset of Community Value and transfer their pub into community ownership, steps reinforced this year through the announcement of £3.62 million in funding to support community ownership in England.

"Furthermore, the Small Business Enterprise & Employment Act 2015 promises to deliver long term benefits for tied licensees by cracking down on excessive rents and beer costs and offering the option of a free of tie rent arrangements.

"These measures, coupled with the abolition of the beer and alcohol duty escalator, and the announcement that Small Business Rate Relief will permanently double from 50% to 100% from 2017/18, will undoubtedly have a positive impact upon the protection and support of local pubs.

"Nevertheless, progress is still required, for whilst the rate of closure has dropped significantly, 27 pubs still close every week. Indeed, at the end of 2015 there were 52,750 pubs remaining in the UK, the lowest level for a decade."

Given that the measures listed above, it would be easy for us to believe that pubs in Cambridge are safe.

Unfortunately we do not believe this to be the case. Recent applications for Asset of



Castle, Castle Street

turned down, because city planners do not believe them to fit the criteria required for ACV status.



Hopbine, Fair Street

communities from applying for ACV recognition.

A direct result of this decision is that the owners will be able to close and change the use of these famous pubs without challenge. It would appear that Cambridge City Council, which was once a champion of the community pub, is now the supporter of the property developer.

So, what can we learn from this? Looking closely at the two applications, both of which were supported by CAMRA national office, I can see that neither of them offers a great deal of evidence to support a 'community pub' status.

Both applications were registered by CAMRA on behalf of one person, and there is little evidence of a community willing to gather together to buy the pub should the owners wanted to sell up. Whilst many councils would, and have, been supportive of such simple nominations, the simplicity does make it possible for planners looking for reasons not to issue ACV's to turn them down.

Community Value (ACV) status for both The Castle, Castle Street, and The Hopbine, Fair Street have been

Even more concerning, a Cambridge CAMRA freedom of information request has revealed that the planners wish to deter

Community Value



If we are to win the right to save our pubs and keep them safe we will have to work harder. We will need to co-ordinate our efforts to ensure that there is enough relevant evidence to support an ACV application and we will need to ensure that we have plenty of

support from the people who use the pub and from the local community. If you would like to register your local pub as an Asset of Community Value contact Cambridge CAMRA; (will.smith@cambridge-camra.org.uk) for a preliminary chat.

Will Smith

Branch Chairman



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***Cambridge CAMRA Rural
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The X is silent so: Grin and Bexar it!

An interview with Steve Saldana Bexar County Brewery



Cambridge Summer Beer festival is almost as well known for the interesting characters that visit and work there as it is for its beers. I soon discovered that

Steve Saldana, the owner, brewer and larger than life character behind Bexar County Brewery fits perfectly into that mix. Could I have a chat with a view to writing something for ALE? Of course I could!

Time travelled very quickly and before I knew it we had spent the best part of an hour, seated outside the festival key keg storage "igloo" discussing everything I could think to ask about Bexar Brewery, Steve, his family and his beer. The introduction of key keg dispensers is quite an innovation for CAMRA festivals, and innovation is given Steve's wholehearted support. In his own words Bexar County beers are "innovative and exciting, aggressive and challenging" but not at the cost of quality. Bexar County beers are well designed and hand crafted.

The Peterborough brewery, which opened in 2012, has a 7 barrel plant, much of the equipment bought second hand from a Northamptonshire based Digfield brewery, and boasts an extensive back list of beers, including, La Perla Negra En Fuego, a 5.8% porter, "dry hopped" with New Mexican chilli's. Current beers include Chupacabra, a 7.4% Porter, and the 4.8% Mexican Lager, El Sol Y La Luna, both are well rated by the drinking community.

It didn't take me long to notice that there is a distinct leaning towards Mexico in the Steve's

choice of names. Steve hails from Texas, specifically San Antonio "Close to the Alamo" and he believes it is because he is American that he doesn't recognise the limitations, and the stifling classification of beers, that some English brewers adhere to. "When the prohibition ended American brewers decided to take a "f**k it attitude". Consequently they went out looking for new tastes and new ingredients "Beer doesn't have to be bitter!"

Whatever the ingredients are they are all natural. "I won't use synthetics", he told me, "Everything is natural. If my beer uses chocolate it is actual chocolate." Neither does he use Finings; fish bladders used by brewers to ensure a beer isn't cloudy, so Bexar beers are suitable for Vegans.

So, why is a Texan brewing beer in Peterborough? "I met my wife Vanessa Medina when she was attending a conference in San Antonio. We came to the U.K because of her work. I left my job as a teacher, and I would have carried it forward, but found that because my qualifications are not recognised in this country I would have had to undertake three years teacher training."

I had had some experience helping out the Ranger Creek Brewing and Distilling Company, so brewing seemed to be a natural alternative career!"

Seated, as I was, outside an igloo dedicated to the storage of key keg beers, and talking to one of Cambridgeshire's most respected craft brewers I just had to ask him his thoughts on the Craft versus Real Ale arguments that have dogged beer followers over recent years.

"To appreciate a craft beer you have to understand what it is and where it came from".

People trying craft beers for the first time expect the taste to be similar to 1970s English keg beer and are surprised by craft beer and its strength and flavour. A key keg beer, which is dispensed

from a compressible bag inside a plastic container (a bit like a sophisticated wine box) will last several days longer than will a tapped cask beer. This will benefit pubs whose main business is at weekends, because it lessens the chance that their beer will turn sour during the week.

And what of the future? Steve smiles. He has become something of a mentor to other craft brewers, both in our area and around the country. Collaborations with Ely's Three Blind Mice brewery (Brewed on a Shoestring, 3.8% Stout), and Manchester's Alphabet Brewery (Would a Bexar Sh*t in the Woods, 4.1% Stout, and Tainted Dove, 5.2% American Pale Ale) are exciting, and there are plenty more innovations he would like to try.

Whatever these innovations are, we can be sure that they will be bold, interesting and aggressively flavoured. Far from "Grin and bear it", those of us who like robust, unusual craft beers drink Bexar and grin!



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

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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.

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Ale Tour

August 20th

11am on a sunny Saturday morning and I was standing in a layby quite close to Cambridge station accompanied by Gladys Emmanuelle, my 9 month old Jack Russell/ Shi Tzu cross terrier, and a number of my fellow CAMRA stalwarts. We were about to embark on a mystery tour of village pubs. I was a little nervous because, whilst I'd had the forethought to ask permission of the bus company, I had no idea whether or not the pubs we would be visiting were dog friendly, or even if they had gardens where ostracized as we would be, at least I would have somewhere to sit. As it happens, in all but one notable case, I needn't have worried.

We boarded the bus and as we reached the outskirts of Cambridge it soon became apparent that our tour was to be based to the North West of the city, and we soon arrived at our first and only disappointing pub of the tour

The Fox, Bar Hill

<https://www.foxcambridge.co.uk>

The Fox makes a lot of being "The only pub in the village". There has been a pub here since 1965 (Bar Hill didn't really exist before then), and whilst this sprawling 2001 construction has improved on the older design it still reminded me of a 1970's steak house.



It is a Mitchell's and Butlers chain-style pub and its main selling point seems to be the reasonably priced breakfast, though it

advertises good value food served all day. There are TVs and games, and I could imagine it as being a good place to wait whilst your spouse or partner undertakes the monthly shop in the nearby Mega Tesco's, but not if you have a puppy. The Fox is very definitely not dog friendly. I was told very apologetically by the pleasant bar person that it was company policy. There is no access to the garden other than through the bar, so those of us with canine friends are relegated to the car park. The Fox has capacity for three hand pumps. On this occasion the only real ale available was a very tired Sharp's Doom Bar (4%).

We left feeling a little deflated, but that feeling didn't last long, and we received a much happier welcome at pub number two:

The Blue Lion, Hardwick

<http://www.bluelionhardwick.co.uk>

The Blue Lion has been trading as a pub since 1737. "The main bar is on two levels and has stone-flagged floors, plentiful beams and fireplaces at each end. The contemporary decorative scheme works well. There's also a dining room with conservatory extension."

This description, taken from the CAMRA WhatPub website, could not convey the warmth of welcome we received from landlady Vicky and her staff. Nor does it mention the quality of the beer. We tried two of the three on offer, eschewing the Greene King IPA (3.4%) in favour of the St Peter's Ruby Red (4.3%) and the Black Sheep single hopped Pathfinder (4.0%). Both



beers were in excellent condition, and both scored highly in the end of trip vote for beer of the tour. The Blue Lion is unashamedly a gastro-pub and it is well known for the quality of its food, but it is also a village pub. Dogs and drinkers are welcome!

We left the Blue Lion in a much happier frame of mind. Could the high standard set of the Blue Lion be equalled? Yes it could, and it was:

The Three Horseshoes, Comberton

The first thing that struck me as we pulled up alongside the Three Horseshoes was how beautiful it looked. Tidy hanging baskets complemented the red tiled roof, and I could see at once that the pub is cared for.



Relying once again on the WhatPub website: "The long, low-ceilinged main bar has a cosy alcove at one end and a small raised area at the other. The brick fronted bar takes up much of the central section. The multilevel floor and exposed beams hint at the pub's former multi-room format. On the walls are historical photographs of the village and its sports players. A separate pool and darts room lies off to the left. The large garden has beautifully tended borders and lots of play equipment for children".

This is in every way the epitome of the village pub.

The welcome is warm and inviting, especially so for Gladys Emmanuelle who was given special hugs and dog treats by dog loving landlady, Caragh Urqhart. The pub is well known for attracting local clubs and societies. Our visit happened to coincide with a local bikers meeting. Gladys was immediately besotted and was lucky enough to have her photo taken whilst seated on one of their pristine machines.

Landlord, and husband, Jim is a local lad having

been brought up just down the road and the couple are enthusiastic supporters of local charities, and local sports groups.

Three beers are on offer including Greene King IPA (3.6%), which is their biggest seller, being much favoured by visitors staying in the nearby caravan park. The beer list always includes at least one beer from a local brewer.

All to soon it was time to move on and rather reluctantly we downed our drinks and boarded the bus.

The Prince of Wales, Hilton

<http://www.thehiltonpow.co.uk/>

Another village pub, another warm welcome; both for the weary drinkers and for the dog! By now we were well into the afternoon, and only a few lunchtime diners remained, but The Prince of Wales still had plenty of customers.



This is a cosy pub. Unfortunately the weather was too mild for us to experience the open fire, but I could imagine sitting in the lounge bar warming my socks and enjoying some

excellent beer.

I am a great fan of Timmy Taylors Landlord (4.3%) so it was a pleasure to find it here, alongside Greene King's 1966 World Cup celebration beer Bo66y (4.2%). Another reference to football could be seen in the shape of the Prince of Wales scarecrow. A permanent resident of the bar, his clothing changes to match important occasions. On this occasion he was wearing what looked to be the full Chelsea football kit.

Ale Tour continued

The White Swan, Conington

<http://www.theswan.edgedevelop.co.uk>



We rolled into the White Swan car park to find ourselves surrounded by villagers enjoying a combined anniversary and birthday party. The garden is so large and was so full that it reminded me of a village fete I used to go to when I was a child. It is a smashing pub and it's so good to see that it has gone from strength to strength since being bought from Greene King by the village squire in 2013.



WhatPub describes it as a "Sturdy 18th-century brick building ... The main bar has a tiled floor and a brick fireplace occupied by a fine cast-iron stove. It has been extended into the old cellar, the real ales being served by gravity from behind the new low bar."

It has always been described as a "Destiny pub", and it is favoured by motorcyclist and car clubs, but tenants Caroline and Neil have worked hard to create a more customer friendly atmosphere. Opening times have increased and villagers have responded by giving the pub their full support.

The White Swan is a very dog friendly pub, and a number of visitors had brought their canine companions. Gladys made a number of friends. There was a small misunderstanding with a fellow Jack Russell, but it was only a small scuffle and I believe they parted best of friends.

Adnams beers are prevalent, on this occasion Ghost Ship (4.5%) and Southwold Bitter (3.7%). I plumped for the Ghost Ship because it rarely disappoints – and it didn't!

The Cock, Hemingford Grey

cambscuisine.com/the-cock-hemingford



Another welcome for both dog and party was waiting for us at this multi award winning pub – so was a beer festival! The beer, which was housed under canvas in the pub car park and was dispensed straight from the barrel, had been sourced from local breweries, including Moonshine, Fulbourn, Turpins, Sawston and Lord Conrad's, Dry Drayton, to name a few. It was by now a very warm day and the car park was very crowded, and all too overwhelming for Gladys and me, so we retired to the comparatively more peaceful small bar, where I sipped my Great Oakley, Wagtail (3.9%) and Gladys made acquaintance with a local family who had popped in for lunch. I won't list the accolades that this pub has received since becoming part of Cambscuisine in 2001, but I will mention that it is on the Good Pub Guide list of Top 10 pubs for 2016. Looking around the pub, noticing the tasteful décor and tasting the

quality of the beer I can see why.



It has been a long day and we are looking rather weary. The only one who appears to have any

energy left is Gladys, who having been fortified by a handful of doggie treats bought from The Cock is eagerly looking forward to the next pub.

We soon perk up though, when Clive, our tour organiser tells us that the next pub is

The Bank Micropub, Willingham

<http://www.thebankmicropub.co.uk/>



I have said this before I know, but I will say it again. Walking into The Bank Micropub is like walking into your best friend's front room. You can be sure of a warm welcome and a chat.

According to WhatPub, "The Bank was the first micro-pub in Cambridgeshire when it opened in late 2012" and "The Bank does more for the local populace now than it ever did as a bank". I am absolutely certain that both statements are true! The ever-changing beer list usually includes an offering from a local brewery and the pub manages to please both "Craft" and "Real" ale followers in its selection of beers. Oh – and it is dog friendly too!

And so we came to the end of the journey. As is customary we had a show of hands to elect our favourite pub and our favourite beer of the day. The pub we unanimously agreed was The Three Horseshoes, Comberton. After some discussion it was agreed that our favourite beer was Black Sheep Brewery Pathfinder, served in The Blue Lion Hardwick.

If you'd like to know more about WhatPub visit whatpub.com.

If you'd like to follow Gladys Emmanuelle's travels on Twitter: Will Smith @camrasmith

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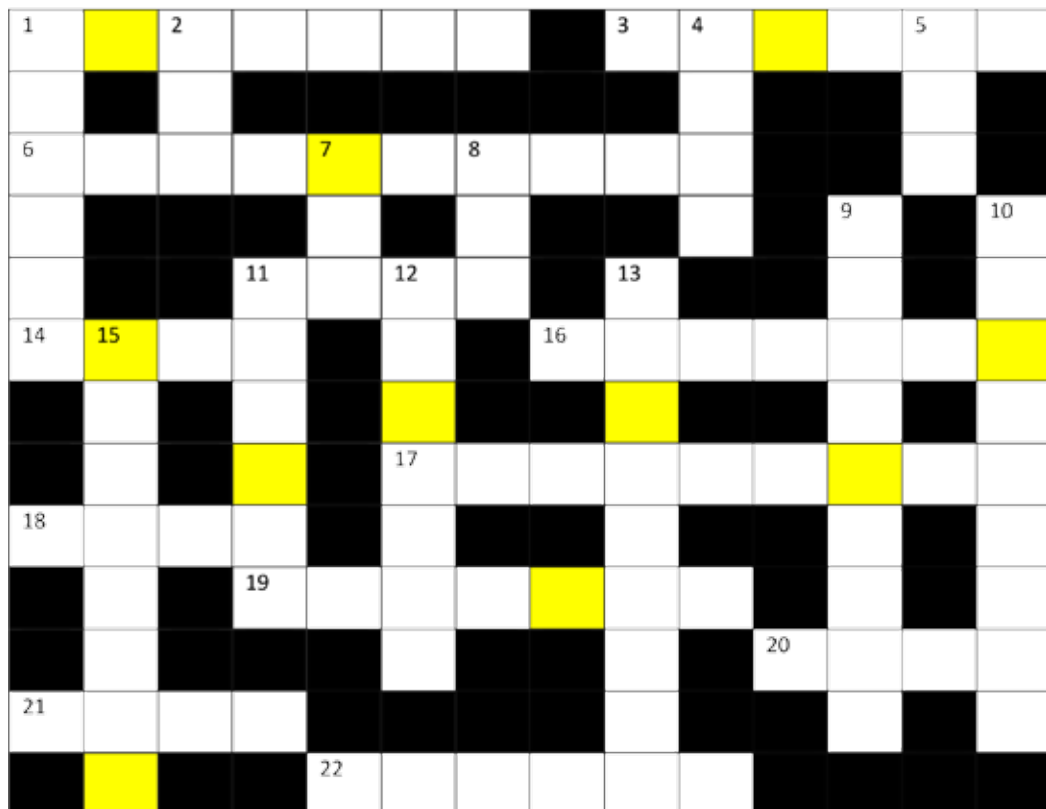
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Cambridge Beer Crossword Number 5 by FRED



Across:

1. Dark ruby brown ale, named after the location in Southwold where 6 cannons point out to sea... (3,4)
3. Golden 4.1% pale ale, made with new US hops. (6)
6. Southwold's most prominent architecture. (10)
11. Little defender of the seaside town for many decades. (4)
14. ____ Valley Brewery in Oundle produces the wonderful Dick's Extraordinary Bitter. (4)
16. Christmas only barley wine around 7% . (5,2)
17. Suffolk home to a lovely 190m T-shaped pier. (9)
18. Colour of friendly Grantchester pub where you can have a Ball while drinking your real ales? (4)
19. Lightly _____ malts produce very pale beer. Dry _____ peanuts would go well with it! (7)
20. The Queens _____ in Newton serve their Adnams ales straight from the barrel. (4)
21. Southwold Bitter is far from Adnams worst? (4)
22. The White Horse in this village near Newmarket serves a super pint of Adnams. (6)

Down:

1. The colour of Sole Star; it is a winner. (6)
2. Over the Norfolk border, Woodfordes brew this rival to Adnams Old Ale. (3)
4. Village home to Charles Wells pub, The Admiral Vernon. (4)
5. "Ease Up ____" is a new keg beer for 2016. (1,1,1)
7. Unusual ingredient found in Lord Conrad's beautiful Her MajesTea. (3)
8. Adnams new Triple Malt Whisky is aged in American _____. (3)
9. This lager is often found in key keg at The Bank in Willingham. (3,6)
10. Superb strong bitter, brewed to celebrate the 1672 Battle of Sole Bay. (9)
11. Golden fruity seasonal beer made with new New British hops? He must be clowning around! (6)
12. Citrus/ pine dominates the _____ Rye IPA. (7)
13. Cambridge's only Adnams tied house. Southwold Bitter is always in fine form here. (6,3)
15. Underrated refreshing beer, no doubt popular with Columbus and Marco Polo. (8)

Answers to Crossword 5 (Issue 377): Across: 1 Fulbourn, 4 Bells, 8 Queen Edith, 10 Shepherds, 13 Pub, 15 Rat, 17 Ubu, 18 Green Man, 21 eagle, 22 Bakers, 23 Ho, 24, Star, 25 White Hart, 26 SX Down: 1 Flying Pig, 2 Ushers, 3 Nene, 5 Elm Tree, 6 St Ives, 7 Duke, 9 Depot, 11 Hera, 12 Dobblers, 14 Desert, 16 Anchor, 19 Reach, 20 Malts

Take the eleven coloured letters and rearrange to make another Adnams ale. (6, 5) _____

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