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Editor's Ramblings

This is my sixth issue as Editor, so I've been doing the job now for a whole year! Tempus fugit and all that.....in that time I've laughed a bit, coughed a bit, worried a bit and learned a lot as well as drinking some fine ales in places I might not otherwise have been to.

I must start this issue's Ramblings with the sad news that stalwart daytripper Joan Wilkinson passed away in September. I didn't know her well but benefitted, on Branch social outings, from the wit and wisdom she dispensed so freely! A fitting tribute to Joan appears later in this edition.

The Yuletide season is upon us, but one thing festive drinkers won't see this year is the welcoming lights of the Heron in Stanground, which closed its doors for the last time in September. I can't claim to have been a regular there – as you know I don't even live in Peterborough – but on the occasions I did visit recently I immediately felt at home. The fact that the Nene Valley Egyptian Cream was always so delicious probably helped! When pubs like the Heron, with its cavernous interior, separate function room, large outdoor drinking area and spacious car park (think the Northfields in Stamford) close, it makes me feel very sad indeed... I'm sure I speak for all at CAMRA when I say that we wish Meri and her family every success in the future.

Moving on, there's better news from Werrington with the announcement that Andy at the Ploughman has signed a fifteen-year lease to secure the pub's future. This is seriously good news and brings closure to an interminable saga and what must have been a worrying time for the Simmonds family. Now they can concentrate on doing what they do best, which, if the pints I sampled during the recent Branch meeting at the Ploughman are anything to go by, includes dispensing top quality ale!

Talking of top quality ale, and with Christmas approaching, I quote Guardian columnist Zoe Williams : “If you really want to show your commitment to pub culture, all you have to do is visit more pubs, more often, and stay longer”.

By the way, there was a single crossword winner from Issue 203. Step forward David Weaver of Orton Goldhay, who was also a winner of the previous competition – clearly a man who likes his Rocket Ales!

To close, I'd like to wish every one of our readers and contributors a splendid Christmas and New Year. And – if you're driving over the holiday period, please take care – 'cos I'll be walking!

Good luck!

Al

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Chairman's Corner

I will start off by congratulating Andy Simmonds who after a number of hard years campaigning has managed to save his beloved Ploughman pub at Werrington by taking out a new lease... well done Andy and his team. I also wish Stuart, Andy's elder brother, and former landlord of the Dragon, Werrington, all the best in his new venture, a micro-pub down in Brixham on the English Riviera.

It is encouraging to hear that the pub chains are continuing to invest in their Peterborough pubs with the Halcyon, Coopers and Dragon all benefiting. We are also seeing existing micropubs expanding and doing well with the team behind Puzzles opening a new venture in the old Costa Coffee shop in the town hall and plans underway to open the Wonkey Donkey micropub on Fletton High Street.

Slight changes to the Peterborough Pub of the Year mean that 2018 winner the Bumble Inn is included with the three Gold Award winners from this year, Charters, Frothblowers and the Yard of Ale. All branch members

should have already received their nomination or voting forms through the post. If you haven't please email me your nominations / votes along with your membership number to chairman@real-ale.org.uk before the deadline of the 28th December. The winners will be announced on our website before New Year's Day.

I do hope to see as many of you at the AGM on 3rd December at the Brewery Tap, if you want to stand for any committee position please contact me before the 26th November. Otherwise I hope you all have a merry Christmas and wish you a happy New Year.

Matt Mace

Chair

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Pub of the Year Award and Good Beer Guide Review

We are in the process of reviewing how we select the Branch Pub of the Year and how we choose pubs for the Good Beer Guide.

At present the Pub of the Year is voted for by CAMRA members who select their choice from a list of the Gold Award winners from the year (usually around 3 to 5 Pubs). The result of the voting takes place at the end of December each year. Currently the Bumble Inn holds this title. Along with Pub of the Year we also have a Cider Pub of the Year (currently the Frothblowers in Werrington) and a LocAle Pub of the Year (currently the Ostrich in the city centre).

One of the changes we are considering is to give out other annual awards, similar to many CAMRA branches throughout the country, such as "Rural Pub of the Year", "Community Pub of the Year" and "Micropub of the Year". The latter of these reflects the growing number of Micropubs in our district. We are looking at these options

but we do feel it is important not to undermine the prestige of an overall Pub of the Year award.

A change we have agreed to make is to include the current Pub of the Year in the selection of choices for the next Pub of the Year award. So in other words the Bumble Inn will be included alongside the Gold Award winners of this year (these being Charters, the Yard of Ale and the Frothblowers) for selection of the overall winner.

With regard to the Good Beer Guide entries for our area we are looking to make some changes on the way we select pubs to be listed. This is a project that we will pick up in the new year.

If you have any views or comments on the way we carry out these selections we would be pleased to receive your feedback.

Don Rudd

Pub News

In this month's edition we will be looking at pubs along the A15 from where it starts at Norman Cross right the way through to Bourne, where we also look at the two Knead pubs, and where to get a good pint in Bretton, Peterborough's Entertainment Hotspot! As usual we finish off with the opening and closings of various pubs in our area.

The A15 through our Area

The road that begins at Norman Cross and carries on through our area is known as London Road, Lincoln Road or even Peterborough Road depending on your location, and has historically been well served for pubs, but sadly many of these have fallen by the wayside of late, especially in Peterborough. The good news though is that if we stray just a short distance off the route there are still plenty of good pubs to enjoy.

We'll start in the village of Stilton where, in the last edition, we looked at The S Bar. There are several other options for the ale enthusiast in this large village, and probably the most famous is **The Bell Inn**, an old coaching inn on the Great North Road that traditionally was thought to have given rise to the famous Stilton Cheese. The story told that the cheese was brought here from Leicestershire and sold to the stage coaches for resale in London. More recently it has been suggested that the cheese may actually have originated in the village. We may never know for sure. After the village was bypassed in 1958, many of the coaching inns suffered from loss of trade, and in fact The Bell closed and the building became derelict soon after. Reopened in the mid-sixties, the inn has been in the hands of Liam McGivern since 1985, under whose guidance it has gone from strength to strength and now provides high quality food and accommodation. The beer range is also excellent with four to choose from, typically Digfield's Fool's Nook (branded as Parrish Bitter), Oakham Bishop's Farewell, GK IPA and Morland's Old Speckled Hen. The Hen does occasionally get rotated for a guest, and lately the Black Pit beers have been well received. Liam will listen to his locals and get a beer on request, so other guest beers are planned for the coming months. Inside, there's a comfy country inn atmosphere, with flag stone floors, exposed stonework and even a centrepiece of some ancient fire bellows. The highlight of the menu, for me, has to be the Stilton Cheese platter for £11. The Digfield beer was in excellent condition, so I think I'll be heading back for the Cheese course in the coming weeks.

Another historic outpost for the famous local cheese was The Angel Inn, which has since become an Indian

Restaurant, but does harbour the S Bar in the rear courtyard (see BAE 203).



A few doors up the road sits **The Talbot Inn**, a Charles Wells pub that caters for both diners and drinkers. Still retaining two rooms, the lounge especially has a comfy feel with deep wood panelling, whilst the small bar area is mainly for drinking and watching sports on TV. The beers are Young's Bitter, Bombardier and when we were there, St. Austell Tribute was on guest. The Young's was on great form. Landlord John Smith has been there eight years and has made it into a real community local; the pub sponsors the local football teams and has a pétanque court in the garden. The food is good old traditional pub grub, with lunchtime specials starting at £5.00. Motorcycle fans might like to pop along on Wednesday evenings when the local Triumph club meets up, or look out for the large annual meet in August when over 700 bikes normally attend. The final pub in the village is **The Stilton Cheese Inn**, originally called the George, but named after the famed fermented curd since the 1920s. Another Free House, this time in the hands of Mark & Mandy who, since taking over in August 2017, have built up a nice B&B business to go along with the pub and restaurant. Yet another great place for Real Ales, with another four to choose from, rising to five in the coming weeks. Typically Lacon's Encore and Legacy will be on permanently, along with a couple from Nene Valley, and another roving guest. The next one will be Grainstore's Erica Roe for the Autumn Internationals. If the quality of the NV Blonde was anything to go by, it's another pub where you can't go wrong. Members of 'Brit Stops' will be pleased to know that the pub provides free pitches for motor homes.

So, by my reckoning, across the four pubs in Stilton, there are typically 18 different Real Ales available in the village at any given time. I'll have to go on the bus next time!

As we head towards Peterborough we pass the site of the world's first purpose-built Prisoner of War Camp. Constructed during the Napoleonic Wars it held on average around 5,500 French prisoners. The British Government set out to ensure that the POW's would be fed to a level expected by the surrounding population, so consequently they were each provided with two pints of beer a day. By my calculations the Camp was serving an average of 11,000 pints a day, making it one of the earliest MegaPubs! The only option now in Norman Cross is the Premier Inn Bar, which has no real ale, so we have to carry on to the village of Yaxley for our next beer.

Passing the Farmers Arms, which was covered in BAE199, we drop down into the old village and come to **The Three Horseshoes**, a pub that has recently had a change of licensee, and a refurbishment. The modern, light décor seems to have worked as when we visited on a Tuesday night it was quite busy with a fairly youthful crowd. The three beers available were Doom Bar, Timmy Taylor Landlord and Exmoor Stag. Just across the road is the old King William IV pub which is now **The Lancaster Club**, which the public can visit for £1.00 when signed in by one of the bar staff. Once inside the three Real Ales on offer are from both National and Regional breweries. Further down the village high street is **The Duck & Drake**, a Free House in the hands of Colin and Amanda who previously did a good job at The Peacock in Fletton. A two-roomed pub with a good village feel, the bar is straight ahead, but the hand pumps are to be found through the door to the right which still has a number "3" on it from the days when licensing laws required rooms to be numbered. Through the latched door is the lounge area with screens to show BT Sports and Sky events. Our focus was drawn more to the five handpumps which offered Abbot and Doom Bar as regulars and two guests along with a Real Cider. I scored my Nottingham Extra Pale Ale well on the Whatpub.com Beer App. A good traditional old pub that just focuses on the wet trade but does offer snacks. And, if you're lucky, free cakes are provided on Tuesday and Friday evening from a generous local.

Skipping Peterborough and its suburbs, the next pub en route (or just off it in this case) is the **Blue Bell** in Glington, the only survivor in a village that had three pubs in living memory. Although food led, it also fills the role of village local for those just wanting a pint or two. There is a separate dining room, and the large drinking area is divided up into smaller sections with clever use of low walls and wooden frameworks. The beers are from the Greene King stable, and include IPA, Golden Hen, a 3.9% GK beer "brewed specially for the pub" called "Blue Bell Bitter", plus one guest ale - Oakham's Bishops Farewell when we visited.

Crossing over the Nine Bridges to the last Cambridgeshire

pub on the A15 brings us to **The Pack Horse**, Northborough. Taking advantage of a pleasant corner site, another traditional pub that balances the Food / Drink roles very well. Now under the Heineken umbrella, the beers on offer were Fuller's London Pride, Theakston's Best Bitter and Marston's Pedigree. The pub is planning to introduce coffee mornings, something that is proving successful with village pubs around the country.

Into Lincolnshire, and again we'll skip the larger settlements and move onto the next village north - Langtoft, where right at the main junction is the **Waggon & Horses** which is owned by Enterprise Inns. Unfortunately, just as we arrived the doors were closing so if you're thinking of stopping off here, best to call in advance.

Taking a short skip off the main road into the village of Boston is **The White Horse**. Previously known for many years as the Spinning Wheel, the pub was saved after a short period of closure in 2013. It is now a free house, and has reverted to its original name. There were four beers on tap, Oakham's JHB, Adnams Southwold, Timmy Taylor's Landlord and the locally brewed Cheeky Imp from Lincolnshire Brewery. We had the JHB and Cheeky Imp, both in good nick. The pub has really become a focal point for the village - it sponsors both the village's Cricket and Football teams, as well as Stamford Rugby Club. Charity is a theme running through the pub, and by the time you read this, landlady Germaine Larter should have completed a 24-hour static cycle ride in the pub in aid of MIND charity. Rugby fans will also be impressed with Germaine's father-in-law's 1968 Lions rugby shirt from the 1968 tour of South Africa, which is on display in the bar. Peter Larter also played 24 Tests for England as a Lock Forward.

Further down the village is **Baskervilles** which closed earlier in the year; a banner outside proclaimed it was reopening after a refurbishment, and village sources told us it was going to be reopened as "The Black Horse" in November. The group behind it also run The Deeping Stage, so hopes are high that it will also feature Real Ale.

Once more, on the right-hand side, as were all pubs between Peterborough and Lincoln, in the village of Thurlby is a Marston's tied house, **The Horseshoe**. Inside this long pub there are distinct dining and drinking areas, and the bar / lounge area is very pleasant with old photos on the wall and memorabilia dotted around. The beers included Bishops Farewell, Doom Bar and Batemans XB.

At this point we pass through Bourne and the next pub is the **Wishing Well** at Dyke where we pass the baton onto the Fenland branch.

On the way back we stopped into **The Bull** in Deeping to see how things were going after the refurbishment over

a year ago. Thankfully the snug has been retained, and the old kitchen area has been opened up to make a cosy dining area. The central stair block has been removed, and bar counters are new. The pub now has a light airy modern feel, but some of the traditional features remain, and it balances the old and the new very well. The beers on



offer were Everard's Tiger and Old Original along with Rowton's Ironbridge Gold. As far as we know the Bull is the only pub in the country named after a Papal Bull and not the animal. The pub sign depicts the bull along with an image of Crowland Abbey, in line with the belief that the Bull in question was garnered by the Abbot of Croylard from the Pope in 1147.

A Bit of Bourne

Despite passing over Bourne on the A15 section, a few of us did visit the town later in the month for a bite to eat. **The Jubilee Garage** is one of two Knead Group pubs in the town, and has a strong Automobile theme as would be expected since it is housed in the old car garage on North Street. There are two levels, both offering plenty of seating and TVs showing sports. The upstairs bar is interestingly fashioned out of an old 1960s style VW Bus. The menu is American style with burgers at the forefront. When we visited at the end of summer there were just the two Real Ales reflecting the reduced demand caused by the hot summer. We had the option of Oakham JHB or Marston's Saddle Tank; the other hand pumps were for Real Cider. As with all Knead pubs, the JHB was well kept. Plans were afoot to go back to three ales and one cider once the cooler winter months arrived. Across the road is the other Knead pub, **Smith's**, where six Real Ales are on offer. Again, JHB is available, along with a range of pales, ambers and a dark beer, typically from independents. This time the building was a former grocer's shop, so the paraphernalia is more "Open All Hours". Smith's has been Bourne's flagship Real Ale outlet for several years now, having graced the pages of the Good Beer Guide every year since 2004.

Out and About

On a drive through the fens we took the opportunity to stop in at **The Lion** in Ramsey St Mary's, a free house which had been closed for a short while before being reinvigorated with assistance from Angles Ales. Moving on a few months, the pub is in the hands of experienced Peterborough Beer Festival cellarman and sometime

brewer Graham Wesley, and beers are usually sourced from Lacon's with guests from local breweries. Graham tells me that the highlight of the week is the Sunday night "Play Your Cards Right" Quiz where winners have the opportunity to pocket a cash prize on top of the free round of drinks. The pub was built in the 1950s on the land behind the original 18th century pub. Once complete the original pub was demolished to create what is now the front parking area and garden. The pub retained four separate pub rooms and a rear restaurant. The highlight for me is the original 1950's bar counter in the rear bar (see photo):



On the drive back to the big city it became apparent that any lingering hopes that the magnificent **Plough** in Farcet Fen would be resurrected were laid to rest with the realisation that it had been bulldozed and all that remained was the sad pub sign standing as a grim reminder of past glories. A sad end to a pub that was in the Good Beer Guide as recently as 2010.

On a more positive note, Paul Frith emailed me to say that his endeavours to keep the **The Bell** in Deeping St James alive had been rewarded with an agreement with PubCo Enterprise to sign a lease. When I had last visited the pub, it was in a very sorry state, and memorably the barman told me that the real ale wasn't off, they just kept the pump clips turned inwards so that the staff knew what beer was on! So, prompted by Paul's contact I spared no time and popped in to check it out. Paul moved over from The Golden Fleece in Stamford and has been running the pub since November. In that time, he has doubled the barrelage of Real Ale. Sensibly Paul doesn't put on more beer than he can shift so during the summer he just ran Doom Bar. Once he has built up the ale side he plans to introduce a second guest ale. The pub is on the up and runs five darts teams, has BT Sports, and puts on live music at least once a month.

Bretton – Peterborough's Entertainment Hot Spot?

At a recent visit to The Cresset to see German comedian,

Henning Wehn, I dropped into **The Fayre Spot** and was pleased to see a couple of pumps selling regional brews from Milestone and Mauldons. Something to bear in mind if attending a show, or a visit to the shopping centre. Just around the corner is the home ground of **Peterborough Lions Rugby Club**. The team now play in National League Division 2 North, the highest standard of rugby played in the city. Admission for home matches is just £5.00 and the good news is that Batemans ales are available in the bar!

Open & Closed...

Good news that **The Sportsman** in Elm is opening in November, a visit is planned to get an update for the next edition.

A couple of snippets from Alun Thomas on his travels: "**The Talbot Inn**, Gretton, closed its doors in September and work has already begun to convert it into a private dwelling (they don't hang about in East Northants!). The pub, in my opinion, had never really recovered from the departure a few years back of larger-than-life landlord Alan Carr (not that one), who was also the driving force behind the much-missed Welland Valley Beer Festival. At least Gretton residents still have two pubs to choose from - the Hatton Arms and the Blue Bell - many villages of a similar size have none, of course.

Meanwhile renovation work continues at the **Queen's Head**, Bulwick (this Branch's Pub Of The Year in 2013), but a completion date has yet to be announced."

Another refurb to be checked out is **The Dragon** in Werrington. Updates expected for the next issue.

Lastly, anyone fancying opening a pub should look no further than **The Decoy** in Milking Nook (Newborough), it is currently available for £245,000. It would be great to see this fenland boozer brought back to life.

A question on Pub Names?

In the piece about the A15 we covered the Blue Bell in Glington, and after checking the numbers, there appear to be around 80 pubs with this name (as opposed to the floral Bluebell, of which there are around another 30), yet we still have five in our area in a very small area, i.e. Dogsthorpe, Werrington, Glington, Helpston & Maxey. I'd be interested if anyone can suggest why there would be such a proliferation in and around us.

Mark Finney



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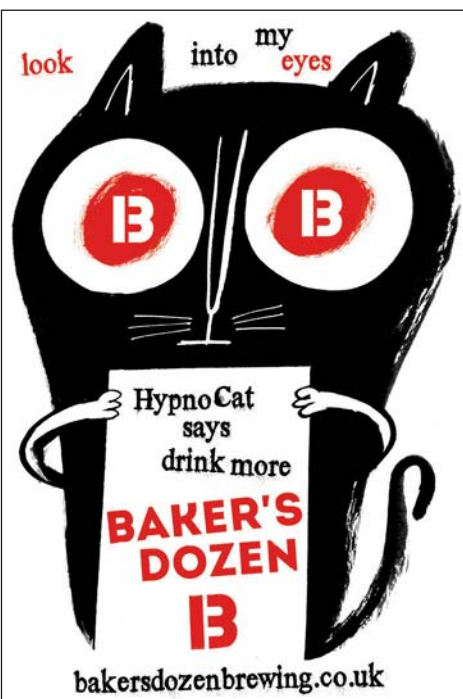
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R.I.P. JOAN WILKINSON



The “mad” woman sitting in the corner of the pub, wearing a hat with a pheasant feather, annoying at times, outspoken at times, but usually just with her meanderings. Far from mad, she lived her life, once living in the States, marrying an American I believe and also I believe working,

singing and dancing at theatres in London and Paris. Joan continued to show wanderlust in her later years, a regular on Mick Slaughter’s train trips around Britain. As you would expect, she enjoyed a beer or cider on these trips and around the hostleries of Peterborough. On one of her last forays out she made it over the border to Deeping Rugby Club Beer Festival.

On occasions Joan could be found singing in local and not-so-local pubs, keeping the clientele in the Black Horse in Coventry amused for over an hour, and she could sing. Above all else, Flora and Fauna was her true passion, planting flowers around her home in Orton Brimbles. Until recently Joan was advising unwitting councillors and builders of rare plants, and on occasion work was halted. Therapeutic supplements helped her use a stick less and less. Sadly, she was found to have breast cancer and had a mastectomy, but she refused radiotherapy, wanting to enjoy an active life a little longer, and a beer or two. Equally, she did not want to burden society with what would have been expensive treatment. Unbeknown to her she had had a secondary cancer for some years, and this one was incurable. One of her wishes she expressed to me was to see a hoopoe (a bird) in this country, stating she didn’t want to die without seeing one ; alas we don’t always get what we want. Please raise a glass to Joan.

Terry Alexander and Mick Slaughter

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Cobbled Courts Echo Roman Supremacy.
Blood & Circus their Enduring Legacy.
A Listless Tavern in Cotswold Stone.
Longing for Comfort, a long way from Home!

Dare us in, or Don’t stay out?
The Beggars Knife of Wholesome Stout?
Rain Daggers down o’er Smugglers Inn.
Thieves without and Thieves within!

Over the Threshold? Unto the Fold!
The Draw of the pint ‘gainst the Bitter Cold?
Tankards; A Shilling but Mostly Head
Flies; Crowd the Bar, Drinking the Dregs.

Busty Wenches Circulate Beer,
Cursed Every Drop (but Crystal Clear).
Life is a Vice and Drinking a Gamble.
Pour me a Pint in a Glass with a Handle!

Anon

Spotted in the Pelican Inn, Gloucester, during a recent stay there.

Dave Murray



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Brewery News



Angles Ales

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Bottled ale sales have been steady, particularly Rude Rudolph, which has conditioned very well since it was brewed last year. Our beers are set to make a regular appearance at Peterborough Rugby Union, Fengate, as a guest and for special events. Other local rugby clubs are looking at our beers too. Full scale bottling will commence in the New Year.

Mark Wroe



Blue Bell

www.thebluebell.net

The Blue Bell Brewery's Christmas Beer will be in barrels soon and available exclusively at the pub from early December. It's called Extra Comfortably Numb and is a dark ale (6.1%).

The brewery recently trialed a half-barrel of lower-alcohol beer (approx 1.7%) which was based on an historical 'small beer' recipe which would have been produced by the village brewster from a secondary mash and given to children when the drinking water was unsafe. The Blue Bell's was thankfully given to adult customers who provided positive feed-back.

The brewery also supply to beer festivals and private-parties.

Sarah Finney



Bexar County

www.bexarcountybrewery.com



Castor Ales

www.castorales.co.uk

Still buzzing from their success of Roman Mosaic at the Peterborough Beer Festival, we, the boys and girls of Castor Ales, are resolutely sticking to our policy of "no collaboration", despite many requests from famous breweries to spend the day together discussing the merits of malted barley and speciality hops sourced from the far reaches of the temperate zones, infused with exotic fruits from the tropical zones. We don't like disappointing people, let alone fellow brewers, but we must stick to our principles : good, honest traditional beer brewed by good, honest guys ; no weirdo beardo types in our brewery nicking our wonderful recipes!

Commenting on our award, one local wag in the Prince of Wales Feathers, Castor (the brewery tap) said, "After 300 brews you had to get it right sooner or later!"

That said, our brewery featured at the Nottingham Beer Festival and we are hoping to make an impact at the Cambridge Winter Beer Festival and other events leading up to Christmas. As we write, the seasonal Mistle Toad is in the fermenter, looking forward to making an appearance at a local hostelry near you. It is a quirky twist of the ubiquitous Hopping Toad, punching a heavier ABV at 4.7% and infused with seasonal orange peel and root ginger. What could possibly go wrong?

A Merry Christmas and a Happy, Peaceful and Prosperous (Brexit pending) New Year to all.

Duncan Vessey



Digfield Ales

www.digfield-ales.co.uk

A successful summer was capped by Shacklebush winning the Best Bitter category at the Northampton Beer festival. In September, a delegation from Northants CAMRA visited the brewery to present the award, and a good time was had by all!

The winter brews are well in hand, with Merry Monk conditioning nicely and Old Crow Porter about to be brewed in readiness for the Christmas period.

Dave Waller



Elgood's

www.elgoods-brewery.co.uk



Historic Ales

Hopshackle

www.hopshacklebrewery.co.uk

Autumn is a distant memory now, with its warm days but chilly nights. Halloween, "Go Sober For October and Bonfire Night have passed and the festive season is approaching rapidly. Hopshackle will have a full range of cask beers available for the run-up to Christmas – from golden hoppy beers like Simarillo (3.8%), PE6 (4.0%) and Mutaka (4.3%) to

the dark brown Extra Special Bitter at 4.8% and the almost black Historic Porter, also at 4.8%.

There is also a wide range of bottled beers available at the Frothblowers in Werrington, ranging from the standard session beers through to the stronger beers such as Hopnosis (5.2%) and Fire Belly Export (7.0%), as well as seven-year-old bottles of Restoration at 9.5% and Imperial Russian Stout, again at 9.5%. These are great to drink straight away, but would also make fantastic Christmas presents for family and friends!

It is also the time of year that a lot of local breweries bring out their seasonal and Christmas beers, dark and strong winter warmers filled with the spices of Christmas cake, pudding and mince pies. So why not take the once-a-year opportunity and give them a go while you can!

Nigel



Kings Cliffe Brewery

www.kcbales.co.uk

Jez has produced a "limited edition" bitter called 6XB, with strength of 3.8%. The cascade hops used in this beer were grown on his own allotment. This beer will be on sale in a few selected pubs in the area, including the Olive Branch in Clipsham.

Otherwise, sales of other beers are steady and can be found in several local outlets.

Don Rudd

Melbourn

www.allsaintsbrewery.co.uk



Mile Tree

www.miletreebrewery.co.uk

Since September, our beers have featured at the SIBA Eastern Region Beer Competition held at Elgood's Brewery, Coalheavers Beer Festival, Melton Mowbray Beer Festival, Nottingham Beer Festival, Gainsborough Beer Festival and Cambridge Winter Beer Festival.

We had an enjoyable evening on 17th October at Oliver Cromwell's House, Ely, where Geoff Brandwood gave a talk on the Golden Age of Pub Building to members of the Stained Glass Museum. On that evening we launched our new range of bottled beers. This was successful and everyone who attended enjoyed trying the tasters on offer.

Look out for our new range of bottled beers, gift-wrapped at the following events:

30th Nov/1st Dec - Peterborough Cathedral Christmas Fair

2nd Dec - Secret Garden Touring Park Christmas Fayre

2nd Dec - March Christmas Market

9th Dec - Wisbech Christmas Fayre

Richard Matthews



Nene Valley Brewery

www.nenevalleybrewery.co.uk

Following a successful Peterborough Beer Festival, where NVB ran their own bar for the second year running, they also had a great time at the Nottingham Beer festival, again with their own bar. There proved to be a lot of interest in their beers, building up their reputation from a good festival last year.

Nene Valley has had a busy year, producing even more choice to the wide selection of beers produced. Of the ten core beers, Release The Chimps, a 4.4% IPA, has proved to be their most popular, now available in bottles and cans as well as being on keg and cask.

They are now producing more beer in cans, including Bitter and Orange, a citrus bitters and rye 5.5% IPA with an appropriate picture of Donald Trump on the label, and Pulping On Your Stereo, a 4.5% orange IPA, Egyptian Cream, a 4.5% creamy milk stout, and my favourite summer can, Supersonic, the gin and tonic-inspired wheat beer.

Their lagers, Heisenberg (4.4%) and Kellerbier (4.6%), have been selling so well they have had to increase production. Another new beer is in the pipeline, a Coffee Pale Ale which has yet to be named and details are currently unavailable. I am looking forward to trying that one!

Barrel-aged beers in 750ml bottles will be available in the run-up to the festive season. I have enjoyed brewer Paul's concoctions this year ; John Lemon, a collaboration with Castle Rock, Manhattan Project, a 4.0% refreshing citrus ale, and the hoppy and fruity A Beer Named Leroy (5.5%). Paul's inventive and not afraid to try all sorts of ingredients, which make a visit to the brewery shop a glass of delights!

Bill Taylor



Oakham Ales

Oakham Ales

www.oakhamales.com



www.rocket-ales.com

Rocket Ales have had a successful summer, with sell-outs at a number of beer festivals. Sidewinder (4.0%) is proving very popular and will be brewed again very soon. Komet (3.8%) and Bloodhound (4.2%) have been introduced to a number of high-profile gastro-pubs.

Looking forward, Rocket Ales will have their beers on show at Christmas Markets in Huntingdon and St. Neots.

Don Rudd



Tydd Steam

www.tyddsteam.co.uk



Xtreme Ales

www.xtremeales.com

AND INTRODUCING:

Sneaky Peacock Craft Brewery is a husband and wife project (David and Anna Peacock) based at their home in Deeping St James. They brew with recipes and techniques developed since starting homebrewing seven years ago. They hope to focus on the brewery full time one day, but for now they brew at weekends. Anna handles things day to day while David works in IT.

In 2018 they converted their workshop outbuilding to a fully functioning commercial brewery including floor drains, a cold room, water filtration and a two-barrel electrically fired brewery. The building is

topped off with solar panels, helping keep a good rolling boil during the summer months.

Their beers are particularly flavoursome with everything being bottle or cask conditioned. The recipes are quite different and unique, from style, hop selection, malt profile and base water minerals. No filtering, pasteurisation or shortcuts go into making the beers.

Beer line up

Easy Peasy pale ale - 5.7% A robust pale ale with refreshing hints of citrus and pine.

Dilly Dally summer ale - 4.5% A light, tropical, fruity and thirst-quenching summer ale.

Rye IPA - 6% A well-balanced IPA with complex malt and tons of dry hops.

Wonder Blunder brown ale - 4.8% A biscuity and bitter brown ale, with a surprisingly refreshing hoppy punch.

Equinox IPA - 5.2% A sessionable American style IPA loaded with citrus, pine and resin flavour.

Beer availability is very limited so far though casks have travelled as far as Oxford and Leicester. David is now looking for outlets nearer to home. Bottles can be found at Sam's Convenience Store and Driftwood Bistro in Deeping St James. David and Anna hope to run a stall at the Deepings Christmas Market this year and there are plans afoot to sell directly from the brewery early next year. They will also look at selling by post and delivering beers locally.

Don Rudd

How Do You Protect Against The Theft Of Cash From Your Business?



Throughout our extensive involvement with this sector, we have witnessed a number of different frauds, perpetrated at different levels by employees. In recognising some of the types, solutions can quickly be put in place, but it's essential to realise that even "honest" people sometimes fall over the edge, and steal from their employers. Sometimes this happens because an employee might need to "borrow" a few pounds overnight, and they put it back undetected on the next day. Having "got away" with it, they feel confident to do it again when the need arises, still being honest enough to return it at the first opportunity. Then the amount increases, but still is put back. Then the amount

increases again, but this time beyond their ability to replace it. They've still "got away" with it, so now it's taken without the intention of putting it back. Usually at the higher amount, and so "honest" people have become thieves, by default, not intent. We call this "teeming and lading".

Then we come across the people with a history of dishonesty. They never announce this of course, and even though former employers may know of their dishonesty, references are notoriously deficient in details of known or suspicious honesty. Pass the problem on rather than nip it in the bud, is sadly many people's response to identifying thieves! These dishonest employees may engage in a variety of ways to extract cash from your business, or worse still, from your customers! If this happens, it's you that will be branded a sharp operator, not the employee as a thief. The damage this can cause can be much worse than the loss of cash to your business!

You should always consider the presence of cash as a temptation, and therefore put systems in place to protect yourself. No system is 100% though, so you will suffer losses. The aim is to minimise them!

So what methods might the determined thief adopt in moving your money from you to themselves? Here are



a few ideas you might want to think about protecting yourself from:

- Ringing in to the till fewer items sold or cheaper items, whilst still taking the actual price from the customers. At the end of the shift, if the employee is allowed to balance the till, the cash in the till exceeds the amount required to balance. This can be tens of pounds daily! Add that up, and it's major losses! So firstly you should appear randomly and check the till with an X read, during shifts. You should also appear randomly at shift ends and carry out the balancing of the till personally. You could consider having another staff member carry out the cashing up process, but never the same pairing regularly. Regular pairing can lead to co-operative fraud.
- The alternative to ringing in a lower value products than that served is, of course, not ringing anything in. Again the cash usually goes in the till, to be recovered at the shift end. Use of CCTV, and cashing up yourself are good defences against this.
- Selling their own products over. This is usually the prerogative of managers where the owner never visits the premises. It's not too popular because it requires expenditure on products, and complete autonomy, but does happen. It's difficult to protect against this if the manager has autonomy. Checking the movement in your gross profit helps. Having regular stocktakes by external stock takers may also help, but this will only identify that an issue exists, not necessarily the perpetrator.
- Raffles and other (charitable?) fund raising can be a small leakage. The offending staff member puts themselves, or more likely a friend's name in, without paying for the ticket/square, etc. This leaves you making good! Difficult to protect against, but regularly removing the money paid, can isolate any opportunity to defraud.
- Theft of product. This might be more apparent in food outlets, where staff steals foodstuffs for personal consumption. CCTV can be a major weapon in the fight to prevent this, but unless the access is carefully controlled or monitored, it's basic theft along the lines of shoplifting.
- Giving goods to significant others without charging. It's amazing how much people can eat and drink when it's free! If a partner is spending most of the employees shift in the bar or restaurant, keeping them company, there's a very good chance this is happening.
- Do you have a policy on staff being purchased drinks by customers? You should! Some establishments allow staff to take the cash from the till at the end of the shift. Dangerous! Some insist the staff accept and

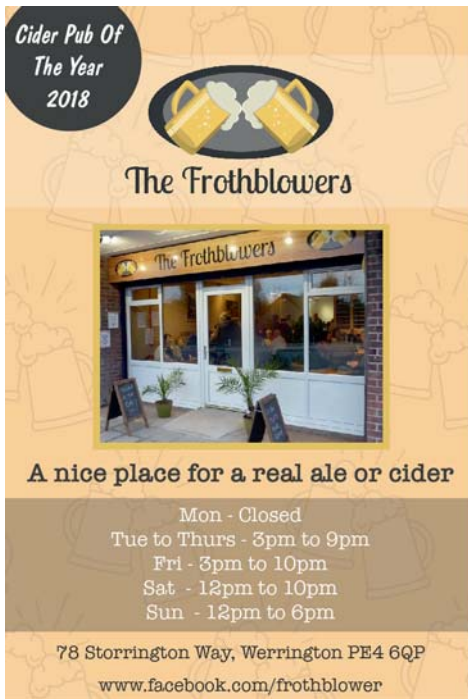
have a soft drink only. These must be consumed in front of the customer. Never allow staff to consume the drinks purchased for them after their shift, before leaving, or to "bank" drinks for another day. The customer may never have offered this, but without a policy and controls it costs you!

- Short changing. This tends to happen more towards the end of the evening, as customers may have consumed enough to become careless about the amount requested or the change given. It's you that takes the flak if anyone is caught doing this. It's your establishment and reputation. Difficult to prevent, and personal presence is possibly the only defence.
- Time theft is also going to dip into your pocket. This is often carried out by employees claiming more hours on the time sheet than were actually worked.

We've seen times when personal shopping items have been on Cash and Carry receipts, when employees have been asked to carry out the shopping (holiday periods usually), and the items have not been paid for by the employee.

To discuss any issues this may raise, please call us on 07899 947578

Barry Dovey



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www.facebook.com/frothblower

ST. WULFRAM'S BEER FESTIVAL, GRANTHAM

“Land Of Hops And Glory” trumpeted the programme – it’s a plagiarism of the title of Pete Brown’s excellent book “Hops And Glory”, of course, but we’ll overlook that! It’s two years now since the inaugural St. Wulfram’s Beer Festival in Grantham took place, and it has come on in that time in leaps and bounds. Indeed, such has been its effect that it has now been renamed the Grantham CAMRA and St. Wulfram’s Beer Festival, replacing the former’s Festival, held in the past at such diverse venues as the Railway Club and the Huntingtower Academy Infant School.

This year no fewer than 3500 thirsty folk passed through the doors during the three-day event, boosting the church’s coffers as well as the burgeoning reputation of the Festival. As I think I mentioned last year, my sister lives a couple of minutes’ walk from the church so I had booked in for the night!



I should add that twenty ciders were on offer as well as four meads, ten gins and five proseccos in addition to no fewer than 60 ales. The ales were drawn from a wide cross-section : heavyweights (Abbeydale, Bath, Camerons, Kelham Island, Oakham, St.Peter’s, Thornbridge), locals (Brewsters, Newby Wyke, Oldershaws) and the unfamiliar (to me at any rate!) Boss, Cross Bay, Heavy Industry, Old Mill, Wandering Brewer).

As is the case at most Beer Festivals, the feelgood factor was in evidence from the word go as a local band ran through their repertoire and sausage rolls, pork pies and pasties helped soak up the ale. Local CAMRA member Mark Beecham, who contributed an article to BAE 199, joined us for a couple of hours and kindly introduced me



to Grantham CAMRA Chairman Neville Lomas, who was taking a break from pulling pints behind the bar.

I had my sensible head on (that rarest of occasions) so didn’t overdo things, although I did achieve my aim of sampling at least a pint of each available type of ale. The highlight? A 5.6% Elland Brewery Blackout (I didn’t), a truly full-bodied Oatmeal Stout.

I should mention a memorable “schadenfreude” moment from the evening : Father Stuart Craddock, the Rector of St. Wulfram’s, was clearly flagging whilst doing a stint behind the bar when a customer aggressively ordered him to top up his pint. The run-off-his-feet Rector, clearly put out, nonetheless retraced his steps to the other end of the bar to comply and then watched said customer (who hadn’t thanked him) stumble as he turned away from the bar, slopping a quarter of a pint on to the floor in the process!

Father Stuart's face was a picture as some presumably un-Christian thoughts possibly went through his head...

Anyway – that old myth about Grantham being a boring place can be laid to rest – any town that has the imagination and foresight to combine CAMRA and church to produce such a memorable Festival is deserving of the highest, erm, prayers...

AI



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PUBS, BEER, TRAINS, TRAMS & FERRIES

– A TRIP TO THE ISLE OF MAN

We used the incredibly good value **Economy**

Return SailRail tickets that must be bought from Peterborough Station at least 7 days in advance of the date of travel. These allow you to travel on trains to / from either Heysham Port or Liverpool and also include the foot passenger fare on the traditional ferry / fast ferry respectively and only cost £118.00 or a remarkable low price of £85.50 for Railcard holders. Having bought your tickets you are strongly recommended to ring the Isle of Man Steam Packet Co. (on 01634 661661) and advise them of the ferries you intend to travel on and supply the names of all the passengers so they are expecting you when you check-in.

On **Thursday** morning we travelled from Peterborough to Leeds on the 07.53 (*i.e. a peak time train*) and had an hour - so time to visit the **Wetherspoons on Leeds station** - before taking the train to Heysham Port. As we had 50 mins before final check-in time we walked (with cases) the 10 mins or so to the **Duke of Rothesay, Heysham Port**, a pub selling two guest beers – *both York Brewery*.

The traditional ferry *Ben my Chree* takes three and a half hours to Douglas and was done in good weather. At Douglas we were delighted that the Tourist Information Office was still open at 6.00pm as we needed to buy a **3 Day Go Explore Card** that costs £34.00 (*includes £2.00 for the card*) and which covers all the transport on the island, e.g. Electric Railway, Steam Railway, Snaefell Mountain Railway, Horse Trams and Buses. *There are also 1, 5 & 7 day ones available*. We found time to visit the **Albert Hotel**, a two-roomed pub barely changed since the 1960s, to try the local Okells and Bushy's real ales before we took taxis to our guest houses.

We decided to visit a few pubs before going to the beer festival – these included the **Woodbourne Hotel**, a large Victorian local with three rooms (one is still called the Gentlemen's Bar) and a regular in the Good Beer Guide, and the **Rosemount Hotel**. The **Isle of Man Beer Festival** is held in Villa Marina on the Promenade, an excellent venue where you pay £5.00 and get it back in beer tokens if you are a CAMRA member! The festival had a good selection of beers from Northern Ireland amongst others.

Bushy's Wagon



On **Friday** morning we used the **Horse Tram** service from the guest house to the Sea Terminal. The Douglas Bay Horse Tramway started in 1876, the council passed it to a trust in 2015 and the service now operates between April and November.

After a quick beer in the early opening **Old Market Inn**, a traditional pub with a very small front bar, we walked to Douglas Railway Station for the **Isle of Man Steam Railway**, which (*from March to November*) runs a basic train to Port Erin that takes an hour. There is a **Steam Railway Museum** at Port Erin (Admission £2). *Other non-beer things to do in the area are to take the bus to Sound, where the coast overlooks the Calf of Man and there is a Visitor Centre; or Cregneash village, a Restored Manx Village Folk Museum which is open daily from 10am to 5pm. Admission costs £5 for adults.*

In **Port Erin** we visited the **Station Hotel**, the characterful **Falcon's Nest Hotel** and the **Bay Hotel** with the latter being the most impressive with a range of Bushy's real ales. We then took a bus to **Port St Mary** for the **Albert Hotel**, a traditional pub overlooking the harbour (*missed out the Railway Station Hotel*) and changed plan and took a bus to the **Shore Hotel, Gansey**, which is popular with diners. We then walked to the tiny **Colby Level Station** – a request stop - to join the steam train back to **Castletown**.

After a bite to eat at the Bowling Green Café, we visited the **Tap Room**, the **Castle Arms** (nicknamed the 'Glue Pot'), which has a traditional interior, and the **Sidings**, a former railway ticket office that has the largest range of

Shore Hotel, Port Erin Public Bar



real ales on the island (v). As the train was delayed we took a bus to the outskirts of **Douglas** and then walked to the **Horse & Groom, Bradden**.

Local CAMRA member David Halliwall had made an offer to drive some of us to pubs in the countryside that are difficult to get to by public transport so we took the last bus of the day to the **Baltic Inn, Foxdale** and David then took us to the **Tynwald Hill Inn**. He also gave us a lift to **Peel** where we found a good fish & chip shop called the Cod & Castle. **Peel** has a number of pubs of character – the **Peveril** with two rooms; the **Central**, a small terraced pub with three rooms; and the **White House Hotel**, the most unspoilt pub on the island with four small rooms and a screened bar. Other pubs visited were the **Marine Hotel** and the **Royal**. If you visit during the day then the ruins of **Peel Castle** and **St Germans Cathedral** are worth a look.

Central, Peel Left Bar



A bus back to **Douglas** and time to visit some pubs in the town centre such as the **Prospect Hotel**, and **Rovers Return** – look for the fire hose nozzles used as hand pumps – before heading for the **Hooded Ram**, a new pub in part of the former Clinch's brewery and the brewery tap

White House, Peel Screened Bar



for the Hooded Ram brewery who brew the tastiest real ales on the Isle of Man – I was particularly fond of their Mosaic Single Hop Pale Ale.

On **Saturday** we took the **Horse Tram** – some of the party were privileged to be on the **double deck one** – to Derby Castle, the southern terminus of the **Manx Electric Railway** (operates March to November). We went as far as **Laxey** where we changed to the **Snaefell Mountain Railway** (operates April to November) for the 30 minute ride to the top of the island's highest mountain at 2026 feet above sea level. Sadly it was foggy towards the summit but we did get good views lower down including the **Laxey Wheel**, a huge waterwheel (it can be visited).

The Trippers at the misty Summit of Snaefell



They allow you 20 odd minutes to visit the café and walk the few minutes to the triangulation point.

Back in Laxey we were able to ride on the **Great Laxey Mines Railway**, a tiny narrow gauge railway with a very cramped carriage which operates on a Saturday and is free to holders of the Go Explore Card. In **Laxey** we visited the **Bridge Inn, Mines Tavern** which has a unique bar counter resembling a tram; and then took a muddy footpath to the **Shore Hotel in Old Laxey**, the only home brew pub on the island selling Old Laxey Bosun Bitter. We then walked up a steep hill to the **Queens Hotel** and back to the **Electric Railway** for the journey to Ramsey. Parts of the line run very close to the cliff edge giving good views.

In **Ramsey** we found **Bar Logo** served food and had time to visit the **Mitre** and the **Trafalgar Hotel**. We then took a bus to **Kirk Michael** for the multi-roomed **Mitre** and the next part of the evening visits were, again, courtesy of a sort of taxi service by local member David Halliwall. Other pubs visited were the **Raven, Ballaugh; Sulby Glen Hotel**; and the **Ginger Hall, Sulby**, which is a very traditional pub. David took two of us to Ramsey for the bus to Onchan and then took the rest via the **Crag-Na-Bar** to meet up in **Onchan** where we visited the **Manx Arms** and the **Terminus Tavern**. We walked to the **Queens Hotel** and took a taxi to the town centre for visits to the **Prospect Hotel, Rovers Return** and I finished in the **Hooded Ram** again! Those with greater capacity were to be found in **Jak's** on the Promenade, which didn't seem in a hurry to close!

On **Sunday** I went on the bus to Peel to photograph some pub interiors and then took another trip on the **Horse Tram**. We visited some pubs on North Quay, such as the **British Hotel**, finishing in the **Hooded Ram** (again!). We checked-in before 2.30pm for the **SeaCat Fast Ferry Manannan** to Liverpool, which only takes 2 hours 45 minutes. From the Landing Stage in **Liverpool, near the famous Liver Building**, some of the party took a taxi while others walked to Lime Street Station (allow 20 minutes to walk) on a route, which just happens to pass the **Lion Tavern**, a pub with a National Important Historic Interior and a good range of real ales. We boarded the 18.22 train to Leeds only discover that passengers had ignored the seat reservations but we were able to obtain our seats – it just showed how essential it is to make seat reservations on the East Coast and Transpennine Trains, having bought your SailRail tickets. At **Leeds** there was just time to pop into **Tapped Leeds** before catching the 20.45 train back to Peterborough.

A superb trip, highly recommended for anyone who loves trains and transport as well as pubs and real ales. Although lots of the pubs are owned by Okells (*Heron & Brearley*), in

many we found their MPA (*Manx Pale Ale*) very drinkable. There are 28 pubs on the Isle of Man in the 2019 Good Beer Guide. The SailRail tickets (*use Low Saver Return for travel on Fri, Sat, Sun in June, July, Aug & Sept.*) are called the UK's well-kept secret tickets and similar bargain ones are available from any railway station in Britain to Belfast, Northern Ireland and Dublin, Republic of Ireland – more details can be found on the 'Man in Seat 61' website. Anyone interested a trip to **Dublin in May 2019?**

Mick Slaughter

Photos by Derek Gibson & Mick Slaughter



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Quarts & Thoughts

Plus ça change... in the last Quarts And Thoughts, I reminisced about my enjoyable visit to the Loch Lomond Brewery in Alexandria. So it was with some trepidation that I found that the brewery had entered into an “arrangement” with Greede Kerrching to supply a range of cask ales into GK’s Scottish free trade, tied and managed houses. I realise that business is business, and there’s no point in brewing passionately for years and only breaking even, but... While I’m sure that it will be business as usual at Loch Lomond, recent history suggests that there may be ominous rumblings to come! To be honest, I hadn’t realised that GK were so prevalent north of the border, although I know they own Belhaven, and, by association, Innis and Gunn.

Speaking of our friends in Suffolk – I spent an evening in Bury St. Edmunds in early October and, having consulted the GBG, strolled into the town, heading for the Dove.



My route took me past the Greene King brewery, which made me chuckle. A few years ago, whilst driving through the town with my wife and another couple, I suddenly realised that we were passing the brewery. It was a hot day and the windows were down, and I involuntarily let out a deafening “BOOOO!”, to the evident surprise of a number of inoffensive nearby pedestrians! Anyway, I digress. The Dove is pretty much as it’s described in the Guide: “No lager, TVs, pool or gaming machines here – the Dove is how pubs used to be...” In fact, it’s owned by a former GK accountant who apparently came to an arrangement to evade the tie before buying the pub outright. My first pint was Tring Moongazing, and whilst supping it I moved

over to the literary section, where I leafed through various CAMRA newsletters (I’m always looking to steal other people’s ideas for use in BAE) and got talking to a drinker. My second pint was Elgood’s Greyhound, and I noticed that a pint glass full of pork scratchings had appeared on the table. “Nice of the landlord to dish out snacks” I thought, helping myself liberally, only for my new friend to say “Leave some for me mate, they’ve just cost me two quid!”

Anyway, he can’t have been too miffed because he recommended the nearby Oakes Barn as my second port of call. This is a free house, opened by two ladies – a solicitor and a nurse, not a bad combination for two people running a pub – a couple of years ago, and pubs like this and the Dove could have me looking seriously at house prices in Bury... Incidentally, my pints in the Oakes Barn were Fuller’s Red



Fox (4.3%) and Buffy’s Norwegian Blue at 4.9%. This is a serious community pub – when was the last time you were in a pub that offered Advanced Conversational French, a Positive Birth Group, Crochet, Knitting and Traditional Unaccompanied Folk Singing as well as Blokes At The Oakes at various times during the week?

I was in Penrith again recently and visited the Fell Bar (basically the tap for the Fell Brewery of Flookburgh, Cumbria). Enjoyed a pint of Fell’s Robust Porter at 4.8% and couldn’t resist a half of Fyne Ales Mills Hills Coffee Imperial Stout at a mere 9.5%. Seriously, um, fyne ale...and I had to





Style	Beer	Style	ABV	Notes	Price
C. Fell	Glythi	Golden Ale	3.7	light, poppy, well balanced	3.50
C. Fell	Lake Soma	Porter	4	light, poppy, well balanced	3.50
C. Fell	Rock Water	Porter	4.3	light, poppy, well balanced	3.50
C. Red Willow	Stoutless	Pale	3.9	light, poppy, well balanced	3.50
C. Tine T.T.	Stoutless	Pale	3.9	light, poppy, well balanced	3.50
K. Fell	Tinderbox	IPA	6.3	Probably better than Carlsberg	3.50
K. Fell	Session IPA	SIPA	4	light, poppy, well balanced	3.50
K. Tine T.T.	Stoutless	Pale	3.9	light, poppy, well balanced	3.50
K. Tine T.T.	Stoutless	Pale	3.9	light, poppy, well balanced	3.50
K. Northern Monk	Stoutless	Pale	3.9	light, poppy, well balanced	3.50
K. Tine T.T.	Stoutless	Pale	3.9	light, poppy, well balanced	3.50

chuckle at the blackboard's description of Fell's Tinderbox IPA : "Probably better than Carlsberg". I couldn't resist calling at the Dockray Hall later (see BAE 203) for a pint of Cumbrian Legendary Ales Oatmeal Stout.

Closer to home, I was in the Bluebell, Helpston, a few weeks ago and couldn't help noticing that they stocked bottles of the Belgian "strongie" Kwak behind the bar. The barman admitted that they didn't sell much of it so I felt compelled to invoke the spirit of former Branch Social Secretary John Hunt by buying up the stock of three bottles for, ahem, "personal use".

Was in the George, Stamford, a while back for a celebratory dinner and I have to say that the Adnams Broadside in there is the best I've ever had from that particular brewery – and I've drunk it several times in the Adnams heartland of Southwold. Some would say that at £4.90 a pint, it should be good – but on the "value for money" premise, I ordered a third pint as my sweet course (it was still less than half the price of the cheapest sweet!).

Still on the local front, I had offered to drop some Good

Beer Guide paraphernalia off at the Shuckburgh Arms, Southwick, so Tina and I drove through the quite beautiful Northamptonshire countryside to take advantage of the Thursday night "Fish and Chips for Five Quid" offer. That quite remarkable deal apart, it was heartening to see the pub busy on a Thursday night – and equally encouraging to see five ales on offer in what you have to say is a remote boozer! My pints here were Digfield Barnwell (which never, ever, disappoints) and Brewster's Decadence. Their Hophead was also available along with Fuller's London Pride and Oakham JHB.

Called at the Castle Inn, Castle Bytham on a recent Friday evening for a meal. This is a pub that faced an uncertain future a while back, but it is now under the stewardship of Will and Sue Stanton and was encouragingly busy. A chap drinking at the bar recommended the Bass, and I was delighted I'd taken his advice – I haven't tasted Bass like that since the 1980s! Also on offer were Summer Lightning, Castle Rock Harvest Pale and Oakham Citra.

Ho hum, another week, another evening in Bury St. Edmunds. This time I headed for the Beerhouse, an unusual semi-circular building which doubles up as the tap for the nearby Brewshed brewery. Eight ales, three ciders and a craft keg wall. I sampled Brewshed Best (4.3%),



Pale (3.9%) and a lovely Vanilla Porter (4.7%). It's a small world – the landlord was born and bred in Castle Bytham, just outside our Branch area, and his sister ran the now-defunct Hole In The Wall in Stamford for several years in the 1990s! Also called at the Cannon, a brewpub with two huge vats on display in the bar. This pub was more food-driven, and less welcoming, but I enjoyed halves of Old Cannon Hornblower and Woodforde's Red Admiral before calling it a night.



So – I'd visited four of Bury's five non-GK pubs, and a lasting memory (apart from the ales) is the anti-GK feedback I experienced. I'd expected some negativity, but not the extent of the vehemence directed at what must be one of the town's biggest employers who, in the not so distant past, even employed a full-time Mortgages Officer to help employees to buy their own homes.

Plus ca change...

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Good Beer Guide 2019

As the new edition hits our shelves we thought we'd welcome the new entries, and pay tribute to those that have notched up 10 consecutive years.

Welcome to the GBG

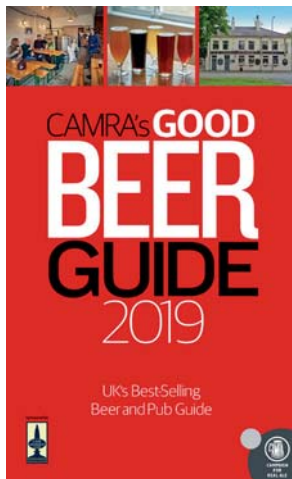
- **Frothblowers, Peterborough** – New to the guide, after being open for just over a year. Peterborough's newest Micropub has been serving excellent Real Ale since the start, and there is nothing to suggest it won't become a permanent fixture for years to come. If those accolades aren't enough, it has already picked up the local Cider Pub of the Year award too.
- **Yard of Ale, Peterborough** – New to the guide, the pub previously known as the "New Inn" and then "The Office", has been transformed and finally made the guide at the 46th attempt! It just shows what can happen when the right people run a pub.
- **Anchor, Bourne** – New to the guide, this pub was a worthy candidate for the local Pub Of The Year, and has rightly been recognised as an excellent place for a pint or two.
- **Ship, Oundle** – Has made the guide for first time since 2012. This long-time favourite of GBGs past has made a welcome return. Let's hope it can have another extended run.
- **George Hotel, Whittlesey** – This Wetherspoon's pub has made it back after three years out.
- **King's Arms, Polebrook** - This traditional village local missed out on the last two years, so it is pleasing to see it make a welcome return.
- **Blue Bell, Helpston** – Missed out last year, but now back after one year out. The pub has been a regular for a good chunk of the last 25 years, missing only seven of them in total.

Local Roll of Honour – pubs that have stacked up 10 consecutive years

- **Hand & Heart, Peterborough** – This magnificent back street local has been in the guide since 2004. It is the area's only National Level Heritage Pub, and can always be relied upon for a varied range of beers in great condition.
- **Smith's, Bourne** – Again, in the GBG since 2004, this is one of the first Knead group pubs, and has performed excellently for the last 15 years.

- **Montagu Arms, Barnwell** – This charismatic country pub in idyllic surroundings has been found in the guide since 2005. The pub has struck a great balance between food and beer, and never fails to impress on either count.
- **Draper's Arms, Peterborough** – Originally part of the copycat "Old Monk" chain but soon absorbed into the Wetherspoon fold, it has been performing well since 2007.
- **Boat, Whittlesey** – Appeared in the very first guide in 1974 and was an occasional visitor to the hallowed pages in the following decade or so, fell from grace a little, but has been a constant entrant since 2007.
- **Letter B, Whittlesey** – Made a couple of appearances in the first 35 years up to 2009, but has been an ever-present since. Not only is this pub a Mecca for Ale lovers, it typically offers ten or more ciders.
- **Jolly Brewer, Stamford** – Another pub to feature in the very first edition, but in this case they soon fell off the Real Ale scene for many years until resurfacing in 2009.
- **Tobie Norris, Stamford** – the second Knead pub to feature in this list, it only became a pub in 2005, so to have featured every year since 2009 is a fine achievement.

Mark Finney



PLOUGHMAN'S PLEASURE

After an arduous TEN year campaign the future of The Ploughman public house in Werrington, Peterborough is now thankfully secured.

The Ploughman has received various awards from the local CAMRA branch, not the least of which were Pub of the Year in 2011 and again in 2014 despite the pub's uncertain future, firstly with threats of demolition by the then owners Tesco and more recently (following the sale of sections of Werrington Centre by Tesco) by a Property Development Company headed by John Livock that had purchased the pub and surrounding areas. Plans submitted to the City Council clearly showed the intention to demolish The Ploughman to make way for new housing developments, but after a long and often difficult campaign by pub landlord Andy Simmonds (Simmo) plans for the demolition of the pub have now been shelved and Andy has finally secured a long term lease for the next 15 years.

Examples of community pubs abound, but The Ploughman truly is a valued asset of the Werrington community. Tens of thousands of pounds have previously been raised in support of a variety of local projects, not the least of which, Heltwate School which has benefited to the tune of a £3,000+ donation just from this year's successful July Beer Festival. The pub's facilities continue to be enjoyed by the darts teams, poker players, runners and sponsored football teams to mention a few.

Landlord Andy and his brother Stuart (former landlord of The Dragon, also in Werrington) received a Peterborough



Civic Award in recognition of the Community Involvement and Charity work achieved by Team Ploughman. Pubs are clearly in the family DNA with third brother Chris being landlord of the CAMRA Award winning Queens Arms in Brixham, Devon.

It's hard to imagine an "estate pub", built in the early '80's, having such a dedicated following of supporters, including local councillors and MPs, campaigning alongside the enthusiastic staff and management team to prevent the "Big Boys" from getting their way and demolishing this public house in the search for short term financial gain.

The Ploughman remains a totally "free house" always with a range of well-kept real ales (typically 6), often with one or more South Devon ale(s) available not usually sampled in the Peterborough area. With two separate bars the pub is also well established on the local entertainment scene featuring live music every weekend and the opportunity to take advantage of the lounge bar which may be available for larger functions or parties.

Kim Neale



POSH PINTS

And away we go...

As BAE went to press, Posh were still unbeaten away from home, a remarkable achievement at this stage of the season. I'd like to think that this is partly due to the travelling support whose vocal chords have been lubricated in pubs suggested on the Posh Pints pages! Anyway, December and January bring trips to promotion rivals Barnsley, Accrington Stanley and Luton plus strugglers Shrewsbury and Bristol Rovers. Unfortunately, at this stage, we don't know whether or not Posh are still in the FA Cup!

15th December, Shrewsbury Town, KO 1500.

NAG'S HEAD

22 Wyle Cop SY1 1XB

Allegedly haunted pub whose interior has remained unchanged for many years. Hobsons Best, Doom Bar, Landlord, Wye Valley HPA, guest ale. But no food.

THREE FISHES

4 Fish Street SY1 1UR

Hooray! Freshly prepared lunchtime grub is available in this 15th century building in the town's medieval quarter to complement the five local and national ales, including Stonehouse Station bitter and Three Tuns stout.

26th December, Barnsley, KO 1500.

THE MOUNT

32 Pontefract Road S71 1AB

"Like going back to the 70s, a good traditional boozier! Friendly staff, nice pint, what more could you ask? Good food too." What's not to like, as they say?

DOVE INN

102 Doncaster Road S70 1TP

A decent, no-nonsense hostelry not far from Oakwell, welcomes away supporters. Owned by Selby brewers Old Mill. However – "even the Foster's tastes nice." You decide...

29th December, Accrington Stanley, KO 1500.

CANINE CLUB

45-47 Abbey Street BB5 1EN

Large street-corner social club on a busy street, all welcome. Traditional games room at the rear of the pub. The changing beer range usually includes a couple of East

Lancashire brews, which has to be a good thing, and one from further afield. No lunchtime food though.

PEEL PARK HOTEL

Turkey Street BB5 6EW

A true free house opposite the site of Stanley's original ground (still used by Peel Park FC). Six ales on from smaller regional breweries. No grub though.

5th January, Bristol Rovers, KO 1500.

ANNEXE

Seymour Road, BS7 9EQ

Community pub not far from the Memorial Stadium, can get busy on match days. Large conservatory/family room to one side. Several TVs (including one outside) show live sport. Some guest ales can be "fairly adventurous", apparently, while good-value wholesome food is served at lunchtimes.

DRAPER'S ARMS

447 Gloucester Road BS7 8TZ

Close to the ground, this was Bristol's first micropub. Prides itself on an interesting and changing beer selection from in and around Brizzle. Up to eight ales served by gravity, frequently including a dark ale, and three real ciders. Bar snacks available. No music or TV, but "a warm welcome and a convivial, cosy atmosphere, with a focus on conversation". Local CAMRA Pub of the Year 2017.

19th January, Luton Town, KO 1500.

BEECH HILL CONSERVATIVE CLUB

18 Leagrave Road LU4 8HZ

Welcomes away supporters who can park there for £4. There's a charge to get in, but the ale is so cheap you'll probably still be up on the deal!

WHITE HOUSE

1 Bridge Street LU1 2NB

A bright, clean Wetherspoon outlet in the Galaxy Centre, refurbished in 2017. The pub offers guest ales from Vale or Tring (again this must be seen as a plus) as well as the usual options. Lunchtime nosh, obviously.

AI

FROTHBLOWERS FERVOUR

Celebratory drinks flowed at the Frothblowers, Werrington, on Thursday 25th October as the pub was presented with a CAMRA Gold Award. The award is “for creating a welcoming, friendly and inclusive environment in a superb community pub, serving an excellent range of beers and ciders”.

Pictured left to right are Frothblowers luminaries Louise Lawrence, Debbie Williams, John Lawrence and Steve Williams plus Tom Beran of the Bumble Inn, who proposed the pub for the award.

Photo : Richard Eames



WHITTLESEY BEER FESTIVAL NEWS

You will recall that the Rotary Club of Whittlesey held its inaugural Charity Beer Festival back in May. The organisers are delighted to announce that a remarkable £1400 was raised for the Whittlesey Young People's Counselling Service and MIND. A big “thankyou” is due to all who attended and supported this worthwhile event. The Rotary Club hope you all enjoyed yourselves!



It is the Rotary Club's intention to run a second Festival next year on the same weekend, 17th-19th May, at the Falcon, Whittlesey – so please make a note of it in your diaries! The chosen charities next year will be Whittlesey Young People's Counselling Service as well as the No Pain No Gain Charity.



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Diary Dates

CAMRA meetings, socials and beer festivals

December

Monday 3rd at 8.30pm

AGM of Peterborough and District Branch of CAMRA at the Brewery Tap, Westgate, Peterborough, PE1 2AA. All members welcome, please bring membership card.

Sunday 30th at 8.30pm

Burghley Square Club, 7 Burghley Road, Peterborough PE1 2QA. Count for Pub of the Year and Good Beer Guide entries.

January

Monday 7th at 8.30pm

Yard of Ale, 72 Oundle Road, Peterborough PE2 9PA. Branch Monthly Meeting, all welcome, please bring membership card.

Friday 18th – Sunday 20th

40th Whittlesea Straw Bear Festival. For details: www.strawbear.org.uk

Thursday 24th – Saturday 26th

10th Elysian Winter Beer Festival at The Maltings, Ship Lane, Ely, CB7 4BB. For details: www.elycamrabeerfest.com

February

Monday 4th at 8:30pm

Duck and Drake, 34 Main Street, Yaxley PE7 3LY. Branch Monthly Meeting, all welcome, please bring membership card.

Tuesday 19th – Saturday 23rd

Great British Winter Beer Festival at The Halls, Norwich, NR3 1AU. For details: www.winter.gbbf.org.uk



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Pub Merit Awards & Gold Awards

Does your pub have excellent beer, friendly staff, a great atmosphere, community spirit, or have they introduced additional hand pumps? If so, nominate them for an award. Gold Awards are for pubs that make exceptional efforts to improve. The Merit Award is for pubs that continue to maintain high standards. If you know of a deserving pub within the branch area, please complete the form below indicating Gold or Merit and post to the secretary or email nominations to info@real-ale.org.uk.

Pub name:

Pub address/town/village:

Reason for award:

Your name:

Your phone number or e-mail address:

Your membership number:

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