



### Emergency Newsletter

Until Tuesday 6<sup>th</sup> August this was to be my normal rural report. Alas at the committee meeting held that evening, our Chairperson Martha Zantides and Secretary; Tracy Barnes announced their intention to step down at the Tuesday September 10<sup>th</sup> SGM. The Chair's and Secretary's reason given is a hoped-for imminent move to Leeds very soon. This allows the branch then, just one month to find a new Chair' before it all goes south and we have to be absorbed back into the Cambridge Branch. Here is a message from the Chairperson Martha Zantides appealing for a new person for the role;

*"The Chair and Secretary of the Ely and District Branch are standing down at the September 10<sup>th</sup> SGM. For the Branch to survive, we need as a minimum, Chair, Secretary, \*Membership Secretary (person co-opted to be ratified at the SGM), Treasurer (in place).*

*The minutes of the August Branch Meeting which was held Tuesday 6th August will be circulated within the next week.*

*Please contact the Chair via the Ely & Branch District Web Site <https://ely.camra.org.uk> for more details if you are interested in taking on either role.*

*Thanks*

*Martha" \*Taffy's note; Phil Eden is standing as membership officer. We are looking for two positions and not three.*

### My take on it

Martha and Tracey took the position in order to keep the branch going and as long as we have a branch committee, we can have a beer festival but without a committee, CAMRA don't allow a beer festival so no Chairperson – no Beer Festival. It seems there's a LOT of work involved even though the branch often appears to stand still which is because everything goes past the Chair. There are so many trapdoors due to CAMRA requiring things done the right way and it has been the cause of some debate with strongly held views on the one hand and the pedants on the other. It isn't a place for shrinking violets!

The rural coach trip is a branch trip but it is independent within the branch and autonomous being paid for by the people going so it will still go ahead whatever the outcome on Saturday 7<sup>th</sup> December. Everything else though, is in the air.

A new Chairperson is therefore needed. It needs someone thick skinned who can handle people and it pays to ask before telling and also to know when it smells of bull. All this, in a once healthy branch, stems back all the way to arguments about how the Elysian Beer Festival was to be run come February 2023 between the beer festival organiser and members who served both the main committee and the BF sub-committee. The then BFO resigned in September of 2022 and the new guard stepped in and ran the 2023 Elysian BF. This was followed by a re-assertion by the old guard at the AGM two months later in April 2023 and so, things had swung back. There was a large loss (of all the new guard) of members at that 2023 AGM. The old guard though are just that, and haven't stepped forwards to back them up by taking committee tasks. Job done; they have retired back into the ether. Will they come forwards now?

The task over the last 2 years has been to keep the beer festival alive, the paperwork involved in going first one way and then the other was colossal and the 'old' BFO took the position of Chair at the 2023 AGM in order to be certain to take the position of BFO which is handed out one month later at the first CM. Doing both jobs, the year deteriorated with the loss of a lot of good people that had stuck with the old guard and found the 'happy' and 'original' situation not to be happy or original at all. After a very successful beer festival 2024, still severely depleted, we came to the 2024 AGM in April knowing we were now in crisis with few left, the Chair stood down, Martha was found and a month after the AGM the old BFO has taken on the BFO task again.

When things are right, we have a great small beer festival, an ale trail, a rural coach trip, a rural newsletter and find winners for the rural and city pubs of the year as well as recommending pubs to go into the Good Beer Guide. Last year we did a 'how to taste beer correctly' and brewed 'a beer festival beer' at Papworth Brewery. *And now rural news, unedited by above events, your normal service is resumed.*

## Taffy's Rural View

The rude health of the Ely Branch area pubs and anything else I've been doing!

August 2024 edition.

### Welcome!

To the August edition of the rural news, I'm sure after you've read this, you'll agree that it should be called 'rural view' so I've changed the name from this month. Now some of you won't know that we used to have a newsletter until April and still require an editor to continue it. We'd also like an Ely city pub officer if only to report to the committee but ideally to write a little for you the dear reader, and that job is tough I can tell you! Testing beers, talking, laughing and maybe a little writing too. Any volunteers for either just let me know. My e-mail address is at the bottom.

Well, as I finished a cycle of going to all 24 rural pubs and the four Social Clubs that sell real ale, I hoped I could slow down a little but alas we have a dilemma in that the 5 or 6 improved pubs that have shown themselves to be serving excellent beer now refuse to sell a bad one. The mini-coach trip can't visit 13 pubs so, rather cruelly, I (with a little help from Bruce) have been visiting the new kids on the block and it's hard to find fault, of course there's always the last of the barrel but I've seen enough to know this and forget it. We even have the problem of the summer heat and nobody can account for a lack of customers and the beer sitting there getting warm. We'd 'all' like to see four hand-pumps from which to choose but what about the quiet Tuesday when at 8pm in walks a man from CAMRA who says "poor beer"! I hope you agree, it isn't fair. It won't happen.... We'll strike off a bad beer only when, we're sure.

### An Ely Branch Guide to our Rural Pubs

<https://ely.camra.org.uk/dl.php?id=223624> We've now put together a guide of the rural pubs and clubs in our patch. Follow the link above and download it. It's CURRENT and will be updated in the future; as we keep visiting them. We reckon its worth making a nice bike ride or walk out of a few of these and by all means pass it onto your friends.



### Rural Coach Trip - December 7<sup>th</sup> 2024 – the infamy trip.

The Ely branch will be visiting 8 pubs that should represent the very best of the rural scene, visiting rural backwaters of the Ely Branch, last year was sold out early. This will be the second branch rural trip and the prices are frozen at last year's price; £29. It includes a spread in the third/fourth pub; the White Horse, Witcham so you can guess from that that we are going in reverse this time.

Confirmation is payment to Taffy's paypal account 'Taffmeisters' and either PP or cash will be withdrawn to pay Lords Travel and Witcham White Horse for the food. The standards have gone up over the last two years so we're

fairly sure you'll enjoy the quality. Presently we have 5 places booked and 11 places left. It has been agreed that this year, the pubs won't know we're coming and that you, the passenger, won't know either! All we can say is that last year's winner, the Witcham White Horse is hosting us for lunch. There are 4 new pubs involved this year.

Details are;

11.40am meet at Ely Railway Station. Get on the Lords Travel mini-coach.

Trains alight from Cambridge at Ely; 11.25 and 11.36. We leave at 11.45am and get back at around 7.30+pm. Trains departing Ely to Cambridge; 7.18, 7.27, 7.50, 7.53, 8.18.

Price is set at £29. Transport is a Lord's Travel 16-seater mini-coach. All CAMRA and non-member with a CAMRA member welcome. If you'd like to book a few places, email Taffy on [david@taffmeisters.co.uk](mailto:david@taffmeisters.co.uk) please with the names.

### **Scoring the pubs for POTY and the Good Beer Guide**

The trip will be used for CAMRA lay members to score the beers and from the trip maybe 2, 3 or 4 pubs will go forwards to be marked against the 4 pubs not on the trip. So, the first volunteers needed will be those from the trip immediately visiting the other 4 as well and helping to draw up a final short list of around 7 rural pubs. Any CAMRA member wishing to participate and visit the 4 plus 4 is welcome but they must be quick! Details of the 8 will be known on Sunday 8<sup>th</sup> December.

Next, will come proper marking using CAMRA guidelines of the 7-8 rural pubs to create the best 3 in order. They are the three chosen for the Good Beer Guide while at the same time, the winner is our Rural POTY and second is runner-up. Some judges may wish to then judge all those in the best city POTY or just the run-off between the two winners for branch POTY. Again, any CAMRA member can judge the final 7-8 rural but to do overall they must judge both the best city and rural. Judges should work either in pairs or car loads or if solo, should meet up to discuss what they have seen. If we have enough judges (6+) we will use the truncated mean method meaning the top and bottom scores of every pub are wiped off with the other 4 in the middle counting. We have had the occasional 'wild' apprentice scorer you see..... There! I think I covered it.

### **The Bell, Kennett.**

**Someone has finally visited the pub furthest south/east in the Ely branch. Both Bury St. Edmunds and Newmarket are nearer than Ely to Kennett people!**

From Bruce Patten. Friday 12<sup>th</sup> July.

"Enjoying a lovely pint of Wherry here on a busy Friday evening. Only one draught pump now and usually Woodforde's, but condition spot on as you would hope for the beginning of the weekend. Very friendly staff making me feel at home, particularly as I'm on my own propping up the bar!

The pub specialises in monthly tribute (bands) and entertainment acts, often over a bottomless 3 course Sunday Lunch. From the look of the tables at the dining end, my mouth is watering - must bring the other half.

The other side is primarily for the casual drinker. Lovely, spotless dark beamed old inn. The rooms look very attractive to (and they have) 10 ensuite in total according to their booklet. Must visit more often".

### **The Village Inn, Witchford**

A Thursday visit in early July and the Timothy Taylor Landlord (TTL) was excellent. The Sharp's Sea Fury was due on when ready. It looks like it is one pump midweek and two at the weekend. The pub is with Punch Taverns and the choice of beers the pub has is therefore quite limited. Although the Sea Fury has a touch of spice to the flavour, it is a 5.0% beer and as such a couple of those and it's 'home time'. But, what to do about it?

The pub has the early shift building trade which, gives the pub a vibrant atmosphere with plenty of banter. A week later, I get to hear that the TTL and GK Abbot Ale are superb from Bruce. It would appear to at least be a good safe bet now.

### **Three Pickerels, Mepal**

A lovely and unusual walk out from Sutton to this Mepal pub netted a pint of Xtreme BeXt Bitter at 3.9%. The pub loves the rare and obscure. They've come up with some gems in recent months but this bitter doesn't agree with me having a certain taste. Papworth's Mild Thing is the same. But anyway, it was well served and I get the feeling they could push a second pump but don't, not sure why. Recently the pub has had JHB, Woodforde's Wherry, a Mile Tree, and Xtreme Ale's Xanadu. Definitely a good selection.

I also note that although we'd love to see a second ale on, the pub does already have GKs Level Head on tap as well as Beavertown's Neck Oil making three bitter-type beers so we often forget these things. This really is a pretty spot and must be tried. On then to the Witcham White Horse.

### **White Horse, Witcham**

The village pub now has some competition from a nearby caravan and camping site but I believe that will mean extra drinkers created and not 'lost' drinkers from the White Horse; well, I hope so! The beer is as usual, excellent and on tap were Elgood's Cambridge Gold and Goffs' Lancer both 3.9% session beers. The Lancer (as at the Three Pickerels above) had that taste I'm not keen on. Both were perfectly served and it seems that one or other Elgoods Cambridge Best Bitter or Gold are usually on tap with the Parkway Brewery coming back regularly.



*'Gary' has become a regular but was thrown out on Euro Finals night for 'Goosing' the landlady twice! Nice hair...*

Landlady Linda was on form teasing one or two of her customers and the banter at the bar is just so like the old Tharp Arms used to be with everyone getting on. Several things came up in the conversation, the first was that the pub's energy bill is £3,000 per month which I find to be just incredible. How can you make a living like that? The pub excels at selling beer at £4 per pint which is brilliant news for the customer but getting the beer in at the right price is becoming critical. There is a point of course where the only 'cheap' beer is the stuff that the wholesaler can't sell...

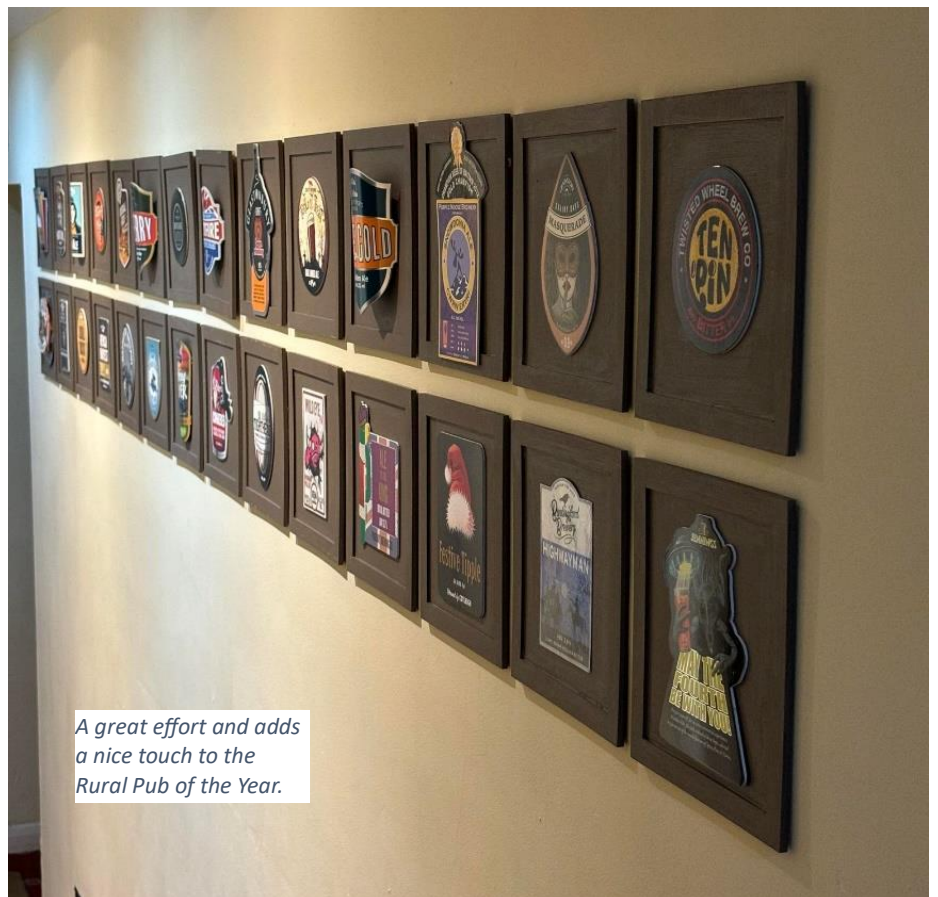
The pub, now Rural POTY winner for two years, is toying with a third pump which they used to have anyway and I really hope they go for it and have the very best of the rare and make it the premium beer pump at £4.50-£5 per pint. I can see some very good business if that is the route they take. That's what a third pump gives the customer; **choice**, and a chance to move away from the usual Golden, Ambers, Lights and Pales (GALPs) and to take on some dark beer.

Another great feature of the pub is that each old pump clip is placed on small square frames and mounted on the walls around the pub and down the corridors. Presently there are over 200 pump clips mounted and Linda assures me that there are another 200 to go!

I'm disappointed that the ale trade hasn't been there for a pub outside Ely to go big on real ale, to become an 'emporium of real ale' but I believe that of all the pubs suited to do it, the Witcham White Horse is the one that could and when all those pump clips are mounted, it's going to be quite the visitor's attraction.

If the beer has one weakness, it is that at best, the beer is at cellar temperature but occasionally, it can be served almost room temperature.

**The Fountain, Soham; down and up!** it's particularly tough to report on this, but my local ale has been bad of late and I've had days and weeks of it. The landlord hasn't been helped by a mischievous young bar staff member who swore the lines were done, proved one night that they clearly hadn't been as I watched the pump



*A great effort and adds a nice touch to the Rural Pub of the Year.*

clips get swapped and 'beer as usual' all in under 2-minutes.

Then the week after she's gone and in time for the Euro Final, the beers straightened up and I'm pleased to report that the beer was excellent again and has been for three weeks. I don't suppose I'm going to be popular here but I'm almost certain to report on the Fountain every month and so every month is a chance for me to mention how amazing it is but it's there to be seen... The beers on are London Pride and TTL.

### Tharp Arms, Chippenham

Two superb pints on the Olympic opening Sunday in St. Austell's Tribute and Lacon's Encore. The cellar temperature has never been known to be higher than 'cool' and there really is nowhere better on a hot day. Bev's daughter Charlotte, tells me that they are putting on extra ale now and going through Sunday with two ales on tap with a nice mix. Recent beers include; GK Abbot, Wadworth 6X, Lacon's Norfolk Gem and I did spot a Three Blind Mice clip too.

### The Ship, Brandon Creek

**Not good. Not good. Superb!**

Those of you that take a drink at The Ship will know that the beer there is very cold which does affect the flavours of the beer. Take the GK IPA; it becomes too cold and takes 'all' the flavour away and then the guest beer on the most recent occasion; Belhaven's Scorcher 3.8% which like most Belhaven beers has had the flavour extracted at the brewery, well, what little chance it had, had gone when the hops, malt and any bitterness are chilled out.

So far, 0 from 2 BUT, take the third beer; Lacon's Encore which, with its passion fruit flavour starts to imitate all those Beavertown (Neck Oil, Gamma Ray) and Camden beers that are served chilled from the keg (draught) and wow! It is beautiful!!! Final score 1-2 then!



Belhaven's Scorcher, Greene King's IPA didn't like being chilled, Lacon's Encore did!

It's a shame but what can you do when the Doom Bar is swapped for a Belhaven? The landlady responded; 'all our customers are happy and don't want anything else'. It is though, still a beautiful setting for a pub and the customers that mostly fraternise are, there for the food. They pay the bills.

### The Plough, Little Downham

Our recent CM (this week) was held there and the beer was more than very good, it was excellent. The Parkway Brewery's Norwegian Blue had just been put on in the last few minutes, usually seen at the White Horse at Witcham the taste was superb. Also, on was the seasonal Woodforde's West Coast Wherry which I've not tasted anything the like of before, it had a citra taste at the front of the mouth and a regular bitter taste at the back and the two were completely separate. "It was meant to be on (ready) last Friday but it took four extra days to clear only being ready today. It's worse than Timothy Taylor Landlord!" said Wutt. The beer temperatures were spot on.

As you may have gathered, the TTL has a bit of a reputation for being difficult in the trade but the Norwegian Blue was worth the wait and for a Tuesday evening, the pub was packed. (Note: in the photo, the Lacon's Encore - arrowed - on draught. See The Ship, Brandon Creek story).



Wutt has now settled in as the Landlord at The Plough, Little Downham. The ale is 'West Coast Wherry'. These Wherry's operated on the East Coast of East Anglia and in the Norfolk Broads. 'West Coast' is bowing to the USA style. Tish! Tish!

## The Chequers, Fordham

Unfortunately, no ale at the pub, at Christmas they may put a Greene King winter ale on but that's about it.

## Festivals

### Soham Beer Festival

12<sup>th</sup> & 13<sup>th</sup> July.

The 24 real ales had a distinct problem at opening on the Friday afternoon. The beer was flat and lifeless but after the spiles were released, later that evening some beers appeared to be a lot better. Elgoods' still supply the cellar service; 'professionally' now leaving the Rotary Club free to choose their beers which they have pledged will be more varied next year.

Perhaps what is needed is someone who knows more about stillage. Just for a year or two mind and then I'm sure they will get the knack of it. Maybe we can encourage them to take on someone for this, it's too important having shelled out for everything else to continually have problems with the beer. Ely CAMRA stands by to help if needed. Promoting real ale is what we're here for.

Numbers were hard-hit with the move to the football club and Soham people are famously unforgiving; especially when they've had something for free. But which way now for the Rotary Club and the festival?

### Sutton Beer Festival

25<sup>th</sup> – 27<sup>th</sup> July.

Held over the last weekend of July it was back again with more glorious weather. I'm beginning to really like this small under-appreciated festival held in the very building they raise money for and you can always see where your money is sadly needed.

These are the village gentry doing their bit, strictly amateur and I love it! Everyone is whispering, the food; cooked and prepared that afternoon, you take your beer out to a gazebo and pull up a chair. It's not so much a beer festival as a 'church service'.

16 real ales were on and also; three Key Kegs which might be a first for me at a 'local' beer festival. Things started well with a Lord Conrad's Burnt Ends 5.0% followed by a Panther Brewery pair; the first was their American Pale Ale which was hazy and average and backed up by Ginger Panther 3.7% which was just like a Stone's Ginger Wine. Now, mixed with a whisky for a Whisky Mac well, then; yes! But as a beer? Well then; no! Each to their own.

Ignoring Three Blind Mice's Key Keg named Coconut Blues I went for their Another Brick in the Walnut which definitely tasted of coconut which was to a taste that's becoming more and more prevalent in stout form; very sweet, flat, dark and tasty which as a 5-year-old's birthday treat; works but, on a beer level... Oh well! Each to their own.

I needed a good one to finish on and Paul Butler reminded me of 8 Sail's John Barleycorn, an old English dark IPA and it was beautiful. And on that note, Franki Four Fingers and I set off back to Witcham Toll, a magnificent sunset and watching the harvest coming in. [See the Cambridge Branch Rural Trip for a surprise return to the festival.](#)

### Cambridge Branch Rural Trip

Surprise late runner was our own Paul Butler who took the last seat and yes, it really was full this time. Leaving the station we were left to guess 'where to?' as it is always an enjoyable surprise and soon, we were parking up at the Sun Inn at Waterbeach where we had Greene King's; The Rev. James 4.5%, also on was a Utopian Brewing/Adnams unfiltered keller lager named Beach Breaker 4.2% (see photo right) and Ferry Ales; Rye PA 4.4%. I had the Rye which was a lovely cloudy beer. The Rev is just too sweet for me so this did the job. The conversation at this point on the trip seemed a little muted but by the next pub we were our usual selves so, where was it?

Back on the bus (parked in front of the White Horse!), we left for the Brewery Tap at the end of the village which only opened again at the beginning of June. A lovely deserted pub deserving of a few customers at 1pm on a Saturday, we found GK's King Mango 4.3%; a passion fruit ale as well as Noble Green Brewery's; The OG; a vegan beer at 4.3%. I sampled both and the Mango was



very similar to Lacon's Encore and the Beavertown beers; Neck Oil and Gamma Ray. The best way to enjoy this flavour I feel is very cold giving Beavertown on keg the edge over the ale versions. The OG was a nice light ale.

Next up after a closed road detour was the White Horse, Oakington. Trevor has been at the helm about 10 years now and the pub was nice and busy. GK's IPA and Oakham's Citra were on, the original citra so, I went for a pint of the Oakhams and a half of the IPA which were both lovely. We grabbed some food and sat in the shade behind the pub, while spotting that Mike as usual was getting 'Gladys Emmanuel' to show a paw for some nicely staged photos with the staff which is a feature of all the Cambridge trips.

Ali Cook called out that the next pub would be 5-minutes away and all thought; 'where can we get to in just 5-minutes?'. The answer was the Blue Barrel Cidery just around the corner! Entering a farmyard, we all bought a bottle each with Paul and I going for the Cuckoo Returns 5.5% which was sweet and warm; 'if only for a fridge' and soon it was 'thanks' and off again with everyone smiling at Ali's 'curved ball'.

Having been thrown one curved ball, we then received another; we were on our way to the Sutton Beer Festival at the Sutton Church which nobody saw coming as it's in the Ely branch area - our manor. We had a lovely drink here with both Paul and I trying TBM's Coconut Blues 5.8% which didn't have 'coconut' and an old fall-back of mine; Whispering Grass by Papworth 3.8% which was excellent. Branch members Fil, Til and Bruce were enjoying the day and in good form! Business looked good and soon we were bidding farewell and off again.

Where next but the Three Kings, Haddenham which was a surprise and completely empty mid-afternoon. So, we found a corner for our drinks with myself drinking the Abbot which was superb.

And now, a third curved ball .... bang!....we arrived at the Admiral Vernon in Over which had only opened for the first time after a major refurb, *the previous evening*. When we rocked up it was heaving with only room to stand and the bar was two-deep. We headed for the garden and enjoyed the party atmosphere of a very young and noisy crowd! The beer of choice was the Hobgoblin Gold 4.2% which was spot on. Other beers may have been available but by now, things were catching up with me!

Our last call was at the huge open barn bar of the Tap & Social in the new village of Northstowe. Here, there was no real ale so I had the weakest keg; a 3.8% which was, I'm sure; cool and OK. Others had the *beer of the day* which was Pressure Drop's; King Queen Knave at 5.2%. If any of you are already humming "it is y-o-u!" by Toots and the Maytals then what with all this tropical fruit flavour; maybe you too get the connection.

On the way back to the station, yet again a first or last beer won beer of the day (see above) and venue of the day was Sutton Church - and why not! Most stopped at the Kingston Arms for a beer where we had the excellent Side Pocket for a Toad 3.6% by Tring and then at The Old Ticket Office, we had Siren's Soundwave 3.8% a nice refreshing bitter to finish. All in all, a good day out with new and different places visited and several new beers tried as well.

## **North-east Norfolk**

### **A short walking trip into the area.**

To be brief I walked Franki around to several pubs on a recent a week-long trip to the north-east Norfolk coast and used my Good Beer Guide and my 'East Anglian book of Pub Architecture' to help. Many of these pubs have been reported on here in the last two years.

**The Hill House Inn, Happisburgh.** A quirky and rustic real ale haven which had just two ales on at the time; Lacon's Encore and Goffs' Cheltenham Gold. Need to get back when busy and more ales on!

**The Star Inn, Lessingham.** Three real ales on; Lacon's Encore, GK IPA and also Green Jack's Trawlerboys 4.6% which is a stunning beer. The landlord leaves the cellar to the previous landlord (with whom I chatted) to keep right.....which he does! Very much a small foodie, the beer garden is the logical place for relief.

**The Vernon Arms, Southrepps.** Best of the trip, very large pub with 4 real ales all local and all 5/5.

**The Kings Arms, Blakeney.** Here because it's in the East Anglian book of Pub Architecture; the beer was good too. Norfolk Nibbler, Lacons Encore and Woodforde's Wherry. Fantastic little pub left 'natural'.

**The Lord Nelson, Burnham Thorpe.** Here again for the architecture, this immaculate huge turned-over pub had all the character gone. Upmarket foodie, huge garden and beer is 100% by Woodforde's. The right place to take a lady!

**The Blue Bell, Stoke Ferry.** Wonderful little pub mid-afternoon Friday, with a great beer garden. The one beer on was an excellent Barsham Brewery's Norfolk Topper. I believe they go to two pumps later on.... can't wait to go back.

**The Ship, Mundesley.** The Woodforde's Nelson's Bitter was poorly kept on two occasions.

Using my East Anglian book of Pub Architecture again, I visited;



**The Cock, Monks Eleigh** (near Lavenham) Described as the perfect country pub in a book; *The Quest for the Perfect pub* by Nick and Charlie Hurt, The Cock is about 5 miles outside Lavenham in Suffolk and stuck in a time warp from 1918. Listed in the CAMRA book; with 3 stars it's well worth the trip. Only the Newton Queens Head gets three stars in the whole of Cambridgeshire so you get some idea how rare this pub is. The pumps are at the back of the bar, there's an old-style off-sales hatch (on the left in the photo), low ceilings and low doorways. Around the walls customers can be seated in settles; a little like church pews while the toilets are in an outside building and on one table top and a bench, shove ha'penny is marked out. They make an amazing

breakfast on Thursday mornings for £8 as well. The three beers in the photo are essentially dark English Ales in Southwold Bitter, GK Abbot Ale and Mighty Oak's Captain Bob at 3.8% with an amazing taste for the ABV.

### Beer Scoring

Maybe you're unaware but CAMRA are encouraging us all to go online and score each and every beer on a dedicated web site named 'Whatbeer'. When we go out drinking, even if you have four GK IPA's and the first is poor then three are excellent, you're encouraged to score the two tastes. If you get a poor drop and the pub offer to change it FOC and no quibble to another beer, you're obliged to NOT score the poor beer.

There's an important reason for not scoring a poor pint replaced. Nearly all good pints are scored at around 3.5-4.0. If dozens of beers in dozens of pubs are scored like that, smashing them with 1.0 for a pint that was replaced means that countless scores can't bring the pub back into close battle. Think about it please?

Of course, if the pint isn't replaced; well, do your duty! I have to admit to falling over backwards to try and accommodate a poor beer. Take the weather right now? Very hot and cellars have the coolers going flat out, the coolers maybe cooling the lager but the cellar temp goes up for the ale! This sends beer off in just a few hours when the barrel is less than half full.

The most interesting argument is the 'bottom of the barrel'. Some drinkers are adamant; "they should know when it's the bottom of the barrel and stop serving from it before it happens?" while others accept that 'someone' has to have that first cloudy beer near the bottom. I'm with the latter but, alas the next bit I'm not with; 'staff arguing with the customer'. When staff don't know what is left in the barrel and then argue with the customer, I can be quite severe when this happens. The landlord should be able to tell his staff where the barrels are (what is left) as they come on shift.

Anyway, it's hoped that eventually, enough scores will be reported that we can make valid assessments for the Good Beer Guide using this system for the GBG and POTY competitions. Currently, it's OK that the popular pubs are 'well scored' but the problem is that the lesser-spotted pubs have so few scores, we all view these things differently; that we can't trust these few scores alone. It's a difficult conundrum. I must admit, I find scoring beers tiresome already after a year. Here's the link; <https://www1.camra.org.uk/pubs>.

### Peterborough Beer Festival

This month sees the **Peterborough Beer Festival** which is probably the best 'huge' beer festival in the East Anglia. With hundreds of real ales, the best beer glass of the year and a live music marquee; what else could you want! It's just a mile from the railway station by foot, there are no queues and no lunchtime closure (not one hour, not two,

just not at all!). It even has a pub games area, printed T-shirts dedicated to drinking ale and lastly, it's always cool in the marquees; even on a hot day.

### Festivals

NC = non-CAMRA. F = Food. M = Music.

**Peterborough CAMRA Beer Festival.** Tuesday 20 – Saturday 24 August 2024. Embankment, Peterborough. <https://pboroberfest.camra.org.uk/> Probably the best big beer festival in East Anglia.

**East Anglian CAMRA Beer & Cider Festival.** M. F. Wednesday 21 – Monday 26 August 2024. St Edmundsbury Cathedral. <https://burystedmundsbeerfestival.com/>

**The Ship Beer Festival, Soham.** NC. M. F. Saturday 24<sup>th</sup> – Sunday 25<sup>th</sup> August. 8 Real Ales including the pub pumps, several live bands each day, local ales usually from Burwell or Moonshine Breweries. 2-3 Ciders. ¾-mile from Soham Station by Red Lion Square. CB7 5HD.

**Prince Albert 8<sup>th</sup> Annual Beer Festival** NC. M. F. Friday 30<sup>th</sup> August – Sunday 1<sup>st</sup> September.

30 Real Ales and Ciders, live music, likely food will again be the pulled pork, pizza, bratwurst, burgers and hot dogs. This is usually a top do and landlord Mike doesn't hold back on the ABV%, if it's a good drop and 9% well, then it's a good drop and 9%! Details not fully released yet.

**Histon Beer Festival.** NC. M. F. Monday 2<sup>nd</sup> – Saturday 7<sup>th</sup> September. 60 Real Ales and ciders at The Red Lion pub in Histon which is a legend in itself. Music all week and all for good causes. 27 High St, Histon, CB24 9JD. <https://histonbeerfestival.co.uk/beer/>

**The Dykes End Beer Festival.** Wednesday 2<sup>nd</sup> – Sunday 6<sup>th</sup> October. NC. F. M. More details to follow but be prepared for the micro beers and some rare gems. Well worth the visit; especially on a nice day on a bicycle. Use the river bank from Ely, on to Padney, 5 Miles from Anywhere in Upware etc. Fair Green, Reach. CB25 0JD.

	'22	'23	'24		'22	'23	'24
<b>Rural Pubs</b>							
The Tharp Arms, Chippenham	1	2	3	The Three Pickerels, Mepal	1	2	1
The George & Dragon, Snailwell	2	2	2	The White Horse, Witcham	2	2	2
The Maids Head, Wicken	2	3	3	The Village Inn, Witchford	1	0	2
The Griffin, Isleham	2	3	3	The Anchor, Little Downham	2	1	2
The Rising Sun, Isleham	2	2	3	The Plough, Little Downham	2	1	2
The Bell, Kennett	1*	1*	1*	The Isle of Ely, Downham Rd	-	-	-
The Carpenters Arms, Soham	1	3	3	The Crown, Littleport	1	1	1
The Cherry Tree, Soham	1	2	2	The Plough & Harrow, L/port	0	1	1
The Ship, Soham	1	1	1	The Swan on the River, L/port	1	0	0
The Fountain, Soham	2	2	2	The Ship, Brandon Creek	3	3	3
The 5 Miles, Upware	4	4	4	The Chequers, Sutton	2	2	2
The Red Lion, Stretham	2	2	2	The Three Kings, Haddenham	3	3	3
					39	43	48
<b>Clubs</b>							
Ex-Servicemen's, L/port	2*	2*	2*	The RBL, Sutton	1*	1*	1*
The RBL, Fordham	1	1	2	Ely EOSA	0	1	1
					4	5	6
<b>City Pubs</b>							
The High Flyer, Ely	1	2	2	The West End, Ely	4	4	4
The Kings Arms, Ely	1	2	2	The Cutter, Ely	3	4	4
The Lamb Hotel, Ely	1*	1*	1*	The Drayman's Son, Ely	5	5	4
The Minster, Ely	5	4	4	The Yard, Ely	0	0	0
The Hereward, Ely	6	6	6	The 3at3, Ely	0	0	0
The Townhouse, Ely	3	3	1	The Prince Albert, Ely	7	7	7
The Fountain, Ely	1	1	1		37	39	36
*Information found out retrospectively.				<i>Overall Pumps in Ely CAMRA Branch</i>	80	87	90

2024 figures are constantly updated. **The Branch Rural Pub guide;** <https://ely.camra.org.uk/dl.php?id=223624>  
Disclaimer; The views expressed here are mine and not necessarily those of either CAMRA; Branch or body.  
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