



SGM News

Tuesday 10th September at the West End House, Ely

At the August branch CM, our Chairperson Martha Zantides and Secretary Tracey Barnes had announced their desire to stand down with just a month's notice. The branch was due to hold a specially convened SGM anyway, being called to induct Phil Eden as Membership Secretary (one of 4 key positions the branch must fill) so we now had plenty of reason for it. We were though, now, in crisis. Was this position necessary though, did it have to be like this?

The intervening month had seen the few members that care for these things trying to cobble some ideas together but nothing 'worked'. It looked like the branch would be absorbed in some form back to the Cambridge branch from whence we came.

A large group of some 18 attended including Regional Director Andrea Briers and Deputy Director Chris Rouse from EA-HQ to oversee the etiquette plus Helge Nereid from the Cambridge

Branch. Initially, and carefully it was put forwards by Martha and Andrea that there was a 'Cambridge Offer' from their branch to support us through to April's AGM being that Will Smith and Ali Cook would stand for Chair and Secretary. Unfortunately, neither could make the meeting.

Before this could be voted on, an offer came from Lloyd Vella that Dana Vella would like to be Chair but with the caveat that TG could not be the BFO – to be forced out – and so Andrea and Chris were very careful how this was handled and Chris suggested an 'indicative vote' to see if Dana (she hadn't been seconded) had future support, there were just two hands up for that and so, with that, Lloyd left the meeting.

The meeting then voted through the Cambridge Offer and also added Phil Eden as Membership Secretary. Suddenly, Ely Branch was and is **back still in the game!**

Conclusion; So, the branch appears to have removed a source of conflict, can see a way to April 2025's AGM and just needs to get the books signed off for the 2025 EBF to go ahead. It now has to recruit more people, to heal itself and find a Chairman and Secretary in 7-months. A big question for myself would be; are we going to continue this 'mend and make do' or are we going to finally deal with branch business because all we have done for two years is deal with other things? If you don't though, then do PLEASE remember that this is the unfortunate side of democracy in action. But as Henning Wenn would maybe say; "vot a pallava!!!". Anyway, let's move on....

Tragedy at Ely pub

Nothing, "I suppose", must be greater than the headline news of the branch but this story surely should trump it; A pub in Ely had pets that had not been fed or watered and died. Two parakeets, two other birds and 2 of 5 rabbits are said to have passed away through starvation while 5 dogs were rescued. I'm sure, like me you are very angry at this.

The landlords involved have split up with one leaving early and the other was due to leave at the beginning of September. I'm only an amateur and they don't pay me enough to say any more. Sorry. My information is though from a party that saw all this first hand.

Coming Up

**Our Branch Rural Coach Trip - December 7th 2024 – The ‘Infamy’ Trip.
Route Sorted. It’s a Mystery Tour. Numbers sit at; 14. 2 spaces left.**



Our new Chairman pondering what he’s taken on perchance? Will Smith leaving the mini-coach (the dog is Gladys Emmanuel) on the most recent Cambridge area rural pubs trip.

The route for the trip is now sorted but will remain a secret only known to myself even on the day. The mini-coach that takes 16 passengers around the 8 pubs being visited will go in an anti-clockwise direction this year with The Witcham, White Horse being the 3rd or 4th stop for a great lunch spread that you’ll be ready for. If we have any vegans, please let me know and I can address this.

The 8 pubs that Ely branch will be visiting should represent the very best of the rural scene – except that we’re having to leave 4 off! We can also say that of the 8 we’re visiting, 4 are new

this year. Visiting the rural backwaters of the Ely Branch last year was sold out early. This will be our second branch rural trip and the prices are frozen at last year’s price; **£29**.

Presently we have 14 places booked with 12-weeks to go. We will consider the 22-seater if more are interested.

The 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 mini-coach.

All CAMRA members and with a non-member welcome.

If you’d like to book a place, email Taffy on david@taffmeisters.co.uk please with the names.

Trip to Stowmarket



If you took the train and wanted to alight at pubs recommended in the Good Beer Guide, where would you go locally? Which town has GBG quality pubs near enough to the station? Well, Stowmarket is just 4 stations from Ely and is worth considering. The rail ticket is £17 return to Ely but with my senior concession I got that down to just £11.

Arriving on the last train carriage I was near the station exit dropping straight onto the street for the first pub just 100 metres up a slight incline named the Little Wellington where the landlady had three real ales on being; Bishop Nick’s; 1555, Drinkstone Ales of Suffolk; Uncle Percy’s Solar Powered Pale Ale and Mighty Oak’s; Jake the Snake. The pub was full with mostly men watching the

Community Shield match on any the many TV screens but this isn’t a Stonegate type pub and the banter was good so I got greedy and tried all three before I left and all were excellent while the Drinkstone’s UPSPPA was excellent! Asking the landlady why the name ‘Little Wellington’? she explained that there used to be a very large pub opposite – pulled down now - named the Duke of Wellington and so that was how we got our name’.

There's a huge meat draw every Sunday plus another one for money; 'we have 8 little wellington boots with money in the bottom of them and one of them has the £500 jackpot! Sunday, as you can imagine is our busiest day'.

After my great start I reversed and went down and across the railway line, went past The Pickerel Inn a very well-known music venue that has plenty of tribute bands on every weekend and always for free and onwards then to a right turn into Union Street and around the curve to the Royal William one of two CAMRA listed pubs in the Good Beer Guide (GBG) for the Town.

Imagine my disappointment when I saw no real ale at all; "I'm sorry but I thought I was going to find real ale here?", "You have! we've got it through that door! We have 8 real ales straight-from-the-barrel". I looked and could see 7 of 8 firkins tapped and a couple of pins above them... she was right too! So, off I went trying 6 of them. Chatting away with customers, I eventually realised the knowledgeable man I was trading ale tales with and sat with his customers incognito was the owner! He was right, mild doesn't have to be weak and there's plenty that haven't been too.



Note the barrels through the left door (bottom left) easily missed.

"Normally, we try and have 2+2+2+2 light to dark beers on but I'm a little out of synch today" he confessed. Onwards then, I'm glad I went back to the Union St corner before heading up to what was to be the second GBG pub – the Walnut – because I bumped into a pub on the corner to The Walnut by the name of The Stag Tavern, the other



Cropped photo of the 8 ale slates to be found at the Royal William

way and I'd have missed it. Here, eventually Franki Four Fingers and I got in and past a huge Great Dane barely more than a puppy at about 4' 1" and Franki was drowning in slobbery drool. There were three GK real ales on; False 9, IPA and Ruddles Best Bitter and I opted for the Ruddles which was well kept. This was essentially a sports bar and the conversation was as earthy as the people. Franki though, was keen to go, he thought he might be Mr Dane's next meal.

On then to that second GBG pub; The Walnut Tree. There were hundreds of pump clips up as well as a blackboard of the real ales, the GBG says '6' but I only counted 3 plus the 1 in the lounge as well. I had halves of Tindall Ales 3.7% Best Bitter and Summer Loving 4.0% a token Golden Ale but I found it to have a touch of biscuit (chestnut) and it was my beer of the day. Before I left, I wanted to try a local beer brewed just one mile away at Burnt Mill Brewery. They brew just for canning or keg but the landlord said he'd had the occasional cask from them for a beer festival. At the moment the brewery isn't recognised in the GBG though. They had the Burnt Mill Fog 6.0% on draught and it was very refreshing! Just as I got near the end of my beer, the barman said in passing; 'you know that the owner has sold the pub to Stonegate and they have already said that all this is going? We leave at the end of August'. What a shame! The end of a GBG pub for sure methinks.

Next on the list was to drop to the High Street, turn right, go past the Royal Oak and slightly up hill again to the Willow Tree, a JD Wetherspoons where I would drink and eat outside. Alas, having paid for the food and drink, the manager came up and said 'is that your dog outside sir? No dogs anywhere on the property, sorry'. So, it was full refund and off I went again. My fault, I had thought that my dog might be OK outside and none of the other customers knew the rules either.

All the pubs to here had been close to one another but the next pub was a good ¾ mile away in Combs Ford but felt like it was Stowmarket still. This pub, The Gladstone Arms is in the GBG book as under Combs Ford. There must have been 1,000 pump clips all around the walls, incredible.....The pub was quiet but it was only 5pm and there were four ales on – say 3 - as the Nethergate Fox stopped as it was being poured so I settled on Wild Card Brewery's ESB a 5.5% and a Wadworth 6X at 4.3%. Having had my drink and marvelled at all the pump clips, I should next have checked out The Magpie directly opposite but anyhow, I'd say that it was still worth the trip out to the Gladstone alone.



Maybe 1,000 pump clips and beer mats adorn the Gladstone Arms. The beer is excellent too!

Instead, I tramped back past the Willow Tree and on down to the station for one last beer just 100m from the platform and for this I went for The Pickerel Inn. It was either of the Sharp's; the Atlantic Pale Ale or the Doom Bar so I took the Atlantic before catching my train comfortably in time and stress free.

Of Stowmarket then; if you did nothing else and just visited the Little Wellington and the Royal William, the trip is worth it and you can have halves of 10-12 real ales just with these two. I'm not sure why the Little Wellington isn't in the GBG but only so many can get in I suppose. On this trip I missed the Royal Oak, Willow Tree (JD Wetherspoons and 8 real ales), Queens Head and the Magpie and so I'm pledged to go back again and take in these four sometime soon.

No change at The Lazy Otter

A little dickie bird tells me that the obstinate lack of effort at the pub is all due to the owner's wish NOT to open the pub again but to just sit on it. Apparently, there's a long-game to be played out. Very sad.

Tenancy available at The Chequers, Sutton

Preparing the way for February 2025, landlady Miaja is to leave the Admiral Taverns pub. New costs are; a rent of £25K PA, £9,750 tenancy, no rates and most unfortunately a 100% tie-in on the alcohol supply. This is one of the best, but most under-appreciated pubs in the area and Miaja's always kept the beer well.

Prince Albert Beer Festival

Landlord Mike had 19 excellent real ales and 4 key kegs on over the weekend of 30th August – 1st September. The beers were rare enough (see the list below) and I gave all 12 ales I drank on the Friday a score of 7/8+ from 10 with my stand-out beer being Steam-shed Brewing's Hobnail (from Norfolk) at 4.1% it was a copper English bitter which got a 9. Mile Tree supplied a lively Fenland Pilsner 4.0% which was really with the old bubbles fizzing away on a cask just like a lager and the first, it seems, to sell out on Saturday afternoon! How did they do that? I've no idea but; 'book it Danno'.

You could drink a black mild, two black stouts, a black porter and other than the above-named Hobnail the beers were mainly light straw-coloured summer beers and looking around I gathered that a few were looking for a good old EPA or some-such. Ironic then that back in the bar were bitters like IPA, Abbott, Black Sheep and also Old Brown Mouse.

People play at things but Mike deserves his success because he does things so thoroughly well. Even the beer list is top notch being printed on a glossed sheet with lots of space allowing dotty old gits like me to see the beers without having to wear glasses. It's as though he was thinking of just me!

Casks

- 1. Beartown Crème Bearlee** 4.8%
(Cheshire)
A luscious dark and sweet stout. mild? 8
- 2. Disruption is Brewing Chaos More Chaos** 5.6%
(Surrey) cloudy 7
Super smooth NEPA unleashing intense tropical, mango and blueberry aromas. Exotic fruit punch bowl flavours with every sip.
- 3. Disruption is Brewing Shadow of Darkness Cherry Coconut Stout** 5.0%
(Surrey)
Toasted coconut and puréed cherries are added to Disruption's award winning dark coffee and bitter chocolate stout to give a luscious mouthfeel with a delightful flavour.
- 4. Jacaranda Big Sur** 4.6%
(Nottinghamshire)
A firm bitterness balanced with malty sweetness and citrus and pine.
- 5. Left Handed Giant Dark Mild** 3.4%
(Bristol) 8
This traditional Dark Mild is mellow and easy to drink, with characterful dark malt flavours present in the finish.
- 6. Liquid Light Brewing Wizard of Finance** 4.2%
(Nottinghamshire)
An amber best bitter brewed with a combination of East Kent Goldings and Northdown hops and fermented with a British ale strain.
- 7. Little Monster Brewing Co Favourite for a Long Time** 4.3%
(West Sussex)
This collaboration with Brighton's Lost Pier is a fruit forward juicy and hazy

pale ale. Brewed with US Vista and New Zealand Nectar hops. Extremely refreshing.

- 8. Magpie Brewery Salute** 3.6%
(Nottinghamshire)
Super sessionable dry hopped American pale. Citra and Idaho 7 hops pair for notes of citrus & stone fruit.
- 9. Mile Tree Fenland Pilsner** 4.0%
(Cambridgeshire) Not by type but 8.0%
A fantastic crisp pilsner from Richard at Mile Tree. Very refreshing and easy to drink.
- 10. Papworth Fen Skater** 4.0% 8.5
(Cambridgeshire)
Brewed with Pilsen malt and a soft water, the combination of Nelson Sauvin and Mosaic hops provide fresh fruity flavours and a crisp finish.
- 11. Papworth Half Nelson** 4.3% 8.5
(Cambridgeshire)
Malty notes are balanced with New Zealand hops to provide a delightfully fresh and zesty finish.
- 12. Salopian Flying Saucer** 4.1%
(Shropshire)
Lychee aroma spins into flavours of mango and passion fruit and finishes with an unidentifiable bitterness.
- 13. Steam-shed Brewing Hobnail** 4.1% 9
(Norfolk)
Copper coloured English bitter with fruity caramel flavours coming from the combination of Crystal malts with English and European hops. Bittersweet finish.
- 14. Steam-shed Brewing Light Load** 4.2%
(Norfolk)
A session IPA with a greater level of malt character than the average modern IPA.

Sweet toffee malt to compliment the usual bitter hoppy and aromatic finish from Simcoe, Amarillo, Mosaic and Victoria Secret.

- 15. Thornbridge Jaipur** 5.9% hopped but good 8
(Derbyshire)
American style IPA brewed with US hops giving grapefruit, lemon and tropical fruit flavours with an enticing bitterness.
- 16. Three Acre Brewery Azacca Haze** 3.4%
(East Sussex)
A silky-smooth milkshake pale, with an burst of tropical and citrus flavours from Azacca hops. 8 nice
- 17. Three Brothers Trilogy** 3.9%
(County Durham)
A thirst quenching citrus blonde showcasing Simcoe, Azacca and Citra hops, to give a beautiful lemon and orange Aroma, a moreish hoppy flavour and a light bitter finish. 6-9
- 18. Titanic Plum Porter** 4.9%
(Staffordshire) Black
A classic, well-rounded porter with fruity, sweet notes over a hoppy flavour.
- 19. Triple Point Brewing Sommar** 3.8%
(Yorkshire)
Easy-drinking pale ale. Expect floral notes

Key Kegs

- 20. Disruption is brewing talk to your alchemist Key Lime Pie** 6.3%
(Surrey)
A sour that is packed full of lime with a touch of vanilla to create a perfect summer tippie.
- 21. Three Blind Mice Confessor (Brandy)** 10.0%
(Cambridgeshire)
Imperial ale with flavours of dark fruit and raisins. Aged in brandy barrels providing an incredible thick smooth mouth feel.
- 22. Three Blind Mice Double Tree** 4.5%
(Cambridgeshire)
Two hopped (Motueka and Ekuanot) New England pale. This hop combo delivers a flavour profile packed with lime, lemon and tropical fruit.
- 23. Vault City Brewery P.O.G Punch** 8% 6
(Portobello, Edinburgh)
Tropical medley sour combining passionfruit, orange and juicy guava. The ultimate tropical sour.

Ciders

1. Seacider Hardcore (Dry) 7.3%	6. Spinney Abbey Monk and Disorderly (Medium) 6.1%
2. Seacider White Peach (Fruit) 4.0%	7. Spinney Abbey Virgin on the Ridiculous (Med/Dry) 6.1%
3. Pulp Cider Mango and Lime (Fruit) 4.0%	8. Cromwell Cavalier Perry (Medium) 6.5%
4. Pulp Cider Rhubarb and Strawberry (Fruit) 3.4%	9. Newton Court Panting Partridge (Medium) 5.8%
5. Snails Bank Pig Squeal (Med/Dry) 7.0%	



Notes from the Prince Albert BF. '9-6' means I know it's a lovely drop served well (9) but not for me (6). My scores reflect if I'd have them again

The Five Miles from Anywhere

On the hottest day of the summer at a sweltering 34.8 degrees in Cambridge, I visited a pub known for its struggling cellar in the past – well when else do you want me to go? When it's easy!

For years, I've been drinking at the pub that has two names - I use 'The No Hurry' – and the beer has been warm at times, recently I'd reported a much-wanted drop in the beer temperature but, was this a permanent change?

Well yes, it seems it has been. A word with a young member of staff revealed two things; "We've had the air conditioning in the cellar repaired after letting it slide for several years and at the same time, we've gone to Greene King for ALL our beers. It's much simpler having one dray turn up a week. Today we've sent a barrel back that wasn't right otherwise we'd have had the IPA to go with the Old Speckled Hen. Recently we've had False 9, Yardbird, Abbot and Old Golden Hen on".

This new low temperature has made all the difference. Gone then are the Mauldon's, Butcombe and the St. Austell beers of the recent past. We know that GK can supply many beers other than their own branded ale and only hope that Dave and the team try and vary it up a little.

With that cellar temp drop you get the feeling the quality of the serve will go up and be almost assured. The pub has been for sale in recent times at £1.6M but is now a bargain basement £1.3M yet still no takers and that's been the situation since Covid-19. I'd imagine the whole thing is past the 'fun' stage now and the time is grinding out.

The Crown, Fordham

The pub is still a mystery. I can't find any information on it.



Wainwright's Worth the Walk, Nethergate's Stour Valley, Woodforde's Wherry at The Griffin

The Griffin, Isleham

A recent visit netted three excellent beers in Nethergate's Stour Valley, the 'house' permanent ale; Woodforde's Wherry and Wainwright's Worth the Walk which in this case, my walk from Soham to Isleham; was!

This is my 5th trip or so to the pub this year and nearly always on a Sunday lunchtime for a proper good drop. With a cool breeze running through the pub, it is quite the place on a warm day.

The Red Lion, Swaffham Prior

Just into Cambridge's branch patch, I have long encompassed both the Red Lion and the Dyke's End, Reach (1.5 miles away) in my regular beat. But I believe that John and Lana have taken the pub up a gear this summer. Let's be mindful that if you go back three years, it was strictly a foodie, that the pub was closed for 6 months, then after a Romanian tried his hand and then it closed for a further 10-months and so Prior was dry. So all in all, pretty b.....d then!

But our hosts character just shines through and John has that lovely light touch that the Irish (North or Sout' o' the border) seem to possess in buckets when they deal witchya. But imagine Bateman's surprise as well with the wonderful little pub doing so well and what the couple have turned it into! Exposed as the brewery's southern-most tenanted pub John tells me the Bateman family 'gave it 3-months' suspecting just about any of the four wheels were likely to come off or indeed all four and all at the same time! The Bateman's family and staff have popped in to mark their cards and indeed sister and brother Bateman bumped into each other there by surprise last week. How well did they score; let's just say it got a "Nadia Comaneci"!!!!

So, on top of this, if I tell you that Cambridge CAMRA have voted it their Most Improved Rural Pub of 2024 you'll not be surprised. Anyway, on this trip I prayed they would have their Bateman's 'MM best mild' only to find it's called Dark M which, I was assured was the tipple I had last time so I'm obviously losing it! I recall that last time it had peppery notes and they weren't there this time but it was lovely.

Other beers on were TTL and Oakham's JHB. I'd just missed a fourth; The Bateman's Two Churches. My timing was even further out because two days before a barrel of Dark M was sold out at £1.50 per pint in 4 hours! It was a Bateman's gift; 150p for 150 years - which obviously didn't work did it!

This is said to be so popular that it is now permanently in the pub (my visit was at the end of the August BH) and not only that, another 10 pubs get to sell the Two Churches ale which I trust is how many pubs a brew will spread too. For those that don't know, the likely squire in Swaffham Prior back in the day had two daughters and decided that they should both have a 'modest' Church each as part of their dowry....and facing each other....and next to The Red Lion!



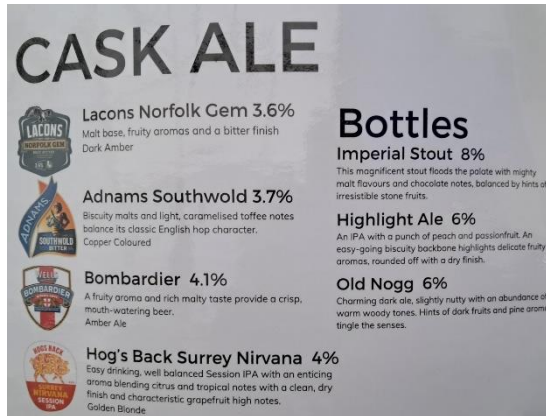
Rumours are of a name change to 'The Murdered Salesman'!

The best way to Prior from Ely is to take your time and have a look at the fens around the No Hurry Inn and just keep going over the sluice for another 3 miles, the Red Lion is in front of you in the village. Take a sick bag (the road is very rough) and visit here and the Dyke's End, Reach as well. The Bateman's are surely pinching themselves. Footnote; just 13 days later I got back to the pub and got to try their Two Churches bitter. It's an English dark IPA and was excellent. I also spotted the above poster for their forthcoming beer festival.

Maids Head, Wicken

The pub is now closed on a Monday and Tuesday Lunchtime opening at 5pm instead, it is otherwise open all-day Wednesday to Sunday and was very busy on a recent summer's day trip. The three real ales on were Doombar, also Bristol Beer Factory's Independence a 4.6% U.S style hopped citra which was really nice and their baseline Everytime at 3.8% which tasted just like a watered-down Independence. You can get away with this as long as the two beers aren't on side-by-side not only that but it was showing distinct signs of line problems. I reckon the pub may have made the owner a few bob this summer but the village pub faces a tough winter as the customers are mainly lightweights and tourists. If I should be so lucky, a team of us will be playing Bar Billiards out of the pub come October and we can check every drop.

The Ship, Soham – Beer Festival



CASK ALE

Lacons Norfolk Gem 3.6%
Malt base, fruity aromas and a bitter finish
Dark Amber

Adnams Southwold 3.7%
Biscuity malts and light, caramelised toffee notes balance its classic English hop character.
Copper Coloured

Bombardier 4.1%
A fruity aroma and rich malty taste provide a crisp, mouth-watering beer.
Amber Ale

Hog's Back Surrey Nirvana 4%
Easy drinking, well balanced Session IPA with an enticing aroma blending citrus and tropical notes with a clean, dry finish and characteristic grapefruit high notes.
Golden Blonde

Bottles

Imperial Stout 8%
This magnificent stout floods the palate with mighty malt flavours and chocolate notes, balanced by hints of irresistible stone fruits.

Highlight Ale 6%
An IPA with a punch of peach and passionfruit. An easy-going biscuity backbone highlights delicate fruity aromas, rounded off with a dry finish.

Old Nogg 6%
Charming dark ale, slightly nutty with an abundance of warm woody tones. Hints of dark fruits and pine aroma tingle the senses.

Held over the 24-25th August weekend this was I'd guess landlady Molly's 8th beer festival and I'm sure they have had 8 beers in the past. Limited by owners Greene King to just 4 real ales at a beer festival making sure that it isn't (much of) a beer festival, the pub chose Lacons' Falcon Ale, Southwold's Bitter, (Charles) Wells' Bombardier and Hog's Back's Surrey Nirvana. I had a favourite in the Falcon Ale which is a



really nice pale ale and the Surrey Nirvana knowing the other two well but I saw (right) these bottles from Lacons and thought I'd try them all (see photo). All were nice but the Nogg was old school and very nice.

I don't envy Molly and the team at The Ship; I'd imagine she's fed up with it all. Have a look at the Prince Albert's beer list (above) and then you see the Ship's and you realise how it's one rule for one and one rule for another. I was also told of the large difference in the cost of barrels which are bought by untied pubs and clubs for much less.

Dyke's End, Reach



Popping over last Sunday (was it REALLY the end of the summer?) I had a real favourite in Colchester's Copper coloured Number1 and it **was my beer-of-the-year**. Absolutely superb! Next up was Mighty Oak's Maldon Gold which was also perfect. I have to say Mighty Oak's Jake the Snake and especially Captain Bob being a little darker are even nicer! Fact is though, yet again, Dan is bringing in the beers from the right brewers. Note how the Prior Warning cider from Spinney Abbey is on a hand pump on the end! You don't see that every day!

In the background are the pump clips for beers coming (on the left) and those just finished (on the right). The just missed; looks like a Buntingford's; Hurricane, Green Jack's Lurcher which is always in and out and a very good favourite. Also, Colchester's Metropolis and Papworth's pair of Fenskat and Crystal Ship. Due on this week are; Buntingford's Oatmeal Stout and Adnams' Distant Fields. The Woodforde's Wherry is permanent.

Seen at the Histon Beer Festival

A first visit to the recent Histon Beer Festival now in its 24th year, netted some excellent beers and a couple of duds, one just simply tasted all wrong and was removed with the comment; 'nobody has liked it, it's coming off' which is how it should be. The other which shall remain nameless was flat and dead but I'm pleased to say that the other 6-7 beers I tried had excellent condition, I was very impressed! Day 5 and with barrels half full, you'd expect the beer to be part of a 'snuff movie' (DEAD!) but no, it was frothing over the rim!

A look at their cooling system tells you this is as cheap and efficient as you're going to get. First of all, cooling the liquor DIRECTLY is more efficient than anything on a barrel or wrapped around it. Secondly, this is just cold water circulating; it isn't ice! There is no mess, no dripping, there wasn't a drop on the grass below the barrels. Just one cooler was looking after 60 real ales. So, are you impressed too?

Again, the programme was made for me (see the Albert above), no glasses required and if I may say so, so good that it was almost; OTT. It was a 7-day festival with 60+ real ales.



Rottenest thing I have heard

No names but one of the local BF organisers when asked about a CAMRA poster being put up reckoned that his village beer festival "did more for real ale than CAMRA". That's funny!

If it had not been for CAMRA driving through a request for a 'guest beer' in the 1989 'Beer Orders' act of Parliament, we wouldn't have the micro brewing industry we have today. CAMRA pushed it further than even the Mergers and Monopolies Commission tasked with the job of acting on behalf of the government wanted – and got it. The guest beer that the MMC were looking at (at CAMRA's request) stopped at the MMC's first recommendation of 'a guest draught beer' - with the obvious inference being that Guinness could now get to all pubs – they were then, in no way tied in but felt vulnerable to 4 of the 'Big 6' corporations locking them out. So, Guinness would thus be everyone's obvious 'guest beer'. CAMRA trusting rightly that Guinness was so big that it was going to be stocked by 'the big 6' and that everyone needed Guinness, fought instead specifically for it to be 'a guest Cask Ale' and while the MMC put it down as only a recommendation, the Government bought into this idea and that's quite something if you think about it. Lord Young, in the Government trusted a voluntary consumer group that had no stake but just an honest voice that made sense – and backed it. Governments like to throw us a bone now and again but we'll overlook that!

The 'big 6' as they were, controlled over 50% of the UK's 50,000 plus pubs and clubs at the time and so 25,000+ pubs had to stock a guest cask ale **by law**. On top of this, CAMRA and the Consumer Association requested a tax break for small breweries producing under a certain annual barrelage. They got that too. The Beer Orders act was rescinded some 7 years later when it was realised things hadn't worked out. However, all agreed that one good thing had come out of it; Guest cask ale had been in the majority of the larger pubs and so, the genie was now out of the lamp!

Now that on its own makes CAMRA worth it wouldn't you say?

That wasn't the start of microbrewing, it had been going on for years but, in these circumstances HUNDREDS of Microbreweries started. We really do have CAMRA, the Consumer Association and even yes; the government to thank for the massive launch of microbrewing in this country. I rest my case m'lord.

The Cock, Monks Eliegh Beer Festival. Held in early August, I had to visit this lovely little pub again which, I only mentioned last month as serving not just lovely dark beers but for being a pub of historic significance. The 12 ales on top were worth the trip and the ambience at this old pub was lovely. Try and get out to Lavenham sometime.

No more Jolly Good Beer then!

Cambridge Branch have forewarned us that Jolly Good Beer; the wholesale suppliers to the pub and beer festival

trade have packed up trading. If you recall I noted that this year's Wicken Beer Festival was supplied by them and I made it the best - beer wise - BF I've ever been to. They also supplied half the beer to our 2023 Elysian BF – the rebel year – and what an excellent beer year that was too! What a shame....

Festivals and Events

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

Red Lion, Swaffham Prior Beer & Cider Festival. Friday 27th – Sunday 29th September. NC. M. F.
see the poster above but John has already had one great BF this year and really picks great beers AND he keeps them in a walk-in freezer! Jazz, pulled pork and the charm of your Irish host will top it off!

The Dykes End Beer Festival. Wednesday 2nd – Sunday 6th October. NC. F. M.
More details to follow but be prepared for lots of rare micro beer gems. Well worth the visit; especially on a nice day on a bicycle. Use the river bank from Ely, on to Padney, pass the Five Miles from Anywhere, Upware or if able to ride a cross-country bike, just follow the lode from Upware directly into the back of reach but you will be saddle sore!
Fair Green, Reach. CB25 0JD.

The date of our **Elysian Beer Festival** has yet to be confirmed.

Cambridge Branch Mini-coach Tour of Rural Pubs on Saturday 19th October at 12:00–19:30 (Cambridge Branch)
This is a tremendous way to try lots of different rural pubs – and fast! Drink just a half, a pint or if over-ambitious 2 pints at each pub at your peril. Usually, a couple of halves is sufficient at each drop. Roughly 7-8 pubs are visited and kept as a secret – even during the trip! Visit Cambridge CAMRA web page for details.

I put this together last month.

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 to download it. It's CURRENT and will be updated in the future; as we keep revisiting them. We reckon its worth making a nice bike ride or walk out of a few of these. By all means pass onto your friends.

Disclaimer; The views expressed here are mine and not necessarily those of either CAMRA; branch or body.
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