

Ely & District Branch News - August 2025

Welcome to this update of what's happening in Ely & District Branch CAMRA

New Ely Branch Committee... seeking more members!

Please welcome the 2025-2026 Ely Branch Committee who were elected at the Open Branch Meeting last month:

Chair - Phil Eden

Vice Chair - Steven Spencer

Treasurer - Fil Utting-Brown

Secretary - Megan Sutton

Town Pubs Officer - Terry Carter

Beer Festival Organiser - Will Smith

Pub Data Coordinator - Paul Butler

We are still seeking committee members - please reach out to contact@ely.camra.org.uk to learn more about volunteer opportunities with CAMRA! Open roles include Pub Protection Officer, Rural Pubs Officer, Socials Secretary, Cider Representative, and Public Affairs.

Upcoming Dates for Ely & District CAMRA

We will host an August social on Friday 29 August at 1200 - join us in the beer garden and enjoy the first hours of Prince Albert's Summer Beer Festival!

The next Ely & District Branch meeting will take place on 2 September at 1900 at The Cutter Inn

New Publicans Network for Ely & Rural Pubs

CAMRA members attended the first-ever meeting of a "Publicans Network" organised by Ely and East Cambridgeshire MP Charlotte Cane at the Three Kings in Haddenham. Pub owners from Ely, Reach, and Waterbeach shared views on a variety of opportunities and challenges facing the pub industry in our area.

Publicans discussed rising costs for ingredients and the inability to hire kitchen staff due to lack of interest and immigration challenges. Pubs have a very low profit margin on beer, with some distributors raising prices yearly; most of the profit for pubs comes from food and special events. Rural pubs face all of these same obstacles but more acutely as they lack reliable foot traffic and sufficient public transportation services. Also part of the discussion was the positive impact of VAT relief on pubs during Covid - many owners struggle to adequately reinvest in their business due to high VAT and business rates on insurance, permitting, etc. France's VAT reduction programs for pubs and restaurants have shown positive impact for all parties. The overarching theme of the meeting was that pubs serve as important community centers in East Cambridgeshire and the government should take more action to support the vital role that pubs play in combating loneliness, feeding rural populations, and serving as a gathering place.

It was great to see caring Publicans have the opportunity to have facetime with our local MP - everyone left the meeting feeling energized about being heard and excited about opportunities to share wisdom at future Publican Network meetings.

As CAMRA members, we can continue our important work of promoting pubs and real ale by visiting pubs often, eating out at pubs, sharing their posts on social media, and supporting local breweries that supply these pubs.

Beer Festivals locally and beyond

Summer is prime time for beer and cider festivals whether they be run by pubs & clubs, town and village committees or CAMRA volunteers. Here's some upcoming festivals!

Tuesday 19 August - Saturday 23 August - CAMRA Peterborough Beer Festival - Peterborough

Wednesday 20 August - Monday 25 August - East Anglian Beer & Cider Festival - Bury St Edmunds

Friday 29 August - Saturday 31 August - Prince Albert Beer Festival - Ely

Thursday 18 September - Sunday 21 September - Dyke's End Beer Festival - Reach

Please email us about real ale events that aren't listed here yet!

Adopt a Pub Program

Turn your visits to your favourite pubs into action for Ely CAMRA - adopt a pub on behalf of CAMRA! With Ely's large number of city and rural pubs its hard for our small committee to keep track of and support all of the pubs in our district. That's where you come in! By adopting a pub,

you can make sure CAMRA stays apprised of news and events for your pub and you can make sure the pub knows all of the ways that CAMRA can support them. Pubs with great community engagement and high standards for real ale should be recognized - with your help we can make sure all great pubs are supported! Contact Megan at Secretary@ely.camra.org.uk if you are interested in adopting a pub.

Beer Scoring

Many thanks to all CAMRA members who have been scoring their beers recently. It helps us to monitor pubs so please score the beers you drink whether they be good, mediocre or poor. Beer scoring is easy to do via the pub's CAMRA website entry. If you have a smart phone you can score while you drink. If not, you can do it from home later. Your beer scores help us to discover which pubs are serving the best beer and also helps in selecting candidates for the Good Beer Guide. CAMRA's website can also be used to give us feedback on pubs. If you spot that the pub description is inaccurate or the opening hours are wrong, click on "Suggest an edit" and let us know.