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We are a local branch of the Campaign for Real Ale (CAMRA) representing the Northamptonshire area. In addition to supporting CAMRA initiatives, we also hold meetings, arrange outings (e.g. breweries) and have social events.

Northamptonshire has its fair share of pubs — many of which serve Real Ale — from quiet village inns and friendly street-corner locals to busy town centre pubs and Gastropubs. As well as several small breweries or microbreweries which produce Real Ale, we even have producers of Real Cider and Perry right here in the county.

Over the Barrel is published by the Northamptonshire branch of Campaign for Real Ale (CAMRA). Views expressed herein are not necessarily those of CAMRA or its officers.



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From the Chair

From feedback we have received, it appears that our first post-Covid edition of “Over The Barrel” has gone down very well with our readers and publicans alike. This is in no small part due to our illustrious editor Colin Goldring, who does a remarkable job collecting and collating articles - not to mention having to crack the whip to get contributors (including me!) to pull their fingers out to get their copy in before the deadline!

Of growing concern at the moment are reports coming in regarding the closures and subsequent losses of our village pubs. Over the past few years we have seen closures in several locations and since Covid, the trend is not giving us any cause for optimism. (You will see more about pub closures elsewhere in this publication)

Recently we have learnt of two villages that have formed small committees to attempt to reverse closures and seek measures to prevent a “change of use” to their beloved local pubs.

Cold Ashby and Everdon are lamenting the loss of the Black Horse and Plough, both of which have been closed for some time and which, it has been reported, are looking very sorry for themselves.

The cause of the Black Horse in Cold Ashby is currently being fought by a small, well organised village group, that has approached CAMRA for advice, which we have been more than happy to give. As a result the cudgels have now been taken up with the West Northants planning enforcement department and we are keenly awaiting developments.

In Everdon a group has been polling the villagers to see if there is any enthusiasm for clubbing together and raising funds to acquire the Plough. However, recently we have been made aware that the pub is being advertised

for sale (as a pub!) by a national firm of estate agents, albeit at a rather high price (£550k).

Last year I was approached by a resident of Grendon village, where the local pub the Half Moon had been closed and its future was uncertain. Following a local campaign and the acquisition of an ACV (Asset of Community Value) the Half Moon has now reopened, having joined forces with a local firm who operate a cafeteria within the premises.

The latest shock news has been the recent closure of the Royal Oak at Naseby, a former regular in the Good Beer Guide and a pub that was formerly leased from Admiral Taverns by Towcester Mill Brewery. The pub has been boarded up and there is a sign advertising it for leasehold by the PubCo. Hopefully it won't be too long before a new tenant can be found.

So I think the message out there is pretty clear: if you feel that your pub is under threat of closure, don't just sit back and allow the inevitable to happen. With methodical planning, campaigning, and approaches to the relevant authorities it is possible to take action to fight off these closures. Hopefully this message will eventually be got across to the speculative purchaser who looks to make a fast buck out of turning a lovely old pub into a “des. res”.

But before it gets to the stage where things get so bad and we need to rally support, one final message remains loud and clear to all of us;

“If we don't use it we could lose it.”

Bernie Peal

Holborn & Bloomsbury Pub Crawl

12TH NOVEMBER 2021

After two years absence due to Covid, we returned to London for our annual pub crawl. With Covid still prevalent, the day avoided the Tube or buses by being undertaken by foot from Euston and St Pancras. The crawl was around Holborn and Bloomsbury, covering some of the pubs last done in 2011 when we visited Brodies in Northeast London, but with some new ones too.

So, with some assembling at the **Sir John Oldcastle**, a Wetherspoons which is just down from Farringdon Station and opposite the number 63 bus stop from St Pancras, and others in the pub, a throng of around 30 amalgamated in the small **Jerusalem Tavern** (GBG22), owned by



Suffolk brewer's St Peters. Once an 18th century coffee house, the pub is narrow and contains a cosy ambience with its bowed glass shop

front. Usually, six beers from the brewery are stocked and are served through the wall under air pressure. Four beers were on including the lovely Plum Porter, plus a good, bottled range too.

From here, we made our way to Farringdon Road and then onto Leather Lane. The **Cask Pub Co** (GBG22) is a crap name but nonetheless the beer choice has always been good here. The pub opened in June 2011 and was a regular haunt of mine when working in Holborn. This mid-19th century three storey pub is on the CAMRA Regional Inventory of Outstanding Pub Interiors with a green glazed tile ground floor and rendered upper storeys. Three doors indicate it was subdivided but now is a single

room. It has a stunning ceiling of 19th century ceiling ribs and decorated ventilation grills with mirrors added in the late 20th century. The bar counter curved at both ends dates from the early 20th century but has modern panels added to the front and a new bar top added over the original one. With most office staff still working from home, the normal range of around sixteen casks was reduced to just two, demonstrating how difficult trading is in London for such iconic pubs. Siren Craft Breakfast Stout and Kent Pale though were still immensely enjoyed.

A short walk around Hatton Garden and down a hard-to-find alleyway led us to the **Olde Mitre** (GBG22) which appears on the National Inventory and is a late 18th century building tucked away. The pub is situated in the former garden of the Palace of the Bishops of Ely and was once part of Cambridgeshire. Inside is 1930s refitting, with extensive wood panelling. The servery sits between the large back room (with a snug leading off), whilst the smaller front room contains an ancient cherry tree. There is also a small room upstairs (used by me on the Weekly Wind Up). Fuller's took over in 2009, but there are still other brewer's real ales on sale which on the day included Durham Hopbound, Kelham Easy Rider, Saltaire No5 Proper Stout and Ossett White Rat.

We continued down to Holborn, turning right where two beautiful buildings came into view – first on the right is Two Waterhouse Square, the red former Prudential Assurance company building dating from 1879 to the designs of Alfred Waterhouse. Further along on the left is the Staple Inn dating from 1585. The building was originally used for wool where it was weighed and taxed. It survived the Great Fire of London and has a distinctive timber-framed façade, cruck roof and an internal courtyard.

Our next pub was the truly remarkable **Cittie of Yorke** which is on the National Inventory. Rebuilt in 1923-4, it is a self-conscious, romantic evocation of an Olde Englande. Outside in the four-storey frontage is Tudor detailing in the windows. The entrance to the right leads first to a panelled room of the type common in inter-war pubs which evoke ideas of the late-sixteenth or early seventeenth centuries. The bar counter is a modern addition, although what really counts is the long bar at the back which seeks to rediscover the atmosphere of the great English timber halls. This amazing room is unlike any other in a British pub with a high-pitched roof.



To the right-hand side is a three-bay arcade with clerestory windows above while beyond is an aisle filled with seven small carrels which serve as drinking booths (there are three more at the rear left); such features are rare in traditional English pubs (but similar to the compartments which are prominent in historic Northern Irish pubs). On the left-hand side the dominant feature is an array of casks, some of enormous size and evidently of some antiquity (as are the cast-iron columns supporting the shelving). A high-level walkway stretches the length of the room. A unique triangular stove with a flue escaping under the floor is a centre piece. The direct connection to the front room is a modern addition - this room has painted roundels of famous figures from history and did have a modern bar counter until it was removed in 2010. The brick cellars from the previous building form the Cellar Bar, but this is only open when food is served. The special character of this pub is reflected in its being Grade II* listed. Being Samuel Smith, the only cask beer was the OBB (Old Brewery Bitter) which is still quite palatable.

Going down Chancery Lane, some dropped into the **Knights Templar**, an imposing listed conversion of a former banking hall which appeared in the film *The Da Vinci Code*. A 'Spoon's', the beer choice was also hampered by the reduced office clientele, but some were in need of food!

Around the corner in Carey Street is the **Seven Stars**, a regular GBG entry and also entry on the National Inventory. This small, famous and much-loved free house is in the heart of legal London with a frontage bearing the date 1602 but the building itself probably dates only from the 1680s. The core of the pub is the part with doors embellished with etched and gilded glass, declaring 'private counter' (on the left) and 'general counter' (right). These names are probably unique, alongside the more commonly used 'private bar' and 'public bar'. The counter and bar-back are Victorian and the coloured advertising panels in the head of the latter are typical of the period around 1870-1890. The pub expanded into a right-hand area and recently has experienced further growth on the left into the next-door building to form a cosy drinking area called the 'Wig Box'. There are three fine old advertising mirrors. Beers on were Adnams Bitter and Broadside and Green King IPA.

Continuing around Lincoln Inn's Field, we deliberately passed a shop with an overhanging upper storey, sloping roof and wooden beams from the 16th century which warrants its title as probably the oldest shop in central London. It also fits perfectly the image of Charles Dickens' creaking, half-timbered 'Old Curiosity Shop'. While some doubt has been cast over the assumption that the shop was the inspiration behind Dickens' novel of the same name, the building certainly does a very good job of convincing sceptics otherwise. Made using the wood from old ships the building miraculously survived the flames of the Great Fire of 1666 and the bombs of Second World War. Our next pub was the **Ship Tavern**, hidden down an

alleyway, on the site of a pub since 1549 and with some nice, stripped oak flooring, booths, and maritime prints. Beers on were Portbello Star and Westway Pale, Wye Valley Butty Bach, Otter Bitter, St Austell Tribute and a house beer Ship Shape IPA.

Around the corner on Holborn Kingsway is the **Shakespeare's Head** (GBG22), another 'Spoons' providing an ideal meal break with some good beers too. The pub takes its name from a famous pub that was located nearby until the entire street was demolished over 100 years ago, shortly before Africa House, was built. Converted from a bank/building society in 1998, it is now a cavernous pub with among others, Southwark Potters' Fields Porter and Mayflower Session IPA, Portbello Star, and East London Quadrant Oatmeal Stout.

The highlight of the day and what I consider to be the best National Inventory pub in London was the stupendous **Princess Louise**, owned by Samuel Smith. This is one of the great historic pubs of London, famous for its remarkable interior. The exterior is a rather modest, slightly Italianate design of 1872, whilst the interior was completely remodelled in 1891 with the most sumptuous display of tiling and mirrors which give the building exactly the sense of fantasy and gaiety its owners and architect must have wanted. The tiles are by Simpson & Sons and the glass is signed Morris & Son. There is a splendid bar-back, original counter, and highly ornate ceiling. The pub originally had two corridors down the sides and off these there would have been many small drinking compartments. However, in 2008 an expensive refurbishment was carried out and returned the lost screen work re-creating the original layout of corridors and small rooms around the island bar. If you visit, gents must have a peek at the loos - a piece of lavatorial elegance exceeded only by those at the Philharmonic in Liverpool!

Continuing along High Holborn, the second **Craft Beer Co** (GBG22) was visited and had a wider choice than the earlier one being nearer to Covent Garden. Rebuilt in 1961 as part of Oasis swimming pool, after many years as a fairly indifferent pub it was acquired by Craft in 2014 and offers a huge and regularly changing range of cask and craft beers. My notes of the beers are now discernible.

Our next pub was the **Museum** (GBG22), opposite the British Museum. This Grade II-listed pub is operated by Greene King and is a magnificent Victorian pub on the Regional Inventory. William Finch Hill designed the 1855 redevelopment with the ground floor front and classic mahogany

back bar fitting being evident today. 1889 saw another redesign of the interior by architects Wylson and Long. Finch's classical style



was partly preserved as five separate bars were created, with partitions and decorations of stained glass. Two rare examples of these stained-glass windows survive in the bar today, an essential part of any visit. Five bars were reduced to three in 1935 becoming one in the 1960s. The five sets of entrance doors are all that remains of this arrangement today. Unfortunately, they had run out of cask beer, although two of us managed to visit before the crawl started for that extra tick!

By now time was marching-on and our throng had become somewhat dispersed, with some continuing into Covent Garden to seek other pubs. Others fell by the wayside.....

Karl Tecklenberg

The Cordwainer welcomes back CAMRA

On 19th October 2021 (just missing the deadline for the last issue) The Cordwainer kindly opened their doors to Branch members for a tasting evening in order to sample the ales that would be available for the upcoming Wetherspoon's Beer Festival.

As usual we were hosted by our very own Gary Drinkwater (PLO Northampton) who once again looked after us really well.

The beers were good and the added bonus was the pizza and chips.



CAMRA members serving themselves and enjoying the offerings



Gary Drinkwater briefs the "troops"



Ales available on the night

Whilst at The Earl of Dalkeith

A group of around ten of us attended the Earl of Dalkeith Beer Festival preview night. This was started a few years ago by Rob, who has left the industry, although fortunately Chantal and her team were keen to continue with this tradition.

Two groups were invited into the "cellar" to try three beers. With a bit of swapping, we were able to decide which beers we preferred and were able to order these from the main bar once we had all finished our sampling.

The welcome tradition of providing us with a few warm snacks was also appreciated.



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Roman Awayday Londinium

11TH DECEMBER 2021

Since Christmas 2014, we have been visiting Roman cities providing a great festive day out. With missing out in 2021, I had planned a trip to Colchester, but with Covid still prevalent, I couldn't guarantee filling a coach so instead we returned to London a month after our London Day out in November. This time we revisited pubs from the Fuller's trip in 2004, plus many more in Victoria and Kensington. On the day I had around 25 from the branch although it wasn't long before we had splinter groups depending upon their speed of walking and drinking!



Our meeting pub was the **Cask and Kitchen** (GBG), Pimlico, which doesn't look much from the outside but once inside,

an array of great beers awaited us. Formerly the Pimlico Tram, the pub was renamed in 2011 and following Covid, has so far managed to increase the range back to eight. The featured brewery was Eight Arch with four of their beers on and with other guests, providing us with two dark beers too.

A mile walk passing many stately town homes, gardens and expensive boutique shops took us to Eaton Terrace and the **Antelope** (GBG), a regular Guide entry now under Fuller's control. Original preserved features include etched-glass windows, a snug and central bar. Compared to outside, it was very warm and inviting and worth a decent stay. Alongside the Fuller's beers were Dark Star Hophead and Stroud Budding.

We just missed the bus to our next place, so it was a while before we arrived at the **Anglesea**

Arms (GBG). This is another perennial Guide entry featuring both local and national beers, although today's offering was somewhat disappointing. Now Grade-II listed, it features a diverse collection of mirrors, prints, photographs and painting. We retraced our footsteps and continued towards Hyde Park, taking a slight deviation to the **Queens's Arms** (GBG), the first of our impressive mews pubs. Tucked away in Queens Gate, it features an unusual curved front door, wooden flooring and panelling. The clientele, as in many of today's pubs, reflected the location with glamorous locals, or just rich people forking out for the London prices. Beers were Adnams Ghost Ship, St Austell Proper Job and Doom Bar.

From now it all went wrong! We headed for Hyde Park; well some of us who had a sense of direction did, in order to catch a bus. However, a



robbery and shooting nearby caused mayhem with the bus services, with blue lights one after another racing past us. As a result, we trekked alongside the park to the **Paxton's Head**, the first of our CAMRA National Inventory pubs of the day. Forming part of the massive Park Mansions, it is located in the part built around 1900-02. Named after the Joseph Paxton who designed the Crystal Palace, it is a work of art containing etched and cut glass lining the walls, doors and baffles. Motifs include grotesque masks, mythical birds, fruit, floors, and swirling foliage. The bar and bar back are original, as is the clock in the central lobby.

There is also an attractive lincrusta ceiling with foliage decoration. The main bar was closed for a private party, although with his walking stick, Teck and his entourage blagged their way into here where we could be served with real ale. Upstairs and downstairs bars were operating, but the choice on these bars was just Greene King compared to a couple of guests in the main bar.

Those in the know stuck with me for the hard-to-find short cuts that took us to Wilton Row, signed "Private Mews" with the **Grenadier** tucked away at the end. It was built about 1830 to serve staff from the neighbouring mansions and guards from the barracks from where the name came. This raised mews pub has a central bar counter and pewter top, dividing the panelled rooms. Outside is a guard's sentry box. The place was heaving with restricted access to groups, so I sent in two of us at a time and we all managed to get in. Chatting to the landlord, I was able to get later followers in too as they arrived and knocked on the closed door. Note in diary. Do not arrange a Saturday Crawl near Hyde Pak when the Christmas Fair is on!

Retracing our steps, but turning into Kinnerton Street, we arrived at the **Nag's Head** which is featured on the London Inventory. This tiny



unspoilt pub is caught in a time warp with the beers being served from an authentic zinc topped 19th century beer engine on

one of the lowest bars in the country. The pub contains a number of amusement machines from days gone by. The pub is run by former guardsman and actor Kevin Moran who could be described as one of the more characterful pub landlords.

Note that coats must be hung on the provided hooks and Kevin bans mobile phones from the pub! Also, the venue is cash-only for bills below £15. Beers on were from Adnams.

Continuing along Kinnerton Street and through Waitrose, I lost a couple of my remaining ten group, so had to search the aisles a few times for them before arriving at the **Star Tavern** (GBG 22), an attractive, unspoilt mews pub on the west side of Belgrave Square also featured on the London Inventory. The bar is on the right, whilst the attractive room to the left contains scrubbed tables, real fires and mirrors. This Fuller's pub has the full range and has made it to every one of the CAMRA Good Beer Guides. Folklore has it that the 1963 Great Train Robbery was planned here, with Bruce Reynolds, Buster Edwards and Ronnie Biggs meeting up regularly in the days leading up to the 'blag'. It's also said to have been one of John Profumo's favoured haunts for discreet assignations with Christine Keeler. Other assorted high-life 'stars' were said to include Elizabeth Taylor and Bing Crosby, and that both Peter O'Toole and Princess Margaret would occasionally stop by. A decent range of Fuller's beers were on offer.

Our final mews pub, the **Horse and Groom**, was quiet compared to the other pubs. Built in 1846, it has wood panelling, which provides for a cosy atmosphere. A Shepherd Neame's pub since the mid 2000s, the choice of beers was Master Brew, Spitfire and Whitstable Bay. We made our way to Victoria station where there are two **Wetherspoons**. One is on the station between platform 8 and 9 called Wetherspoons which is an upstairs bar that overlooks the east side platforms and west side concourse. We opted for the larger **Willow Walk** (GBG) next to the Apollo Theatre which had a reasonable choice too. However, many of us were "beered" out" by now and settled for a plate of grub instead!

Karl Tecklenberg

Branch Christmas Get Together

Due to all the uncertainty still existing around Covid and the Omicron variant, the Branch was unsure about how to proceed with regard to Christmas and whether or not the traditional Christmas dinner was a good idea.

Fortunately, The Albion Brewery Tap (Phipps NBC) came to the rescue and offered to host a gathering on Sunday 19th December.

The Branch accepted this offer, and the call went out to all the members and on the day upwards of 40 members turned up to receive a Christmas pint and to share in a smashing finger buffet, courtesy of the brewery.

After such a horrible time it was truly great to see so many members together again in a pub enjoying great beer, good food and fantastic conversation. Everybody enjoyed a fantastic afternoon where they were able to catch up and all had a great time. Our sincere thanks to Aleric and the team for hosting the Branch so well.



The full range of Phipps NBC beers available



Including a lovely Christmas Ale



Whilst the more astute seated by the buffet table



Members enjoying the beer and conversation

Bruges Beer Festival

(Or maybe not)

A long-planned trip to the Bruges beer festival was quickly altered when the issue of travel through France became a game of chance (there's always next year)

So, an alternative stay at a home destination was discussed and myself, my wife and 2 x friends of the Peterborough Branch set off to sample the delights of Exeter.

On advice from our much-travelled Social Secretary, a visit to Topsham was also scheduled in.

In no particular order we got to visit a fair few pubs and sampled a great many ales.

The Prospect Inn, Exeter

This lovely, historical pub is in The Quay area of Exeter and overlooks the River Exe.

It was warm and we received a friendly greeting and as well as some fine ale we managed to top up on food from an extensive snack menu.



Ales available were:
 Otter Ale
 (from the Otter Brewery)
 Legend
 (from the Dartmoor Brewery)
 Lifesaver
 (from the Salcombe Brewery)
 Avocet Ale
 (from the Exeter Brewery)



A truly LocAle pub

The Ship Inn, Exeter

This is a 15th Century pub, that lays claim to having Sir Francis Drake as a regular (there is a plaque outside purporting to this fact). It was a smashing pub that served a good number of ales and therefore necessitated 2 visits.



The Turks Head, Exeter



Another really old pub in the town centre that is 700 years old and is a bit of a Tardis in that from the outside it looks very small, but inside it stretches out to be a decent sized pub.

Another pub that purports to have had a famous patron, Charles Dickens.

The pub has only recently re-opened as a pub and was a great place to visit.



Again, a pub with a variety of ales to choose from

The Topsham Brewery Tap, Exeter



Despite its name the brewery is in Exeter (not Topsham) located in the Quay area, but on the opposite side of the river to The Prospect Inn.

A welcoming place but with a huge disappointment in that they had none of their own cask beers on tap.

We were however able to sample 3 real ales that were available.



The brewery and tap The ales

Manchester Marble Bitter, Hanlon's Firefly and Thornbridge Astryd. So although we could not sample any Topsham Brewery ales, the beers they did have were 3 we had never had before. A 15-minute train ride from Exeter Central (right opposite our hotel) is the small town of Topsham, which we ventured

to after a morning of sightseeing in Exeter.

Having been advised to visit the Bridge we immediately made our way there only to find it closed following its lunchtime opening session (clearly not enough research done here).

A couple sat at the outside seating advised us that the pub would open at 5.30 and as it was only 2.45 it gave us the opportunity to wander around Topsham. What a beautiful little town this is, with it's multicoloured homes in narrow streets.

The Globe, Topsham

This is a St. Austell pub and so the ales available were Tribute, Trelawny and the ever-popular Proper Job



The Lighter Inn, Topsham



Situated down by the river, we were given a fantastic welcome and even better service by Debbie and Harry (no jokes about Blondie, they've heard them all before)

Although we had previously had the 3 beers available, such was the welcome and service we stayed and sampled all 3 along with a bite to eat, before returning to The Bridge.

Beers available were Badger's Tanglefoot, Best Bitter and Fursty Ferret.

The Bridge Inn, Topsham

So, having been recommended ,we finally got to visit this pub and it was easy to see why it was recommended. A quaint pub without hand pumps but selling ale straight from the barrel.

Due to there being no hand pumps, on entering the pub the first door on the right looked inviting so we entered only to find ourselves behind the bar. But as "behind the bar" was a cosy sitting



List of ales available

room, an easy mistake to make, one I am sure has been made before.

We were directed to a sitting area, where the current owner, Caroline happened to be sitting. The pub has been in her family's hands since 1857 and she is 4th generation.

Caroline kindly offered to show me around and what a truly remarkable building it was. As you got lower and

lower you could see the age of the building, which as Caroline explained created certain issues with upkeep, but as custodian of such an old building, in my eyes, she is doing a great job.

Ales available and sampled included: Branscombe's Summa'that and Brannoc Hanlon's Stormstay Red Rock Pale



A recently renovated sitting area "downstairs"



The Bridge Inn (at night)



View of a very snug sitting area from "behind the bar"



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Pub Companies

Who They Are & What They Do

Pub and Club Campaigns Committee feels that many members would find it helpful to have more information about the companies that control many of our pubs. This is the first in a series of articles that will provide the facts on pub company practices and operations, explaining in particular how their business models work and what this means for both licensees and, ultimately, us as customers. The aim is to let the facts speak for themselves so that members can make up their own minds about the positive or negative effects of these practices on our pubs and the folk who run them.

1. A POTTED HISTORY OF THE PUBCO

Fifty years ago, when CAMRA was formed, the pub landscape looked very different. For a start, there were many more of them – some 75000 against around 47500 now. The majority of pubs (52000 or so) were owned by breweries. The 89 small and regional breweries had 13800 of them and the rest were in the hands of the ‘Big Six’ – Bass Charrington, Allied, Whitbread, Scottish & Newcastle, Watney/Grand Metropolitan and Courage/Imperial.

Most of the other 23000 pubs were free houses (in name anyway – many tied their beer supplies to a big brewer in return for loans and discounts). Companies that just owned pubs were few and far between – the likes of Sir John Fitzgerald in the north-east and Heavitree in the south west (though they tied themselves to Bass).

Just about every pub-owning brewery rigorously imposed a supply tie on its own products. As late as the mid-1980s, I remember a Greene King Director recoiling in horror at my suggestion that they allow a few guest beers in their pubs. As a result, new breweries found outlets hard to come by and we customers were hardly spoilt for choice, as a glance at a Good Beer Guide of that era will reveal.

Then, in 1989, along came the Beer Orders. The story of this epochal legislation (for better or worse) is superbly told in Laura Hadland’s recent *Fifty Years of CAMRA* book but, in essence, the government acknowledged the stranglehold on the industry exercised by the Big Six and, among other things, capped their pub ownership at 2000.

By now, because of closures and sell-offs, the Big Six owned fewer pubs between them but the Orders still meant around 11000 pubs coming onto the market. We, of course, dreamed of a new golden age of multi-handpumped free houses galore, but the reality was sadly different. Companies were quickly established, usually with close links to the Big Six, to Hoover up these pubs in big batches then negotiate supply deals, invariably with the company who previously owned the place. Enterprise Inns, for instance, started off with the purchase of 368 pubs from Bass, and that’s where they bought the beer from.

In the years that followed, wheeling and dealing saw companies variously grow, collapse, merge, acquire, dispose – it was very difficult to keep up with who owned what. Some companies concentrated on managed pubs, some on tenancies, a few on a mixed model. Behemoths emerged – by 2004, Punch Taverns and Enterprise each owned more than 8000 pubs, though both had accumulated so much debt that they ran into trouble come the financial crash and subsequently retrenched. We’ll have a closer look at the current pub company scene in the next article.

A brief history of Punch Taverns illustrates the volatility surrounding pubcos from the 1990s onwards. Punch formed in 1997, purchasing a tranche of pubs from Bass. Two years later, they bought Inn Business (mostly former Whitbread pubs) and then the rump of the Allied estate. The managed pubs were spun off into a separate division called Spirit. In 2003, they acquired their

3100-strong rival Pubmaster plus a couple of smaller companies. Next, Scottish & Newcastle's managed pubs were snapped up and added to Spirit. By 2011 the impact of the crash was being felt, calling for a 'strategic review'. Spirit was demerged and, in 2015, sold to Greene King. Come 2016, a takeover bid totalling £403m (plus the taking on of a billion pounds of debt) was accepted; 1900 pubs went to Heineken with the remaining 1300 residing with Patron Capital, though the Punch brand has been retained.

In the meantime, the treatment of their tenants by many of the Pubcos had become a major issue and, after years of campaigning, the Government was persuaded, in 2014, to announce a statutory Pubs Code aimed at regulating their practices and ensuring fair treatment for tenants. We'll return to the Code in a future article. In this context, though, it needs mentioning that the currently accepted definition of a pub company embraces breweries that own pubs – and nowadays most such companies have separate management structures for their pub and brewing operations.

Final comments. Pub companies are here to stay. There is nothing wrong with the basic model and, indeed, there are some excellent companies (mostly smaller ones) who treat their licensees well and clearly see their pubs as more than just property assets. It would, though, be difficult to argue that the ways in which some companies operate raise many issues around their custodianship of what aren't just piles of bricks-and-mortar but, in most cases, precious and valued community assets. We'll examine those issues in due course.

2. THE CURRENT PUB COMPANY SCENE

A pub company is simply a company that owns pubs and there are literally hundreds of them, many with only a handful or even just one pub. We'll concentrate here, though, on the bigger companies who, between them, own over half the country's pubs.

Stonegate

Founded in 2010 with the purchase of 333 pubs from Mitchells & Butlers, Stonegate grew quite

slowly over the next ten years, making a series of acquisitions including brands like Slug & Lettuce, Walkabout and Be At One, until its pub numbers totalled 765. All the pubs were managed houses. A seismic change came in 2020 when Ei Group was bought for £1.27bn, making Stonegate the largest pub company in the UK with 1,270 managed pubs and, as a result of the Ei purchase, 3,200 leased and tenanted businesses.

Ei itself had been founded, as Enterprise Inns, in 1991, initially with 333 pubs from Bass. The company built up its estate, gaining 2,200 pubs in batches by buying them from other companies or taking them over. In 2002, 1,864 pubs were bought from Whitbread and in 2004, 4,054 from Unique. By this time, it owned nearly 10,000 pubs and was in the FTSE 100 list of top companies. However, it was loaded with debt and the 2008 financial crash required a good deal of retrenchment. Ei also started building up its managed estate, including pubs on retail agreements under the Craft Union brand (we'll look at this operating model in the next article). By the time of the sale, it was down to fewer than 4,000 pubs.

Punch Taverns

The first article included a brief history of Punch to illustrate the volatility around pubco development. In summary, it grew quickly to around 8,000 pubs, suffered under the crash, sold a lot of pubs including its managed division and was taken over in 2016. 1,900 pubs went to Heineken and 1,300 to Patron Capital, who retain the Punch brand. At takeover time, all pubs were leased or tenanted but it's also now pushing retail agreements (which it calls Management Partnerships). Some pubs were sold but in June 2021 it announced the purchase of Youngs' tenanted division, bringing the current total to 1,282.

Admiral Taverns

Admiral was founded in 2003 by two families and grew quickly to 2,300 pubs by 2007. Many of these were 'bottom end' houses disposed of by other pub companies. The financial crash had the usual consequences for over-extended businesses and numbers were down to 1,700 by 2011 and continued to fall. By 2017 it was in the hands of Cerberus Capital Management who sold up to a joint venture

by Magners cider-makers C&C Group and estate investor Proprium Capital Partners, by which time there were 845 pubs. The acquisition trail was hit in 2019 with 137 pubs coming from Marstons and 150 from Heineken. The big one arrived in July 2021 when Admiral bought 674 Hawthorn pubs from property firm New River taking the estate to over 1,500.

Admiral's pubs are all tenanted or leased and tend to be wet-led community operations. It has a relatively good reputation in the trade though there's certainly no aversion to flogging off pubs as 'development opportunities'.

Star Pubs & Bars

In 1995, Scottish & Newcastle, one of the original 'Big Six' breweries, bought another of them, Courage, making the combined group Britain's biggest brewer. By 2011, the pub arm, then known as S&N Pub Co, had 1,500 tenanted pubs and 600 in management. Come 2008, Scottish Courage was gobbled up by international brewer Heineken and the pub business rebranded as Star Pubs & Bars. Many pubs were sold but then, in 2017, as previously mentioned, 1,900 were snapped up from Punch. Again there were disposals and the estate currently stands at 2,500.

Star vigorously promote their retail agreement scheme, Just Add Talent. In 2020, it was fined £2m for breaches of the Pubs Code (which we'll cover in a later article)

Greene King

In 1995, Greene King was a long-established family brewer with 900 pubs, nearly all in East Anglia and the South-East. It then embarked on a ferocious acquisition trail, swallowing up many breweries (the likes of Morlands, Belhaven, Morrells and Hardy & Hanson) and other pub companies. GK itself is now owned by a billionaire Hong Kong property developer. It has some 3,100 pubs, restaurants and hotels, of which 1,200 are tenanted or leased. Its strategy seems to be to move in the managed direction and the 'Pub Ready' retail agreements are pushed hard. GK was once renowned for not letting other people's beers in its pubs but now have a more enlightened attitude.

Marston's

The company was known as Wolverhampton & Dudley until 2007 when it rebranded as Marston's, one of the many breweries it had taken over in recent years. At that time, 2,500 pubs were owned but the total is now down to 1,400. The tenanted estate, in particular, has been reduced through sales such as 200 to New River in 2013 and 137 to Admiral in 2019. In late 2020, the company took on the running of 156 Brains pubs in Wales. Also that year, Marston's merged its brewing operations with Carlsberg but this does not directly affect the pub business.

Mitchells and Butlers

Formed originally out of the old Bass estate, M&B have 1,650 pubs and restaurants. The multitudinous brands include Ember Inns, Toby Carveries, Nicholsons and All Bar One – as can be seen, the emphasis is on food. Pubs are mostly managed though around 50 are on a lease arrangement.

J D Wetherspoon

Since opening its first pub in 1979, 'Spoons has expanded to 925 pubs and 50 hotels, all managed. Plans for 18 new pubs are in the pipeline.

Wellington

Owned by the billionaire Reuben Brothers, the company leases all its 850 pubs on a free of tie basis.

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The 3 Horseshoes/Benjamin Franklin Brewery



Some 2 years ago, the owners of the 3 Horseshoes pub in Ecton, Steve & Sandra Wheatman, were approached by Richard Denny about setting up a brewery in the outbuildings at the back of the pub.

Richard had been looking for a suitable location for some time and the 3 Horseshoe's owners had also been considering entering the Craft Brewing scene, so the partnership made good business sense especially as Richard (*more about Richard in the next issue – Meet the Brewer*) had some 17 years' experience with Carlsberg as a technical brewer and was a qualified Master Brewer.



A name for the brewery was debated and eventually it was decided to call it Benjamin Franklin Brewery Ltd due to Ecton's and particularly the 3 Horseshoes having such a close association with the family of Benjamin Franklin, one of the foremost figures in North American history and part of the 5 men who in 1776 drafted the Declaration of Independence.

The Franklin family lived in Ecton from at least 1555 and Benjamin's uncle, Thomas, was a village blacksmith, based in the yard behind the

3 Horseshoes pub (hence the pub name) and along with his wife Eleanor was buried in the Ecton churchyard after his death in 1702.

Benjamin Franklin visited Ecton to discover his family history in July 1758 and spent time around the 3 Horseshoes and viewed his family graves.

The great man himself was a huge fan of beer and amongst his many famous quotes was the very appropriate 'Beer is proof that god loves us and wants us to be happy; perhaps a sign that this area in Ecton was destined to one day be a site to brew ale ...

A brand-new brewery was purchased from Oban Ales Brewery in Scotland and installed and commissioned in early 2020 just in time for the Covid 19 lockdowns to have a dramatic effect on the demand for beer!

During the lockdown some socially distanced trial brewing and tasting occurred and after the July re-opening an initial 3.6% real ale named Benjamin Franklin Bitter was brewed and some 20 barrels (approx. 1400 pints) was produced.

The majority of this first brew was supplied to the 3 Horseshoes in Ecton, but beer was also sold to local venues in Holcot, Earls Barton, Sywell, Olney, Burton Latimer and Kettering and was enthusiastically received.

A second brew was also successful but unfortunately coincided with the late summer tier restrictions and brewing again was put on hold.

A second stronger ale was developed during lockdown 2, the 4.2% Dougal's Thumper, named after the legendary Ex Saints player, Geoff Wright (nicknamed 'Dougal') who has close family connections with Ecton and was added to the beer menu after the pub reopened in April.

Full brewing operations have now recommenced, and the brewery recently brewed its 10,000th pint and now pubs are fully re-open again will be looking to supply a select number of local outlets who can correctly look after and serve this local ale.

Technical details of the Benjamin Franklin Brewery are: -

- 5BBL brew length capacity (800 – 1000 litres)
- 5 vessel system, Hot liquor tank, mash tun, kettle, 2 x fermenting vessels, all temperature controlled and insulated.
- Capacity to make any beer we like from best bitter to barley wine including craft beers, Stouts and cider
- Only using finest fresh ingredients, no processed chemicals, or flavours
- Capability to do 2 x brews every week

Inside a cosy 18th Century village pub

Although extended since it was first built in 1757, the maintains a fantastic rural feel with a great community atmosphere.



Maybe Benjamin Franklin sat here, in the snug



*Or maybe here, in the main room
(featuring Keith, the landlord)*

(More about Keith in the next issue – Meet the Publican)



*Or maybe he fancied a game of skittles in
this cosy games room?*



*2 x Benjamin Franklin beers alongside
2 other popular real ales available at the bar*

Thanks to Steve Wheatman for the article (with a tiny bit of editorial input)





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to welcome you back!



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Triple Stamps 25

29th January 2022

The last organised branch coach trip was the Triple Stamps 24 on 8th February 2020. Little did we know



at the time that this would probably be the last coach trip for nearly two years? Well, here we are back again, two years later having missed one year, with Triple Stamps 25. With

the 25th event being such a monumental occasion, we had a full-on visit to one of the most traditional breweries in existence; a microbrewery which is in the process of expanding; and a tap visit to our first brewery on Triple Stamps 1 back in 1997.

So after a slog across the Fens in bright sunshine along the twisty A52, we arrived just before midday in Wainfleet for a tour around **Batemans Brewery**. We assembled below the Brewery's signature windmill, were signed in, and were off for a tour that was to last 100 minutes.

The original brewery was established in 1874 by George Bateman who began making beer for thirsty farmers who knew a good pint when they tasted one. In 1880, George and his wife Susannah moved the brewery to Salem House, with its beautiful old windmill on the bank of the River Steeping. This is still the brewing site today after 142 years and we were to spend the first half of the tour in the old brewhouse sampling malted barley, rubbing hops, and sniffing the fermenting wort in two of the eight open fermenters.

In 2002 a new brewery was installed alongside, containing a mash tun, copper and whirlpool to make the brewing more economical. However, the old kit is still used for occasional brews and the same fermenters are used, even though they have now been clad with stainless steel over the previous slate fermenters.

We returned to the windmill, ascending a flight of stairs that took us into a room where we were invited to watch a short video on how Batemans' trades on

the Independent Family Brewer's name. Afterwards we relaxed in the adjoining room where our tour guide took us through the history of Batemans which is now managed by the fourth generation. Always independent, although they nearly went under in the late 1980s when part of the family wanted to sell their 60% share. Thankfully those in charge today managed to buy-out their siblings with bank loans which has resulted in the brewery continuing to this day.

The closure of pubs due to Covid affected the brewery immensely, as it was too small to have the financial backing that the conglomerates have while too big to obtain some of the benefits that the smaller micro breweries have managed to obtain. Still, onwards and upwards and they are now looking forward to brewing their extensive range of seasonal beers alongside their regular beer.

With the tour finished, we descended to the base of the windmill to Mr George's Bar in the **Visitor Centre** (GBG) where we were invited to pull ourselves a drink. Those who were eager though found themselves pulling twenty halves of either Yella Belly Gold or XXXB! Just coming out of dry January, the brewery had limited its production, so we had to make do with sampling other beers in bottles, including the Mocha and Winter Berry. Regular beers are the XB, a 3.7% session bitter; XXXB, a stronger 4.8% premium bitter; Yella Belly Gold (3.9%); Skull & Hammers, a 4% English/American Pale ale; Salem porter (4.7%) and Dark Fruits Porter (4.4%).

Three hours after arriving at what was our longest visit in twenty-five years, we were heading towards the setting sun to Heckington. Passing over the railway crossing, we arrived at the Grade I listed windmill which was built in 1830 originally with five sails. Damaged in a storm in 1890, the mill was repaired using eight sails (now apparently the only mill with eight sails in the world), the cap and machinery from a local windmill in Boston. Now fully restored, the site hosts an award-winning visitor centre, tearoom, gardens, bakehouse and museum. Oh, and a brewery!

The award-winning **8 Sail Brewery** (GBG) is located in the shadows of the unique eight-sailed windmill in

the old engine shed. On the small bar was a choice of seven beers along with a wider choice of bottled beers from the brewery.

Once we had all got our drinks in hand, owner Tony Pygott took us through to the brewery at the rear where he spoke about the history of the brewery and his future plans. Set-up in 2010, the five-barrel brewery brewed its first beer in June of that year and is now an established, multi award-winning micro-brewery. Tony was a teacher, although 30 years in the classroom drove him to drink! During the Covid shutdown, beer sales have actually trebled resulting in a new seven-barrel brewery currently on its way from China which will help to meet the insatiable demand. The bottled beer range can also be increased. Six core beers are brewed: Fenman Bitter (4.1%), John Barleycorn (5.5% IPA), King John's Jewels (4.5% Golden), Rolling Stone (4.3% Pale), Victorian Porter (5%), and Windmill Bitter (3.8% session ale). Occasional beers featured today were Old Colony, a 5.3% American pale; Fen Slodger, a 4.5% copper; Millwrights Porter (4.7%); Dark Side of the Mill, a 4.5% dark chocolate chilli ale; Froglet (4% Pale and hoppy); and John Barleycorn DIPA, an 11% IPA produced for the 11th Anniversary of the brewery. These beers are sold in 10-15 regular outlets.

With the Batemans Brewery tour taking up a large part of the day, we only had time for one more brewery. This was the **Oakham Brewery Tap**, Peterborough, although while we had no brewery tour (we had done this brewery in 1999), we could still view the brewery that is used for smaller batch beers.

Oakham Brewery was set up in Oakham, Rutland (with a capacity of 10 barrels a week) and Oakham Ales was born in 1993 with Jeffrey Hudson Bitter (JHB) being one of the very first UK beers to be generously hopped with USA-sourced hops. The inspiration for the name came from Sir Jeffrey Hudson, also known as "Lord Minimus", a courtier in the service of King Charles I. By 1998, the brewery had out-grown Oakham and moved to Peterborough to a new 35-barrel brewery sited inside the old labour exchange. The other half of the exchange became the brewery tap and is claimed to be the largest brewpub in Europe. Further expansion in 2006 led to a second brewery being built to accommodate a new 75-barrel brew house in Woodston, Peterborough. This has further developed into a 350-barrel brewery. The Brewery Tap continues with a small batch (6 barrel) brew house which was installed to produce special and one-off brews. On the bar were four Oakham beers Citra, JHB, Bishops

Farewell and Inferno, while a guest beer featured too. Most of us though were more interested in filling-up with one of the fabulous Thai curries or stir-fries.

A few of our group ventured further afield to the **Bumble Inn** (GBG), just a couple of minutes away, which is a micro and former local CAMRA Pub of the Year which opened in 2016 in a former chemist's shop. Five beers are usually on. On the otherside of the Queensgate Shopping Centre as an alternative to Thai food and hoppy beers is the **Drapers Arms** (GBG), the local 'Spoons' where a decent range of local and national microbrewery beers can be found on the bar.

So that is it for another year. Triple Stamps has always been about doing three breweries, although with more breweries now than ever, in some ways this should be much easier. However, there has been the odd occasion when the third brewery has been the tap, with the brewery being viewed without an official tour! With this being our twenty-fifth, how have you fared in previous years? See listing on next page:

Karl Tecklenberg



1997	Oakham	Grainstore	Parish	
1998	Ringwood	Hampshire	West Berkshire	
1999	Blencowe	Oakham	Blue Cow	Stamford crawl
2000	Milton	Potton	B&T	NI pubs in Broom and Newton
2001	Belvoir	Brewsters	Grainstore & John O'Gaunt taps	Hose pubs
2002	Castle Rock	Nottingham	Alcazar	Nottingham crawl
2003	Felstar	Sawbridgeworth	Green Tye	
2004	Marston's	Tower	Old Cottage	Burton-upon-Trent crawl
2005	Leatherbritches	Leadmill	Falstaff	Derby crawl
2006	Beowulf	Highgate	Church End	Bloxwich & Walsall crawl
2007	North Cotswold	Wizard		
2008	Burton Bridge	Quartz	Slaters	Stafford crawl
2009	Saffron	Heart of Stebbing	Son of Sid	Saffron Walden crawl
2010	Elmtree	Wolf	Fat Cat	Norwich crawl
2011	Half Penny	Old Forge	Swan	Wychwood
2012	Nut Brook	Marlpool	Blue Monkey	Naked, Amber
2013	Funfair	Springhead	Pheasantry	Navigation tap
2014	Banks's	Olde Swan	Sarah Hughes	Dudley crawl
2015	Tring	Red Squirrel	Farmers Boy (cancelled)	Dunstable crawl
2016	Peak Ales	Raw	Townes	Brampton Mile crawl
2017	Lincoln Green	Flipside	Navigation tap	Nottingham & Beeston crawls
2018	XT	Hop Pole tap	Leighton Buzzard	Leighton Buzzard crawl
2019	Brentwood	Mighty Oak	Crouch Vale	Billericay crawl
2020	Black Market	Dukeries	Priors Well tap	Worksop & Mansfield crawls



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Beer Tasting in Northamptonshire

In July 2019 a training session was held at the Black Prince, Abington Square, Northampton. Nineteen people were trained and over the next few months we held meetings once a month and members completed beer tasting cards on their own to the extent that we became one of the more active tasting panels around.

For those not familiar with the concept, a CAMRA Tasting Panel is a group of trained people who produce tasting notes which initially go onto the Brewery Information System which is the CAMRA database for breweries and beers. The tasting notes are incorporated into the Good Beer Guide and are used in other relevant CAMRA publications and by those choosing beers for festivals and so on. The function is therefore of importance and the tasters have a lot of fun in the process.

Only 7 months into the project covid and lockdowns struck, and we could do nothing for the next eighteen months. When we started to get going again it quickly became apparent that we were all so out of practice that we could not in all conscience produce anything that might be relied upon by others. We therefore need further training. The course lasts for 5 hours and involves an introduction to the production process of brewing and what the ingredients contribute to the eventual taste, the kinds of tastes that might be encountered including off-flavours, and then there is an introduction to the special record cards produced by CAMRA, and they get used on four sample beers. Thereafter the trainees are expected to complete 12 tasting cards over the next 3 months to become fully proficient.

We thought it would be fun to keep the project going by testing ourselves out again and meeting socially, which we did at the Black Prince on 4 December. Eleven people turned up and at least a further six would have attended if various other enticements or problems had not got in the way. We completed a couple of cards and exchanged notes and quickly and unanimously agreed our previous suspicion that we must have further

training. The afternoon was great fun, however, and I had the impression that it was enjoyed by all who attended. I cannot speak too highly of the hospitality afforded by the Black Prince. The staff arranged for a further three beers to be added to selection on offer, cheerfully supplied the half pints for tasting, and at reasonable prices. We were offered excellent meeting facilities for the future.

If anyone is interested in joining the next training session for the Tasting Panel, or if any more information is needed, please contact me at nicklevinge@gmail.com

Nick Levinge
*Chair Northants CAMRA
Tasting Panel*

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Birthday Wishes

ST. GILES ALE HOUSE

On 24th November, St. Giles Ale House celebrated 5 years of operation.

Since opening, they have scooped Branch Pub of the Year and various other local awards.

However, the team continue to look forward, not resting on their laurels, and build for the future.

On the evening there were 4 ales, served to the usual high standard, including a couple from a brewery that this drinker has never experienced. These were sampled and found to be excellent beers.

Beers available were:

Fernandes' Ale to the Tsar @4.1% and Sunshine IPA @5.5%

Mallinsons' Lydia @4.1%

Framework's Five Leaves @4%



Ales available on the evening of the pub's 5th birthday

THE BADGERS ARMS

On 12th December, The Badgers Arms celebrated their 4th birthday and there was lots of rejoicing and merriment. As they do not usually open on a Sunday, Jeff and Ali were overwhelmed by the support that they received.



As usual they had a great selection of ales and due to the amount of people that turned up, they actually replaced 2 x cask throughout the day.

Beers available started as:

Potbelly Hedonism and Pigginn Stout

Grainstore Three Kings (very festive)

Church End Coffin Stout (very popular and replaced by Moreton Mild on the day)

Church End Goats Milk (Champion Beer of Britain 2017)



Jeff, Ali and Abi ready to serve up some great beer (and birthday cake) to their customers



A room full of CAMRA members enjoying themselves and supporting their Local

So, Congratulations to Jeff and Ali on the occasion of the 4th birthday of The Badgers Arms and long may it continue.

Pub Watch 2022

With pubs back to the “new” normal, our Pub Liaison Officers are busy re-surveying the pubs on their patch with the current findings listed below. For the latest updates on the county’s pubs, check out Whatpub.com, the CAMRA national pub database. Any changes notified at branch meetings, through e-mails, or directly from the website are updated ensuring a live listing of the real ale scene across the county and country. As ever, if you are aware of any pub changes, be it closure, re-opening, change in landlords, beers, festivals, or updates to the information below, then please drop us an e-mail to plo-north@northants-camra.org.uk, or click on the pub in Whatpub to send an update.

RE-OPENINGS

In previous magazines we have reported some pub closures, although it is pleasing to announce that after Covid, the following have re-opened; **Green Dragon** and **Olde Three Cocks**, Brigstock; **Press**, Northampton, and the **Golden Lion**, Wellingborough. The latter though is only selling bottled beers for the foreseeable future.

CLOSURES

During the last two years of the pandemic, there have been pubs closed that are yet to re-open with some changed ownership, or advertising for new tenants. Such known pubs are the **Black Horse**, Cold Ashby; **Spread Eagle**, Cottingham; **Plough Inn**, Everdon; **Althorp Coaching Inn** (Fox and Hounds), Great Brington; **Lamb**, Little Harrowden; **Snooty Fox**, Lowick; **Compass**, Milton Malsor; **Royal Oak**, Naseby; **Baroque** (Belvedere), **King Billy**, Rifle Drum, **Volunteer**, and **Wedgewood**, all in Northampton; **Vane Arms**, Sudborough, being sold by Everards to another pub operator; **Maltsters Arms**, Weedon, and the **Red Lion**, Yardley Hastings.

Further, the **Bull**, Harpole closed and has since been demolished to make way for three new houses.

The **Three Cranes**, Great Cransley, briefly opened under the control of Kelchner Brewery Bedfordshire, although is currently closed while they seek new tenants.

NEW OPENINGS

Despite the doom and gloom, the **Brackley Bar & Grill** opened in 2020 and is the vision of local business owner who wanted to own a bar and restaurant for many years. This opening offers the space available to cater to events, clubs and special occasions. This was originally a sweet shop and café back in the 1950s, and it has also been a video shop as well. Also in Brackley the **Unicorn Hotel** was an impressive 16th Century Country house and is now a 3 star hotel with a pretty bar, stylish restaurant, comfy lounge offer a cosy retreat after a long day’s travelling coupled with good old-fashioned hospitality. The South facing patio offers a sunny retreat and is the perfect spot for some serious alfresco dining. In Irthlingborough we have the **Artlenock Inn** which opened in August 2020 in the former HSBC Bank premises.

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Open:

Mon-Thurs: 4-11pm, Fri: 2pm-12am
Sat: 12pm-12am, Sun: 12-10:30pm



01327 340729

22 The Green, Nether Heyford, NN7 3LE

CAMRA LocAle

With pubs now returning to the new “normal”, we are currently out and about resurveying our pubs for their LocAle offerings. This report is an update of those that have been checked plus existing ones that we are yet to visit within our Branch area. For the latest information, please check Whatpub for the latest survey date.

If your pub or club regularly stocks real ale from a local brewery, then we are happy to promote the brewery and your pub on our LocAle accredited list in this magazine. In addition, the Whatpub website identifies LocAle pubs, as does the annual Good Beer Guide. We will also provide publicity material including posters, leaflets, annual accreditation stickers, beer mats, and pump-clip crownlers to draw the attention of pub visitors that you are proud to support local breweries. LocAle breweries are those within the county and/or those within 30 miles of the pub. If you are visiting a pub and there is no LocAle, then please let us know through the Whatpub.com website.

The current LocAle accredited pubs in the Branch area are:

Pub	Location	Brewery
New Inn	<i>Abthorpe</i>	Hook Norton range
Bulls Head	<i>Arthingworth</i>	Potbelly
George	<i>Ashley</i>	Various (3 of)
Cartwright Hotel	<i>Aynho</i>	Hook Norton
Great Western Arms	<i>Aynho</i>	Hook Norton range
Stirrup Cup	<i>Barton Seagrave</i>	Potbelly
Bartholomew Arms	<i>Blakesley</i>	
Walnut Tree Inn	<i>Blisworth</i>	Great Oakley and Phipps
Loco Inn	<i>Brackley</i>	Hook Norton range
Plough Pub & Kitchen	<i>Brackley</i>	Hook Norton Hooky Bitter
Swan	<i>Braybrooke</i>	Everard's range
Green Dragon	<i>Brigstock</i>	Various
Bakers Arms	<i>Bugbrooke</i>	Phipps
Dukes Arms	<i>Burton Latimer</i>	Occasional, plus Three Hills cans
Star & Garter	<i>Chelveston</i>	Wells
Bulls Head	<i>Clipston</i>	
Samuel Lloyd	<i>Corby</i>	Grainstore
Shire Horse	<i>Corby</i>	Bottled Great Oakley
Royal George	<i>Cottingham</i>	Grainstore
Early Doors	<i>Daventry</i>	Phipps, Potbelly and others
George	<i>Desborough</i>	
Saxon Tavern	<i>Earls Barton</i>	Various
Three Horseshoes	<i>Ecton</i>	Benjamin Franklin plus others
Plough Inn	<i>Everdon</i>	
Star Inn	<i>Geddington</i>	Various inc Nene Valley
Hare & Hounds	<i>Great Addington</i>	3 Hills Brewery Woodford (bottled)
Greatworth Inn	<i>Greatworth</i>	Hook Norton range
Butchers Arms	<i>Greens Norton</i>	Various inc Great Oakley, Towcester Mill,
		Roman Way and Silverstone
Witch & Sow	<i>Gullesborough</i>	Potbelly plus others
Sun Inn	<i>Hardingstone</i>	Various
Red Lion Inn	<i>Hellidon</i>	Various
Green Dragon Hotel	<i>Higham Ferrers</i>	Oakham
Griffin	<i>Higham Ferrers</i>	
Crewe Arms	<i>Hinton-In-The-Hedges</i>	Roman Way and Hook Norton
Artlenock Inn	<i>Irthlingborough</i>	
Lilacs	<i>Isham</i>	Oakham, Potbelly
Alexandra Arms	<i>Kettering</i>	Various inc Potbelly

<p> Beeswing Peacock Shire Horse Three Cocks Wayfarers Butchers Arms Olde Red Lion Swan Old Red Lion Saracen's Head Four Pears Hare at Loddington Badgers Arms Long Buckby Sports & Social Club Old Kings Head Carpenters Arms Stag Foresters Arms Albion Brewery Bar Artizan Black Prince Britannia Cordwainer Fish Fox & Hounds Garibaldi Hotel John Franklin's Kingsley Park Working Men's Club Lamplighter Malt Shovel Tavern Old White Hart Olde Cobbler Olde England Pomfret Arms Princess Alexandra Road to Morocco Sir Pickering Phipps Thomas A' Becket Wheatsheaf White Elephant Griffin Rowell Charter Inn Hopmaster General Rushden Historical Transport Soc. Plough Inn Stanwick Hotel Countryman White Horse Star Inn Red Lion Three Conies Kings Arms Mason Arms George at Tiffield Folly Inn Plough Inn </p>	<p> <i>Kettering</i> <i>Kettering</i> <i>Kettering</i> <i>Kettering</i> <i>Kettering</i> <i>Kings Sutton</i> <i>Kislingbury</i> <i>Lampport</i> <i>Litchborough</i> <i>Little Brington</i> <i>Little Houghton</i> <i>Loddington</i> <i>Long Buckby</i> <i>Long Buckby</i> <i>Long Buckby</i> <i>Lower Boddington</i> <i>Maidwell</i> <i>Nether Heyford</i> <i>Northampton</i> <i>Northampton</i> <i>Northampton</i> <i>Northampton</i> <i>Northampton</i> <i>Northampton</i> <i>Northampton</i> <i>Northampton</i> <i>Northampton</i> <i>Northampton</i> <i>Northampton</i> <i>Northampton</i> <i>Northampton</i> <i>Northampton</i> <i>Northampton</i> <i>Northampton</i> <i>Northampton</i> <i>Northampton</i> <i>Northampton</i> <i>Northampton</i> <i>Northampton</i> <i>Northampton</i> <i>Northampton</i> <i>Northampton</i> <i>Pitsford</i> <i>Rothwell</i> <i>Rushden</i> <i>Rushden</i> <i>Shutlanger</i> <i>Stanwick</i> <i>Staverton</i> <i>Stoke Albany</i> <i>Sulgrave</i> <i>Thornby</i> <i>Thorpe Mandeville</i> <i>Thrapston</i> <i>Thrapston</i> <i>Tiffield</i> <i>Towcester</i> <i>Towcester</i> </p>	<p> Everard's range Oakham JHB Phipps, Great Oakley & Potbelly (Upto 8) Various inc Grainstore and Oakham Everard's range Hook Norton range Various Various inc Nene Valley or Phipps Great Oakley Various Phipps IPA Various inc Phipps, Langton & Kingscliffe Various Phipps Everard's range Hook Norton range Various inc Grainstore and Phipps Various Phipps range Various (2 of) Various inc Digfield, Phipps & Potbelly </p> <p> Various inc Phipps Phipps Phipps Nene Valley and Phipps Phipps Phipps Various inc Nene Valley and Phipps Phipps Phipps IPA </p> <p> Various inc Phipps & Potbelly Great Oakley Various inc Phipps and Potbelly </p> <p> Phipps Phipps Everard's range Great Oakley and Phipps Potbelly Various Various Phipps IPA plus others Blackpit Digfield Various Various inc Langton and Nene Valley Hook Norton range Various Hook Norton range Digfield Grainstore Great Oakley Towcester Mill range Wells </p>
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<p>Towcester Mill Brewery Tap Plough Plume of Feathers Wharf Inn Coach & Horses Little Ale House Little R'Ale House Locomotive Olde England 2 Crown Inn Crown Fox & Hounds</p> <p>Fox Inn Dukes</p>	<p><i>Towcester</i> <i>Upper Boddington</i> <i>Weedon</i> <i>Welford</i> <i>Wellingborough</i> <i>Wellingborough</i> <i>Wellingborough</i> <i>Wellingborough</i> <i>Wellingborough</i> <i>West Haddon</i> <i>Weston By Weedon Lois</i> <i>Whittlebury</i></p> <p><i>Wilbarston</i> <i>Woodford</i></p>	<p>Towcester Mill range Various Everard's and occasionally Phipps Various Various Potbelly plus others Potbelly plus others</p> <p>Upto 6 various breweries</p> <p>Hook Norton Various inc Great Oakley, Silverstone & Towcester Mill Various inc Grainstore, Langton, Kings Cliffe Digfield plus others</p>
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Surviving Covid

Our final story on this issue, as we return to normal

The New Inn, Abthorpe

The pub survived lockdown by having an off licence selling fraught beer through a hatch and also delivering fresh fish he buys from Billingsgate every Thursday. The landlord, Robert Smith continues to do this, leaving at 1am in the morning to be able to purchase and deliver the fresh fish on the same day. He also sells the fish in his restaurant - we didn't taste any but saw a lovely lobster being served!

We had a great evening in his busy pub. He had 4 Hook Norton beers on, and all were in good condition.

I was there, as PLO Southwest, to present Robert with his GBG certificate.



Richard (PLO SW) with landlord Robert

Branch Diary

SOCIAL MEETING – KETTERING

TUE 29th MARCH

We have again been invited by Chantal to the **Earl of Dalkeith**, the new manager Chantal has carried on the tradition of inviting us for pre-tasters on the eve of the Wetherspoon's Beer Festival which runs until 10th April. Expect to be invited to the cellar for some samples before a selection is provided over the bar, along with nibbles. Meet from 19:00.

SOCIAL MEETING – NORTHAMPTON

TUE 29th MARCH

We have once again been invited by Gary Drinkwater from the **Cordwainer** for pre-tasters on the eve of the Wetherspoon's Beer Festival. On the tasting evening there will be 16 of the 20 available beers. Meet from 18:30.

BRANCH MEETING – RUSHDEN - LocAle

WED 13th APRIL

We make our first of our bi-annual visits to the **Rushden Historical Transport Society** (NN10 0AW), where the meeting will be held in the station coach. With six beers including a dark and two ciders, there will be something for everyone. The main business of the night will be making the Branch's selection for the *Good Beer Guide 2023*. Meet at 20:00.

BRANCH SOCIAL CRAWL - NORTHAMPTON - LocAle

FRI 15th APRIL

Traditionally we have had a bus or pub crawl on Good Friday, so for the first time in three years we can continue with this tradition. Stephen Digby will lead a crawl around Northampton town centre to the following pubs. Times are listed for any late-comers. We start at the **Malt Shovel Tavern**, 121 Bridge Street, NN1 1QF, between 16:00 and 16:55. Walking back into town, we stop at the **Albion Brewery Bar**, 54 Kingswell Street, NN1 1PR, for an ample choice of Phipps' NBC beers between 17:00 and 17:50. Up the hill now to the **Wig and Pen**, St. Giles Street, for a swifty between 18:00 and 18:30. Continuing along the street, we can squeeze into the **St. Giles Ale House**, 45 St Giles Street, between 18:30 and 19:15. Our final official stop will be the **Cordwainer**, The Ridings, from 19:15 onwards which is the town's Wetherspoons

where normally 12 different beers are on to choose from. Anyone wishing to eat can do so here or at other local establishments.

BRANCH OPEN MEETING NORTHAMPTON - LocAle

WED 11th MAY

With the beer festival fast approaching, our branch meeting will be held in Northampton at the **Kingsley Park Working Men's Club** to muster some support and finalise details. Meet in the back room for 20.00.

NORTHAMPTON BEER FESTIVAL NORTHAMPTON - LocAle

FRI 3rd – SUN 5th JUNE

After several cancelled dates, the Northampton Beer Festival is back at **Becket's Park** and will run from Thursday to Saturday. Once again our Branch will support the running of the real ale and cider bars. Staff are required at all sessions if you can spare a few hours.

BRANCH OPEN MEETING – TBC

WED 8th JUNE

Location to be confirmed.

THE COTSWOLD SEVERNSIDER WEEKEND TRIP

FRI 17th - SUN 19th JUNE

Rescheduled from 2020, we will be returning to a county already visited, although to a number of different pubs. I will again be planning some beautiful pubs in lush settings, as well as a selection of brewery-owned pubs. Accommodation is already reserved in a Gloucester hotel which provides a great base for visiting pubs in the Cotswolds, Dean Forest, on the Severn, and the Golden Valley. A few places remain – please email for further details.



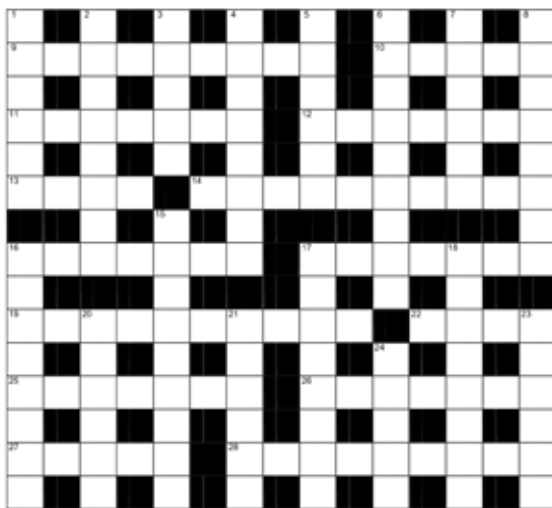
Crossword

ACROSS

- 9 Digfield companion for the Mad Hatter (5, 4)
 10 Not as confused as the home of the Bartons Arms (5)
 11 Son of Sid makes rat grow! (7)
 12 Exotic bird also found in Kettering and Towcester (7)
 13 Keen diva comes back (4)
 14 Does the beer flow from this county brewery? (4, 6)
 16 Devon brewery makes this tank beer? (7)
 17 Traditional family brewer from a railway town (7)
 19 This beer from 14 goes very fast (10)
 22 This is the river in Oxford (4)
 25 This Small Paul's beer is the motto of Kent (7)
 26 Scramble edge or I will be a Northerner (7)
 27 Moray Firth town and river – they make oatcakes (5)
 28 Twisted Oak stout, as sung by The Specials (5, 4)

DOWN

- 1 Fixed Wheel stout demands your silence in Italy (6)
 2 Weldon beer makes large din (8)
 3 Funfair brewery used to create this confusion (5)
 4 Roman Way make this temple in Rome (8)
 5 Is this brewery in the middle of the Thames? (3, 3)
 6 It sounds as if this Donkeystone stout is an Indian Ocean island (9)
 7 Stupid trolls amble along (6)
 8 Derbyshire brewery beer makes reptile? Correct! (8)
 15 Backyard brewery pale ale – coffee loses nothing and gains top grade. (9)
 16 Brown Cow beer fuels plenty of these! (8)
 17 Toning ab to create this former Northampton brewery (8)
 18 Windsor & Eton make this final sup (4, 4)
 20 Nip via roundabout will make this chemical from horse chestnuts (6)
 21 Yetmans bitter and former Pimlico brewhouse (6)
 23 Wily Fox beer sounds like Italian city (6)
 24 Leeds brewery could be star or pole (5)



WIN A PACK OF BEERS PRIZE CROSSWORD

A pack of beers will be awarded to the first correct entry drawn on 14th June May 2022 at the Branch open meeting.

To enter

Scan or photograph your completed crossword and email to:

publicity@northants.camra.org.uk



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Alternatively you can send a cheque payable to CAMRA Ltd with your completed form, visit www.camra.org.uk/joinup, or call **01727 798440**. * All forms should be addressed to Membership Department, CAMRA, 230 Hatfield Road, St Albans, AL1 4LW.

Your details:

Title Surname

Forename(s)

Date of Birth (dd/mm/yyyy)

Address

Postcode

Email address

Daytime Tel

Partner's Details (if Joint Membership)

Title Surname

Forename(s)

Date of Birth (dd/mm/yyyy)

Direct Debit Instruction

Please fill in the whole form using a ball point pen and send to:
Campaign for Real Ale Ltd. 230 Hatfield Road, St. Albans, Herts AL1 4LW
Email: membership@camra.org.uk Telephone: 01727 867201

Name(s) of Account Holder

Billing Address

Bank or Building Society Account Number

Branch Sort Code

Postcode

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Signature

	Direct Debit	Non DD
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Under 26 Membership	£20.00 <input type="checkbox"/>	£22.00 <input type="checkbox"/>
Joint Membership (At the same address)	£36.50 <input type="checkbox"/>	£38.50 <input type="checkbox"/>
Joint Under 26 Membership	£22.00 <input type="checkbox"/>	£30.00 <input type="checkbox"/>

Please indicate whether you wish to receive **BEER** by email OR post: ☐ Email ☐ Post

I wish to Opt-in to ☐ General Communications ☐ Branch Communications

Concessionary rates are available only for Under 26 Memberships.

I wish to join the Campaign for Real Ale, and agree to abide by the Memorandum and Articles of Association which can be found on our website.

Signed

Date

Applications will be processed within 21 days.



This Guarantee should be detached and retained by the payer.

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- If you receive a refund you are not entitled to, you must pay it back when Stripe asks you to.
- You can cancel a Direct Debit at any time by simply contacting your bank or building society. Written confirmation may be required. Please also notify us. Setup of Direct Debit instruction with Stripe on behalf of CAMRA.



Campaign
for
Real Ale

[†]Price of single membership when paying by Direct Debit. *Calls from landlines charged at standard national rates, cost may vary from mobile phones. New Direct Debit members will receive a 12 month supply of vouchers in their first 15 months of membership. The data you provide will be processed in accordance with our privacy policy in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulations.

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10 real ales

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Dr Busker

See below for
opening times

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Premium Gins • Malt Whiskies & Soft Drinks



Quiz Night every second Thursday each month - 7pm

Picture Quiz every Sunday

14A High Street
Wellingborough
Northants NN8 4JU
M: 07870 392011
E: tracie@thelittlealehouse.co.uk

FIND US



Opening Times:

Mon/Tues - Closed

Wed/Thurs - 12 noon-9pm

Fri & Sat - 12 noon-11pm

Sunday - 1pm-6pm





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