



**CAMPAIGN
FOR
REAL ALE**

The Newsletter of CAMRA Fenland Branch

Pub Mirror

www.fenlandcamra.org.uk Paper edition June 2010

This is the first of the (occasional) paper editions of Pub Mirror.

Fewer of you asked for a copy than we had hoped - but you are no less welcome for that.

At present we plan just two editions a year - in Summer before the AGM and in November/December. Maybe you know another branch member who also cannot access the online website, but who would like a paper copy? If so, please remind them they are welcome to apply. If it helps, we have reproduced on the back page the

application form that appeared in Pub Mirror for November 2009 (though they can also simply write or phone - details also on the back page.)

As you know, we had to take this step because the cost of paper newsletters was getting out of hand and as most of the cost was postage and stationery there was little we could do to reduce it. As things turned out it was a well-timed decision. Our major source of funds has always been our annual beer festival and at present we do not have one (see story below).

Friday 18th June - Fenland Branch AGM

The Fenland Branch AGM will be held at the Three Kings, Threekingham, starting at 8.00 pm. This is your chance to meet the Committee, and let them know what you would like the branch to do.

With a large branch, we urgently need more active members to help organise things. Please come, if you can, prepared to offer your support. At present we particularly need additional members for the committee as several have left the area or are no longer active in the branch. Details will be announced at the meeting and volunteers / nominations sought. Help Fenland to keep going!

As a reward for attending(!) there will be free food provided (jacket potatoes with fillings). If possible please let Heather know (see back page) if you will be attending so that we can make sure there is enough for all.

Diary

June 2010

Tuesday 1st June	Branch Committee Meeting. 8pm Duke of York, Gosberton Risegate
Sunday 13th June	Walk & Beer. Ruskington & North Ings Farm Museum. Details and bookings Dave*
Friday 18th June	Branch AGM. 8pm Three Kings, Threekingham

July 2010

Tuesday 6th July	Branch Committee Meeting. 8pm Wheatsheaf, Hubberts Bridge
Saturday 31st July	Bus trip to Old Dalby / Vale of Belvoir Brewery. Details and Bookings Heather*
Tuesday 3rd August	Branch Committee Meeting. 8pm King's Arms, Boston
Friday 13th August	Mini Bus trip to Wolds (Old Bolingbroke, Halton Holgate). Details and Bookings Heather*
Sunday 15th August	Walk & Beer. Spalding area 10.45. Details and Bookings Dave*

* contact info back page

Sad News: No more Steam and Ale at Pimlico

We had been puzzled over the lack of contact with the organisers of the Boston Steam and Vintage Festival at Pimlico Farm. Then, out of the blue, we were told that they had accepted an offer from an Outside Bar operator and would be using them this year. It seems to be the not uncommon story - someone bids up-front money (something CAMRA as a charity will, indeed can, never do) and then runs a commercial bar at much higher prices. Sad. It does mean, as mentioned above, that we have no main source of funds this year - it's hard to replace a festival this late. Anyway, after organising two very enjoyable and successful mini Beer Festivals for them we are out! Our very own Recession!

PUBS, BEER & WALKS - a selection

December 2009 – Threekingham & Horbling

A small but perfectly orderly party of stalwarts shook off any pretence of hangovers from the previous night's escapade to walk from the **Three Kings at Threekingham** to the **Plough at Horbling** and return.

The route took in grassed fields, tricky stiles, and the narrow edges of ploughed fields (made passable after some severe pruning of hawthorn hedging), and through the tunnel of the dismantled Sleaford to Bourne railway, which is now a Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust area. A visit to the delightful Spring Wells at Horbling was also included.

The weather, mainly sunny throughout, was perfectly timed so that on arrival at the **Plough**, and just as the tasty pints of Stocking Filler (4.3%) from Highgate were going down a treat, the rain started. However as soon as boots were laced up the rain stopped and so the waterproof that had been rushed over by Jo & Ena (marvellous to see Ena looking so well after her op) was not required for the return journey.

Three Kings

The Wolf Coyote (4.3%) at the Three Kings proved popular and the regular ales, Bass and Landlord, were in their usual good form. A wide ranging menu and good service completed an excellent day out for the Fenland folk.



January 2010 – Surfleet & Surfleet Seas End

The January pub walk returned to the Mermaid at Surfleet to celebrate the eighth anniversary of Fenland's first walk back in January 2002. (Sadly it has since become apparent that this could well have been the last walk based on the Mermaid as it closed a few weeks later and so far there seems to be no sign of a buyer.)

Eleven intrepid souls braved occasional sleet and north east wind; however the weather turned out to be far better than the grim forecast. Several inches of snow covered the banks of the River Glen and Spalding Golf Course, with the ducks waddling on the river ice, and the sight of swans all adding to the winter wonderland. Grebe were also spotted by the lock gates at Seas End.

Mention must be made here of Ian who had already walked from Spalding to Surfleet before the walk proper started - all above and beyond the call of CAMRA duty!

The party split for the return routes via road and river bank.

The Pubs & Beers - the halfway house was the **Ship** where a warm welcome awaited along with Tettleys Northern Cracker (4.4%) full bodied winter ale, and Pedigree which went down very well. Two stone beer jugs in the pub stamped Alfred Smith - Surfleet Brewery and J Challans & Son - White Hart Inn, Boston attracted the group's interest.

The **Mermaid's** beers were Broadside, GK IPA, and Abbot and were in good form to accompany an excellent lunch.

Dave had delved in the archives and brought along a copy of Pub Mirror from February 2002 to remind everyone of the Editor's report of that first walk eight years ago, and a toast was proposed to Rodney and Heather for originating what has proved to be a very popular Fenland Branch activity.



April 2010 – Hagworthingham

From the George & Dragon at Hagworthingham the happy wanderers waddled (speak for yourself! - ed.) down the attractive village lane with its gardens of spring blossoms and daffodils, crossed the ford by the footbridge and made their way along the footpath towards Snipe Dales. Grassed fields and the ox bow beck gave way eventually to the country park with its spectacular views across the wolds. The Meridian Line plaque and the quartz monument provided interesting diversions along with the report of hearing a woodpecker. The white igloo sighted on the hill along the line of monuments proved too intriguing to miss, and on closer inspection revealed that a stonemason (female) in protective garb was sculpting a large upright boulder. No doubt all will be revealed in due course.



The trekkers arrived back in Hagworthingham. A walk round the churchyard, with its new mown grass and views, showed the remains of the fallen bell tower. While most returned to the **George and Dragon** for welcome pints of Jennings Cumberland Ale, one member visited the charming delights of the Aladdin's cave of a second hand book shop and a trio went the extra mile via Deep Lane and spotted not only a mistle thrush but also what appeared through binoculars to be a large brown shaggy wildcat skulking a field away. And all this before a drop of Cumberland had passed their lips!

Despite the pre-booked carvery running out most of the band enjoyed a delicious lunch from the menu - and more pints of Cumberland of course.



Other walks have included: February 2010 – Hundleby, Halton Hologate & Spilsby; March 2010 - Sleaford and Silk Willoughby; May 2010 - Hagworthingham and Snipe Dales

The Year so far in Brief

Carrying on from where we left off in 2009:

The Christmas Party at the Kings Arms Boston, was very enjoyable. A good number turned up and the beers as usual were in fine form - not many places locally where you can get two resident dark beers and four bitters every time you go!

Boston Treasure Hunt

In the spring we revived this popular event, organised by Pat and Richard. Starting at the Eagle the group, finally numbering at over 30, including several new faces, followed the clues through another five Boston Pubs - the Duke of York, Moon Under Water, Goodbarn's Yard, Carpenters' Arms and King's Arms. As you may imagine, there were a good number of ales to choose from during the afternoon and light refreshments at the end point were very welcome.

Fuller details are overleaf - and the branch owes Pat and Richard a big 'Thankyou' for compiling the clues (some really hard ones - ed.) and marking the answers.

Good Beer Guide 2011 - and future years

As usual the first couple of months of this year were particularly busy for volunteers surveying, checking and making recommendations for pubs to put forward for the 2011 Guide. With a lot of hard work the list was whittled

down to the number of entries in our allocation.

This is arguably the most important duty of a branch and can always be done better. As we often stress, we always welcome input from YOU - the other (too often silent) members. You can help, especially by keeping an eye on pubs in your area, nominating worthy contenders for inclusion next time around - or letting us know if the landlord changes which under the rules means suspension for the following Guide year. All comments or nominations will, as appropriate, be acted on immediately or recorded and filed and included in our deliberations when the next year's entries are being decided.

Is your local slipping?

If you use the Guide and visit a pub in the current edition which in your opinion is not up to scratch do report that as soon as you can. If your view is supported on checking, we can arrange for a deletion form to be sent to HQ and this will be reported in a future edition of What's Brewing.

And by the way ...

In early March the official CAMRA database showed that our branch now has over 800 members. Many of these are joint memberships of course but it is still a stunning number which has nearly doubled in the last few years. More updates when the new database is available to branches - soon we hope.

Treasure Hunt, full report

In February we revived this popular event, organised by Pat and Richard. **Dave Mellor** reported:

There was an excellent turnout of Fenland members and friends at the Eagle, Boston on Saturday afternoon for the treasure hunt organised by Pat & Richard, which commenced with pints of Castle Rock beers, such as Harvest Pale & Hemlock, along with Ryedale's Winters Tale.

The first five questions / clues proved such a problem for the teams that it was a good hour before the competitors moved on - or perhaps the quality of the ales prove too good to miss.

The Duke of York was next where the age of Sidney Parsons (and you thought you were old) provided further points, and excellent pints of Batemans Dark Mild and XB were dispensed.

Next up was Wetherspoons' Moon Under Water and the answer to a local celebrity's demise in a Canadian lake was worth more points. The Brains SA was off (a real downer for Welsh rugby fans) but the Ammonite from Dorset at 4.5% provided some consolation, but not to the anti-hoppy brigade however!

On then to Goodbarns Yard in Wormgate - surely one of the quaintest parts of Boston - where there were Timmy Taylor and Speckled Hen, along with a warm welcome.

Discussion on the merits of overhead telegraphy against underground cabling - "I'm a climber not a burrower" - resulted in no bonus points whatsoever for the member from BT !!

The clues then led to the Carpenters Arms, tucked away in the back streets but well worth the trip, as the pub, Tardis like, was bursting with energy. Darts, large coal fire, and conversation galore. The wood panelling and décor along with the mezzanine floor, alcoves and even the barrel seat at the bar in prime position make this a unique pub not to be missed. Beers included XB, XXXB and Bass - all in A1 condition. The Cornish branch answer of "Pirates in Men's Pants" proved to be a bit of a red herring! .

The last port of call was the Kings Arms where, after the final clue had been found and solved, papers were handed in to scrutineers Pat & Richard. Pints of Dark Mild, XB, Salem Porter, Bass and others were supped, and refreshments taken thanks to Kev & Viv, and then the winners were announced and bottle prizes awarded.

It was great to see several new members from Boston and Donington who enjoyed the day and the company, so we hope to see them again soon.

Many thanks to Pat & Richard for organising such a splendid afternoon.

Do someone a favour:

If you know of someone who forgot to register for the paper edition, here is a copy of the form for them - or a note will do..

Please send me Pub Mirror when published as I cannot (or do not want to) use the branch Web Site or receive emails:

Name:

Address

Send to: Pub Mirror, 7 The Flaxmill, Flaxmill Lane, Pinchbeck, Spalding, PE11 3YP

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