



▲ Four pubs currently compete for the **Haxey Hood**, three in Haxey, and one in Westwoodside, the Carpenters Arms. This imbalance suggests, and the roll of honour confirms, that it is relatively difficult to get the hood westwards to the Carpenters, and so they have on occasions solicited outside help – in 2007 for example from members of Doncaster Rugby Club.

The action starts on Haxey Hill, when the hood is thrown up just below the brow of the hill on the Haxey side. This presents the Westwoodsidiers with an immediate uphill challenge. Their easier route is not via the road but behind a bungalow on the brow of the hill, where the incline is less severe. On the rare occasion when they gain the vital first 100 yards, it is downhill all the way home.

The Haxey contingent work collectively to ‘sway’ the hood back into their village, but once there split into rival factions in an attempt to reach their own favoured pub. Nearest are the Duke William and The Loco, yet the Kings Arms still wins more often than might be expected, given its position.

We know from William Peck’s account that inns formed the goals in 1815. Of the current pubs, both the Duke William and Kings Arms have been licensed since 1852, while the Carpenters Arms dates from at least 1874. The Loco, a more recent addition, entered the fray in 1985.

Participation is open to others though. In 1948 a marathon sway took the hood south to the Great Northern Hotel in Graizelound, across fields and dykes.

- Key:**
CA Carpenters Arms
DW Duke William
LO The Loco
KA Kings Arms
- 1** Starting point
2 Church of St Nicholas, Haxey
3 Mowbray Cross
4 Buttercross
5 Water Tower



▲ And still they sing – boggins and friends stop for what has become an annual photo opportunity at the **Buttercross**, opposite the Kings Arms, Haxey, in 1948.

On the left, **Church Street** on game day 2007, with The Loco on the right. Not seen, just further on, is the Duke William.

The Loco (previously a fish and chip shop) became involved in 1985, when only the Carpenters Arms and the Kings Arms remained in competition.

Four years prior to that the Duke William had dropped out from contesting the Hood when its landlady preferred to protect her new carpet from the ravages of so many muddy boots. The

pub returned to the fold in 1991, however, and nowadays sheets of plastic are rolled out to protect the furnishings.

In the distance, the concrete water tower looms surprisingly large behind Haxey Church, even though it is actually located some 500 yards to the west.

Built in 1935 to ensure a reliable supply to the parish, the tower provides a useful landmark during

the Hood game, as well as enabling Westwoodsidiers to boast of their generosity in allowing water to flow down to their rivals in Haxey.

Of the 74 victors of the Hood recorded since 1931, the Duke William has won 25 times, second only to the Kings Arms with 35 victories. By comparison, the Carpenters Arms – facing the greater weight of the Haxey contingent and the rigours of that initial uphill struggle – has won on only ten occasions, four of those during the 1980s, while the Duke William was *hors de combat*.

Only twice, in 1998 and 2005, has The Loco been triumphant.

It is often said that entering the Sway offers an ideal opportunity for people to settle old grudges, a suggestion that not even Lord of the Hood Stan Boor would deny when interviewed in 1979. But the crucial thing, he also insisted, is that the parties would have to share a drink afterwards.

As to which pub an outsider should choose to play for – and outsiders are welcome – Boor felt the best choice would be the one that served your favourite beer.