

The firkin



**CAMPAIGN
FOR
REAL ALE**

FREE

Newsletter of CAMRA North Bedfordshire Branch Vol 39 No 1 Spring 2014

North Beds CAMRA's Pub of the Year The Stone Jug at Clophill



**CHAIRMAN'S CORNER
TOUGH CONTEST
FOR COUNTY TITLE
STONE JUG IS LOCAL
PUB OF THE YEAR
LANCASHIRE PUB IS
NATIONAL CHAMP
PUB NEWS**

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Chairman's Corner

Recently I have visited several pubs for the first time, generally with other CAMRA members on organised tours.

It has been an enjoyable as well as an enlightening experience as they all have their own character. This has reflected both the location and the style of the building. Both are important if the pub is to be successful, and so be able to continue. This is what gives us the rich variety we enjoy in Britain, a small portion of which is reflected in the three places we have decided to award certificates to this year. You can find out more about them on page 4, and below you see what competition our champion pub faces at the next stage of CAMRA's annual contest.

We tend to gravitate towards our own favourite watering hole, perhaps chosen on the basis of proximity, atmosphere or facilities. When elsewhere there is the temptation to compare a new place to one we are used to. Because it is different we may well feel "It's not like ..." but that is being unfair. It is important to value each place for what it is, not what it isn't. In that way we appreciate the ways in which licensees seek to use their building to serve their community, and so bring the pub to life.

After a wet and miserable winter why not get out and sample more of our great British pubs? If you're visiting a new area, whatpub.com will help you learn what each one offers and other useful information. Obviously if you are driving then be sensible about drinking.

Roger Stokes, Branch Chairman.

Tough Competition for Bedfordshire Pub of the Year Title

As noted overleaf on page 4, the Stone Jug at Clophill is North Bedfordshire CAMRA's Pub of the Year for 2014. It now goes into the contest for Bedfordshire County Pub of the Year for 2014, against South Bedfordshire and East Bedfordshire CAMRA's champions. And both have chosen very strong contenders. South Beds has chosen the Albion at Ampthill for the third year running, and in both 2012 and 2013 it went on to be Bedfordshire County Pub of the Year. East Beds has chosen the Engineers Arms at Henlow. In 2011 the Engineers went on to reach the last four in the CAMRA's national Pub of the Year contest! The Bedfordshire title is going to see the toughest competition in many years.

What Pub?

Details of all pubs in Bedfordshire, including those featured in articles in the Firkin, and all pubs in most of the UK, can be found in CAMRA's new national online pub guide, WhatPub?, at www.whatpub.com



Little Stone Jug Don't We Love Thee

The Stone Jug at Clophill is North Bedfordshire CAMRA's Pub of the Year for 2014. The **Stone Jug** – right at the southern end of our branch area – last held the title in 2007, though it's been one of our favourite pubs for many years. The branch committee used the single transferable vote method to ballot for the Pub of the Year and the Stone Jug emerged as victor.



In aptly named Back Street, the pub is one of our most attractive and historic, having been converted out of a row of 16th-century stone cottages. It has one L-shaped bar and a small private room at the rear, where CAMRA's quarterly Bedfordshire Liaison Meetings between the offic-

ers of the three Bedfordshire branches take place. It is a free house with five hand-pumps, and serves mostly local cask ales which are always well kept. Weston's cider is also regularly available. Home-cooked lunches are served on Tuesday to Saturday lunchtimes, but it is predominantly a real local pub that's welcoming to visitors too.

Mother and daughter owner-licensees Joyce and Vikki Stevens always offer a friendly greeting, and in the winter there is a real fire in the grate. Benches outside the front door and in the rear garden provide a summer alternative. The car park is small and the street is narrow, but the public transport alternative is viable, since the nearby A6 has a bus route with an evening service.



Since our Pub of the Year this time is in the country, we also nominated our Town Pub of the Year for 2014 – the **Burnaby Arms** in Stanley Street, Bedford. The Burnaby was our branch's Most Improved Pub for 2013, and its rapid move up in the world goes on. Four handpumps are in regular use, with Eagle, Directors, Young's Gold and a guest, and beer quality is excellent; the increase in its clientele since licensees Lucie and Stephen Fuller took over speaks for itself.

The **Sun at Felmersham** is North Beds' Most Improved Pub for 2014. The Sun was closed by Charles Wells in 2012, although the company said it wanted to see the pub reopened. Locals campaigned vigorously to save the last pub in the village and it was



bought by a local resident to be re-launched as a family-owned free house. It reopened in July 2013 with Ben and Hannah Just

(pictured) in charge behind the bar. Thorough refurbishment of the pub is almost complete. A warm, welcoming old village pub with low beams, a wood-burning stove and a skittles table, it has three handpumps in regular use. The regular ale is Eagle, but guest beers are also offered from local microbreweries. Long may the Sun shine!

CAMRA's National Pub of the Year



While we're starting the process for choosing local, county and regional Pubs of the Year (see pages 3 & 4), the culmination of last year's contest has produced CAMRA's national Pub of the Year, the Swan with Two Necks in Pendleton, Lancashire. The pub faces a small stream running through the village, historically notorious for the trials of local women for witchcraft, and was described as 'a quintessentially British rural setting' by CAMRA's Pubs Director, Julian Hough.

This tiny village pub is described as a time-warrior, and has been run by the same licensee, Steve Dilworth, for 27 years. It is truly the heart of the village and for a while even served as the post office! It is very much a traditional pub, with no sport on TV, but serving cider brewed from the pub's own apple trees. Golden Pippin – not a cider despite its name – from the Copper Dragon brewery in Skipton, Yorkshire is the regular ale, but guests from local microbreweries are always on offer. The pub also offers traditional pub meals including home-made pies.

This is a second successive victory for a Lancashire pub, the previous year's winner being the Baum in Rochdale. The Swan beat the other three finalists, the Hope in Carshalton (Surrey), the Horse and Jockey in Stapleford (Nottinghamshire) and The Old Spot Inn in Dursley (Gloucestershire) to win the title.

The Firkin

Published every three months by the North Bedfordshire Branch of CAMRA, the Campaign for Real Ale. The Firkin is produced and distributed by volunteers to most

pubs and clubs in Bedfordshire north of a line joining the M1, Clophill, Bedford and Tempsford. We welcome correspondence and any relevant features for publication. Views expressed here may not be those of the Editor, the Campaign for Real Ale, or its North Bedfordshire Branch.

Items for publication in the next issue should reach the Editor by the date shown at the foot of this page.

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Printed by Portland Print, Kettering

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Trading Standards

If you complain to a licensee about short measure, lack of a visible price list, or a misleading product promotion, and do not get a satisfactory response, call Consumer Direct on 08454 040506 or contact an adviser through the website at www.consumerdirect.gov.uk

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Pub News

Three Compasses, Upper Dean



Welcome to Adam and Tina, new landlords of this pretty, thatched country pub near our northern border.

The **Compasses** was closed last year by Charles Wells but reopened as a free house in December. Greene King IPA, Abbot and Timothy Taylor Landlord are regulars on handpump, with a changing guest beer likely to join them in due course. The pub opens from 4-11 on weekdays and 12-11 at weekends. Freshly prepared pub food is available throughout opening hours. The games area can get busy during skittles matches, but there is a quiet, family-friendly garden at the rear. Call 01234 708346 or visit www.thethreecompasses.co.uk

Guinea, Moggerhanger



Welcome to John and Deanna Ellis, who took over this large village pub on the A603 in the autumn.

Wells Eagle IPA and Courage Directors are available, often with up to two guest ales from the Wells & Young's list. Freshly prepared food is served throughout the week except on Monday and Sunday evening. The large garden at the front is popular in fine weather. Skittles is played in a smaller, separate bar. Call 01767 640388 or visit www.guineamoggerhanger.co.uk

The Bedford Bar 19, Great Denham



With so many pubs having closed in recent years, it is a pleasure to discover that new ones do occasionally open.

Bar 19 at The Bedford Golf Club is a pub/restaurant within a building serving as clubhouse, conference centre, function room and wedding venue. It is open to the public as well as to golfers for meals, drinks, tea and coffee, from 8am (7.30 on Wednesday and at weekends) to 5pm (9 Wednesday, 11 Friday and 7 Saturday). Sharp's Doom Bar is available on handpump and guest beers may appear in future. Freshly prepared pub food is available to order, although Sunday lunch must be booked beforehand. Special events include an occasional jazz evening and a regular quiz night may be launched. The no 8 bus from Bedford town centre turns round just up the road. Call 01234 320022 or visit www.thebedfordgc.com

Swan, Bromham



Welcome back Matthew and Corinne, who have returned to this handsome pub near Bromham Watermill after

a period working elsewhere. A licensed inn since 1798, the **Swan** retains many old features despite extensive modernisation. The bar opens from 11 to 11 (midnight on Friday, 10.30 on Sunday). The regular beers are Greene King IPA and Abbot, with a guest ale from Greene King usually available. Meals are served until 10pm daily in the



Spring beer festivals

23rd East Anglian Beer Festival

Wed 23 to Sat 26 April at Apex, Charter Square, Bury St Edmunds IP33 3FD. Open 12-11 daily. Over 80 real ales plus ciders. Food available all sessions. Check website nearer date for beers, ciders and admission prices. www.ftol.co.uk/wsc

Coventry Beer Festival

Thu 13 to Sat 15 April at Coventry RFC, Butts Park Arena Coventry CV1 3GE (near city ring road J7, rail stn 15min, buses from city centre). Open 12-4, 6-11, admission £2 except Fri eve £3, Sat lunch £1, CAMRA members free or reduced rate. Over 80 real ales including specials from local breweries plus cider, perry and country wines. Food available all sessions. www.covnwcamra.org.uk

41st Cambridge Beer Festival

Mon 19 to Sat 24 May, under canvas on Jesus Green (X5 bus 10 min). Wide range of local and national beers, plus cider, perry, mead, country wines and foreign beers. Food includes locally baked bread, pork pies, ham and cheese counter. Frequent X5 bus from Bedford. Check website for details nearer date.

www.cambridgebeerfestival.com

14th Banbury Beer Festival

Thu 8 to Sat 10 May at the TA Centre, Oxford Road OX16 9AN. Open Thu 5-11, Fri 12-12, Sat 12-11. Admission Thu £1, Fri £2, after 5pm £3, Sat £3, after 5pm £1. About 90 real ales and 20 ciders plus evening entertainment. Check website for details nearer date. www.northoxoncamra.org.uk

Pub News continued

bar and restaurant to the rear, a classic pub menu with roasts on Sunday. Call 01234 823284.

d'Parys, De Parys Avenue, Bedford



This new hotel, pub and restaurant rebuilt into part of the former **De Parys Hotel** was opened in February

by Apostrophe Pubs, a subsidiary of Charles Wells. The bar is open to 11 daily, with real Wells Eagle IPA, Courage Directors and guest beers on the pumps. Manager Alfie Molinari and his team serve break-

fasts, lunches and evening meals throughout the day until 10pm. Much of the old garden to the rear is still available in fine weather. Call 01234 340248 or visit www.dparys.co.uk

Three Cranes, Turvey



Closed by Greene King over a year ago, the **Three Cranes** is expected to re-open as a free house

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January means Pub Minibus Trips

North Beds CAMRA's traditional winter round of trips began at the **Wellington Arms in Bedford** on 16th January. We headed first to **Wilstead** where we visited the **Woolpack**. This Greene King house had four hand pumps in use, with Abbot, IPA and Old Trip accompanied by Wibblers American Dark, made at GK by a visiting American brewer for a limited period. I couldn't resist the innovation and found the Wibblers palatable, with a dark ruby colour and plenty of malt, but with little hop finish. The Woolpack is an extended Victorian pub now very much into food. It was busy with both diners and drinkers, but the friendly staff provided quick service nonetheless.

We moved on to the **Knife and Cleaver at Houghton Conquest**, another foodie pub but, under its present licensees, welcoming to drinkers, with an open fire in the bar area. Now a Wells pub, it offered Eagle, Directors and Young's Winter Warmer on handpump. The Winter Warmer was in good nick, malty and fruity, but pricey – my dearest half of the month. There were surprisingly few diners in.

We stopped next at the **Chimney Corner at Kempston Hardwick**, another food pub and also very quiet. Only one cask ale was on, Two Hoots from Joseph Holt, a 4.2% abv golden ale lacking much hoppy kick. The saloon bar is the main eating area, and had a real fire in the grate. This main road pub's licensee was welcoming and friendly.

A longish run then brought us to the westernmost pub in our branch area, the **Red Lion at Salford**, alongside the M1, on the Milton Keynes border. This Wells pub doesn't do guest ales, and as usual offered Eagle and Bombardier. Even though food service had finished, there were plenty of customers in, and the atmosphere was pleasant, helped by welcoming staff. The

beers were in good condition and served at the correct temperature; I sampled the Bombardier.



Moving back towards Bedford, we stopped at the **Chequers at Wootton**, a traditional village pub with low

ceilings and bare beams, now a free house. Cask ales on offer were Wells Eagle, St Austell Trelawny and Brains Firkling Good, the last-named being a new one on me. I found the Trelawny to be in good shape. Amusingly, the sign outside had suffered some damage and now read 'Cheque Sinn' – I wonder what that is, issuing bouncing cheques maybe? The place was quite full at 10 p.m., warm and welcoming.

A short ride to the final stop – the **Cross Keys at Wood End**, which I didn't know existed until recently. A modernish pub, it shares its premises with a restaurant. We were the only customers. A guest ale goes on at weekends, but only Eagle was on handpump on a Thursday. It seemed in reasonable condition. Then it was back to the **Bedford Arms in Bedford**, our traditional endpoint as it opens till midnight.



Another Thursday, another trip. On 23rd January we started at the **White Horse** in Newnham Avenue,

Bedford. This Wells pub holds twice-yearly beer festivals but at other times mostly has the owners' cask beers on – on

Pub Minibus Trips continued

this occasion, Eagle, Bombardier and Winter Warmer. It has a lively business owing to its highly enterprising licensees Nigel and Sue Anstead. Our visit coincided with their Burns Night Supper – slightly early, because they hold it on a Thursday. It was booked out, but not starting till later, so there was room for us. I can't resist Winter Warmer, and found it in good condition.



First stop for our bus was the **Five Bells** at **Cople**, which to local CAMRA members means Greene King

XX Mild! It is the only GK house around Bedford that always has the mild on - not my favourite beer, but it was very well kept. Also on handpump were GK IPA and Ruddles County. The Five Bells was pleasantly busy, and the licensees gave a us friendly welcome to their traditional old village pub.



On to the **Anchor** at **Great Barford** – its great asset is its location right by the old river bridge and

the parish church. In summer drinks can be taken out by the river, but it was pretty empty on a winter Thursday, though food service is offered. It's a Wells House and on handpumps were Eagle, Young's Bitter and Holt's Two Hoots; Young's Special had been on, but had run out. I like Young's Bitter and so I tried that; it was in acceptable condition.

Next to **Roxton** and the **Royal Oak**. A Victorian free house, it had Wells Eagle and Adnams Southwold as the available cask ales; Black Sheep had run out. I had the Adnams and liked it.



A busier Victorian pub was our next stop – Greene King's **Polhill Arms** at **Renhold**.

The landlord is friendly and enterprising, and had five real ales available including three of GK's: IPA, Hardy Hanson's Kimberley, and (appropriately, given the date) Belhaven Robert Burns (4.2% abv) from GK's Scottish brewery. The guests were Hogs Back TEA (4.2% abv) and Thwaites Crafty Devil (4.3% abv). I tried both – TEA I knew, a golden bitter, Crafty Devil I didn't, and it turned out to be a red ale – and I found them well kept.

Then came a longish stage northwards to the **Plough** at **Bolnhurst**, a lovely old pub extended and converted into an excellent restaurant. However, one end of the building is a very warm and comfortable area for drinkers, and three handpumps were in use. Plenty of diners were still being served, but the bar service was nevertheless brisk. The Plough is a free house, and Hopping Mad Hopnotch, Adnams Southwold and Gun Dog Chilly Dog were the cask ales available. I like Hopnotch and tried that – it was well kept.

Back to the **Bedford Arms** in **Bedford** again, and this time I went in. It is a Wells specialist real ale house, and had six handpumps in use. Young's Bitter, Special and Winter Warmer occupied three of them, and two beers from the Growler Brewery were also on – Gladness, a cask lager

Pub Minibus Trips **continued**

(4.2% abv) and Augustinian, an amber ale (4.5% abv). The sixth pump, though, provided White Park Mayflower Mild (only 3.3% abv), which was new to many of us, and which seemed good. The pub as renovated a few years ago is appropriate for its role, with bare boards and a pleasantly basic town-pub feel to it.



We started our third minibus trip on 30th January at the **Three Cups** in **Bedford**, rebranded as a Greene King specialist cask ale house a couple of years ago. It regularly has eight handpumps in use, with GK

beers and guests, usually local ones. The eight were GK Abbot, IPA and Old Speckled Hen, Hopping Mad Brainstorm, Potton Phoenix, Tring Brock Bitter, White Park Mayflower Mild, and Timothy Taylor Golden Best, though the last-named had run out. I tried Brock, which was in good condition, and Brainstorm. Our bus came and we set off, hoping to find no floods.

The **Sun** at **Felmersham** was our first stop. It is a free house, and a lovely old village pub with a wood-burning stove and table skittles. It's mostly a drinkers' pub, and was pleasantly busy. Wells Eagle was on, together with Church Brewery's Canon Crisparkle, new to us. We all tried the Canon, who turned out to be a drinkable golden bitter, in good condition and reasonably priced, though lacking any heavy final hop kick. Then further north to **Souldrop** on the Northants border, and the **Bedford Arms**. Formerly a Wells pub, but sold off and now a free house with five handpumps in use. GK IPA, Black Sheep Best Bitter and Phipps (NBC) Red Star, now brewed by Grainstore, were familiar, but Whistling Kite's Wet Your Whistle (3.8% abv) and Cottage Brewery's Old Hooker (not a misprint; 4.3% abv) were new to me. I

had the Black Sheep and found it in excellent condition. The Bedford Arms is another old village pub, now extended with a large restaurant. Diners and drinkers made the place pretty busy, but the welcome was friendly, the service quick, and the table skittles viewed in the bar by CCTV an amusing extra.



A short run to the **Bell** at **Odell**, a Greene King House, which is yet another old village pub with low beams, tiled

floor and a wood-burning stove, but not busy. GK IPA and Abbot were accompanied by Thwaites Crafty Devil as we walked in, but we drank the pub dry of the guest, and Morland's Tanner's Jack went on instead – not a true guest, as Morland's is one of GK's brands. I had the IPA and found it very acceptable. Another old village pub came next – the **Royal George** at **Stevington**, a free house, quite busy, warm and welcoming. Wells Eagle and Adnams Southwold were on. The Southwold was in good condition.

Finally to the **Half Moon** at **Kempston**, a Wells town pub, and largely a drinkers' pub, still with separate rooms. TV and a fruit machine are in evidence. Only Eagle is on handpump these days, but the licensee takes a pride in keeping it really well. Our January round of visits ended at the **Bedford Arms** in **Bedford** as usual, where we found Young's Special and two White Park beers, White Gold (3.8 abv) and Kellyhopter (4.8% abv), on offer. I had Kellyhopter, which I've only had in bottled form before, and liked it – a hoppy blonde bitter. I didn't quite make it home by midnight....

Fytton Rowland



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Bedfordshire CAMRA Visits Blairtown

The annual London trip of the three Bedfordshire branches of CAMRA took us to Islington in November 2013 – maybe in 2014, to maintain political neutrality, we should go to Notting Hill!



We met up at the **Parcel Yard** in **Kings Cross** station – a Fuller's house occupying the station's former parcels office. It

claims to be the largest pub in any of the London main line stations, which I can believe, and usually has all Fuller's cask beers on handpump as well as various guests. Risking the wrath of CAMRA purists, I tried a half of Meantime Brewery's Yakima Red (4.1% abv), a 'craft keg', not a cask beer. It was full-flavoured and ruby-coloured with a light hoppy finish, but grossly overpriced.



First Islington stop – the **Barnsbury** in (unsurprisingly) Barnsbury. This is a 2014 Good Beer Guide entry, a pleasant,

basic pub with bare boards; a free house serving Yeovil Ales Ruby (4.5% abv), Adnams Topaz Gold (4.0% abv) and Dark Star Hophead (3.7%). Being a bit of a hop-head myself, I chose the Dark Star, and found it well-kept. A food menu was available but it was a bit early for lunch.

Crossing Upper Street, we entered the area that gives Islington its reputation – tall Georgian terrace houses beautifully modernised and worth a fortune each, well supplied with good pubs on many street corners.

The **New Rose**, another 2014 Good Beer Guide entry, unusually for these days



serves its draught beer in handle mugs as the norm. Four handpumps provided Kent Pale Ale (4.0% abv), Truman's

Bold as Brass (4.2% abv), Adnams Broad-side (4.7% abv), and Saffron Brewery's Blonde (4.3% abv). Intrigued by the reincarnation of Truman's, I tried the Bold as Brass and I didn't regret it – an excellent traditional ale, medium amber, with a light hop finish.



The **Duke of Cambridge** was next. (The sign doesn't yet show Prince William.) A distinctive pub, reminiscent of the Flatiron Building in New York in miniature. A foodie place, its bare boards and scrubbed tables make it look more

like a café than a pub – so we ate there. But it had Windsor & Eton brewery's Windsor Knot (4.0% abv), St Peter's Organic Best Bitter (4.1% abv), its own Duke of Cambridge Bitter (3.7% abv) brewed by Pitfield's, and Pitfield's own Ecowarmer (5.0% abv). I chose the St Peter's and found it similar to the Truman's at the previous stop – very acceptable.

The **Earl of Essex** is another Victorian pub in the same neighbourhood, with more bare boards. It provided a selection of rarer beers on handpump: Nene Valley's NVB (4.1% abv), Magic Rock's Rapture (4.6% abv), A Head in a Hat Brewery – now there's a name to conjure with – Tommy (4.2% abv) and, from Wales, Waen Brewery's TWA (3.7%). Trying to stay sober by choosing a session beer, I tried the Waen and was a bit disappointed. Maybe it doesn't travel well.

Islington Pubs (continued)



Bare boards are obviously an Islington thing – more of them at the **Island Queen**, another Victorian pub in the typical London style.

Not such rare ales this time, though – Timothy Taylor Landlord (4.3%), Sharp's Doom Bar (4.0% abv), Adnams Lighthouse (3.4% abv) and, to the delight of



the dark beer lovers in the group, Belhaven Black Stout (4.2% abv) were on handpump. I had Landlord and found it well-kept.

Then to the **Prince of Wales** – which doesn't have Prince Charles on its sign! More bare boards here, but a different atmosphere. This was a proper locals' local, with not much foodie pretension about it. A small place fronting on to the Regent's Canal, it offered only Doom Bar, which had just run out, and Adnams Bitter (3.7% abv) on handpump. The Adnams was in decent nick.

The last of our visits in trendy Islington was to the very crowded **Charles Lamb**, our third Good Beer Guide pub of the day. Hophead and Windsor Knot appeared again, along with Signature Brewery's Black Vinyl Stout (4.2% abv) and A Head in a Hat (them again!) Titfer (4.2% abv). I had the Titfer, which turned out to be another traditional bitter. Are they making a comeback against all the golden and blonde ales?

Moving eastwards along the City Road into a less trendy area, we reached our final stop, the **Wenlock**. Not untrendy for long, though, one suspects – the pub is surrounded by building sites with posh flats going up. A serious real ale pub, this, but sadly with a

cloud over its future – its site has become so valuable that development threatens. Ten handpumps were in use, only one of them duplicating anything we'd seen earlier in the day – Hophead for the third time. Of the other nine beers, two were former Champion Beers of Britain – Mighty Oak's Oscar Wilde Mild (3.7% abv), CBoB 2011, and Crouch Vale Brewer's Gold (4.0% abv), CBoB 2005 and 2006. I tried Arbor Brewery's Triple Hop Series #14 (4.0%), a golden ale in the hoppy Oakham style, and liked it.

Some stalwarts dropped in to another couple of pubs on the walk back to Kings Cross, but I'd exceeded my daily beer quota by some margin, so I took a bus back instead!

Fytton Rowland

CAMRA Pubs Month April 2014

CAMRA will again be organising Community Pubs Month in April following the success of 2013's event. This month of action gives pubs a campaign to focus promotions around. They can try some new marketing initiatives to attract more custom.

Twenty-six pubs close every week. We do not want this situation getting any worse, so please encourage your friends (especially those who do not visit pubs regularly) to have a night out in one of your local pubs in April to show your support. Imagine if your local was one of the 26 to close next month!

How will CAMRA support this event?

CAMRA produced some free promotional packs for pubs to use that will remind people how great pubs are.

All pubs that feature in the Good Beer Guide 2014 will automatically be sent a promotional pack. Other pubs can order one by visiting communitypubsmonth.org.uk. CAMRA's national press office will also issue a number of press releases to raise the profile of pub-going.



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Great Community Pubs the perfect blend for everyone.



A great community pub is adaptable to the needs of its locals offering the perfect social environment for all to enjoy. Please support your local in Community Pubs Month, April 2014.
www.communitypubsmonth.org.uk

CAMRA Membership Benefits

For just £23* a year, that's less than a pint a month, you can join CAMRA and enjoy the following benefits:

- A quarterly copy of our magazine BEER, which is packed with features on pubs, beers and breweries.
- Our monthly newspaper, 'What's Brewing', informing you on beer and pub news and detailing events and beer festivals around the country.
- Reduced entry to over 160 national, regional and local beer festivals.
- Socials and brewery trips, with national, regional and local groups.
- The opportunity to campaign to save pubs and breweries under threat of closure.
- The chance to join CAMRA / Brewery Complimentary Clubs that are exclusive to CAMRA members. These clubs offer a variety of promotions including free pint vouchers, brewery trips, competitions, and merchandise offers.
- Discounts on all CAMRA books including the Good Beer Guide.

Plus these amazing discounts...

10% discount on JD Wetherspoons Real Ale Visiting™	10% discount with National Express coach services	10% discount on Expresso coffee
10% savings at Coca-Cola Outlets	10% off beer lists with Greenpeace members	20% off brewery and beer serving events
10% discount on booking with Collage	10% discount on booking with Hoxton	Up to 50% off - with members for the family and friends to visit

For more on your CAMRA Membership Benefits please visit www.camra.org.uk/benefits

* This price is based on the Direct Debit discount. ** Join CAMRA membership will ensure one set of vouchers to drink. CAMRA reserves the right to withdraw any offer as soon as stock runs out and members should check CAMRA website for updated details of current offers.

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I'm a Milton Keynes based home brewer who started making beer in 1971. In 2002 I restarted brewing, with the intention of making commercial standard beers. Since then I have progressed to the point where I brew some 700 litres of beer a year, using only water, malt, hops and my own brewery yeast (strictly speaking, I also use ordinary sugar for conditioning only and replenish the yeast every couple of years).



Two beautiful pints at 17p each!

The brewery is a 60 litre capacity nanobrewery – part way between a normal home brewery of 25 litre capacity and a commercial microbrewery. Its footprint is 250cm by 80cm, most of which is the storage unit which holds up to 150 litres of cask conditioned real ale at Casque Mark recommended temperature. It includes a fridge that can also store bottled beer or a couple of dozen bottles of white wine. I operate to professional brewery standards of materials, processing, storage and dispense. The figure of 29p a litre was correct as of my last purchases and includes everything except water, energy and minor consumables.

After many years' happy brewing I now find that I don't enjoy it quite as much as I used to, because it's become more a routine chore than a hobby. A brew day is fairly hard physical work and I'd rather free up my

time and spend the kids' inheritance instead.

By about August 2014 I will have used up my stock of brewing ingredients and at that time I plan to stop brewing. I would like someone to inherit the brewery as a going concern sometime between now and that date. I'm not looking to make a profit but I do want to get a fair price for the equipment and ingredients - the intellectual property comes free!

I would ideally like to perform a handover over a period of at least a couple of brewing cycles, to include transfer of all knowledge (captured in a spreadsheet and a written checklist), skills, unused ingredients and ultimately all the equipment.

If you or anyone you know would be interested in finding out more please contact me on 01908 235750 or ken.croucher@btinternet.com.

Ken Croucher

Ken recently became Chairman of the Milton Keynes and North Buckinghamshire branch of CAMRA.



The complete brewery

Branch Diary

CAMRA North Beds Branch business meetings are normally held on the second Thursday of alternate months, e.g. January and March. Social and campaigning events are usually held on the third Thursday of each month.

Guests are welcome at social events, but members have priority on brewery visits. For latest information check *What's Brewing* or visit the branch website at www.northbedscamra.org.uk

Unless otherwise noted, details can be obtained from, and bookings made with, Gary Mudd on 01234 741871 or e-mail socials@northbedscamra.org.uk

April

Thursday 10 – Branch Visit to the Three Bedfordshire Pubs of the Year. Leaving the Wellington Arms, Werlington Street, Bedford, at 7 p.m. Contact Gary Mudd or see branch website for details.

Thursday 24 – Branch Visit to Pubs in Shefford. By public bus from Bedford Bus Station. Contact Gary Mudd or see branch website for details.

May

Monday 5 – Bank Holiday Breakfast

At the White Horse, Newnham Avenue, Bedford at 10 a.m.; beer served from 11 a.m. During of the pub's beer festival. Contact Gary Mudd or see branch website for details.

Thursday 8 – Branch Meeting.

Business meeting at Bedford Rowing Club, Duckmill Lane, Bedford, at 8 p.m. CAMRA members only.

Thursday 22 – Branch Visit to Pubs in Wootton. By public bus from Bedford Bus Station. Contact Gary Mudd or see branch website for details.

June

Thursday 5 – Summer Day Out.

Contact Gary Mudd or see branch website for details.

Thursday 26 – Branch Visit to Pubs in Kempston. By public bus from Bedford

Bus Station. Contact Gary Mudd or see branch website for details.

July

Thursday 3 – Branch Annual General Meeting. At Bedford International Athletic Stadium, Barkers Lane, Bedford. Contact Gary Mudd or see branch website for details.

Thursday 24 - Branch Meeting. Business meeting at Bedford Rowing Club, Duckmill Lane, Bedford, at 8 p.m. CAMRA members only.



LocAle is a scheme to promote locally brewed real ales.

North Beds LocAle scheme includes real ales from all breweries within 25 miles of Bedford.

LocAle is about consumer choice, local jobs, a sustainable environment, local distinctiveness and local pubs. Beers from local breweries means shorter delivery runs. Local breweries help maintain local beer styles and support the local economy.

Licensees who regularly offer one or more locally brewed real ales are invited to join LocAle. CAMRA provides window stickers, pump clip crownlers, drip mats and other promotional material free of charge.

North Beds LocAle currently includes 27 breweries. The breweries currently included are listed on the branch website at www.northbedscamra.org.uk. Fifteen local pubs currently accredited to LocAle are also listed on the branch website.

We hope more local pubs and clubs selling locally brewed real ales will join LocAle during 2014. For more information, or to join the scheme, contact Peter Argyle on 01234 822698 or email pubsofficer@northbedscamra.org.uk



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