

It's that time again: BEDFORD BEER AND CIDER FESTIVAL 6TH-9TH OCTOBER



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Chairman's Corner

Our AGM, held in the Ent Shed at The Gordon Arms, was well attended, and I'd like to thank all the staff at the

Gordon Arms for making it a successful night. It was good to see so many members attend, and I hope that this will encourage members to attend future branch meetings. The buffet was excellent, and our treasurer Mike Benyon did a wonderful job of planning this. Officers elected at the AGM were myself as Branch Chairman for another year, Mike Benyon as Treasurer, Ian Higgs as Secretary, Neil Ratnett as Membership Secretary, Gary Mudd as Social Secretary, Peter Argyle as Branch Contact, Pubs Officer and Newsletter Distribution, Fytton Rowland as Firkin Editor, Peter Lamswood as Branch Webmaster and Lynne Ratnett as Branch Auditor. Other committee members are Jeanette Manning, John Martin, Paul Weston, Geoff Foll and John Cowell. I would like to thank all Branch officers and committee, old and new, for giving up their time to help our branch. If any member has any suggestions or queries about our branch, feel free to contact me or any other committee member.

Our annual outing took us up to the Black Country, and a fantastic day was had by all I enjoyed all the breweries and pubs we visited, and the walk down the canal in the middle provided a welcome break for most of those who came. Bill Roffe represented us on the joint Bedfordshire branches day trip to London, and it proved a very interesting outing. Articles on both these trips appear in this issue.

Our September outing that Gary is planning as his first social is a Saturday trip to CAMRA National Club of the Year 2010, the Rushden Historical Transport Society Social Club. This was called 'a hidden gem' in our last issue – a name it lives up to.

The Bedford Beer and Cider Festival in the Corn Exchange, Bedford, is on 6th to 9th October, and we hope to see you there, members and non-members, having a good time as usual. See fuller details in this issue.

Anyone who has an article that they think would be interesting to our readers, do not be shy, send it in to our Editor

Don Allan
Branch Chairman



Nottingham brewer crowned king of the Castle!

After a year of local tasting panels and regional heats leading up to the finals, CAMRA has announced that Castle Rock (of Nottingham) brewery's Harvest Pale has been crowned the 'Best Beer in Britain'. Harvest Pale, which has an ABV of 3.8%, is described in CAMRA's Good Beer Guide 2010 as 'blonde and refreshing with distinctive citrus hop.'

Overall winners

Champion Beer of Britain - *Castle Rock, Harvest Pale* (3.8% ABV, Nottingham) – also best Golden Ale

Second - *Timothy Taylor, Landlord* (4.3% ABV, Keighley, West Yorkshire) – also best Best Bitter

Third - *Surrey Hills, Hammer Mild* (3.8% ABV, Guildford, Surrey) – also best Mild

Other category winners:

Bitter - RCH, PG Steam (3.9% ABV, Weston-Super-Mare, Somerset)

Strong Bitter - Thornbridge, Jaipur IPA (5.9% ABV, Bakewell, Derbyshire)

Speciality Beer - Amber, Chocolate Orange Stout (4% ABV, Ripley, Derbyshire)

Winter Beer (announced in January 2010)
Elland, 1872 Porter (6.5% ABV, Elland, West Yorkshire)

Bottled Beer (sponsored by Travelodge)
St Austell, Admiral's Ale (5% ABV, St Austell, Cornwall)

It's Time for a Festival!



BEDFORD's own "Octoberfest" is back soon. CAMRA's 33rd annual celebration of real ale, cider, perry and foreign beer will be held at the Corn Exchange in St Paul's Square, from Wednesday 6th to Saturday 9th October. Founded by local CAMRA members, the festival has been held every autumn since 1978. It has grown, first to include cider and perry, then by spreading upstairs to include a dedicated foreign beer bar. The 33rd annual festival looks like being as attractive as ever.

110 Real ales and 30 ciders

The festival will be similar to last year, with about 110 different real ales, about 30 brands of real cider and perry, and a wide range of draught and bottled beers from Belgium, Germany and other European countries. All draught real ales and ciders will be dispensed by gravity, direct from the cask.

Although only a handful of Bedfordshire pubs sell real cider or perry (made from pears), the popularity of these traditional fermented fruit drinks has earned cider a regular place in the festival's title. As with real ale, there is a huge difference between real cider or perry and the processed keg ciders usually offered in Bedfordshire. CAMRA has proclaimed October as "Cider and Perry Month". The festival will sell no keg beers or processed ciders, nor will any of the products on sale be dispensed under gas pressure, as you might expect from the Campaign for Real Ale. The full beer and cider lists will be posted on our website at www.northbedscamra.org.uk during September and will be printed in the free souvenir programme given to visitors.

Real ale is cool

Every indoor beer festival has trouble keeping real

ales in good condition. Despite air conditioning, the main hall is bound to warm up during an evening session packed with up to 800 people, but heat is not good for beer. To ensure that only high quality beers are served, the festival will use power chillers and cooling jackets around the casks. The pint delivered to your glass will remain in good condition throughout the week.



Foreign beer and food

As well as British real ales, cider and perry in the main hall, the foreign beer bar in the Howard Room upstairs will offer a wide range of speciality draught and bottled beers from Belgium, Germany and other countries. The organisers will try to include beers from Bamberg, Bedford's twin town in Bavaria. The Howard Room and adjacent balcony also provide a quiet area for sitting out and enjoying hot and cold meals and snacks from the Corn Exchange catering service. A varied menu will be available every lunchtime and evening.

Lined glasses mean full pints

Visitors will be issued festival glasses sponsored by Wells Eagle IPA for £2 sale or return. If you like the glass, take it home as a souvenir. All glasses will be oversized and lined for pint and half-pint, supporting CAMRA's campaign for full measure. Colin the regular engraver will gladly personalise your glass or other objects for you, but engraved glasses cannot be returned for refunds when you leave.

Buy your Good Beer Guide here

Colleagues from CAMRA East Beds Branch will run the CAMRA shop and tombola, offering a range of shirts, books, breweriana and souvenirs from CAMRA and various breweries. Books will include the brand new Good Beer Guide 2011, hot off the press. You can also win a host of attractive prizes on the tombola.

OUT NOW!

Buy a copy at the Bedford Beer and Cider Festival



Entertainment

There will be live music in the main hall on Wednesday and Saturday evenings. Popular local entertainer Dr Busker and his notorious musical wit will get the festival off to a start on Wednesday, while singer Hayley Strangelove will bring the event to a



musical close on Saturday evening. The Bedford Morris Men are expected to perform in the hall around Saturday lunchtime, probably with one or two guest teams.

Help local charity

The cloakroom service in the basement will be run by the Bedford Lions to raise funds for local charities. Please give generously.

CONTINUED OVERLEAF >



oakham ales

www.oakhamales.com Tel 01733 370500

Arrive early – but no children please

Check the poster in this issue for opening hours and evening admission charges. Everyone gets in free before 5p.m., and there is always a queue at the door by mid-evening on Friday. CAMRA members get in free at any time. If you plan to come several times, why not join CAMRA on day one and get in free for the rest of the week? The hall lift will be available for visitors with restricted mobility. Ask festival staff at the door to arrange lift access direct from the street. To make the best use of space for drinkers, the organisers regret that no one under age 18 will be admitted to the festival.

Pass-outs for smokers

Although smoking is prohibited inside the Corn Exchange, smokers and others will be allowed short pass-outs into the street, leaving their glasses with door staff inside. Drinking alcohol in the street is not permitted.

Don't drink and drive

If you must drive to the festival, take advantage of

our free soft drinks, and make sure someone else drives the next day. Even better, take a bus, train or taxi home.

Staff needed!

We welcome new volunteers to work at the Festival. Please call 01234 344388 or complete the online staffing form at www.northbedscamra.org.uk

Sponsor a beer cask!

Put your business on the bar by sponsoring a cask of real ale at Bedford Beer & Cider Festival. For just £50, your company name and logo will be posted on the beer stillage throughout the four-day festival. Call 01234 344388 or visit www.northbedscamra.org.uk

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beers

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Wed 4-11pm
Thu-Sat 11.30am-11pm

Admission

FREE before 5pm
From 5pm: Wed £2, Thu £3, Fri £5, Sat £1
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Wheelchair access to all floors
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Entertainers

Wed eve: Dr Busker
Sat lunch: Bedford Morris Men
Sat eve: Hayley Strangelove

Other attractions

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Autumn Beer Festivals

St Ives Booze on the Ouse Beer Festival

Thu 16 to Sat 18 September at St Ivo Recreation Centre, Westwood Road, St Ives PE27 6WU. Open Thu/Fri 5-10.45, Sat 12-10. Admission Thu £1 5-7pm then £2, Fri £1 5-7pm then £3, Sat £1 all day, CAMRA members free at all times. Over 55 real ales plus real cider and foreign beers, souvenir glasses, tombola and CAMRA shop, food in all sessions, free soft drinks for drivers. See display ad in this issue. www.huntscamra.org.uk

19th Letchworth Garden City Beer & Cider Festival

Thu 23 to Sat 25 September at Plinston Hall, Broadway, Letchworth SG6 3NX (near railway station). Open Thu 5-11, Fri/Sat 12-11. Admission £1 Fri before 5pm, £2 at all other times, CAMRA members free. About 50 real ales including local beers, excellent selection of cider and perry, plus draught and bottled foreign beers, hot and cold food, tombola and CAMRA shop. No music – a quiet festival. www.camranorthherts.org.uk

Great Central Railway Beer Festival, Loughborough

Fri 24 to Sun 26 September at Loughborough Central Station, Great Central Road, Loughborough. Leics LE11 1RW. Admission £3 (£1 after 8 pm), free to CAMRA members. Live music and food. East Midlands Trains direct from Bedford to Loughborough Midland station, then a short walk. For more details, phone 01509 230726

St Albans Beer Festival

Wed 29 September to Sat 2 October, Alban Arena, Civic Centre, St Albans. Open Wed 12-11, Thu-Sat 11-11. Admission prices vary, CAMRA members free all times. Advance tickets available via website. Over 350 real ales, plus cider and perry, bottle-conditioned beers and a wide range of foreign beers. Daily breweriana auctions, tombola, prize quiz Saturday, live music each evening. See display ad in this issue. Easy journey by train from Bedford. www.stalbansbeerfestival.com

33rd Bedford Beer & Cider Festival

Wed 6 to Sat 9 October, Corn Exchange, St Paul's

Square, Bedford MK40 1SL. Open Wed 4-11, Thu-Sat 11.30-11. Admission free up to 5pm and to CAMRA members at all times. For evening admission prices and other details, see full-page display opposite. Further details including full beer and cider lists on website.

www.northbedscamra.org.uk

Oxford Beer Festival

Thu 14 to Sat 16 October at Oxford Town Hall, St Aldates St, Oxford. Open Thu 5-11, Fri 11-11, Sat 11-8. Admission £2, CAMRA members £1. About 140 real ales plus cider and perry. Easy journey by X5 express bus from Bedford.

<http://oxfordcamra.org.uk>

Nottingham Robin Hood Beer & Cider Festival


Thu 14 to Sun 17 October in grounds of Nottingham Castle (Old Market Square 1min). Open Thu-Sat 11-11, Sun 12-3 (subject to beer and cider stocks). Admission Thu-Sat £5, CAMRA members £2.50, Sun free. Advance tickets available via website. More than 700 real ales plus ciders, perries and country wines, hot food. Live music from Victorian bandstand. East Midlands trains from Bedford. www.nottinghamcamra.org

4th Cambridge Oktoberfest

Fri 15 to Sat 16 October at University Social Club, Mill Lane (bus station 5 min). Open Fri 5-10.30, Sat 12-10.30. Admission £2.50, CAMRA members free. About 40 real ales including continental-style specials, mainly from local brewers, plus German draught and bottled beers, including beers from the Munich Oktoberfest. Regular X5 express bus from Bedford. www.cambridgebeerfestival.com


Concrete Pint: Milton Keynes Beer Festival

Wed 27 to Sat 30 October at the Pitz, Woughton Campus Leisure Centre, Leadenhall, Milton Keynes MK6 5EJ. Open Wed 5-11, Thu-Sat 12-11. Admission £3 Thu/Fri after 5pm, CAMRA members free. Over 50 real ales, cider and perry, hot food. Live music Thu and Sat eves. Use X5 bus from Bedford to CMK, then local route 5. See display ad in this issue. www.mkcamra.org.uk



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Pub News

Cock, Wootton

A warm welcome to new landlords Daniel and Steve, who recently moved from Devon to this popular corner pub in the centre of the village. Home-cooked meals, including Friday fish specials at £6.95, are served daily except Sunday and Tuesday evenings. Wells Eagle IPA is available on handpump. The pub is open all day at weekends and there is live music every Saturday evening, acoustic musis every other Tuesday and a quiz on the first Sunday evening of the month. Call 01234 764350.



Victoria Arms, Wilden

Hello again to Vicky Crooks, who has moved a few miles from the Salutation to this attractive village pub not far out of Bedford. Greene King IPA and other real ales are available, but we have yet to find out more about her plans. Call 01234 772146.



Bull, London Road, Bedford

A warm welcome to new managers Gary and Liz Cummins at this large suburban local south of the river. Originally from Lancashire, they have developed an interest in real ale and hope to expand the range available at the Bull. Current ales are Greene King IPA, Abbot, Old Speckled Hen and a guest ale. A new food menu is now available, with regular feature evenings – Bike Meet Monday, Open Mic Night Tuesday, Poker Night Thursday and Quiz Night Sunday. Call 01234 355719.



Cricketers Arms, Goldington Road, Bedford

We are delighted to hear that landlord Paul Davies can now order beers from the SIBA direct delivery scheme, as well as from the Punch Taverns list. Local SIBA breweries that may supply the Cricketers include B&T, Great Oakley, Oxfordshire Ales, Pottton, Potbelly, Tring and White Park. Call 01234 303958 or visit www.cricketersarms.co.uk

Fox & Hounds, Clapham

A welcome to returner Mark Jeffreys, who took over this prominent pub at the north end of the village back in March. Mark ran the Star further down the high street from 1997 to 2002. Real Wells Eagle IPA and Bombardier are available on the pumps, with a regular guest ale possible in the future. Bar meals are available lunchtimes and evenings. Mark is encouraging new sports teams and regular events with the aim of re-establishing the Fox & Hounds as a local community pub. Further information on the website www.foxandhoundsclapham.co.uk

Royal Oak, Roxton

Hello again to Richard Coop, who moved recently from the Gate at Harrowden to take on the Royal Oak in this small village just off the A1 and A421. Real Wells Eagle IPA and Bombardier are available. Call 01234 870361.

Prince of Wales, Bromham

The item on change of hands here in our last issue was a bit premature, as the pub has been closed all summer for major refurbishment. More news when it re-opens.

Dark (beer) doings in The Black Country

North Beds CAMRA's summer all-day excursion this year went to The Black Country on 10th June. Our destinations: five brewery taps. The region is famous for its milds, and we sampled many of those.

First stop after the thirsty journey from Bedford was the **Beacon Hotel at Sedgley**, home of **Sarah Hughes Brewery** – Sarah Hughes was the grandmother of the current licensee, John Hughes, and she founded the brewery in 1921. The pub is a listed building of very traditional design – four small rooms are supplied from an ornate Victorian carved servery in the centre. Most people started gently with Amber Ale (4% abv) to wash down their cheese-cob lunch. But the high spot was Dark Ruby Mild, a 6% beer – who said milds are weak? – that has won many awards. We couldn't visit the brewery, which is of traditional tower design atop the pub.



Park Inn interior

Next stop was the **Park Inn at Woodsetton**, home of the much larger **Holden's Brewery**, which lies behind the pub. Holden's have about twenty tied houses in the area, and produce five cask ales regularly. Your reporter tried halves of the mild – a conventional 3.7% one this time – and Golden Glow, a nice hoppy golden bitter at 4.4%. Back to architectural history at the **Old Swan** at

Netherton next, a brewpub whose name is also the beer brand.

The pub has expanded by knocking through into the terraced house next door, but both buildings have retained their Victorian character, inside and out. Their typical Black Country mild retailed at £1.80 per pint, and we also sampled Entire, their award-winning premium bitter.



Beacon, interior

To work up an appetite (and thirst) most of the party walked to the next stop, along the towpath of the Dudley No. 1 canal. From the foot of the Delph flight of locks, a steep uphill half-mile brought us to the pub with two names – officially **The Vine at Brierley Hill**, but better known locally as the **Bull and Bladder**. Batham's is brewed here and is sold through nine other houses as well. We tried the mild again – a bit thin at 3.5% – but the bitter (4.3%) had a lovely aroma and a sweetish flavour.

The final stop, for supper and a brewery visit, was the **Windsor Castle at Lye**. This building, which became a pub only recently, stands in front of the **Sadler's Brewery**, which was founded in 2004, thus contrasting strongly with Sarah Hughes.



The Vine



Windsor Castle

The mild here was a 4% Black Country Dark Mild with hints of chocolate, but the high spot was Mud City Stout, which demands respectful drinking at 6.6%. The brewer presented some of us with bottles from the last-ever case of the bottle-conditioned version of Mud City – future bottlings will not be bottle-conditioned.

And then it was home to Bedford, reached after 11 p.m. after an enjoyable day in one of Britain's finest beer regions.

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A Summer Evening's Walk

Editor's note: The walk reported here is the last event organised by John Martin before his retirement as Socials Organiser of CAMRA – Gary Mudd has now replaced him. The whole branch would like to put on record its gratitude to John for all the hard work he has put in organising enjoyable excursions for us over the years.

On 12th August we had an evening's walk from pub to pub, starting at The Pheasant on Kimbolton Road and working our way into town. The Pheasant is a traditional estate pub, recently refurbished. It has one large bar with a restaurant area at one end. There are a sizable garden, a patio and a children's play area. It is a popular local – when I arrived, there were lots of people there, some having a meal. It is a Wells house, selling three cask beers from the Bedford brewery. I had Eagle IPA that went down very easily. It has a welcoming atmosphere with pleasant and efficient staff. Gradually other CAMRA members turned up, and when it became time to move on we were ten in number.



Bluebell on Putnoe Lane

After about fifteen minutes walk, we arrived at the Bluebell on Putnoe Lane. This has a conservatory and an outside area, and a riot of colourful hanging baskets. The pub was quiet, and there was only Courage Best on draught, but that was in good form and went down well. Whilst we were there our number increased by a member who had walked all the way from Amptill Road; now there's dedication to the cause!

Leaving the Bluebell, we cut across a park to The Queen's Tavern on Queens Drive, another estate-style building next to a row of shops. It is a

Greene King two-bar locals' pub with IPA on hand pump, which was in good condition. The landlord was accommodating, finding us enough chairs and an extra table so that we could sit as one group.



White Horse

Then off to more familiar territory, the White Horse on Newnham Avenue, always popular with CAMRA members. It was a music night but luckily we had a table reserved at the other end of the bar so we could hear ourselves talk. Nigel, the landlord, had laid on food for us, which was certainly well received as we had now walked nearly two miles.

The last stop was the Cricketers Arms in Goldington Road, where we were faced with a choice of six real ales. The Cricketers is a single-bar pub on two levels, and although it is owned by Punch Taverns the landlord has some flexibility on purchasing beers.

Altogether, a healthy and pleasant evening, and it was encouraging to find so many pubs selling real ale to good standard.



John Martin



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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, Shefford 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 at the foot of this page.

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Printed by Lodge Printers Ltd, Unit 3, Houghton Hill Industries, Houghton Hill Farm, Houghton, Huntingdon, Cambridgeshire PE28 2DH

Design and Layout by Tamoko Design Tel: 0845 838 7581
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0709



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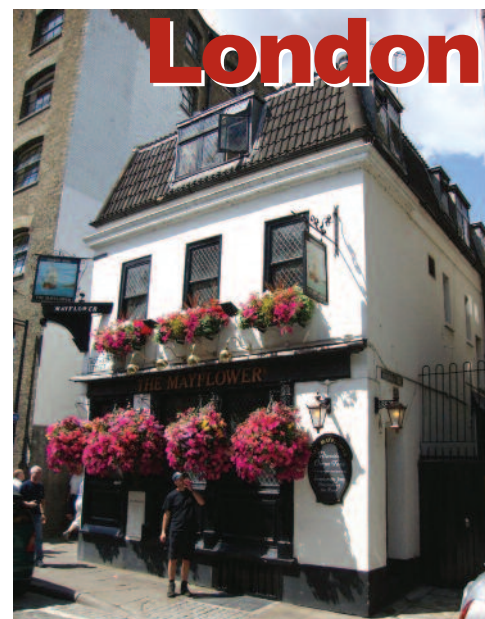
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London Pub Tour 2

Last year a joint outing of all three Bedfordshire Camra branches was held to pubs in Belgravia. This year it was decided to go to visit some historic pubs in east London.

So on Saturday 24th July I found myself outside the Grapes in Limehouse along with about 20 others from East, North and South Beds. The Grapes is a long narrow pub with a small veranda out over the river. Most of us managed to squeeze onto the veranda and get a view of the river.

After a pint of O'Hanlon's Goldblade it was then on to the Prospect of Whitby, a half mile walk along the Thames. Although it is called the Riverside walk there are buildings on the river bank, so you only get the occasional stretch beside the river.

The Prospect of Whitby is somewhat larger than the Grapes but very popular. It has an outside drinking area on the first floor overlooking the river. Here I tried the 'new' Young's London Gold, formerly called Kew Gold and now available on draught all year round.

The next pub was across the river on the south side, so we took the short walk to Wapping

station to catch an East London line train to Rotherhithe. This line is now part of the London Overground. It has been extended and refurbished and has brand new trains. Unfortunately none of our One Day Travel Card tickets was recognised by the new ticket machines and we had to be let through by the ticket office staff. The line from Wapping to Rotherhithe goes through the tunnel built by Marc Brunel and his son Isambard Kingdom Brunel, the first underwater tunnel to be built in the world.

At Rotherhithe we went to the Mayflower, another pub with decking out over the river and claiming to have connections with the Pilgrim Fathers, a Greene King house. After a pint of IPA it was back to the train for the trip back under the Thames to Wapping for the short walk to the Town Of Ramsgate. However, some of us felt the urge to visit the Captain Kidd first. This is a Sam Smith's house selling Old Brewery Bitter at £1.99 a pint. It was then a short stagger to the Town of Ramsgate, another long narrow pub with a small open area at the back overlooking the river. Here I tried the Wye Valley HPA.

I left the party here to make my way back to Bedford. Some of the party were getting into the mood and planning to walk on to Tower Bridge and go back south of the river for some more pubs. I found the trip very enjoyable and can recommend all the pubs we visited. Look out for next year's trip!

Bill Roffe



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Hook Norton Brewery

Returning from a few days in the Cotswolds, Joan and I visited Hook Norton for a tour of the brewery. There has been a brewery in Hook Norton for over 150 years and it is still run by the same family. The first brewery was started by farmer John Harris in the farm malt house, which is now the visitor centre. The present brewery, run by his great-great-grandson James Clarke, is a Victorian tower brewery on 6 floors. On the ground floor is a 25 horse-power steam engine, which is still in working order and is currently used occasionally to power the mill to crush the malt. On the top floor is the open cooling pan, vented by louvers on all four sides. However, for hygiene reasons, this is no longer used today. The liquor is drawn from wells beneath the brewery as it was in John Harris's day in 1849. No fertilizers or chemicals are allowed on the fields surrounding the brewery to protect the purity of the water. The brewery uses locally grown barley, although they no longer malt it themselves, and the remains from the



mash are fed to local pigs. The commonly used hop varieties at Hook Norton are Fuggles, Goldings and Challenger.

Hook Norton Brewery has four core beers: Hooky Dark, a chestnut coloured ale, Hooky Bitter, a golden session bitter, Hooky Gold, a very pale, crisp hoppy beer, and Old Hooky, a fruity beer. In addition, they brew a range of seasonal beers. In July this was Haymaker, a strong pale ale, but in August it was to be Summer Haze, a light fruity beer which will be the first wheat beer from Hook Norton. Beers for bottling are currently sent to another brewery, but there are plans to install a bottling plant at Hook Norton. The brewery has 47 pubs in Oxfordshire, Northamptonshire, Warwickshire, Worcestershire and Gloucestershire. Within a five-mile radius of the brewery, beer is still delivered by a shire-horse-drawn dray.

After the tour we sampled all the draught beers and some of the bottled beers. My favourite was Hooky Bitter, but I did like July's seasonal beer, Haymaker, and I looked forward to trying August's Summer Haze.

It is advisable to book for the brewery tour: click on www.hooknortonbrewery.co.uk/public_visitors/brewery_tours_and_museum.php or phone 01608 730384.

Terry Ferguson



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CAMRA East Anglian Pub of the Year 2008

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1st - 3rd October



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Wed 3rd to Sun 7th Nov
Beer festival 11am to 11pm

Supporting British
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Programme of events

www.whitehorsebedford.co.uk
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Confessions of an Earls Court Tyro



This August your editor volunteered to work at the Great British Beer Festival (GBBF) for the first time. I put in three days behind the bar and ended up footsore and weary – but I wouldn't have missed the experience, and I'll be back next year.

So – for the benefit of anyone who hasn't volunteered for the GBBF – here is how each day went. Get up (out of a Hall of Residence bed) about 7 a.m. Get to Earls Court by Tube by about 9 a.m., have breakfast in the staff cafeteria upstairs near the Volunteers' Arms bar. (Free beer for all the workers!). Call at Staffing Office to find out where you're working that day – new volunteers don't have a permanent posting! Sit around for a while nattering to other volunteers, then about 11 a.m. go to report to Bar Manager (Buster at Bar P8 on my first day; James at P5 on the other two days). Do any unskilled jobs allocated by Manager, like mopping the floor.

Once the beers are on, taste them to make sure you know a bit about each beer on that bar – many customers will say 'What do you recommend?' At 12 noon (11 a.m. on the Saturday) the public are admitted. Business is slow at first but gradually builds up; Deputy Bar Manager comes round allocating lunch-break times; newcomers get last choice! I chose early lunch (12.30) each day, since you might as well be away while business is slack. Lunch upstairs in the staff area (£4 for a main course; tea, coffee, juice, water and beer free) or from one of the many food stalls on the festival floor. Back to work – getting busier now. Gradually increasing tempo all afternoon, especially on Friday when many people get off work early. Evening meal break times allocated – again I chose early (5.30 p.m.). Back at 6.15 to find all hell breaking loose – non-stop serving till about 8.30, with other staff on their meal breaks while the number of visitors increases rapidly.

Finally start getting the odd pause for breath from about 9 p.m. onwards, but still busyish until closing time at 10.30. About 10.15, Deputy Bar Manager comes round saying 'Don't forget to draw a pint for yourself before 10.30'.

At 10.30, everyone goes back behind the stillaging with their pints, and natter about how the day has gone while the stewards urge the last reluctant punters to leave. About 11 p.m., go out front again to clean up; when you've finished, up to the staff area to find the Volunteers' Arms closed (boo!).

But once everyone's there, it reopens with a server at every pump, so that all volunteers can get their final pint quickly. Go and sit down with pint while the day's results are announced – how many gallons sold, how many new members signed up (999 by Friday night), how much of the total beer still left (48% by Thursday night). At 12.30 a.m., departure of buses is announced and you file on to the bus for your Hall, ready to collapse into bed about 1 a.m.



THE BULL

259 London Road, BEDFORD
Email: 4041@greeneking.co.uk
www.gkpubs.co.uk/pubs-in-bedford/bull-pub/

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SKY SPORTS

WHAT'S ON

Monday – Biker Meet
Tuesday – Jam Night
Wednesday – Game Console
Thursday – Poker Night
Friday – Party Night
Saturday – Live Acts
Sunday – Quiz Night

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16-18 September 2010

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OPENING TIMES
Thu 5pm-10.45pm
Fri 5pm-10.45pm
Sat all day from 12noon-10pm
Families welcome until 8pm
ADMISSION
(including programme)
Thu-£1 5-7pm, £2 after 7pm
Fri-£1 5-7pm, £3 after 7pm
Sat-£1 all day
CAMRA members free admission
all sessions

Also ... St Neots Beer Festival ... 10-12 March 2011
www.hunts.camra.org.uk/festival for more details

Branch Diary



BRANCH business meetings are normally held on the third Thursday of alternate months, e.g. January and March. Social and campaigning events are usually held on the second 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 <http://www.northbedscamra.org.uk>

SEPTEMBER

Thursday 16 – Branch meeting

Business Meeting at the Three Cups, Newnham Street, Bedford, 8 for 8.15 p.m. CAMRA members only

Saturday 18 – Visit to Rushden Historic Transport Society (Jazz & Steam Day)

Coach from the Wellie at 12:00 noon. Bookings to Gary Mudd on 01234 741871 or bedsocks@tiscali.co.uk

OCTOBER

Wednesday 6 to Saturday 9 – Bedford Beer and Cider Festival

At the Corn Exchange, St Paul's Square. Full details in this issue

Thursday 28 – Visit to Nobby's Brewery, Guilsborough, Northants

Preference given to those who have worked as volunteers at the Bedford Beer & Cider Festival. Details from Gary Mudd on 01234 741871 or bedsocks@tiscali.co.uk

NOVEMBER

Thursday 11 – Branch Social

Details to be announced. See North Beds CAMRA website <http://www.northbedscamra.org.uk> or contact Gary Mudd on 01234 741871 or bedsocks@tiscali.co.uk

THURSDAY 18 – Branch meeting

Business Meeting at the Three Cups, Newnham Street, Bedford, 8 for 8.15 p.m. CAMRA members only

DECEMBER

Thursday 16 – Branch Christmas Party

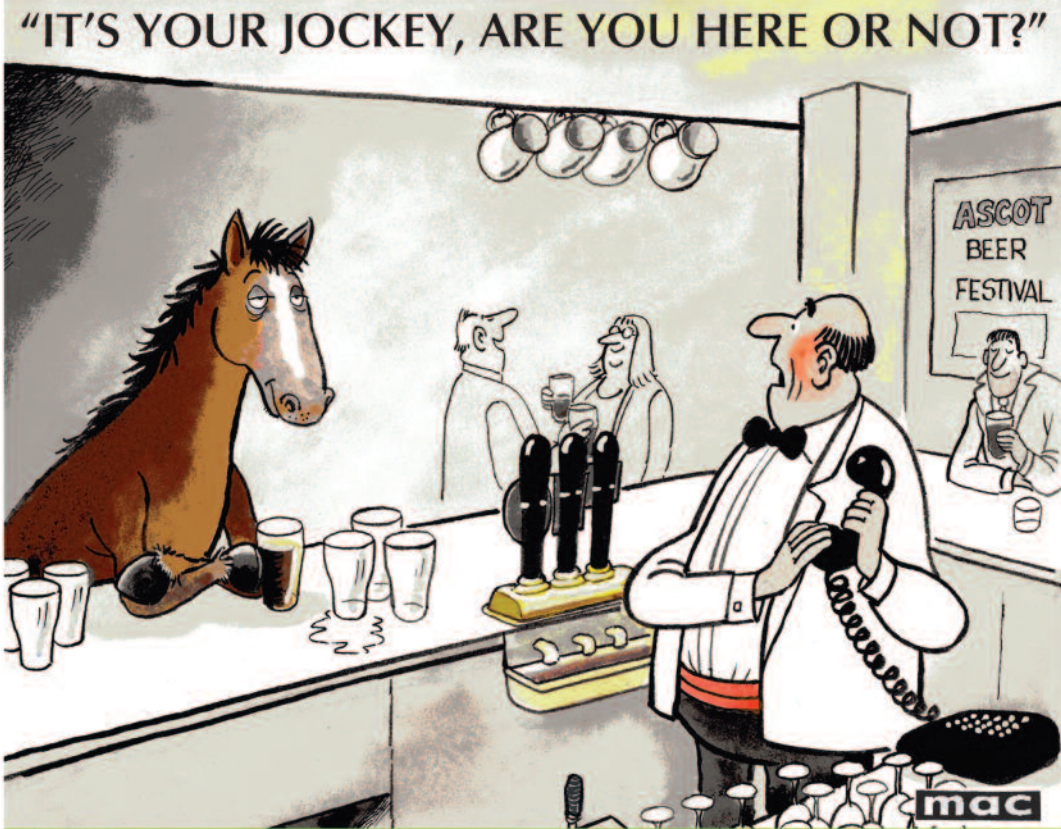
Venue to be announced. See North Beds CAMRA website <http://www.northbedscamra.org.uk> or contact Gary Mudd on 01234 741871 or bedsocks@tiscali.co.uk

JANUARY

Thursday 20 – Branch meeting

Business Meeting at the Three Cups, Newnham Street, Bedford, 8 for 8.15 p.m. CAMRA members only

BEER FESTIVAL
THE PITZ, WOUGHTON CENTRE
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Bus routes 1, 1B, 44, 44X to Oldbrook Christian Centre, or 5 and 5X to the V7/V27 junction. All buses come from Bletchley and CROK stations.
Don't drink & drive - use Skyline Taxis 01908 222111



THE 4TH ASCOT RACECOURSE BEER FESTIVAL Friday 24th and Saturday 25th September 2010

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- Excellent programme of racing.
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