

On Air from the Festival



*CHAIRMAN'S CORNER
R.I.P. GERALD BISHOP
FORTIETH BEDFORD BEER
FESTIVAL
SWAN HOTEL FESTIVAL
WINTER FESTIVALS
SUMMER PUB STROLL
A GOOD EVENING IN NOVEMBER*

*PUBS IN LONDON'S WEST END
A NEW ANGLE ON BEER IN
PETERBOROUGH
AUTUMN MEANDERINGS
HISTORY OF BEER
PUB AND BREWERY NEWS
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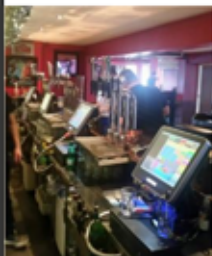
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Chairman's Corner

The long evenings and a sharp downturn in the temperature remind us that Winter is just round the corner. The years seem to be passing at an ever-increasing rate. Time to step aside from the maelstrom of life for a moment, but where? It may be cold outside but a warm welcome is what is needed, and preferably something to help the conversation flow over many different subjects. We may not always agree but it is hearing different points of view which helps us to grow in understanding.

Now is also the time of year to grow in appreciation of different styles of beer. There will be the old favourites making their annual return,

and the familiar punning names, but they often offer a depth and complexity of flavour we may not find in our usual tippie. The advertising on TV may encourage us to buy more but CAMRA encourages responsible drinking, not just knocking it back.

Cask ale is the obvious aid to that because of its variety of tastes. Take time to really taste it, to pause for a moment and consider how the brewer has used relatively few ingredients to produce something to savour. Good beer is not one dimensional. It should offer a balance of aspects that satisfy in different ways. Combine that with good company in a welcoming environment and you have the recipe for an evening to enjoy.

Roger Stokes

R.I.P. Ye Gerbish

We are sorry to report the death of Gerald Bishop, better known by his email address as Ye Gerbish.

Based in Cambridge, he lent his glass-washing skills to a number of CAMRA branch beer festivals, including our Bedford festival from 1996 to 2006. Unfortunately, he came with a vanload of home-made equipment plus his faithful companion DPH (Dish Pan Hands) Teddy, all of which we had to collect from and return to Cambridge every year. His regular, welcome contribution in an unpopular task for volunteers made him a familiar face behind the scenes until we discovered equally reliable, plumbed-in glasswashers in the Corn Exchange.

Gerbish was a true eccentric – the sort of character who cheers us up by being different without becoming irritating or pretentious. His famous, multi-page treatise on handling broken glass remains a classic, though long since replaced by more compact, standard risk assessment forms.

Gerbish gladly did many essential, time-consuming jobs for CAMRA that others were

reluctant to take on. Although we haven't seen him at a Bedford festival for 11 years, those of us who knew him will not easily forget him or his contribution to CAMRA.

Peter Argyle



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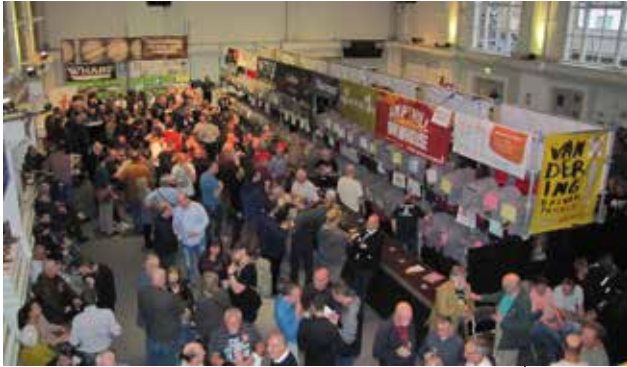
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Forty Years On



No, I didn't go to Harrow School, but their school song seems appropriate for the fortieth Bedford Beer and Cider Festival. This year's was always going to be special, and three local breweries (Amphill, Horne's and White Park) brewed special ruby ales to celebrate the anniversary.

Our main sponsors, Charles Wells Ltd, had chosen our festival for the launch of the first new brews after the sale of their brewery and main brands to Marstons. Until the new smaller brewery is up and running in a couple of years' time, their brewer, Ian Jones, will be travelling the country brewing at other breweries. This is the **Wandering Brewer Project**. At XT Brewery, he had brewed Wet (a 3.7% abv pale bitter) and Wild (a 4.3% full-bodied, maltier bitter), which were revealed to the public on the Wednesday, during the trade session of the



festival. To celebrate the launch and our ruby anniversary, BBC Three Counties Radio broadcast direct from the Corn Exchange. A first for North Beds CAMRA!

This year we welcomed Rookery Mead, who make a traditional honey-based drink of similar strength to sherry. Most of us thought that mead would be too sweet for our taste, but what a revelation! It was so good that several of our sceptics bought bottles of it to take home.

For the first time we invited Ukulele Bedford to perform on Saturday evening, and they went down a storm. The Wednesday evening entertainment was provide by Sloop Groggy Dogs, and the Bedford Morris Men danced as usual.

The main beer bar offered over 160 different beers – we buy only nine gallons of each beer to maximise choice. The cider bar offered forty ciders and ten perries. The choice of real cider normally available in the Bedford area is not large, so the festival is a bonanza for local cider drinkers. Upstairs in the Howard Room, the International Beer Bar sold out its draught beers as usual – and, courtesy of the Corn Exchange management, we had two extra kegs of the ever-popular Früli strawberry beer to sell this year.



Forty Years On (continue)



Food service in the Howard Room was in the hands of Angelo St Cuthberts again, and their traditional pub-style fare served by Angelo's friendly staff gave great satisfaction to visitors and the CAMRA volunteer staff. Oddfellows Chocolate provided their chocolate and beer pairing advice as usual. Downstairs, the CAMRA tombola was popular as ever, but we



had decided not to host the CAMRA shop this time. The 2018 Good Beer Guide, hot off the presses, was sold from the festival office counter instead. From the office we also sold historic Bedford beer festival glasses from down the forty years. They too sold well.

If you came to the festival and enjoyed yourself, why not enjoy the festival from the other side of the bar next year? We always welcome new volunteers, and it's always great fun!

Fytton Rowland

Swan Hotel Beer Festival

Bedford's Swan Hotel holds its festival shortly after the Bedford Beer and Cider Festival – this year on 26th-29th October. Its festival was held in the River Room, with 36 firkins of cask ale plus eleven real ciders and three real perries. Meals included a Sunday roast. Evening entertainments were a quiz on Thursday, country music on Friday with Knoxville Highway, and vocalist Chris Hepworth on Saturday.

The festival was sponsored by Marstons, and four of their beers were among those on offer: Eagle, Jennings Cumberland, Ringwood Razorback and (new to me) 61 Deep from Marstons' Burton brewery.

And the other beers? A wide selection from around the country. I sampled Jarl from Fyne Ales of Argyll, which I'd met before, and Avocet, an organic beer from the Exeter Brewery, which I hadn't. Both citrusy golden beers to my liking.

All beers and ciders were £3.80 a pint, £2.30 a half and £1.80 a third. At festivals, people like to sample a number of beers – that's the whole point – so please don't load the prices of the smaller measures like this next year!

Fytton Rowland



Winter Beer Festivals

22nd Cambridge Winter Ale Festival

17-20 Jan at University Social Club, Mill Lane. Range of traditional winter beers + local ciders and international bottled beers.

cambridgebeerfestival.com

9th Elysian Winter Beer Festival

26-27 Jan at Maltings, Ship Lane, Ely. 84 real ales + 20 ciders.

elycamrabeerfest.com

Stevenage Beer Festival

1-3 Feb at Arts & Leisure Centre, Lytton Way SG1 1LZ. Over 80 real ales plus ciders and international beers.

camranorthherts.org.uk

14th Derby CAMRA Winter Festival

21-24 Feb at Roundhouse, Derby, close to rail stn. 360 real ales plus cider, perry, mead and world beers.

derbycamra.org.uk

35th Luton Beer & Cider Festival

15-17 Feb – see ad below

Great British Beer Festival Winter 2018

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winter.gbbf.org.uk

34th London Drinker Beer & Cider Festival

14-16 Mar at Camden Centre, Bidborough St, WC1H 9AU (near St Pancras). 150 real ales from London breweries + imported beers, ciders/perries, English wines and mead. Closes Friday evening. Last ever festival at this venue.

northlondon.camra.org.uk

St Neots 'Booze on the Ouse' Beer & Cider Festival

15-17 Mar at Priory Centre, Priory Lane PE19 6HB. X5 bus from Bedford 5 min.

hunts.camra.org.uk/festival

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The Seven Wonders of Bedford

We began at the King's Arms in St Mary's Street, a Greene King pub said to be frequented by ghosts! Pleased to say the latter were not seen!



Available were Greene King IPA, Abbot Ale, Belhaven Kittiwake and Morlands Best Bitter. The Kittiwake and Morlands were sampled and both were very acceptable, so the day started off well!



Off towards the Bedford Rowing Club. As it was raining we were unable to sit on the terrace and take in the views of the Great River Ooze.

On offer were Tribute from St Austell and Doom Bar from Sharp's. Not very impressed with the Tribute as it was slightly cloudy, just like the weather!



Rain did not deter the walk, so over the bridge to the Swan Hotel. Only one ale, so Bombardier it was. The surroundings

were opulent in keeping with Bedford's jewel of a hotel. This unfortunately cannot be said for the beer. It was left, and the journey continued further down the Embankment.

Well, what a difference a beer makes. The next stop was the Embankment Hotel. Very busy with both eaters and drinkers on a Saturday afternoon. Four handles, all available with Bombardier, Eagle, Young's Bitter and Wells Globe Hopper. Bombardier and Globe Hopper were sampled and were found to be in excellent condition. As the rain was persistent, a meal was had, and 'Oh dear' another drink, this time Eagle.

It was a quick step to The Ship in St. Cuthbert's Street, the second pub owned by Greene King. Here was a choice of four, again all available. Holy Ship and Honey Porter were chosen, the others being Abbot Ale and Greene King IPA. Although too cold when poured, when they acclimatised, both were very well received by the drinkers.



This trip around Bedford is definitely a keep-fit exercise as the next port of call was the Cricketers in Goldington Road. Black

Sheep Best Bitter and Doom Bar were available. The Black Sheep was thoroughly enjoyed.

And finally to the second Ship of the day, this time in Bromham Road. A Charles Wells pub offering Directors and Young's Bitter. One of each was had, both well kept, thus ending on a high as when the walk started.

Susan Fossey

A Good Evening in November

For North Beds CAMRA's November minibus tour, we started at the **Burnaby Arms** in **Bedford's** Prime Ministers district. It is now under licensee Will, who was behind the bar. As usual there was a good atmosphere, and in this Wells house the handpumps offered Eagle, Young's London Gold, Directors, Young's Winter Warmer, and Wells (Wandering Brewer) Another Special Ale. I can never resist Winter Warmer, and it didn't disappoint, though several of us detected a slight change of flavour from earlier years, now with a hint of liquorice.

Boarding the bus we made the longish hike to **Melchbourne**.



The **St John Arms** (above) is a pleasant Victorian pub on the edge of the village. The beers on handpump were GK IPA and Abbot. A warming fire burned, landlord Eamonn served us, and Abbot was very acceptable.

We looked forward with some anticipation to our next stop, the **New Inn** at **Wymington**, with new licensees. Now a serious real ale and cider house, it offered six cask ales and five real ciders. It had GK IPA and Abbot on, but there were also XB (3.7% abv) and Gold (3.9% abv)

both from Bateman's, Bath Ales Special Pale (3.7% abv) and Black Sheep Rye Mild (4.1% abv). Cider lovers could have chosen between Oakham's Oaple Original and their Oaple Twisted Tree, Moonshine's Crisp Premium and their Rum and Raisin, and Broadoak Strawberry. My first sample was the Bath Ales pale, which was a refreshing golden bitter, in good shape, and my second choice was XB, well up to its usual standard. The pub was busy, and though no reconstruction has taken place, the TV screens and fruit machines had gone and the only sound was the buzz of conversation.



Next to a favourite, the **Bedford Arms** at **Souldrop** (above). I had hoped for Phipps, often on there, but on this occasion the choices were GK IPA, Doom Bar, Black Sheep Best, Plain Ales Innspiration (4.0% abv), and Cotleigh Hawk's Bitter (4.0% abv). Most of us sampled the two less usual beers, and there was a sharp divide of opinion about the Plain Ales one – I was in the camp that didn't like it much. I didn't try the Cotleigh's. The pub is always welcoming and comfortable and some of our number snaffled the armchairs by the fire!

Next, the Swan with **Two Nicks** at **Sharnbrook**. Our second Wells house of the evening, it offered Eagle and Young's London Gold, together with West Berkshire Brewery's Good Old Boy (4.0% abv). Many of those the guest,

A Good Evening in November (continued)



which proved to be a good traditional-style bitter, and well kept. Another warm and welcoming pub, too.

But this was very much a whistle-stop tour, so we were soon back on the bus to another favourite, the **Sun at Felmersham**. Sadly not very busy, the Sun was nevertheless as pleasant as ever, with a log fire burning in the grate. The handpumps supplied Eagle, Oakham JHB, and Lancaster Bomber, with Broadoak Mulled Cider also available. For me, JHB is a no-brainer, and it was in good condition.



The rush had been mainly to make sure that we reached our last stop, the **Cock at Pavenham**, before it closed. We needn't have worried – it was still quite busy. New(ish) licensee John has reinvigorated the Cock. The cask ales available were London Pride (the first of the evening), GK IPA, Cotleigh 25 (4.0% abv) and True North Brewery's Best Bitter (3.8% abv). There wasn't an open fire, but the welcome certainly warm,



and John's friendly chat and deep knowledge of real ale made this last stop the most enjoyable of the evening for me. Both the Cotleigh and the True North (a Sheffield brewery) beers were in excellent nick. Then it was back into **Bedford** about 11.30 to terminate at the **Pilgrim's Progress**.

Fytton Rowland

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Going West

A plethora of interesting, and often historic, pubs await those willing to take a few steps away from the tourist traps of central London. A group of Beds CAMRA members tried some of them in October, enjoying good beer and company along the way.



The meeting point was the **Bloomsbury Tavern** where Late Red and Whitstable Pale joined Spitfire and its Gold stablemate as the offering.

A modest walk brought us to the

Cross Keys in Endell Street with its stained glass and the chance to sample some Brodies (London Fields, Bethnal Green and Grubber), as well as the more familiar London Glory and Olde Trip together with much to feast our eyes on.



The **Lamb & Flag** was quieter than I have known it and offered eight ales to tempt us. Along with more familiar offerings there was a surprise. Brewed at Windsor & Eton, Uprising's All Day Pale was full of flavour but not alcohol. It tasted to have far more than its 2.7% abv. Another short walk took us to the **White Swan**. A disappointment here was that the Rye Not was not drinkable though the badge still faced the front. This Nicholson's pub did, however, have a number of other offerings behind the Halloween cobwebs, including Fire & Water brewed for them by Vocation Brewery.



The **Salisbury**, a pub in the CAMRA National Inventory of Historic Pub Interiors, was the next port of call. Were it not for the electric light it might well have been just as it



was in the former Prime Minister's day when bare-knuckle boxing took place in the area. As in all the pubs we visited, the

beer was in good condition, though here the cut glass and other parts of the décor attracted more than the variety of ales on offer. That said, it is certainly worth a visit. As expected the **Bear & Staff** was quite busy before we headed away from the tourist route again.



Dean Street offered us the **Golden Lion** and the **Crown & Two Chairmen**, both rebuilt between the wars but tracing their history back to the 18th century. There were no real surprises here but each offered a modest choice of relatively familiar brews to round off the official

part of the tour. The North Beds contingent put in a slight diversion on the way back to the train, calling at the **Dog & Duck**, another picturesque pub. Here at last we were able to try Rye Not and the general opinion was that it is well worth trying.

Roger Stokes

A New Angle on Beer

This year our post-festival brewery trip took us to Peterborough and Angles Ales, who supplied three beers to our festival: Goat Tosser, a 4.4% abv brown bitter, Feral Nun, a dark ruby porter-style ale at 5% abv, and Doctor's Orders, a strong cask lager at 5.9%.

Two minibuses set out together from the Wellington Arms in Bedford, but one arrived fifteen minutes after the other having got lost.



Better late than never, and having arrived we were then offered samples of Angles' 2017 Christmas beer straight out of the fermenter and not yet racked. A very good Christmas ale it promises to be, too, with interesting liquorice flavours. Then we were offered Southgate Ale, their session bitter at 3.6% abv, which got invented by accident – someone was making Goat Tosser but didn't put enough malt in!

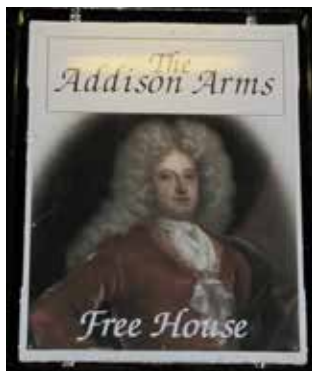
The proprietors are Paul, a former Customs and Excise officer who spent much of his career based at Bass's large brewery at Burton, and



Nick, a microbiologist retired from Pedigree Petfoods. In their small industrial unit they divided our group between the two of them to

tell us about the short history of Angles. They took the lease on the unit in May 2016, and opened in October 2016. They brew in 3.5-barrel batches.. Their first brew appeared around last Christmas. Goat Tosser is their main product, but they also brew Goat Locker, an American-style beer with Chinook hops aimed at the US service personnel based in the Peterborough area – apparently the NCOs' mess on US naval ships is called the goat locker! There's also a fearsome 7.8% abv East India Pale Ale, which they blend with other brews to give a variety of products.

They might move to larger premises soon, and would like their own micropub in Peterborough. They supply about 40 outlets from Kettering to Yarmouth.



One of their outlets is the Addison Arms in Glotton, about ten miles to the south. We left the brewery and headed there for dinner – Angles had supplied Goat Tosser, Feral Nun and Happy Paranoids (a hoppy golden ale) for us to enjoy without charge, and the pub provided a buffet to

accompany them. A proper village pub, it was an ideal place to sample our hosts' main ales.

After dinner, we headed home – another challenge for our drivers as the A1(M) was closed. But we made it back to Bedford just before the Pilgrim's Progress's closing time.

Fytton Rowland

Autumn Meanderings

For North Beds CAMRA's minibus pub trip in September, we started unconventionally at the **White Horse** in **Newnham Avenue, Bedford**. This big



suburban-style pub has been nicely refurbished by Charles Wells Ltd for its new tenants, Steve and Lucie Fuller. They moved from the Burnaby Arms in the Prime Ministers district of Bedford a few months ago, and have set about reinvigorating the White Horse with a will. Their regular cask ales are from the former Charles Wells, now Marstons, stable, and include Eagle, Directors and Young's London Gold. On this particular evening, the guest ale was Black Sheep Monty Python Holy Grail (4.0% abv), which I found to be in good condition but an unexceptional beer.



The next stop on our tour was the **Bull** in **London Road, Bedford**, another of the

dwindling breed of interwar suburban pubs. In this case it is a Greene King 'Meet and Eat' pub, and again we found a new licensee, a manager this time. But a manager with enthusiasm for cask ale, and there was a good atmosphere, a warm welcome from the staff, and well-kept ale.

Along with the expected GK IPA and Abbot came two other GK beers: Radio X Amplified (4.0% abv) and Starry Night (4.2% abv). Most of us sampled these and found them in good nick. While it was mildly disappointing that there was no true guest ale on, four handpumps was a good tally, and we were pleased with the improvement we found at the Bull.

Then on to **Wilstead**, with its two pubs facing each other across the street. One each for Wells and Greene King, of course, as was



formerly the case in many Bedfordshire villages. The **Woolpack** is the GK house, with just IPA from the home stable on, accompanied by New Dawn

from the Navigation Brewery (3.9% abv). The guest was fine, but expensive for a session bitter at £4/pint. Only one staff member was on duty, which made coping with our minibus-load a bit of a trial. Proceeding across the road to the **Red Lion**, the Wells house, we found only Eagle on handpump, though in reasonable condition. All in all, then, Wilstead is hardly a mecca for cask ale fans despite having two pubs.



So it was a pleasure to continue to the **Stone Jug** at **Clophill**, though our driver

had problems finding a parking place for the minibus in narrow Back Street. A historic building built of the local greensand stone, the

Autumn Meanderings continued

Stone Jug has long been a favourite. The regular beers there are St Austell Trelawney and Otter Amber, and on this particular evening they



also had Leighton Buzzard Cuckoo (3.8% abv), Vale Brewery's Titter Ye Not (3.9% abv) and Gun Dog's Hop Goes the Beagle (4.4% abv).

The Gun Dog offering was described as 'Hopped to the Max', so I chose it, but found that it wasn't! Not the Stone Jug's fault, though maybe a complaint to the Advertising Standards Authority might have been in order.

Two more stops had been planned, at the **Greyhound at Haynes** and the **Bell at Cotton End**, but both were closed when we drove up. And as the Bedford Arms in Bedford is still closed (allegedly temporarily – see page 3 for Wells' comments), the setting-down point on our return to town was at Wetherspoons' **Pilgrims Progress**.

Fytton Rowland

The Editor welcomes a new contributor to the Firkin, Susan Fossey, and thanks her warmly for the article on page 9. May there be many more articles from you, Sue!

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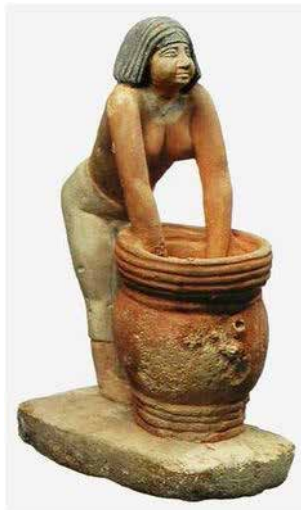
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 TheBearBedford



The History of Beer Part 1

Over several issues of the Firkin, I shall bring you a comprehensive history of beer. This first part is the story of the origin of beer and its introduction to Europe.



Brewster

No-one knows for certain when the first beer was brewed, but evidence from China has shown that people were producing a form of fermented alcoholic beverage as early as 7000 BCE.

5th – 2nd millennium BCE
– Beer was a vital part of civilisation in the

Babylonian, Assyrian, Egyptian, Hebrew, Chinese, and Inca cultures. Brewing in this era was often done by women. This was because beer was seen as a bakers' product alongside bread.

Most of the archaeological finds of the early history of beer come from the Babylon region of Mesopotamia (now Iran). The oldest known recipe comes from the Babylonians on a tablet in the form of a poem called 'Hymn to Ninkasi', which states that the brewsters crush grains, put them into water, add bread and leave it to



Drinking beer through straws in Mesopotamia

ferment. Beer was used as payment for workers, and drunk through straws to avoid the unfiltered grains.

Pub and Brewery News

The **Bedford Arms** in Bromham Road, **Bedford**, closed in the late summer, as predicted in our last issue. However, Charles Wells Ltd have taken issue with some of the points made in the article by David Allen in the Autumn issue, and will be making a statement to CAMRA about its future at some point. We report this in our Spring issue.

Another Wells pub nearby, the **Foresters Arms** in Union Street, **Bedford**, remains closed at the time of going to press, although some refurbishment work has taken place.

The **Meatcure** at the top of **Bedford** High Street has closed. Mostly a restaurant, though it welcomed drinkers and took the Firkin, it never sold cask ale. Its keg beers were from Camden Town Brewery.

Angles Ales (see page 13) now have a tied house, the **Lion** at **Ramsey St Mary's**, Hunts,

which stocks their beers plus Lacons Encore.

News from **B&T Brewery** of Shefford: Following the departure of Jon Pilling as head brewer, B&T have now appointed a second brewer, who started on November 1st. He is Paul New, who is trained on the job, and has helped out intermittently at B&T over the years, so he will slot easily into the role. He will work in tandem with Rob Fardon, who has been second brewer since 2004.

The Amphthill Brewhouse is said to be up for sale as a going concern.

Finally, the Red Brewery at Great Staughton, just outside our area over the border into Cambridgeshire, has ceased brewing and is unlikely to reopen. Its tied house, the micropub St Peter's Ale House in Bedford, closed some months ago.

The History of Beer Part 1 continued

The Babylonians mass-produced their beer, with twenty different varieties. They also implemented a rule that the brewster could be drowned if she made a bad batch of beer.

Beer was mentioned in the Gilgamesh Epic, in a story about a wild man who is given beer to drink.



Ancient Egypt

In Egypt, whilst building the Great Pyramids of Giza, workers were given beer as a

form of payment. It provided both nourishment and refreshment for the workers.



King Hammurabi

c. 1728-1686 BCE – King Hammurabi of the Babylonians decreed daily beer rations for all. He also decreed that only barley can be exchanged to purchase beer. King Hammurabi

ordered that a saloon keeper was to be drowned for accepting silver in exchange for beer.

c. 1600 BCE – Egyptians used beer as a medicine for over a hundred different ailments. They also had a custom where if a man offers a woman a sip of his beer, they are to be married. Brewers begin to flavour their beer with balsam, hay, mint, dandelion, wormwood seeds, horehound juice, crab claws, and oyster shells.



Sophocles

c. 450 BCE – Sophocles suggested that the best diet for a Greek consisted of bread, meat, vegetables and beer (in moderation). This is thought to be the first mention of the concept of moderating how much beer a person should drink. Alongside

beer, the ancient Greeks also made barley wine.

Romans begin to produce 'cerevisiae', named after Ceres, the goddess of agriculture, and vis, meaning strength in Latin.

c. 55 BCE – Romans brought beer to the rest of Europe during their wars.

c. 49 BCE – The Roman Civil War began after Caesar toasted his troops when they had crossed the Rubicon.

500 AD – Throughout the previous five hundred years, Europeans began brewing in their homes as a family tradition, mainly by the women. Beer was used for trading, payment and taxing.

800 AD – The Germans began using barley and wheat in their beer.



c. 500 to 1000 AD – European brewing began shifting from a family tradition to centralised production in monasteries and convents, to

serve as hospitality for travelling pilgrims.

Dan Veal

Branch Diary

CAMRA North Beds Branch business meetings are normally held on the second Thursday of alternate months. Social events are held on the third Thursday of each month.

Guests are welcome at social events, but members have priority on brewery visits. For latest information visit the branch website at

northbeds.camra.org.uk

Unless otherwise stated, for all events further details can be obtained from, and bookings made with, Gary Mudd on 01234 741871 or e-mail

socials@northbeds.camra.org.uk

DECEMBER

Thursday 7th – Christmas Social

At the White Horse, Newnham Avenue, Bedford, at 7.30 for 8 p.m.

JANUARY

Thursday 4th – Branch Meeting

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

Thursday 11th – Rural Pubs Visit

Meet at the Wellington Arms, Wellington Street, Bedford at 7 p.m.

Thursday 18th – Town Pubs Walk

Meeting place and time to be announced – see branch website or contact Gary Mudd

Thursday 25th – Rural Pubs Visit

Meet at the Wellington Arms, Wellington Street, Bedford at 7 p.m.

FEBRUARY

Thursday 1st – Branch Meeting

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

Thursday 15th-Friday 16th – Informal Socials

At the Luton Beer and Cider Festival (see ad on page 7)

MARCH

Thursday 8th – Branch Meeting

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

Thursday 15th-Friday 16th – Informal Socials

At the St Neots Beer and Cider Festival (see page 7)

The Firkin

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Beer – the New Additive

Beer, you drink it and enjoy it, visiting different pubs and trying different ales. Sometimes you may put it in a pie. Some companies, however, take beer and include it in their products as an additive, possibly in some products you never knew could have beer inside.

Jam – You may already be family with beer jam (or jelly), this is jam where beer and sugar make up the main ingredients. The jam is made in the same as any fruit jam, only instead of using fruit they use beer. It is often enjoyed on top of cheese and biscuits, and some pubs serve it with starters.

Soap – Spartisan is one of a few companies that use beer to make soap. The soap is made the same as any soap, the difference is that beer is used as the liquid base. Those that use beer soap say that it makes a good lather and smells of beer.

Shampoo – Technically a similar product to above, but this comes from Australia. A couple of companies in Australia are using local beers to produce shampoo.

Coffee – We are used to seeing coffee used as an ingredient in beer, but rarely the other way around. Dark Matter Coffee from America use beer barrels from local brewers to age their

coffee beans, and this means that the beans acquire beer notes. The company has teamed up with various American brewers to use their coffee in stouts.

Fertiliser – Some gardeners mix beer into their watering cans. It is theorised that the carbohydrates in beer could provide energy for microbes in the soil, which then release energy into the plants.

Pickles – Brooklyn Brine Co. makes pickles that have been pickled in IPA and hop oil.

Fuel – Driving and beer are two things that are never a good idea together. But in New Zealand, scientists created a fuel by using left-over yeast from a local brewery to create an alcohol that they then add with petrol. The future of this fuel is currently unknown.

3D Printing Filament – 3Dom, a company that produces items for 3D printers, created a filament for 3D printers by using spent malts. The filament leaves the printed item with a wood style finish.

Dan Veal

John O'Donnell

We are sad to report the death in November of John O'Donnell, who was landlord of the former Fleur de Lis pub in Mill Street, Bedford, for many years. John was a good friend of CAMRA and provided the branch with a home base for meetings in the room above the bar until he retired from the trade after developing Parkinson's Disease. The pub earned an entry in every Good Beer Guide from 1974 to 2001, but John's successors failed to make it work, particularly after the smoking ban came in, and Charles Wells finally closed the pub in 2009. The pub became an Indian and then an American restaurant but even those have now closed, and it is currently to let. John's son Sean O'Donnell is the licensee of the Kings Arms in St Mary's Street, Bedford, a current Good Beer Guide entry. North Bedfordshire CAMRA sends its condolences to Sean and the rest of the family in their loss.



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