

The firkin

Newsletter of CAMRA North Bedfordshire Branch Vol 42 No 1 Spring 2017

Pub of the Year 2017: The Three Cups



CAMPAIGN
FOR
REAL ALE

FREE



CHAIRMAN'S CORNER

PUB NEWS

PUB OF THE YEAR

MICROBREWERY IN CYPRUS

SPRING FESTIVALS

GLUTEN-FREE BEER

JANUARY PUB TRIPS

AUTUMN TRIP

LOST PUBS OF CAULDWELL STREET

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Chairman's Corner



In this issue you can read about our choice for Pub of the Year, and other awards we are making. This is a matter of judgement because one of the factors is atmosphere, and different people prefer different styles of hospitality. I welcome that, because it would be boring if each pub I entered was a carbon copy of every other pub. What the discussion, and the closeness of the vote, reminded me about was that we have a number of fine pubs in our branch area.

Doubtless there are other good pubs selling excellent real ale in the area. As a branch we intend to have trips to more pubs, looking for those hidden gems. Will you help is in our quest? If you are a member of CAMRA, then score the beer in pubs you visit at Whatpub.com. That will help us see where good beer (the essential criterion) is being served. Alternatively contact Peter Argyle, our Pubs Officer – details on page 7.

It doesn't take long and will help us in our quest of finding the best beer and the best pubs in the area.

Roger Stokes

Pub News

Cricketers, Goldington Rd Bedford



Martin Bartlett at the Cricketers

Just before Christmas, Tom and Mary Kilroy headed home to Ireland. Much to our delight, the doors stayed open with Martin and Naomi, formerly of the Devonshire Arms, behind the bar. They offer a selection of real ales. London Pride is available with up to three guest beers, which among others

have already included Black Sheep Bitter and St Austell Tribute and Proper Job.

Bear, High St Bedford

This old town centre pub regained its original identity as the Bear early in December. Congratulations to new manager Cherrie Bennett and operator Camelot Inns for recreating much of the Bear's old atmosphere. Real ales are Greene King IPA and three guest beers, which have included Tring Brewery's Side Pocket for a Toad and several winter seasonals. Westons Old Rosie cider is also available. Call 01234 630635.

White Horse, Newnham Ave Bedford



Lucie Fuller at the Burnaby Arms

Good news for the White Horse at last. Lucie and Stephen Fuller, award-winning licensees at the Burnaby Arms, will take it over shortly. We don't know who will take on the Burnaby Arms, but watch this space!

Third Place, St Peters St Bedford

The Saint Peter's Ale House, opened by the Red Brewery in 2015, has been sold to local businessman Matt Wolton. As we went to press it was under conversion into a bar not selling real ale.

Bluebell, Putnoe Lane Bedford

Welcome to Karen and Richard, who took over this busy community pub in north-eastern Bedford towards the end of last year. The pub was closed for refurbishment as we went to press, but we should have more to report in our next issue. <http://bluebellbedford.co.uk>

Fordham Arms, Sharnbrook

This pub near the former railway station has been sold and will reopen as a free house after refurbishment. We hope to bring you more news in our next issue.

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Three Cups gives Bev her first Pub of the Year title



North Bedfordshire CAMRA's Pub of the Year for 2017 is the **Three Cups**, Newnham Street, **Bedford**. The Three Cups has had an interesting history in recent years, as has its Manager, Bev Burridge.

Until 2012 it was a Greene King tied house with a reputation for keeping its beer well. GK then decided to renovate it and make it a Local Hero pub, one of only 45 in their estate that are encouraged to serve guest ales from local small breweries and others not on the usual guest list. On reopening, its tenancy was taken up by Pasq Mancini and his wife Janet, the licensees of GK's Ship, just around the corner in St Cuthbert's Street. In February 2014 Bev took up the position of manager, but six months later Pasq and Janet gave up the tenancy. Bev feared for her job if new tenants decided to run the pub themselves, or adopt a 'new broom' approach to the staff. So she contacted Alan Kelly, the proprietor of White Park Brewery, whom she knew, and suggested he take up the tenancy. He did – it was all sorted out in eight weeks – and the Three Cups is now the de facto brewery tap for White Park. Alan no longer takes an active part, as he has a job elsewhere, and Bev runs the pub including doing the cellar work. There is a commitment to use half the

hand pumps for GK beers (although Weston's cider counts), so there are four handpumps available for White Park and other non-GK beers. This arrangement has been very successful, and Bev believes the pub is probably now busier than ever.

The quality of the beer at the Three Cups comes as no surprise to Bedford beer lovers, as Bev has a high reputation for her cellar skills. Her parents were pubgoers who took her into family pubs from an early age, and her mother subsequently worked behind a bar, but initially she herself worked in admin and marketing jobs. After she moved to Bedford, her pub career began at the Wellington Arms as a part-



time barmaid in Eric Mills' time as licensee there. He trained her in cellar work. And then in 2006 SIBA held a beer judging panel at the Welly,

and Eric took her along. One of the panel was Ted Probyn, and he became another mentor in cellar work. Subsequently, Eric moved to the Bedford Arms, a Wells house, and she went with him there. She became involved in tasting sessions at Wells brewery. There she met Paul Craven, Wells' beer tasting expert (*Who also trained me! Ed.*), and Paul became a third mentor.

(continued on page 7)



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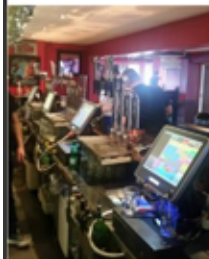
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Three Cups Pub of the Year *continued*



Eric encouraged Bev to try for a hospitality and catering scholarship, for which she had to write an essay on 'My Dream' – which

in her case was to run her own pub – and then give a presentation on this. Paul helped her practise, and in the event she was runner-up. The runner-up's prize was a year's mentoring, and the mentor was Hamish Stoddart, the head of Peach Taverns. So she went over regularly to Woburn for sessions at the Black Horse with Hamish. Pasq and Janet then offered her the Bar Manager's job at the Ship, where she stayed for sixteen months. After that, it was back to the Bedford Arms, where Tom and Laura were the new tenants, and she stayed there for five years as deputy manager until she got the manager's job at the Three Cups.

So Bev has worked and been trained at four of central Bedford's best real ale pubs, and has had four prominent mentors. All of which led to the Three Cups being named North Beds Town Pub of the Year in 2015, and now finally one of Bedford's best known publicans has landed the Pub of the Year title for 2017. Many congratulations, Bev!

North Beds CAMRA branch has also named the **Fox at Carlton** as branch **Country Pub of the Year**, the **Polhill Arms at Renhold** as its **Cider Pub of the Year**, and the **RAFA Club** in Ashburnham Road, **Bedford**, as its **Club of the Year**, all three of these for the second year running. All of these deserve your custom – give them a try if you haven't been there before.

We named no 'most improved pub' this year – we have many fine pubs, but they have all stayed good rather than becoming good suddenly!

Fytton Rowland

The firkin

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Cyprus Brewery Woes

On a recent visit to Cyprus I thought that there were just three breweries there, producing only lagers. And indeed Carlsberg brews its usual stuff near Nicosia, while the two local big boys are Keo (who also produce wine) and Leon.



But right at the end of our trip I found that there is one microbrewery in Cyprus, owned by a Yorkshire family. It's **Aphrodite's Rock** and it's housed in a former winery near Paphos. No cask ale, of course, and no bottle-conditioned either. But half a dozen interesting bottled beers, of which I tasted two, Yorkshire Rose, a conventional session bitter at 3.8% abv, and ESB, a hoppier, stronger beer at 5% abv. The other offerings are an Irish-style red ale, a

porter, a Bavarian-style lager and an American-style IPA (6.0% abv).



I tasted them in the **Wooden Pub** on **Paphos** seafront (photo above) owned by a Lancashireman, who is also a CAMRA member.

Aphrodite's Rock has a pub at its brewery, too, though time didn't permit me to visit it. Their website reveals a tortuous history of attempts by the Cyprus government to thwart their ambitions and deny them a Permit to Brew.

It couldn't possibly be, could it, that the aforesaid three big breweries have political influence? No, perish the thought. It took questions in the European Parliament (asked by the MEPs for Yorkshire) about Cyprus's adherence to the EU's fair competition rules before the magic Permit finally came though.

So – if you're in Cyprus, pop into the Wooden Pub or the Aphrodite's Rock brewpub and try out the only proper beer the island has to offer!

Fytton Rowland

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Spring Beer Festivals

33rd London Drinker Beer Festival

8-10 Mar at Camden Centre, London WC1H 9AU. 150 real ales from London breweries.

northlondon.camra.org.uk

Leicester Beer Festival

8-11 March at Charotar Patidar Samaj, St Margaret's Way Leicester LE1 3AE. 250 real ales plus 30 ciders and perries. Indian and English food. Live music Sat. Trains from Bedford and Luton, station 15 min walk.

www.leicester.camra.org.uk

Derby CAMRA Winter Festival

15-18 March at Roundhouse, Derby College Complex. 300 ales ciders and perries. Direct access to venue from rail station.

www.derbycamra.org.uk

St Neots Booze on the Ouse CAMRA Beer & Cider Festival

16-18 March at Priory Centre, Priory Lane, St Neots PE19 6BH. Over 70 real ales and ciders. Free soft drinks for drivers, hot and cold food at all sessions. X5 bus, Market PI 5 min.

www.hunts.camra.org.uk

Three Cups Beer Festival

13-17 April at the Three Cups, Newnham Street, Bedford (North Beds CAMRA Pub of the Year 2017).

www.threecupsbedford.co.uk

9th "Spooktacular" Beer Festival

20-23 April at Sir William Peel, High Street, Sandy SG19 1AG. Over 40 real ales and ciders available, barbecue and live music. 73 bus from Bedford 2 min.

www.sirwilliampeel.webs.com

Devonshire Arms Annual Beer & Cider Festival

28 Apr-1 May at Devonshire Arms, Dudley St, Bedford. Extra real ales and ciders on gravity as well as the regular range.

www.devonshirearmsbedford.co.uk

44th Cambridge CAMRA Beer Festival

22-27 May under canvas on Jesus Green, Cambridge. Wide selection of local and national beers, plus cider, perry, mead, wines and foreign beers. Food includes locally baked bread, pork pies, ham and cheese counter. X5 bus, Victoria Ave 5 min.

www.cambridgebeerfestival.com

Fox Inn Spring Beer Festival

26-29 May at Fox Inn, High St, Carlton MK43 7LA. 18 real ales plus 6 real ciders served from a temporary bar in the garden. Four live bands, pizza, curry and hog roast

www.thefoxatcarlton.pub

H&H Beer & Cider Fest

27-29 May at Hare & Hounds, Old Warden SG18 9HQ. Extra real ales and ciders plus live music over Spring Bank Holiday weekend.

www.hareandhoundsoldwarden.com

Festivals shown *in italics* are pub events; the rest are CAMRA festivals.

Bedford Beer and Cider Festival

Don't forget our very own Bedford Beer and Cider Festival, to be held in Bedford Corn Exchange from **4th to 7th October 2017**. This will be the fortieth – quite a milestone – and we're hoping for something a bit special.

We need plenty of volunteers for BBCF40, and the volunteering form is already up on our website northbeds.camra.org.uk, so volunteer right now, whether you've worked at our festivals before or not. It's great fun! As well as running the bars when we're open, we need help erecting and dismantling the festival too.

The Mystery that is Gluten-Free Beer

The other day I was speaking to a friend who formerly drank Real Ale, but has recently been diagnosed with coeliac disease, so cannot enjoy it anymore. Or can they? For those not in the know coeliac disease is caused by a reaction to gluten, which is protein found in wheat and in other grains such as barley and rye. Essentially these are the base ingredients of beer, which is why my friend was worried.

Most people on a gluten-free diet tend to go towards beers made from rice, buckwheat or maize as these do not contain gluten. Hitachino Nest Red Rice Ale from the Kiuchi Brewery in Japan is an example of a beer made from rice. There is also a growing trend in America of brewers using rice in their beer instead of barley, for example take Budweiser; in the USA it is brewed with rice but elsewhere it is brewed with barley.

But what if you want to enjoy traditional real ale? Well the current standards in the UK state that the beer has to have less than 20ppm of gluten (20mg of gluten in one litre of beer) to be considered gluten-free. This has meant that brewers have developed methods to create beer with barley or wheat but then make it gluten free by decreasing the amount of gluten. The question then arises: how do they do this?

A lot of breweries create their gluten-free beers in the same way any beer is created: by mixing the malts and liquor in a mash tun, extracting the wort, boiling it up whilst adding the hops, and eventually cooling it to be put into the fermentation vessel. This is point where gluten-free beer differs in production, as the brewers now add an enzyme such as 'Clarity-ferm' into the vessel alongside the yeast. The enzyme breaks down the gluten during the fermentation stage so that the beer comes under the required 20ppm. The jury is still out on whether the beer is truly gluten-free or simply gluten-reduced, so you must be careful when drinking gluten-free beer made by the traditional method, as it could still contain some gluten.

Some examples of gluten free beer can be found on the CAMRA website at this link: http://www.camra.org.uk/factsheets/-/asset_publisher/tsssSmaAGkUE/content/gluten-free-beers



Locally Nene Valley brewery at Oundle Wharf in Northamptonshire offers a wide variety of gluten free beers by the enzymic reduction method.

In fact their website quotes "For over a year now most of our beers have been produced to be gluten free." www.nenevalleybrewery.com This applies to both their cask conditioned beers and their bottled beers.

Happy drinking and I hope you find some enjoyable gluten free beers.

Dan Veal

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Cold-Weather Beer Drinking

North Beds CAMRA's traditional series of January trips to pubs had been arranged using the YMCA's community minibus.

But sad news intervened. The YMCA's volunteer driver, Joe, who we'd come to like over several trips, suddenly and unexpectedly died over Christmas. We offer sincere condolences to his family in their loss.



The Bear

We started our town walkabout at the **Bear** in the High Street, now back to its proper name. It had of course redecorated, and the sign featuring a galleon in full sail did not survive. But the pool table is back in the front bar instead of cocktails! Greene King IPA had run out, but Wells Bombardier, Hobgoblin and Adnams Ghost Ship were on, and so was Weston's Old Rosie cider. The old Bear clientele is gradually drifting back. I had Ghost Ship and it was very acceptable.

Then across the road to the **Brewhouse and Kitchen**, which wasn't there when the Bear was last the Bear! It was offering its regular range: Banker's Draught (3.8% abv), Intrepid (4.2% abv), Sprinter (5.0% abv), Night Fever (5.0% abv) and Invarity (6.0% abv), plus Winter Wonder (5.5%). I found the Intrepid good. CAMRA members receive a 10% discount on pints and halves of cask ales!

Next stop was the **Kings Arms**. This large Greene King house had GK IPA and Olde Trip

on, plus Smoke Stack Stout from Belhaven, GK's Scottish brewery. I tried the guest, and found it did what it said on the tin – I liked the smoky flavour. A minority of the party visited the **Rose** and the **Standard** in the High Street instead.

Then on to Newnham Street, two excellent pubs a couple of hundred yards apart. The **Castle**, our 2016 Pub of the Year, offered Young's Special, London Gold and Winter Warmer along with Eagle and new member of the growing Bombardier family, the Pale Ale (3.6% abv), and Directors. I settled for Winter Warmer, and found it good. Coming soon as a guest: Wadworth's 6X, unusual in a Wells house. Then a hop and a skip to the **Three Cups**, our 2017 Pub of the Year (see page 5). Greene King IPA, Old Speckled Hen and Belhaven Smoke Stack Stout were on, accompanied by White Park's White Gold, Nethergate IPA (3.5% abv) and Shefford Plum Mild, as well as Weston's Rosie's Pig cider. The White Gold was up to standard but the Plum Mild was not at its best.

The **Cricketers** on Goldington Road was Pub of the Year back in 2012 when Paul and Steph ran it. After their departure Tom and Mary took it on, but they retired in December. Now Martin and Naomi from the Devonshire Arms in Dudley Street have come out of retirement to take over the Cricketers! We popped in and there they were, large as life. They have a 'tenancy at will' so that they can stay as long as they like without being committed to any minimum period. They had Fuller's London Pride, St Austell Tribute, Sharp's Doom Bar and Black Sheep Bitter on the handpumps. I tried the Sheep and found it well kept as expected. They are going to get some more unusual beers in future. A good end to the evening!

The following Thursday, no volunteer driver had yet been found. Your editor and branch chairman each volunteered to drive a car round some country pubs. Starting from the **Wellington Arms** in Bedford, we headed first to

Cold-Weather Beer Drinking continued

the **Guinea at Moggerhanger**. This Wells house offered Eagle, Young's Bitter, Directors and Winter Warmer. It's largely an eating pub, and was quite full at 7.30 p.m., fire in the grate and comfortable chairs available. The original village pub has been much extended. My subsequent visit found the same beer selection, and the Winter Warmer was in very good nick.



Next, the **Five Bells at Cople** has lots of nooks and crannies, together with exposed beams, and again an open fire. Greene King IPA and Tring Side Pocket for a Toad were on – but

no GK XX Mild. I tried the Side Pocket on my subsequent visit and found it in good shape.



Brewery Tap

We drove on to **Sheffield** and the **Brewery Tap**, tap for the Banks and Taylor brewery. It offered their Dragon Slayer, Sheffield Bitter and Dark Mild, though the mild went off just after we

arrived. Also on were Salopian Hop Twister, Everard's Tiger and Moondance from fff Brewery (4.2% abv). The pub is a regulars'

haunt, and games of dominoes were in progress. It's a Victorian building, and although the bar has been opened out, it is still half carpeted and half bare boards, showing where the saloon and public bars were. When I visited again the beers were different, the Dark Mild was on and this time it was in good shape.

Our final call was the **Chequers at Wootton**, which had plenty of customers and a family-pub feel. An old village pub not too much updated (good!), it offered Eagle, and Black Sheep's Monty Python Brian, a 3.9% abv bitter. I had a half, but found the beer less interesting than its name, though well kept.

For our third trip we really did have a minibus, the Ivel Sprinter, with a new volunteer driver. We started from Wells' **Burnaby Arms** in Stanley Street, **Bedford**, where Eagle, Young's Gold and Directors were joined by Brains SA as guest ale. The usual friendly welcome from Lucie, an open fire, and a half of SA were all excellent. Lucie and husband Steve are shortly moving to the White Horse (see page 3), great for east Bedford, which already several fine real ale pubs, but who will fill the void at the Burnaby, in a less fortunate part of town?

Joining our bus, we set off for the **St John Arms at Melchbourne**. Or is the St John's Arms? Either way, it was a Greene King pub, and still has GK IPA and Abbot on the pumps. Landlord Eamonn served me a fine glass of Abbot. The pub was quite busy, and an open fire added extra welcome. It's a Victorian edifice at the edge of its village, with a significant food trade. Not too far to our next stop, the much-loved **Bedford Arms at Souldrop**. Since last year, landlord Fred has taken up the reins again after a bout of illness, and his skill in the cellar shows in the quality of the beer. In his free house, he had GK IPA, Doom Bar, Marston's Pedigree Amber (4.2% abv), and Grainstore Red Kite (3.8% abv) on. I tried Red Kite and as expected it was in excellent condition.

Cold-Weather Beer Drinking continued



Swan with Two Nicks

Next, to **Sharnbrook** and the **Swan with Two Nicks**, a handsome Wells pub – one of the few that still has saloon and public bars. The upper classes get the open fire! Eagle, Bombardier Pale Ale again (3.6% abv) and Brains SA were on. I hadn't tried the new Pale Ale before – I found it in good nick but an unremarkable beer. The pub was busy, with likeable staff, a warm and welcoming feel to it.



Bell, Odell

Burns Brown Ale from Belhaven (our visit was in late January)! But there was also a guest – Tim Taylor's Boltmaker, Champion Beer of Britain a year or two ago. I tried the Robbie Burns and it was well kept, but not my favourite style.

We then moved on to two village free houses for which we have a high regard. The **Fox at Carlton** – Country Pub of the Year in 2016 and in 2017 – had Eagle, London Pride, Tring Black Hawk (a dark, malty 3.5% abv beer) and RCH

Greene King again at our next stop, the **Bell at Odell**, our 2016 Most Improved Pub. GK IPA, Abbot and Olde Trip were joined by Robbie

Goldbine (a straw-coloured triple-hopped 3.8% abv ale) on its handpumps. I tried halves of the Tring and the RCH and found them excellent of their styles, though as a hoppy-beer man I preferred the RCH. As usual, licensee Alison coped with our busload efficiently despite being alone behind the bar, and was her usual mine of information about her beers, which as expected were well-kept.

The **Sun at Felmersham**, Pub of the Year in



The Sun

2015, offered Wells Eagle, Cottage Brewery Pacific which had just run out, and Goff's Brewery's

Fallen Knight, a dark beer at 4.4% abv. I had the Goff's and found it very palatable and in good nick. The Sun was quite busy at 10.30 p.m. – encouraging in a village pub.

As usual we finished our trip at the **Bedford Arms in Bedford**. Alongside Bombardier Burning Gold, Young's Bitter and Courage Directors, licensee Tony had White Park's White Gold on. The White Gold was in good nick. We'd visited good pubs that evening!

As we hadn't been able to go to some of the pubs we wanted to check on, and Roger and I hadn't been able to try the beers when driving, we made a few more forays by car. The **Plough at Bolnhurst** is mainly a restaurant but it has a good reputation for cask ale, and a pleasant nook by the warm open fire for those who only want a drink. They had Woodforde's Wherry, Adnams Southwold and Tring Moongazing (4.2%) on; the Tring beer turned out to be a bitter of traditional style, an excellent one at that, and very well kept.



The Bear

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BARREL^{OF} LAPS

29TH JULY 2017

Join us at glorious Claydon Estate in Buckinghamshire on the 29th July for Barrel of Laps. Get your team together, grab your special event barrel (purchased with your entry) and run our fun-style 2 mile route together. Carry your barrel around 5 laps and take on our on-course challenges and the first round is on us. 13 laps earns a second drink and a Marathon Session medal.

CLAYDON ESTATE, BUCKINGHAMSHIRE

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North Beds CAMRA Country Pub of the Year 2016 & 2017



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Cold-Weather Beer Drinking continued



Polhill Arms

We then moved on to the **Polhill Arms** at **Renhold**, our Cider Pub of the Year for 2016 and 2017 (see page 7).

Licensee

Paul Smith greeted us in person. His pub is a Greene King house and had GK IPA and Hardy Hanson Bitter on from the owners' stable. GK cuts him some slack regarding guest ales, and Paul had Exmoor Dark (4.2% abv) and Hadrian Border's Tyneside Blonde (3.9% abv) on, as well as his regular ciders. I found the Tyneside very pleasant and others tried the Exmoor Dark. Both were in excellent condition.

On another day we visited the **Red Lion** at **Salford**, which had Eagle on. It was in good nick but a bit pricey. This is a hotel just off junction 13 of the M1, which no doubt brings in most of its business, but it has a proper warm and comfortable bar too. On the same day we visited the **Stone Jug** at **Clophill**, a free house which has been in the same family for the last 35 years. It's a proper village pub with a limited lunchtime food trade, but was busy when we dropped in about 2 p.m. On the pumps were Otter Amber (4.0% abv), a regular ale there, St Austell Trelawney (3.8% abv), B&T Shefford Bitter (3.8% abv), Adnams Lighthouse (3.4% abv) and White Park Oast House (4.8% abv). I tried the Otter, which was in good nick as usual, but the others found the Trelawney unusually below par, and it was taken off at our request. And so ended a rather long January programme of visits – extending from the 5th to the 31st!

Fytton Rowland

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Pubs Down South

The first stop on our November trip was the **Red Lion at Elstow**. There was a friendly welcome for drinkers, with some very



Elstow

but not noisy, the beer was good and the service quick; a pleasant experience.

From the Red Lion we moved on to ... the **Red Lion!** At **Wilstead** this time. A Wells house



Wilstead

food, TV and an open fire. A minute's walk took us to the rival, Greene King's **Woolpack at Wilstead**, another Victorian pub with an open fire. More choice here – GK IPA, Abbot and Olde Trip on, but I had Black Sheep Shearer, a pale bitter at 4.1% abv with a hint of lemon-grass, and I enjoyed its unusual flavour.



Cotton End

welcome prices: GK IPA at £2.45 a pint, Bombardier at £2.70 and Doom Bar at £2.75. It was crowded,

crowded, offering Eagle on handpump – it was in decent shape. A Victorian pub with two separate bars, offering

Next – a proper old-fashioned village boozier, increasingly rare. The **Bell at Cotton End** was in the

sole charge of its landlady but she coped with our influx well. It's a free house with Spitfire and Tribute available. The Tribute ran out but the landlady put a new barrel on. I had the Spitfire and thought it good. The main theme of the décor is the Cardington airship industry. Pub of the night for me!

Next, to the **Greyhound at Haynes**, a village



pub greatly extended for dining. A Greene King house, it has recently been taken on by the

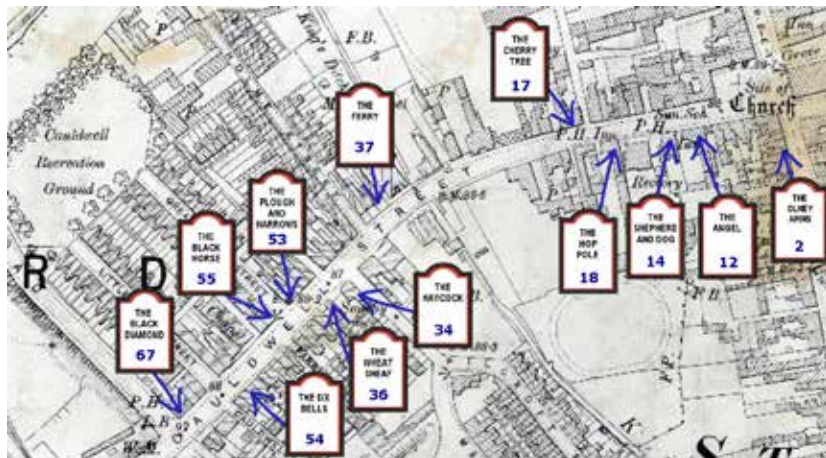
people who run the New Inn in Biggleswade. The Greyhound closed after Christmas for a refurb. We hope this will lead to New Inn brewhouse beers appearing. It was all GK regulars: GK IPA, Abbot and Old Speckled Hen. The Hen was acceptable.

Finally we visited our second two-pub village of the evening, **Houghton Conquest**. Both pubs belong to Wells. The **Royal Oak** is a basic village pub catering to the regulars, with a pool table and Eagle on handpump – in good condition. The long-serving landlord seemed popular with locals. The other pub is the **Knife and Cleaver**, more like a 'restaurant with rooms'. It was bought by Wells a few years ago and prospered with licensees Graham and Terry at the helm. They have moved on, though, and Epic Pubs now leases it from Wells. Eagle, Bombardier and Young's Gold were on and most went for the Gold, but found it 'end of barrel'. So I had Bombardier, which was in good shape. A pub run by staff, not the licensees – not really a change for the better after Graham and Terry, I thought.

Fytton Rowland

Lost Pubs of North Bedfordshire (3)

The Cauldwell Street Pub Crawl



*Carpenters Arms until 1892

Cauldwell Street, just south of the river in Bedford, is nowadays a feeder road into the town centre, dominated by Borough Hall and Bedford College. You'd have no reason to walk down it, unless you were a student, worked for the Council or were visiting one of the few small businesses that remain along the street.

However, in 1897 it was a different story – the Britannia Ironworks employed over 600 people, most of whom lived in the Cauldwell area, the railway was bringing the town's coal to the merchant's yard, there were two Methodist chapels, and a host of small businesses traded along the length of the street. In addition, on Cauldwell Street alone, there were some 13 pubs in which the iron workers and shoppers

could slake their thirst. With the construction of the College, Kingsway relief road and County Hall, by 1970 addresses such as Great Butts Street, Holt Row and Holme Street had disappeared from the map, and the pubs, chapels and shops on Cauldwell Street had disappeared forever.

In 1897, one could meet at the **Olney Arms** (2 Cauldwell Street, owned by the Phipps Brewery of Northampton, closed and demolished to

widen the junction with St John's Street in 1967) to start a pub crawl. This pub would have been where the iCentric building is now. Early arrivals could have even nipped over the road to the **Fountain Inn** on St John's Street (where Salamander House is) for a quick livener!

Then, two doors down at number 6, the **Gardener's Arms** (which was the Carpenters Arms until 1892) would have welcomed you – although not for long, as it closed in 1897. Another short walk up the road would have taken you to the **Angel Inn** at number 12. This was a large inn with lodgings upstairs and stabling at the back for horses Owned by Wells and Winch of Biggleswade, in 1924 it was closed and the licence was transferred to the Angel on Elstow Road.

Lost Pubs of North Bedfordshire (3) The Cauldwell Street Pub Crawl (continued)

Next door at number 14 was a smaller alehouse called the **Shepherd and Dog**. Owned by Higgins and Sons Ltd, the pub ceased trading in 1920. The Bedford Free School now occupies the space where these two pubs would have been.

Staying on the southern side of the street, you could have nipped into the **Hop Pole** (no. 18). This imposing building was known as the **Hearse & Horses** until 1840, and like the Angel offered lodging and stabling. It was owned by Day & Sons of St Neots until 1919, and thereafter by Charles Wells. Henry Manton, after whom Manton Lane is named, was the landlord of the Hop Pole from 1911 until his death in 1922. From at least 1938 the building was used by the Bedford Electricity Works Social Club. It was demolished in the 1970s, and Bedford College's Painting & Decorating Centre is housed in the building that replaced it.

After passing numbers 20 and 22, which miraculously are still standing much as they were in 1897, you would cross over the road to the **Cherry Tree** (no. 17), a smaller pub but one popular with the community in its later years, no doubt drawn to the new-fangled entertainment called television, which they had installed in the upstairs room in the 1950s. Owned by Day & Sons of St Neots until 1919, and thereafter by Charles Wells, it was closed in 1970 and demolished to make way for the entrance to Mander College.

Staying on the north side of the street, a walk up past the Wesleyan chapel would have taken you to the **Ferry** (no. 37). A small one-room pub, it ceased trading in 1922, along with the **Red Lamp** in nearby Pilcroft Street. The access road to the College car park now occupies that site.

Crossing back to the south side of Cauldwell Street, a rather dilapidated pub called the **Haycock** (no. 34) stood on the corner with Pilcroft Street. Owned by Thomas Jarvis & Co., it offered board and lodging, but business was slow and by 1914 it had ceased trading. After

passing through various private owners it was demolished in the 1950s to make room for Kingsway.

Next door, the more welcoming sight of the **Wheatsheaf** (no. 36) awaited. In 1927 the pub was owned by Higgins and Sons Ltd, but in 1931 it was sold to Wells and Winch Ltd as a takeover asset (which in turn happened to W&W when they were taken over by Greene King in 1961). The Wheatsheaf was the last pub to go in Cauldwell Street, closing in 1972 – it was popular with the workers building County Hall in 1967.

Back over the road again, at the junction of Great Butts Street, in the **Plough and Harrows** (no. 53) you could choose to drink in one of three bars, with a skittles alley to take your mind off how many beers you would have had by now. Owned by Jarvis & Co., the pub had ceased trading by 1928.

On the other side of the junction, the small one-roomed **Black Horse** (no. 55) offered more basic amenities, but this pub survived until 1967 when the entire area from Prebend Street to Holme Street was demolished to make way for County (now Borough) Hall.

Back over the road, the **Six Bells** (no. 54) was a Newland & Nash pub until 1938. Wells & Winch ran it until it was sold as a "closed pub" in 1954 to a Mr. Wolodymyr Iwaniw, who converted the ground floor to a hairdresser's shop. It is now the Motorcare Service Centre.

Finally, back across the road for one last time to the most famous, and by all accounts most popular, pub on Cauldwell Street, the **Black Diamond** (no. 67). A Charles Wells pub, it was sited on the Prebend Street corner, which was (and by some people still is) known as the Black Diamond Corner. For more details of all of these pubs, please visit my web site at <http://tinyurl.com/hq95yp4>

Mike Mackechnie

Fictional Beers that Became Real

We've all sat down to enjoy our favourite TV show or movie and thought "I wonder what that beer tastes like?". There are some that have become reality, although some might not have become what you were expecting. Here is a list of them.

Duff Beer – It is enjoyed by the residents of Springfield from the popular TV show *The Simpsons*. It seems you can find this beer everywhere from Moe's to the Kwik-e-mart. Many have created a Duff beer, but the main seems to be from Germany. The Eschweiger Klosterbrauerei in Hessen has created a beer called "The Legendary Duff Beer". It is a pilsner.



Leopard Lager – Dave Lister enjoys this JMC-produced beer aboard Red Dwarf alongside his vindaloo curry. Lion Breweries in New Zealand produced a pale lager of the same name.



Romulan Ale – The banned blue ale from *Star Trek* once became real as two different beverages. Boston America Corp. created a blue-coloured energy drink. But Cerveceria La Constanca in El Salvador used to brew a pale lager of the same name.



Bölkstoff – A pale lager resembling Grolsch that is enjoyed in a German comic called *Werner*. It was produced by the Gilde-Brauerei in Hanover.

Jenkins Beer – This beer can be bought in the Queen Vic in *Eastenders*. In real life the Wild Acre Brewing Company from Texas do produce a bock-style beer called Billy Jenkins (maybe a distant relative?).

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

MARCH

Thursday 9th – Branch Meeting

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

Thursday 16th – Informal meeting

at St Neots Booze on the Ouse Beer Festival (see p.9).

Thursday 30th – Branch Annual General Meeting

At the RAFA Club, Ashburnham Road, Bedford, at 7.30 for 8 p.m. CAMRA members only.

APRIL

Thursday 20th – Pubs or brewery visit

Details to be announced

MAY

Monday 1st – Branch May Day Breakfast

At the Castle, Newnham Street, Bedford, at 10 a.m.

Thursday 11th – Branch Meeting

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

Thursday 18th – Pubs visit

Details to be announced

JUNE

Thursday 8th – Summer Day Out

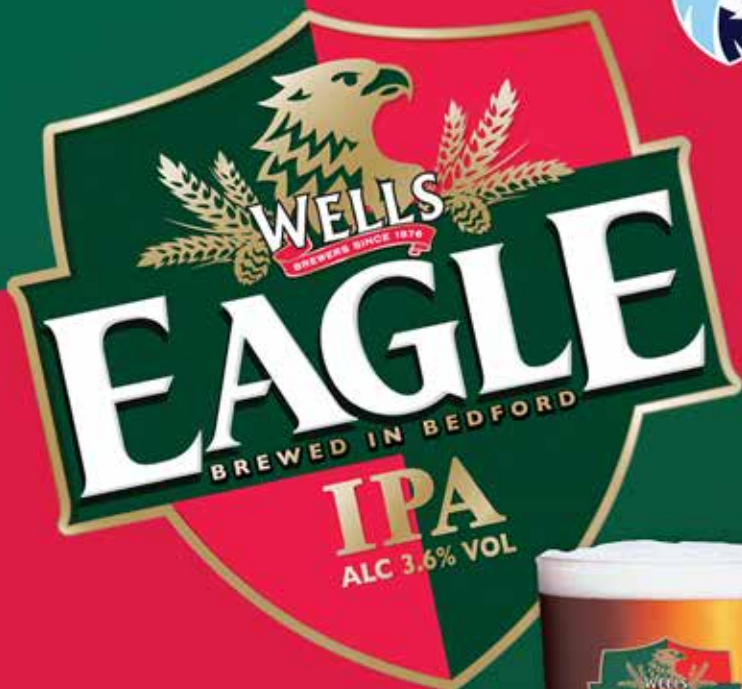
Details to be announced

Thursday 22nd – Pubs visit

Details to be announced

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