

The firkin



CAMPAIGN
FOR
REAL ALE

FREE

Newsletter of CAMRA North Bedfordshire Branch Vol 41 No 4 Winter 2016

Horne's Brewery – A Family Success



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CAMRA MEMBERS BREWING

A Very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year to all our Readers

The Campaign for Real Ale is a consumer organisation founded in 1971

FLYING HIGH

FOR 2016, ALL OUR MONTHLY BEERS ARE NAMED AFTER DE HAVILLAND AIRCRAFT

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Chairman's Corner

Elsewhere in this issue you will find a report of this year's Beer Festival. I got a fresh perspective of it this year as I was released

from being behind bars (apart from a short stint at the wine bar) to be in my new base of the CAMRA Shop and Tombola. This gave me a fresh perspective of the event and greater interaction with the customers. Each interaction allowed time for a brief chat, and the view down the hall showed people chatting in small groups.

That reminded me of one of the attractions of pubs. We are on neutral territory, free to come and go as suits our other commitments. There is

no formality or difference of status. To lubricate the conversation there is a choice of drinks to satisfy most tastes – at this year's festival, beer, cider and wine bars were all in the same hall.

I have long felt that a pub is an important way of helping build community because it is where we can gather without any agenda and simply be with others. Sadly, many estates are being built without provision for such a community focus, and places which have them are losing them because of economic pressures and the demands made of licensees. That is why CAMRA is campaigning to ease the burdens on licensees so they are not burnt out by long hours with little financial reward. We need them to keep our pubs open so we can enjoy the company we find there.

Roger Stokes

Swanning into November

Bedford's Swan Hotel held its annual Beer Festival on 10th-13th November 2016. My son and I went along on the Saturday afternoon. The cask ales were behind a long bar, all served by gravity – 37 of them. I couldn't resist starting with a third of this year's CAMRA Champion Beer of Britain, Bingham's Vanilla Stout. It didn't disappoint.

After that I was in unfamiliar territory. My next third, at 5.5% abv, was Raj IPA from the Tryst brewery of Fife, CAMRA Champion Beer of Scotland. A proper IPA, it was very much to my taste. As was the splendidly named Four Hopmen of the Apocalypse, 4.8% abv, from Totally Brewed of Nottingham.

Another 4.8% abv beer I tried was Plastered Pheasant from the Quantock Brewery, this time a darker, fruitier, less hoppy beer with a hint of coffee flavour – not my usual style, but enjoyable. Then came Fog on the Tyne (atmospheric name!) from the North Blyth

Brewery, a pale, hoppy beer at 4.1% abv. It contains four nationalities of hops – well, Newcastle is a port – which was very much to my liking. And for my final third I had Slightly Foxed from the eponymous brewery in Yorkshire, a pale session bitter at 3.8% abv using American hops. One should drink the weakest first, but some temptations can't be resisted, and I enjoyed the Slightly Foxed anyway.

Val Walter, former licensee of the Devonshire Arms, chooses the beers for this festival and her instinct for a good beer hasn't declined! There were also 16 ciders – most of them containing ancillary fruits, one even with chili – and three perries on offer, with a decent choice of pub food, and a roast on the Sunday lunchtime. Congratulations to the Swan on another fine festival!

Fytton Rowland

The Festival You Don't See

This year I'm doing things differently. This report is accompanied by photos of the 2016 Bedford Beer and Cider Festival as usual, but I describe the Festival you don't see.



The story started on Sunday at 7.30 a.m. Carpeting contractors arrived and covered the Corn Exchange's dance floor with protective

carpet. CAMRA volunteers started to arrive, and laid heavy-duty polythene sheeting on top of the carpet where the main bar and cider bar were going to go. The scaffolding lorry arrived, and had to be unloaded. Scaffolding is heavy! We put it up to make the stillage – the structure that holds all the barrels during the festival, two tiers high.



Then a lorry-load of stuff on pallets arrived from the CAMRA warehouse. Pallet trucks – which have to come off the lorry first so that they can be

used to unload everything else. Cooling coils and fleece jackets for 160 barrels, a dozen cooling units to pump cold water through those coils, and all the piping needed to link them all up. Supplies of two-pint take-away containers. Boxes of glasses – not our specially printed BBCF 2016 ones, but a back-up supply. Fridges for the foreign beer and wine bars. Barrel hoists to get all the casks – not to mention those cooling units – up on to our scaffolding. Barrel taps, and mallets to bash the taps in with. Cleaning materials to ensure those taps are sterile before we bash them in. And so on.

By the end of Sunday, the stillage was ready to receive barrels, with the coolers in place, filled with water and cooling down. On Monday, the beer arrived. We unloaded 160 casks off various vans and cars and rolled them all into the hall, hoisted them up on to the stillage, put

the cooling coils on to them and connected up all the piping, put their fleecy jackets on them, and let them start settling and cooling. Another van arrived bearing our specially printed glasses, which were unloaded into a storeroom in the basement below.



Tuesday brought a third 8 a.m. start for the volunteers, as the main task of the day was to unload the bar counter units from another lorry, and put

the bars up. They're heavy, too! The foreign beers arrived in another van, and had to be taken up by lift two floors to the Howard Room bar, where they went into the cold room to cool down while we puzzled over how to connect the foreign kegs up to the Corn Exchange's pumps. The programmes came from the printers, always a last-minute job so that the beer list is as up-to-date as possible. The barrels were broached and the taps hammered in, the beer tasted and checked for clarity. Some couldn't go on sale till Thursday because they hadn't settled. A couple couldn't go on sale at all – judged unfit to drink. Their brewers were informed that we wouldn't be paying for those.



Wednesday – opening day, but not till 4 p.m. Banners from breweries and cider makers, our sponsors, and CAMRA headquarters

were hung up all round the hall. Good thing some of our volunteers have a good head for heights. Copies of the Firkin, beer mats, and publicity material from sponsors got laid out around the hall for customers to take. The signage went up. And at 4 p.m., I opened the front door and admitted the queue. And so my story ends as the Festival begins!

Fytton Rowland

Hey Ho, Hey Ho, It's off to Work We Go!

Well, assessing pubs is important work for CAMRA. On a warm September evening we sallied forth from the **Wellington Arms** in **Bedford** in our community minibus. Of the many cask ales on offer at the Welly, I'd just had time for a half of Tring Brewery's Sea Vixen, which was new to me – a very nice hoppy amber bitter at 4.0% abv.



First stop was **Queens Park's** sole surviving pub, the **Queen**. It is a free house and had Fuller's London Pride, Sharp's Doom Bar (which had just run out) and Theakston's Best (a 3.8% abv session bitter) on its handpumps. Mostly we tried Theakston's, as it's not one of the 'usual suspects', and it was a very nice example of a traditional bitter. The pub has a pool table, fruit machines, and Premier League football on TV, and it was quite busy at 7.30 p.m. on a Thursday – encouraging! The staff made our influx welcome and served us quickly nonetheless.



The next pub was quite a contrast to the Queen – the **Three Tuns** in **Biddenham**. It's a thatched village pub, now massively extended for the dining trade. About the only feature in common with the Queen is the bar with bare

floorboards, which make both pubs noisy. The Three Tuns is a Greene King house, and it offered GK IPA and Ale Fresco on its handpumps. Mostly we tried Ale Fresco, a summer seasonal brew as its name suggests. It's a pleasant pale bitter at 4.0% abv. Again, the welcome was as warm as the evening.



It was to be an evening of three Threes, as we drove on from the Three Tuns to the village of two Threes, **Turvey**. We stopped first at the **Three Cranes**. Formerly a Greene King pub with an excellent

reputation for food, this Victorian building is now a free house but still favours GK beers – IPA, Abbot and Bobby (a 4.2% abv golden bitter) from the GK stable were on handpumps, plus Doom Bar and Adnams Southwold. I chose the Bobby as it was new to me, and found it pleasant. The dining reputation has returned under the new owners; it was 9 p.m. by now but quite a few were still eating. Yet more bare floorboards! After a very short walk we entered



the **Three Fyshes** – recently saved from closure for a second time, by new local owners. Meals are served except on Mondays and

Tuesdays. A very old village pub alongside the river, it served Hop Back Brewery's Crop Circle, Nobby's Guilsborough Gold, Brakspears (which had run out) and Doom Bar again. I tried Crop Circle (4.2% abv), a pale flaxen colour and crisp without too great a hoppiness – very good!

We had hoped to sample the Prince of Wales at



Royal George, Stevington

Bromham, but it had temporarily closed (see Pub News, page 9). So we diverted to the **Royal George** at **Stevington**, another very old village pub, with a dartboard, a

pool table, and a warm welcome for our group from the new licensees, even though it was close to closing time. It had Wells Eagle, London Pride and Adnams Southwold on handpumps, and the Adnams I tried was in good condition. For once, carpets on the floor to deaden the noise!

Then it was back to our usual end-point, the **Bedford Arms** in **Bedford**, though I didn't go in, having had my quota for the evening. A good evening, visiting some delightful pubs, several of them under very welcome new proprietors.

Fytton Rowland



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Tara and Mark welcome you to the newly refurbished Swan at Cranfield.

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2.30pm, 6-9.30pm;
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www.swanatcranfield.co.uk

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Winter Beer Festivals

21st Cambridge Winter Ale Festival

19-21 Jan at University Social Club, Mill Lane. Range of traditional winter beers + local ciders and international bottled beers. X5 bus from Bedford stops 15 min walk to venue.
www.cambridgebeerfestival.com

Stevenage Beer and Cider Festival

2-4 Feb at Stevenage Arts and Leisure Centre, Lytton Way, Stevenage SG1 1LZ. Over 80 real ales plus ciders and international beers. Admission £3.
www.camranorthherts.org.uk

Derby CAMRA Winter Fest

15-18 Feb at Roundhouse, Derby. 300 real ales, ciders + perries. Direct access from Derby railway station.
www.derbycamra.org.uk

34th Luton Beer & Cider Festival

16-18 Feb at Hightown Community Centre, York St, Luton, LU2 0JD. See advert below. Close to railway station, easy travel from Bedford and Flitwick.
southbeds.camra.org.uk

National Winter Ales Festival

21-25 Feb in St Andrews and Blackfriars Halls, Norwich NR3 1AU. Wide range of winter ales, strong milds, strong old ales, stouts and porters under one roof. Includes selection of CAMRA's Champion Winter Beer of Britain 2017.
nwaf.org.uk

33rd London Drinker Beer & Cider Festival

8-10 Mar at Camden Centre, Bidborough St, London WC1H 9AU. 150 real ales + imported beers, ciders/perries, English wines. Home cooked food. No music. **Ends Friday evening.** Very close to St Pancras and Kings Cross stns.
www.northlondon.camra.org.uk

St Neots Booze on the Ouse Beer and Cider Festival

16-18 Mar at the Priory Centre, Priory Lane, St Neots, PE19 6HB. X5 bus from Bedford; Market Place bus stop 5 mins
www.hunts.camra.org.uk/festival

Thursday 16th to Saturday 18th February 2017

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See <http://southbeds.camra.org.uk/lbcf>



Pub News

Pheasant, Kimbolton Road, Bedford

Welcome to Nigel and Fiona, recently arrived at this comfortable, modern pub in north Bedford. The open drinking area offers Wells Eagle IPA, Bombardier and Courage Directors. Home-cooked lunches and evening meals are served. There are sports TV, a large patio, and a children's play area outside. Call 01234 409301.

Cock, Pavenham



Welcome to John & Linda O'Grady, who have taken on this friendly village pub. Fuller's London Pride, Greene King IPA and a guest ale are served. Food includes fish and chips on Friday evening, Sunday lunches, a cheese club on Monday and a breakfast club on the first Saturday of the month. The Ouse Valley Way footpath runs behind the garden. Call 01234 822834.

Royal George, Stevington



Welcome to Julia and Nigel, new licensees at this pub created from two old buildings. Adnams Southwold Bitter, Fuller's London Pride and Wells

Eagle IPA are available. Light pub lunches are served on Friday and Saturday, with cream teas and home-made cakes on Thursday afternoons. A key to Stevington Windmill can be borrowed for £10 deposit. Call 01234 822184.

Knife and Cleaver, Houghton Conquest



A new Epic Pubs team led by Suzanne McGregor recently took over this pub/restaurant. Wells Eagle IPA, Bombardier and a Wells guest beer are available. High-quality food is prepared using fresh, locally-sourced ingredients wherever possible. There are nine en-suite bedrooms in a separate block behind the garden. A good base for walks on the nearby Greensand Ridge.

www.theknifeandcleaver.com

Bedford Arms, Souldrop



A warm welcome back to Fred & Caroline Rich, who created the pub's award-winning reputation. Greene King IPA and Black Sheep Ale are usually available, with guest beers often from local microbreweries. The restaurant with its open fireplace offers traditional, hearty pub favourites with daily specials and a Sunday roast. Closed on Mondays. Call 01234 781384.

Pub News (continued)

Ship, Bromham Road, Bedford



Welcome to Mary Derbyshire, who recently took on this large, one-bar pub west of the town centre. Courage Directors is available, with a guest ale. There is a regular quiz on Thursday evening, karaoke on Friday, live or disco music on Saturday, and poker on Sunday. Sky and BT Sports TV are available for major sporting events. Call 01234 409303.

Three Tuns, Biddenham

Welcome to Wayne and Jane, new arrivals at this attractive village inn and restaurant. Greene King IPA and two changing guest beers, often from other breweries, are available. Quality home-cooked food is served all day until 9pm, with lighter bar meals until 6pm. The TV in the bar is on for major sports events, and the lounge can be hired for business meetings or family events. www.thethreetunsbiddenham.co.uk

Prince of Wales, Bromham

Welcome to familiar face Chris Sweeting, who recently re-opened this family-friendly pub after refurbishment. Wells Eagle IPA, Courage Directors and a guest beer are available. Traditional pub food is served, with a separate children's menu. Outdoors, the garden has children's play area and there is a covered patio at the front.

www.theprinceofwalesbromham.co.uk

WhatPub: For details of these and other real ale pubs throughout the UK, visit CAMRA's national online pub guide www.whatpub.com

The Firkin

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

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Trading Standards

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

www.consumerdirect.gov.uk

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Horne's – A Fine Addition to the Local Brewery Scene



Every year North Beds CAMRA rewards its hard-working volunteers at the Bedford Beer and Cider Festival by laying on an evening trip to a local brewery. Last year we went to a reincarnated one, Phipps. This year it was a newly-born one, Horne's. It's virtually next door to the Wheatsheaf in Bow Brickhill – though there's no connection between the two businesses. Several houses in a row form the Horne 'family compound', and a couple of garages and a barn at the rear constitute the brewery.

Ryan Horne had been a home brewer who gradually upped the size of his plant to 100 litres. Then he went on a brewing course, decided to take the plunge, and in June 2015 installed a commercial microbrewery. The present plant is a six-barrel one, and by October 2016 he had brewed 53 times – almost once a week, 21 firkins each time. Ryan has gradually increased his working hours and was planning to go fulltime in November. His wife Colette and her mother also work on bottling, and his father Phil Horne retires next year and will join in the fun too. Ryan intends it to remain a small family business, even as sales grow.

Cask ale is sold through local pubs, including two of the Wetherspoons pubs in Milton Keynes. Much of the business is in bottle-conditioned versions, which are sold through farm shops, garden centres and craft fairs in the area. Ryan

was especially pleased when his MP recommended his beers to the House of Commons Strangers' Bar; they took six firkins which sold out in just a few days!



At the start he made three beers, all with the trade name Triple Goat – three goats graze in the field behind the brewery.

The trade mark is a pair of goat's horns, and in the end he decided on Horne's as the company name rather than Triple Goat. Triple Goat IPA at 5% abv, Triple Goat Porter at 4.6% abv, and Triple Goat Pale Ale at 3.9% abv were derived from his home-brew recipes, and these three remain the staple products. But he now brews Dark Fox, a traditional-style darker session bitter at 3.9% abv, regularly as well. His other main product, introduced for the football Euros last summer under the name Hat-Trick, has been kept on under the name of Featherstone Ale; it's an amber, dry-hopped session bitter at 3.6% abv. For us to sample, he had put up pins of Triple Goat IPA and Dark Fox, and we all sampled both and found them very acceptable examples of their breeds.



A fish-and-chip van drove into the yard to provide our supper, and picnic tables had been laid out in the

barn, with a roaring fire outside to cut through the autumn chill.

Horne's – A Fine Addition to the Local Brewery Scene (continued)

Agreeing that this was a new local brewery with a friendly approach and a probable good future – but without



Woburn Ale House

breakneck expansion – we moved on to another new local enterprise, the Woburn Ale House, a micropub next door to the Black Horse.

As we drove through Woburn we noticed that the newcomer seemed to be the busiest pub in Woburn that evening. It usually has a couple of Horne's beers on, as well as cask ales from other local breweries. It's a bit bigger than many micropubs – a minipub, perhaps – with furnishings rather more like a true pub, though the shop-window effect is there. We enjoyed a few halves there before returning to Bedford after a most enjoyable evening.

Fytton Rowland

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 www.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 8th – Christmas Social

At the Devonshire Arms, Dudley Street, Bedford, at 7.30 for 8 p.m. Limited places; bookings a.s.a.p. to Gary Mudd

JANUARY

Thursday 5th – Branch Meeting

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

Thursday 12th – Rural Pubs Visit

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

Thursday 19th – Town Pubs Walk

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

Thursday 26th – Rural Pubs Visit

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

FEBRUARY

Thursday 2nd – Branch Meeting

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

Thursday 16th-Friday 17th – Informal Socials

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

MARCH

Thursday 9th – Branch Meeting

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

Thursday 16th-Friday 17th – Informal Socials

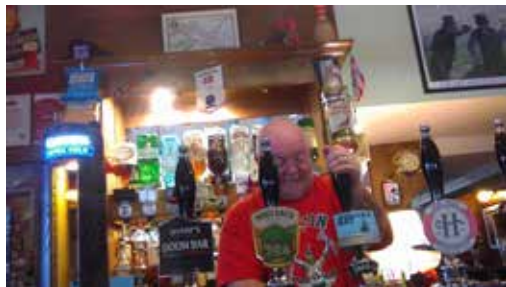
At the St Neots Beer and Cider Festival (see page 7).

All-Beds CAMRA London Trip 2016 – Bow to Bethnal Green



On Saturday 29th October, Helen and I set out with Alan Higgs to be the North Beds deputation on this year's All-Bedfordshire CAMRA London Trip. Although we were running a little late, we emerged from Bow Road Station into a pleasant autumn day, found our way to the Morgan Arms by 12:45p.m., and found the others still there. The **Morgan Arms** is a pleasant and airy Victorian corner pub in grey/dark blue décor inside and out with wood floor, stained glass and some nice architectural features. It is now part of Greene King's Metropolitan Pub Co. Four handpumps stocked Kentish Pip Cider, Southwark Brewery's American IPA (5.5%) and Tring's Brill Gold

(3.5%). We settled down with a half of the Tring to start.



Our initial thirst slaked, it was a short walk to the **Eleanor Arms**. This was a lovely traditional Shepherd Neame house, Victorian with 1930s wood panelling and mirrors. Opened out, but still with two separate areas, pool and darts in the rear. The five handpumps served Master Brew, Whitstable Bay Pale Ale, Hog's Back T.E.A., Hackney Brewery Pumpkin Ale, and Doom Bar. I had a Master Brew and Helen and Alan had the Pumpkin Ale; both were in excellent condition, though the Pumpkin was not to my taste. With a friendly and chatty landlord, this was a pub we could all have settled into for the session, so we all had a second, trying the Whitstable and the T.E.A. Excellent, but we had to tear ourselves away.



On we went to the **Crown** (part of Young's 'Geronimo' chain). An opened-out, airy Victorian edifice with pale grey décor and wood floors. Slightly 'bistro', with old, distressed tables and saggy sofas and a plastic 'green-wall'! The Truman Hoptoberfest was fairly good, and the

All-Beds CAMRA London Trip 2016 – Bow to Bethnal Green (continued)

smashed avocado with lime oil on toast with a poached egg made a tasty lunch.

Onward to the **Palm Tree**. This London Boozer is set in Mile End Park near the Hertfordshire Canal, its surrounding streets demolished to create the park. It is one of London's 'Real Heritage Pubs' and really is a step back in time. Run by the same family for over 35 years (and probably not redecorated in that time), it is full of singing and boxing memorabilia with many signed photos. The landlord was a real cockney and regaled us with many tales such that the '5s' dartboard was used because landlords couldn't add up. The beer was good but I find I forgot to note down what it was!... We then bypassed the Florists Arms as they had no real ale on, and so missed trying their stone baked pizzas!

Then on to the **Camel**, a lovely narrow panelled pub with a long bar. Good pies (Alan had a venison one). Nice outdoor space to sit, since it was busy and the weather was clement. I had to try St Austell Bucket of Blood, which proved an excellent red ale.

And so... to the **Dundee Arms** as dusk drew on. This was free house opened in 2015. A very 'distressed' interior with bench seating and standing tables. There's lovely tiling in the entrance, and a rare mosaic sign for the pub which was uncovered during restoration. A fair bit of glaring neon signage. There is a hairdressers upstairs which has to be entered through the bar; an interesting sales opportunity!

Another short walk took us to the **Redchurch Brewery Tap**. The brewery is built into a railway arch with the tap floor above. Very trendy and popular but controversially is a 'craft' brewery and WhatPub says No Real Ale. However, the beers are live and not directly pressured, I think. None that we tried was too cold or very fizzy, but they were quite expensive (priced in 2/3pints). I had Paradise Pale (3.7%) and Hoxton Dry Stout (6.0%) – both were very tasty.



Most decided to call it a day at that point but us intrepid N Beds trio called in at one more pub on the way to the station. The **King's Head** is a refurbished large pub with a large round bar. Handpumps and taps are unmarked but the beers are displayed on a large blackboard. (More pubs should do this, I think.) They serve a range of bottled and craft keg beers and around six cask ales, often from Arbor, Dark Star and Oakham. I'm sorry that I was flagging by then and forgot to note the beers. The beer was good but again quite pricey. We found our way to Shoreditch High Street and straight to Blackfriars where a delayed train rolled in and took us back to Bedford stopping only at Luton Airport Parkway. Result!

Gary Mudd

Lost Pubs of North Bedfordshire 2 – Pubs with No Bar



The Cock at Broom

If you have ever visited the Cock at Broom, a short distance north of Sandy, you will be aware that it is fairly remarkable in that it is a pub with no bar. Customers are served from a doorway, and are have their drinks handed to them, which makes things a bit awkward if you're fumbling for change at the same time! (A sign also says that food should be ordered 'from the no-bar'. There are said to be only ten no-bar pubs left in the UK. Ed.)

In recent history, there were three other pubs in North Beds which were known to have no bar. I never had the opportunity to frequent any of them, so I am relying on the memories of our older friends to tell the story.

The Case Is Altered, Church Hill, Ravensden



The Case is Altered, closed in the 1990s

"Off the road down quite a steep slope we arrived at the front of the building, which looked like a row of terraced cottages with some old wooden benches outside. I opened the door

expecting to see a bar, but no bar, plenty of people sitting around drinking, must be a pub! Just like walking into someone's lounge but with extra tables and chairs. So the bar must be in this room to the right, in I go! I see a skittles table (*now in the Polhill Arms – M. MacK.*) set in one corner diagonally across the room, so to play you stood in the opposite corner to throw your cheeses; there was also a dart board, never played at the same time due to lack of space! O.K, now where is the bar? So return to the first room to ask and told to go to the door over there and Dick will see to you.

Over to the doorway and find Dick, an elderly gentleman not too steady on his pins but still managing extremely well. He was stood in a room which looked like it may have been a holding room for wrongdoers at some time. It had a brick floor with a couple of steps down to it. There were a couple of kegs and an abundance of bottles and cans, and bar snacks of various sorts.

I took our drinks outside and sat on one of the benches when an elderly lady, who I couldn't remember seeing inside, came and started talking to us. I later found out that this was Connie the landlady who wore a wig, which I am sure was on ball bearings because it had moved the next time you saw her! There was no shortage of characters in The Case, but one I remember most was the one called old Mr Pell who sat there with his pint and whisky chaser." – *Phil Bryan*

The Vicar of Wakefield, 41 High Street, Clapham

"I remember just an ordinary terraced house with a rather low-hanging pub sign. You walked straight in and sat in the front room, wooden benches and a few tables and chairs if memory serves – and an open fire. There wasn't a huge choice of drinks and the 'cellar' was the back room, from where drinks were poured and then brought out. No bar meals! I can't recall the

Lost Pubs of North Bedfordshire 2 – Pubs with No Bar (continued)



The Vicar of Wakefield (on the right-hand side), closed in 1976

name of the then elderly woman who owned and ran it. The pub, I believe, died with her. The chap who helped her may have been known as Lol?" – *Jean Flannery*

The Boot Inn, 119 Bunyan Road, Kempston

"up the Bunyan Road and home to the old Boot Inn, that has stood two hundred and fifty years in



The Boot Inn, Kempston, closed in 1972

the Statty field beside the Saxon burial ground." – *Bryan Walker*

The 'Statty' field can be seen in the background of the photo, and it is known that Stanley Thurston stored his fairground equipment in the field during World War II.

Mike Mackechnie

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Brewery Experience at the B&K

Having nothing better to do on Wednesday 7th September (apart from go to work, and who really wants to do that?),

husband Neil and I went along to the Brewhouse and Kitchen in Bedford High Street along with



two other members of the North Beds CAMRA branch, Fytton and Geoff, to experience a day's brewing under the expert tutelage of brewer Ben Pearson. The plan was to brew an ale that would feature at the 39th Bedford Beer and

Cider Festival. *(Which indeed it did! Ed.)*



Inside the B&K all the brewing equipment is on full show to customers. It looks very shiny and somewhat

mysterious at the beginning, but soon we all became familiar with it and what everything was used for. About 10 a.m. we met up with Ben, and started off not with a beer but a welcome cup of coffee whilst Ben explained the recipe. Neil and I had done some home brewing from scratch using grain rather than malt extract, and the process is the same with bigger containers and quantities.

The basic brewing process starts with the mash where grist (crushed malted barley) is mixed with hot liquor (water) to make a sloppy porridge. This is done in a mash tun (big tank) and the purpose is to extract sugars from the malted barley. After 90 minutes in the mash tun, liquid is drained from the sloppy porridge, and sparging begins. I love that word – it's just a fancy term for rinsing – sprinkling hot liquor

(water again!) over the grains to rinse out the last of the sugars.

The sugary liquid is transferred to another big tank – a copper or boiler – where it is boiled for 90 minutes with hops. This sterilises the liquid which is now called wort (pronounced 'wert'). Hops are added for bitterness, to help preserve the beer and to add aroma and flavour. To do this successfully and to produce different tasting beers, hops are added at various times during the boil. Bittering hops tend to be added at the beginning of the boil and aroma hops towards the end.

Once the boil is finished the wort (see, I'm using the correct terminology, how professional is that!) has to be cooled quickly, and this is done by running it through a heat exchanger before transferring it into the fermentation tank. Brewer's yeast is then pitched (added) and this converts the majority of the sugars into alcohol, releasing carbon dioxide. Finally it is transferred to casks where it is left to mature for a period of time before the best bit – the drinking.

Our first task for the day was truly hands-on – to pour over 100 kg of malted barley into the mash tun, which contained hot liquor at around 77°C. Minerals were added to alter the pH of the water. That's burtonisation, and plenty is written about it in brewing books. The malts that were used were pale malt (mostly), Munich malt, a little chocolate malt and some torrified wheat. (When I was typing this my spell-checker kept wanting to change 'torrified' to 'terrified'.) This was done fairly slowly to allow the grain to be mixed in – with a very large paddle – ensuring no lumps or pockets of dry grain. This was easy at first, lots of water and not much grain, but it got progressively harder. It was very much a team effort; I did the stirring at the beginning with the three men putting in sterling efforts later on.

Once all the grain had been added the temperature was down to about 66°C, which allows the sugars to be extracted, and this took about 75 minutes. Ben had a neat computer



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Brewery Experience at the B&K (continued)

programme that allowed him to control and record all parts of the process. So what to do during that time, hum, what about trying one of the beers available in the B&K? Well, it would be rude not to. At the same time we had all worked up an appetite for the delicious bacon and egg rolls that appeared before us.



Next up was the sparging process – a special sparging arm sprinkles hot water on to the mash, allowing the sugars to

be rinsed out. At the same time the liquid is allowed to drain from the mash tun, using gravity, into an underback (look it up!). A pump is then used to get the liquid into the copper so it can be boiled. There were lots of levers to be tweaked and played with in order to get the flow rates right. Ben predicted this would take ages but it worked first time. It took about an hour to transfer all the liquid, with it starting off being a very dark liquid and gradually getting lighter in colour. I knew at this point it would not be the pale, golden hoppy beer that I prefer.

Next step was to add hops in the form of pellets: Hallertau and Northern Brewer at the beginning, Whitbread Goldings ten minutes before the end, and more Hallertau five minutes before the end. During the boiling process several things happened. Notably, the fire alarm went off apparently caused by the sensor being rather close to the copper. None of the pub customers moved, though.

Next job for the team was to shovel the hot soggy grain out of the mash tun into big bags through a somewhat small hatch on the side. Gloves and shovel were thoughtfully provided and between the four of us we got it cleared. I declined to carry the heavy bags out of the premises, I'd already been to the gym that week so didn't really need the exercise. We also had

lunch which was very welcome and tasty and involved French fries – yummy. And some more beer, again it would be rude to refuse. Between us, over the whole day we tried the full range although I did leave the dark ones to others, not my thing at all.

After 90 minutes or so boiling, the liquid was then transferred to the fermenting vessel – copper coloured like the other vessels, all rather confusing really. This was done using a heat exchanger, and it is amazing just how effective this is. Once in the fermenting vessel it was down to about 25°C. Helpfully the temperature is shown on a display, so no need to stick a thermometer inside the container. Some additional water was added to bring the specific gravity to the correct level. The dried yeast was then reconstituted with a couple of litres of water. The jug was gently jiggled to mix the yeast with the instruction from Ben that there were to be no lumps of dry yeast. This was then left for 15-20 minutes before being added to the fermenting vessel. At that point there was nothing more to see and it was close to 5pm.

The day had passed amazingly quickly and it was incredibly interesting taking part in the whole process. Huge thanks go to Ben for his knowledge and patience in answering loads of questions and allowing us to do the hard work. Neil and I left with a minikeg of beer to drink at home and the promise of another one once the festival beer was ready. Cheers!

Lynne Ratnett



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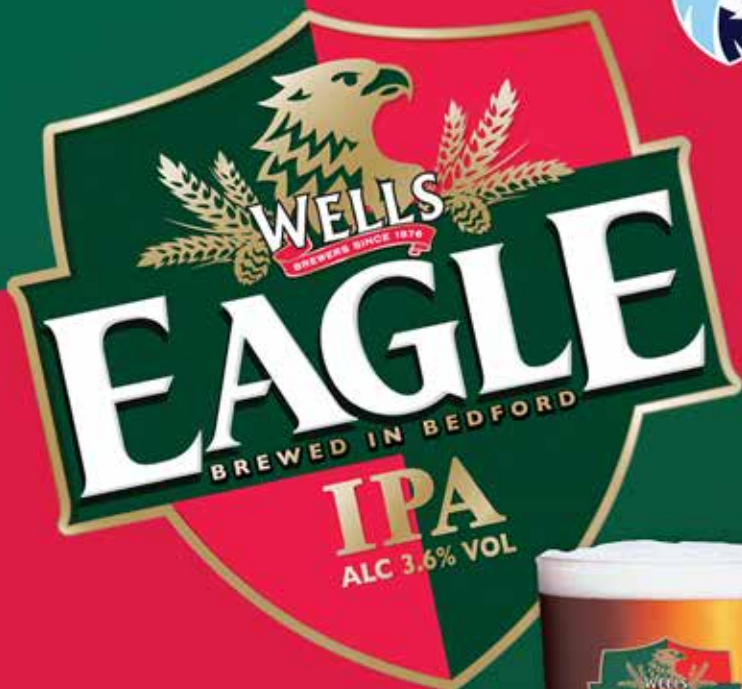


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