

The firkin



CAMPAIGN
FOR
REAL ALE

FREE

Newsletter of CAMRA North Bedfordshire Branch

Vol 34 No 1

SPRING 2009

The Three Cups – CAMRA North Beds Pub of the Year 2009



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Chairman's Corner



SINCE the last issue of Firkin in December, CAMRA North Bedfordshire has enjoyed a number of successful functions and evenings out. We have had good attendance at these and we have recruited some new members. Thanks to our Social Secretary, John Martin, these events are becoming ever more popular, so if you want to join us on a bus trip, do remember to book your seat early.

Our Christmas social was a great success and the curry meal was enjoyed by all. In January our rural pub tour visited selected pubs north of Bedford, attracting a large turnout despite a bitterly cold evening. Unfortunately, our next rural pub tour in February to pubs south of Bedford had to be cancelled owing to heavy snow, so we have we will have to reschedule this during the coming months.

ited the Luton Beer Festival on the Thursday and Friday, which was again very well organised.

Towards the end of February, I and other branch representatives attended the well-organised and well-supported "Save the Five Bells" campaign meeting in Riseley village hall. About 100 people were there, proving that locals do care about their community pubs. We in CAMRA are delighted to support their initiative to re-open the pub and will give practical as well as moral support by putting the organisers in touch with others who have faced pub closures and managed to win the day.

At a meeting in March, we set up the committee need to organise and run our 32nd Bedford Beer & Cider Festival, which will be held in the Bedford Corn Exchange in October. Anyone interested in helping is more than welcome to come along to our branch meetings or socials, the latest dates of which can be found elsewhere in this issue.

In March we enjoyed another rural pub tour around Wootton and a large group of branch members vis-

Don Allan
Branch Chairman

The White Horse



Local beer and food festival
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Programme of events

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Pub News

Swan with Two Nicks, Sharnbrook



Our apologies to new landlords Mel and David for failing to include them in our last issue. The pub offers Wells Eagle IPA and Young's Special,

with traditional pub meals available every day, with senior citizens' special lunches on Monday to Thursday. The doors are open daily from 11.30, with a full Sky and Setanta Sports TV in the bar. To book meals, call 01234 781585.

Three Tuns, Biddenham



Welcome to new landlords Paul and Jan Clark at this popular pub just west of Bedford. Although they have not run a pub before, they have lived locally for 30 years and know the area well. Paul runs the two bars, offering Greene King IPA, the new St Edmunds golden ale and a regularly changing guest ale, while Jan, an experienced cook, runs the kitchen. Home-cooked food follows different menus for lunch, evening meals and Sunday, with daily specials. There is a large garden and a separate play area for children, plus quiz nights every other Thursday. Party bookings and social events are welcome. Call 01234 354847.

White Horse, Newnham Avenue, Bedford

Landlords Nigel and Sue Anstead are running another Local Beer and Food Festival over the May Day holiday weekend 1st to 4th May. The mix of local beers and locally sourced food has proved a winning combination for the past couple of years. A large marquee in the garden will host a range of

events, including a programme of talent and food from Jersey on Saturday, as part of the Bedford Jersey Arts Festival. Call 01234 409306.

Cross Keys, Cranfield

All are welcome at the Cranfield Beer Festival, to



be run on Sunday 3rd May by Mike Stanton of the Parkland Wine Company in the pub garden, in co-operation with landlady Pauline Kinns. The festival bar will be open from 2 to 10pm. Advance tickets can be bought from Parkland Wine for £3, which includes the first beer. The real ale range will be mainly from regional and micro-breweries, including Arkells, Buffy's and Dorset Brewing, and may include a new brew recently featured in the House of Commons bar. A barbeque and live music will complete the fare. Call Parkland Wine on 01234 751528.

Devonshire Arms, Dudley Street, Bedford

Landlady Valerie Walter is holding another spring beer festival over the weekend from Thursday 14th to Sunday 17th May. As in previous years, the courtyard at the side of the pub will again be pressed into service for additional beer stillage, while the garden should provide excellent extra drinking space if the weather remains fine. A selection of beers and ciders from around the country will be available, while Slow Food Bedford will manage food on Saturday evening. Call 01234 359329 for further details.

Salutation, Blunham

Landlords Victoria and Mike Crooks are running an Easter beer festival from Friday 10th to Monday 13th April. There will be about 15 real ales from Orkney southwards, food available throughout and different entertainers daily, including Dr



Busker and his pirate crew on Friday, karaoke on Saturday and The Soul Man on Sunday. Call 01767 640620 for further details.

Wellington Arms, Wellington St, Bedford

Landlords Royston and Lesley are running a beer festival over Easter weekend from Wednesday 8th to Monday 13th April. Although the Wellie with its 14 handpumps may seem to you like a permanent beer festival, a further 35 real ales will be packed into this award-winning, corner pub for the long weekend. It's sure to be popular! Call 01234 308033.

Blacksmiths Arms, Ravensden

This black and white pub near the crossroads on the B660 just north of Bedford is now advertised as a "Country Pub and Indian Restaurant". It is open every evening and at lunchtime on Sunday. Black Sheep Bitter and Fuller's London Pride are available on the bars. Take-away food orders over £10 are delivered free within five miles. Call 01234 772476 or visit www.blacksmithsarmsravensden.co.uk

Carpenters Arms, Cranfield

Welcome to new landlords Don and Jean Norton, who recently took over this popular pub on the High Street. Lunches are served on Sunday, with Wells Eagle IPA and Courage Directors available every day on the pumps. Call 01234 750232.

Litten Tree, High Street, Bedford

After several years with no real ale in sight, this town centre venue has sprouted not just one but a bank of three handpumps, currently serving Young's Bitter and Wells Bombardier.

The Firkin

Published every three months by the North Bedfordshire Branch of CAMRA, the Campaign for Real Ale. The Firkin is produced and distributed by volunteers to most pubs and clubs in Bedfordshire north of a line joining the M1, Clophill, Shefford and Tempsford. We welcome correspondence and any relevant features for publication. Views expressed here may not be those of the Editor, the Campaign for Real Ale, or its North Bedfordshire Branch.

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

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Save The Five Bells!

OVER 80 pubs currently close every month throughout the UK. Most fall by the wayside with regret but little fanfare, but occasionally locals dig in their heels and campaign to keep their community pub open. The Five Bells at Riseley is the latest to inspire action.



The Long Slow Decline

In the early 1990s, the Five Bells was a thriving business with darts, pool and skittles teams, frequented by the village footballers, cricketers and many locals who enjoyed the good beer and friendly atmosphere. A prolonged lack of investment by owners Greene King saw it become increasingly shabby and soulless, supported only by a small group of hardened regulars.

Spurred into action

Time was finally called on the Five Bells just after Christmas, with the boarded up doors and windows now creating the familiar, forlorn look of dying pubs everywhere. However, while this boarded-up pub may be a shadow of its former self, strong support has emerged to reverse the gloom and re-open it as a community local. Four weeks after its sudden closure, a meeting was held to assess local interest in saving the beleaguered pub – and the answer was a resounding yes! More than 40 people turned up to the village hall, where a pledge was made to not only re-open the pub, but to transform it into a friendly, social pub for everyone of which Riseley can be proud.

Villagers from all walks of life turned up to express their desire to save the pub and to pledge

their skills and energies to see it happen. The strong feeling was that as a proper village, Riseley's diverse population of age, professions and social backgrounds, means that like the church, the village hall, the schools and the shop, a local pub is an integral part of the village and important to its long-term success.

Next steps

Greene King has confirmed its interest in principle in re-opening the pub, but will need to feel sure that it can be run as a profitable business. The action group will now put its ideas to Greene King, as well as visiting every house in the village to explain their plan and why it is important for the whole village to join in saving the Five Bells. For further information on the campaign, visit the website at www.savethefivebells.org.uk, or email contact@savethefivebells.org.uk

Many communities throughout the country are fighting to save their pubs and some do win, against the odds. Both CAMRA and The Pub is the Hub are committed to help the cause and offer a wealth of useful information to locals keen to be among the winners.

Wells & Young's Open Day

Bedford brewer Wells & Young's is celebrating National Cask Ale Week, of which it is a sponsor, by holding an open day on Easter Saturday, 10th April. Four brewery tours will start at 10am, 12 noon, 2pm and 4pm, followed by a beer tasting, all free of charge. Places on the tours are likely to be in demand.

If you wish to take part, please phone Lynn Graves on 01234 761010 or email lynn.graves@wellsandyoungs.co.uk

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Wed 22nd to Sat 25th April at the Corn Exchange,
Bury St Edmunds. Open Wed/Thu 12-11, Fri/Sat
11-11. Over 70 real ales from East Anglian brew-
eries. X5 express bus from Bedford, change in
Cambridge. For further information, check
www.freewebs.com/westsuffolkcamra

36th Cambridge Beer Festival

Mon 18 to Sat 23 May, under canvas on Jesus
Green (bus station 5 min). Open Mon 5-10.30,
Tue-Fri 12-3, 5-10.30, Sat 12-10.30. Admission
charges to be confirmed, but either free or re-
duced for CAMRA members. More than 200 real
ales, 60 foreign beers, 150 real ciders & perries,
English wines and mead, with traditional hot and
cold food. Safe footwear is essential. Supervised
children admitted to daytime sessions. An easy
journey from Bedford by X5 express bus.
www.cambridge-camra.org.uk

Delapré Abbey Beer Festival

Thu 28 to Sat 30 May at Delapré Abbey,
Northampton. Organised jointly by CAMRA
Northants and Friends of Delapré Abbey. Live
music has been booked, but no other information
available as we go to press.
www.northantscamra.org.uk

NATIONAL
Cask Ale
WEEK
6th - 13th APRIL 2009

The world's largest real ale festival kicks off on
5th April, beginning a week of festivities to cele-
brate the wonderful world of cask ale. National
Cask Ale Week brings together the major players
in the ale market in a partnership involving

CAMRA, Cask Marque, pub chains and major real
ale brewers.

Mike Benner, CAMRA's Chief Executive said:

"Despite the doom and gloom in the pubs and
beer market, this is an exciting time for real ale
with more brewers and more beers than ever
before. National Cask Ale Week is a celebration of
our national drink and hundreds of events will be
held in pubs across the country."

A key aim of National Cask Ale Week is to
encourage people who have never tried real ale to
give it a go in local pubs. CAMRA research shows
that a staggering 65% of adults have never even
tried our national drink, yet of those that do, 40%
are converted.

Mr Benner added: "CAMRA members have always
been ambassadors for real ale, but in National
Cask Ale Week we will be calling on all Britain's
cask ale drinkers to go out and recruit other
people to the wonderful world of real ale. After
just one or two sips of fine real ale, most people
are amazed at the flavour and never look back".
CAMRA expects at least 5,000 pubs across the
land to get involved in activities during the week,
including pub quizzes, meet-the-brewer sessions,
pub trails, women's ale nights and tasting sessions.

Publicans who want to get involved should call
Cask Marque on 01206 752212 or visit
www.caskaleweek.co.uk to order a special pub kit
containing all you need to promote the event. Kits
costs £35 (plus VAT) for Cask Marque members or
£40 (plus VAT) for others. Participating pubs can
take part in the full activities and will be listed on
the official website. Limited supplies of A4 posters
and beer mats are also available free of charge
through local CAMRA branches.

CAMRA North Beds members will be celebrating
National Cask Ale week with a pub crawl through
part of Bedford and a visit to the Son of Sid Brew-
ery in Little Gransden. See Branch Diary feature.
For more details of the initiative, visit
www.caskaleweek.co.uk

Local beer news

Congratulations to B&T Brewery of Shefford for winning the Champion Beer of East Anglia Mild category title for Shefford Dark Mild.

The new Dunstable Giant, a 4.4 per cent abv brew with crystal and wheat malts created in memory of Melvin Hall, former landlord of the Globe in Dunstable who sadly did last summer, was declared Beer of the Festival at CAMRA's Luton Beer Festival in February. Dunstable Giant has proved popular enough to be added to the brewer's list of regular beers.

Another special – Wembley Wobbly – has been brewed to celebrate Luton Town FC's appearance at Wembley Stadium in the final of the Johnsons Paints Trophy. As with the football club, it's too early yet to say whether the beer will appear again.

Congratulations also to Buntingford Brewery of Royston, Herts, whose Britannia (4.4 per cent) won the Best Bitter category in the same competition. Both Britannia and Shefford Dark Mild go forward to the shortlist for CAMRA's Champion Beer of Britain awards in August.

The overall Champion Beer of East Anglia title was carried off by Mauldons of Sudbury, Suffolk, for its Black Adder 5.3 per cent strong ale. The runners-up were Woild Moild, a dark 4.8 per cent ale from Wolf of Norfolk, and the mighty Marceus Aurelius (7.5 per cent) from Milton Brewery near Cambridge.



On the local brewery trail

CAMRA members do not just work hard organising beer festivals and surveying pubs for guides – we also have fun. The chance to visit breweries that are not routinely open to the public and to be shown round by knowledgeable brewers is one of the great advantages of membership.

Last autumn, local members had the opportunity to visit two nearby micro-breweries – Concrete Cow in Milton Keynes and Buntingford in North Herts.



Dan tells how it's done at Concrete Cow

Concrete Cow

Concrete Cow was founded in August 2007 by Dan Bonner near the famous concrete cows at Bradwell Abbey, Milton Keynes. The 5.5 barrel brewing plant was installed by the Porter Brewing Company. It is still the only brewery in Milton Keynes and uses local landmarks and history to inspire names for its various beers.

The brewery supplies quality draught real ales to pubs and clubs in Milton Keynes and surrounding areas, and the same beers in bottled real ale format, sold in local retail outlets and at farmers' markets.

As with many micros, looking round the brewery takes little more than a couple of minutes, with all

the equipment housed within a single industrial unit. What is more interesting about micros like Concrete Cow is what you learn from being shown round by the owner and head brewer. Concrete Cow is a real one-man business, with Dan brewing and servicing the equipment on some days of the week and delivering or selling bottles at a farmers' market on the others. His seemingly boundless energy should give inspiration to us all.

Although Dan will brew specials to order for pubs or individual customers who want something for an occasion, the brewery is mostly used to produce a group of regular beers. Those you are most likely to find in local pubs or clubs, or in bottled form at a local supermarket, are **Midsummer Ale**, a 3.8 per cent abv golden ale with a hoppy aroma, **Cock 'n' Bull Story**, a 4.1 per cent, dark amber, malty ale, **Old Bloomer**, a 4.7 per cent dark ruby best bitter, **Watling Gold**, a 4.5 per cent bright golden ale, and **Fenny Popper**, a 4 per cent abv, light-coloured, zesty ale. Where these unusual names came from is explained on the brewery website, where you can also check prices and place orders for beer.

www.concretecowbrewery.co.uk

Many thanks to Dan and Concrete Cow for giving us the chance to visit one of the area's newest breweries – and to see how hard he works!

Buntingford

Our other visit was in the opposite direction from Bedford, to the Buntingford Brewery just outside Royston, Herts. The trip was laid on as a thank-you to hard-working staff at last October's Bedford Beer & Cider Festival.



Tasting Oatmeal Stout

The brewery is a bit larger than Concrete Cow, with a 15-barrel plant capable of brewing up to



A yeasty brew at Buntingford

45 barrels a week. Owner Steve Banfield set up the plant in a barn on a conservation farm, with a reed bed system for treating liquid waste and locally grown barley used wherever possible. Sadly, as we visited on a chilly, dark night, we had some difficulty viewing the reed beds, but clearly heard the owls and sundry other wildlife. There are plans to develop green energy resources for running the brewery.

Although it took a little longer to look round here, the real interest once again was in the story told us by the brewer about how the brewery came to be there and the challenges in developing it into a successful business.

The beers you are likely to come across most often in local pubs include **Highwayman IPA**, a well-balanced 3.6 per cent session bitter, **Golden Plover**, a golden session bitter at 3.8 per cent, **Britannia**, a true best bitter at 4.4 per cent (and CAMRA's current Champion Best Bitter of East Anglia), and occasionally the delicious **Oatmeal Stout** (4.4 per cent) or the stronger **Royston Red** (4.8 per cent) or **Silence** (5.2 per cent). For further details of these and the other beers in the brewery's range, visit the website www.buntingford-brewery.co.uk

Many thanks too, to Steve, Catherine and Buntingford for the opportunity to see a successful small brewery in action.




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Wild about Mild?

National Mild Month

CAMRA, with the help of pubs and brewers, will once again celebrate its Mild in May initiative with a new variety of events to promote this endangered beer style.

Last year, CAMRA reported that although Mild is enjoying a revival in today's real ale market, it still only accounts for an estimated 3-5 per cent of all real ale sales. Since last May, there has been more good news on the success of small brewers published by trade bodies such as the Society of Independent Brewers (SIBA). With Mild Month 2009, we hope to expand further on the progress of previous years.

Mild beers are usually relatively low in alcohol and dark in colour, owing to the use of well-roasted malts or barley, and are conventionally less heavily hopped than bitters. CAMRA champion milds have included Beckstones Black Dog Freddy, Hobson's Mild and Oscar Wilde Mild by Mighty Oak. CAMRA is urging all licensees to support the initiative by stocking a mild throughout the

month of May, or even organising mild-related events such as "try before you buy" and "meet the brewer" sessions. CAMRA hopes the month will show licensees that stocking rare beer styles can offer something new to the consumer, and benefit their business in the future.

CAMRA also encourages its local branches to support the campaign for Mild. Past events such as 'Mild Trails' and tasting sessions have been highly successful, and with local brewers signing up to show their support, Mild Month 2009 could prove a pivotal year for this wonderful beer style. National Mild Day will be celebrated on Saturday May 9th. Details of events supporting Mild around the country may be found on the CAMRA website at www.camra.org.uk

Three Cups wins POTY 2009



CAMRA's North Bedfordshire Pub of the Year 2009 is The Three Cups, Newnham Street, Bedford.

The Three Cups is a true community pub with strong support from regular customers, yet always makes casual visitors feel welcome. Despite its situation just east of the town centre, it has more the feel of a village inn than an urban local.

Landlords Tony and Debbie Kennedy have turned the Three Cups into a fine real ale pub, earning a coveted place in CAMRA's national Good Beer Guide. Greene King XX Dark Mild, IPA, Abbot and guest beers that are often from other brewers are well kept and available at fair prices.

The Three Cups was originally built in the 1770s. Its old-style wooden panelling helps give it that village local feel and a welcoming atmosphere. It opens daily from 12 noon and offers an extensive menu for lunches in generous portions, with a full roast dinner on Sunday. The neat, pleasant garden, a little green oasis amid the built-up surroundings, offers a heated smoking shelter. Well-behaved dogs are welcome in the public bar and garden. Quiz night is a highlight on Tuesday.

A framed certificate will be presented to Tony and Debbie in a few weeks time. Meanwhile, CAMRA South Beds has chosen the Globe, Dunstable, and East Beds the Golden Pheasant, Biggleswade, as their branch Pubs of the Year. The three branch winners will now compete for the Bedfordshire Pub of the Year title, with the winner of this going forward to the East Anglia regional round of CAMRA's national competition. The national Pub of the Year 2009 title will be awarded early next year.

Join CAMRA today!

THE Campaign for Real Ale was founded in 1971 to keep real ale alive. Thirty-seven years later we have over 98,000 members and more than 600 British breweries brewing over 2,500 different varieties of real ale. So what does CAMRA do?

Fight pub closures

CAMRA research shows that over 80 pubs closed every month across the country during 2008. Most of these are local community pubs, often run down by their owners and turned into private houses for a quick profit. Many communities no longer have a pub at all. CAMRA works through initiatives such as the Community Pubs Foundation and Pub is the Hub to stop unnecessary pub closures. The next one under threat might be your local!

Fight short measure

Did you realise that 9 out of 10 "pints" of draught beer contain less than 100% liquid? Consumers lose over a million pounds a day through short measure. CAMRA is pressing the Government to change the law so you get what you pay for – a full 20 fluid ounce pint every time.

Promote guest beers

Six out of ten pubs are unable to offer a guest beer of their choice. Two thirds are tied to a single brewery or to a pub company that restricts what they can buy. CAMRA campaigns for a guest beer law to give licensees the right to serve a guest beer of their choice and to improve the accessibility of real ale in British pubs.

Achievements

CAMRA's many achievements include:

- Helping change the law to allow pubs to open longer where it suits the local community.
- Running a powerful campaign for small brewers' duty relief, helping small breweries to invest and become more viable.
- Working with local communities to save hundreds of community pubs from closure.

- Organising over 150 beer festivals a year, including the Great British Beer Festival at London's Earls Court Arena.
- Encouraging more than 5,000 volunteers to survey pubs, organise and work at beer festivals, and actively campaign for real ale and pubs.
- Read more about CAMRA's successful campaigning at www.camra.org.uk

Join CAMRA today!

If you care about these issues and want to make a difference, join CAMRA today! For less than the price of a pint a month, you can join over 98,000 other members throughout Britain and help campaign for quality real ale and good pubs. Single membership costs only £22 a year, reduced to £14 for retired over 60, under age 26, unemployed or disabled. Save £2 a year and get three months free by choosing direct debit.

Use the form opposite, call 01727 867201 or visit www.camra.org.uk/joinus.



32nd Bedford Beer & Cider Festival

Wed 7th to Sat 10th October 2009
Bedford Corn Exchange
Volunteers needed

Contact organiser Don Allan on
01234 752379 or email
chairman@northbedscamra.org.uk

It takes all sorts to campaign for real ale

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Complete the Direct Debit form below and you will receive three months membership free and a fantastic discount on your membership subscription. Alternatively you can send a cheque payable to CAMRA Ltd with your completed form, visit www.camra.org.uk or call 01727 867201. All forms should be addressed to Membership Secretary, CAMRA, 230 Hatfield Road, St Albans, AL1 4LW.



Save money by paying by Direct Debit!

Your Details

Title Surname

Forename(s)

Date of Birth (dd/mm/yyyy)

Address

..... Postcode

Email address

Tel No (s)

Partner's Details (if Joint Membership)

Title Surname

Forename(s)

Date of Birth (dd/mm/yyyy)

Please state which CAMRA newsletter you found this form in?

	Direct Debit	Non DD
Single Membership (UK & EU)	£20 <input type="checkbox"/>	£22 <input type="checkbox"/>
Joint Membership (Partner at the same address)	£25 <input type="checkbox"/>	£27 <input type="checkbox"/>

For Young Member and concessionary rates please visit www.camra.org.uk or call 01727 867201.

I wish to join the Campaign for Real Ale, and agree to abide by the Memorandum and Articles of Association.

I enclose a cheque for

Signed Date

Applications will be processed within 21 days

Mem Form 0108



Instruction to your Bank or Building Society to pay by Direct Debit

Please fill in the form and send to: Campaign for Real Ale Ltd, 230 Hatfield Road, St Albans, Herts AL1 4LW



<p>Name and full postal address of your Bank or Building Society</p> <p>To the Manager <input type="text"/> Bank or Building Society</p> <p>Address <input type="text"/></p> <p>Postcode <input type="text"/></p> <p>Name(s) of Account Holder (s)</p> <p><input type="text"/></p> <p>Bank or Building Society Account Number</p> <p><input type="text"/></p> <p>Branch Sort Code</p> <p><input type="text"/></p> <p>Reference Number</p> <p><input type="text"/></p>	<p>Originators Identification Number</p> <p style="font-size: 24px; text-align: center;">9 2 6 1 2 9</p> <p>FOR CAMRA OFFICIAL USE ONLY</p> <p>This is not part of the instruction to your Bank or Building Society</p> <p>Membership Number <input type="text"/></p> <p>Name <input type="text"/></p> <p>Postcode <input type="text"/></p> <p>Instructions to your Bank or Building Society</p> <p>Please pay CAMRA Direct Debits from the account detailed on this instruction subject to the safeguards assured by the Direct Debit Guarantee. I understand that this instruction may remain with CAMRA and, if so will be passed electronically to my Bank/Building Society.</p> <p>Signature(s) <input type="text"/></p> <p>Date <input type="text"/></p>
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Banks and Building Societies may not accept Direct Debit Instructions for some types of account.

This Guarantee should be detached and retained by the payer.

The Direct Debit Guarantee

- This Guarantee is offered by all Banks and Building Societies that take part in the Direct Debit Scheme. The efficiency and security of the Scheme is monitored and protected by your own Bank or Building Society.
- If the amounts to be paid or the payment dates change CAMRA will notify you 10 working days in advance of your account being debited or as otherwise agreed.
- If an error is made by CAMRA or your Bank or Building Society, you are guaranteed a full and immediate refund from your branch of the amount paid.
- You can cancel a Direct Debit at any time by writing to your Bank or Building Society. Please also send a copy of your letter to us.

Branch Diary



BRANCH business meetings are normally held on the third Thursday of alternate months, e.g. May and July. Social and campaigning events are usually held on the second Thursday of each month.

Guests are welcome at social events, but members have priority on brewery visits. To book places on trips, call John Martin on 01234 768294 or email socials@northbedscamra.org.uk. For the latest information, check *What's Brewing*, or visit the branch website at www.northbedscamra.org.uk

APRIL

Monday 6 – Bedford pub crawl

Urban ale trail to celebrate National Cask Ale Week, starting at the Castle 7.30pm, moving on to the Ship (St Cuthberts St) 8pm, Cricketers 8.45, Gordon Arms 9.25, Devonshire Arms 10pm and White Horse 10.40pm. All welcome.

Thursday 9 – brewpub social

Celebrating National Cask Ale Week with an evening at the Chequers, Little Gransden, Cambs, home of the Son of Sid brewery. Minibus leaves Wellington Arms at 7.30pm, cost about £18 including brewery tour and sandwiches. Book seat with John Martin, payment in advance.

Monday 27 – festival team

Progress Group meeting for Bedford Beer & Cider Festival at the Three Cups, Bedford, at 8.15pm. If you can help with this year's festival, please contact Don Allan or John Martin.

MAY

Thursday 7 – pub tour

A tour of six GBG pubs in Milton Keynes and North Bucks. Coach leaves the Wellington Arms at

7pm, cost approx £10. Book seat with John Martin, payment required in advance.

Monday 11 – festival team

Policy Group meeting at the Three Cups, Bedford, at 8.15pm.

Thursday 21 – branch meeting

Three Cups, Newnham Street, Bedford at 8 for 8.15pm. CAMRA members only

JUNE

Saturday 6 – regional meeting

East Anglia branches meeting at Wells & Young's brewery visitor centre, 12-4.30pm. CAMRA members only – please notify Ian Higgs if you wish to attend.

Thursday 11 – day out

A great day out in Wisbech, including visits to Elgood's and Tydd Steam breweries. Book with John Martin – cost approx £45 covering lunch, supper and transport, payment in advance.

JULY

Thursday 9 – Branch AGM

8pm for 8.15pm
at venue to be confirmed. Free buffet provided.
CAMRA members only.

Advertise in the Firkin

Promote your pub, product or services in our pages

Produced by local beer drinkers for local beer drinkers – a select target audience. Our readers use shops and taxis to get home, buy insurance and drive cars, as well as spending time in the pub. They also include pub and club licensees.

- Circulation 3,000 copies every quarter, delivered to almost every pub and real ale club in north Bedfordshire. Full layout is also posted online for at least a year at www.northbedscamra.org.uk
- Simple artwork created at no extra cost, or supply your own
- Reserve space in the next issue by 1st May

To enquire or place an advert, contact:
Neil Richards on 01536 358670 or 07710 281381 or email: n.richards@btinternet.com



WHATEVER YOU DO, TAKE PRIDE.

The Gordon Arms



Local community pub
Attractive garden and front patio
Four Wells & Young's real ales
Café-style home-cooked lunches
Coffee morning and afternoon teas
Ent. Shed venue for hire
Families welcome

118 Castle Road, Bedford
01234 348668

The Salutation 2nd Easter Beer Festival

April 10/11/12/13

April 10

Dr Busker and Pirate Crew

April 11

Karaoke with Lez and Mary

April 12

The Soulman

15+ Real Ales available

20 High Street, Blunham
01767 640620



2009



BEER FESTIVAL

Thurs. July 30th ~ 7pm-11pm
Fri. July 31st ~ 11am-Late
Sat. August 1st ~ 11am-Late
Sun. August 2nd ~ Noon-4pm



For Wicksteed Park, Kettering follow the brown signs from Junction 10 of the A14.

**55+ BEERS
& CIDERS**
LIVE ENTERTAINMENT
TRADITIONAL FESTIVAL FOOD AVAILABLE

Tel: 01536 512475
or see www.wicksteedpark.co.uk

To allow settling not all beers will be available at any one time.
Also some beers will become 'SOLD OUT' as the Festival progresses.
Entertainment is on evening sessions only.

Entry ticket £2.00 per session (CAMRA card carrying members £1.00)