

# The Firkin



**CAMPAIGN  
FOR  
REAL ALE**

**FREE**

Newsletter of CAMRA North Bedfordshire Branch

Vol 34 No 2

Autumn 2009

## **Bedford Beer & Cider Festival Wed 7th to Sat 10th October**



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We are sorry that our planned summer issue did not appear. Some news items have been carried over into this expanded autumn issue.

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***JOIN CAMRA FORM INSIDE!***

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# *The Five Bells*

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# Chairman's Corner



**C**AMRA North Bedfordshire members have recently enjoyed some successful functions and evenings out. Our social secretary, John Martin, continues to find new venues. Although all

members are welcome, early booking for limited places on popular bus trips and brewery visits is advisable. Spare places are offered to non-members, although we obviously hope to persuade them to join CAMRA.

Since the last Firkin, we held a well-attended pub crawl east of Bedford town centre on a warm April evening for National Cask Ale Week. Our visit to the Chequers at Little Gransden in Cambridgeshire, home of the Son of Sid micro-brewery, was also a great success. Owners Bob and Wendy made us most welcome and offered a much appreciated tour of the tiny brewing plant.

Wells & Young's in Bedford held an open day for local people during National Cask Ale Week. This included a brewery tour and beer tasting, at which 150 visitors enjoyed cask ales – some for the first time.

During May we visited selected Good Beer Guide pubs in neighbouring North Bucks, another super evening out that booked up very quickly.

An all-day visit to Elgood's and Tydd Steam breweries in north Cambridgeshire in June was also a wonderful day out and again very well supported.

Also in June, North Beds Branch hosted a regional CAMRA meeting at Wells & Young's brewery, attended by members from throughout East Anglia. Our thanks to Wells & Young's for allowing us use of the Eagle Centre and for its generous hospitality. Head brewer Jim Robertson led a special brewery tour and kindly answered our awkward questions. We also appreciated a short talk from marketing chief Paul Smith on how to attract young people to real ale.

The branch AGM in July, also kindly hosted by

Wells & Young's, was well supported and gave members a good opportunity to share ideas on local campaigning. There was little change in the committee this year, but two fairly recent members offered to help produce the Firkin.

The villagers' campaign to re-open the Five Bells at Riseley continues, with the current priority to see off a planning application for change of use. We offer them our continued support and hope the pub will eventually be saved.

Meanwhile, planning for the 32nd Bedford Beer and Cider Festival in October is making good progress. The committee seems to be hitting all its targets to create another successful festival. Do come and support it!

Why not join CAMRA and come on some of our outings? I hope to see faces old and new in the future.

*Don Allan  
Branch Chairman*

Debbie and Tony  
look forward to welcoming you to the

## THREE CUPS



Range of five real ales  
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**CAMRA North Beds Pub of the Year 2009**  
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# Pub News

## **Anchor, Goldington Road, Bedford**

This Hungry Horse pub facing Goldington Green has been extensively refurbished, with new booth seating in the restaurant area. Manager Liz Cole and her team are making a determined effort to capture the family market. The bar offers Greene King IPA, Abbot, Old Speckled Hen and a guest ale. The pub is open all day, closing at midnight on Friday and Saturday. Call 01234 353606.

## **Toby Carvery, Goldington Road, Bedford**

This large pub-restaurant facing Goldington Green now advertises "cask ales" outside, with Everards Tiger and Wells Bombardier on handpump. Food is available daily from noon to 10pm, while the bar is open for drinks until midnight on Friday and Saturday. The pub is attached to an Innkeepers Lodge Hotel offering overnight accommodation. Call 01234 272707.

## **Flying Horse, Clophill**

After extensive refurbishment, this large pub-restaurant at the busy A6/A507 junction re-opened in April under new M&B colours. New manager Russ Phillips offers a selection of real ales – Young's Bitter, Wells Bombardier, Adnams Bitter and Taylor Landlord have all appeared in recent weeks. Call 01525 860293.

## **Burnaby Arms, Bedford**

Welcome to new landlords Mandy and Gerry Boland, who have put real Wells Eagle back on the bar of this corner community pub in the Black Tom area of Bedford, after more years than we can count offering only keg beers. Open all day every day, but offers no food. Call 01234 215421.

## **Anchor, Tempsford**

This large roadhouse by the A1 northbound re-opened at the end of March after a period of closure. Real ales were available to start with but had sadly been withdrawn by the time of our most recent visit.

## **Balloon, Foster Hill Road, Bedford**

This former Greene King corner pub north of the town centre has re-opened as a free house offer-



ing Fuller's London Pride and changing guest beers. It is very much a community pub, with pool and other games, TV and either a disco or a live band every Saturday – but no food. Landlord Peter opens the bars at 3pm Monday to Friday, all day at weekends and closes at midnight Friday and Saturday. Call 01234 359357.



## **Bedford Arms, Bromham Road, Bedford**

Welcome to Laura and Tom, who took on this Charles Wells Speciality Beer House in March. The bars open daily from 12 noon, closing at midnight Thursday to Saturday. A good range of Wells & Young's and guest beers are available, with home-cooked food from 12 to 3 and 6 to 8 during the week and all day until 8 at weekends. There is a quiz on Monday, a poetry club on Thursday and live music on Tuesday, Friday and all day Sunday from 1pm. Call 01234 214656.

## Cornerstone, Shefford

The former Black Swan on the corner by the traffic lights has been completely refurbished inside and out, and renamed the Cornerstone. New licensees Steve and Ann McClean offer Tetley Bitter and a guest ale – Shepherd Neame Spitfire when we last called. Steve has family connections with the town, as his father was once landlord of the Bridge. Call 01462 811072.

## Bridge Hotel, Shefford

Welcome to new landlord Stuart Andrews at this popular community pub on High Street, close to where the railway bridge once stood. Wells Eagle IPA and a guest ale are available, with Sky and Setanta Sports TV offering the major sports events. There is karaoke on Friday and regular live music on Saturday. Call 01462 629444.

## Red Lion, Elstow

Welcome to new manager Edward White at this busy pub on the high street, now owned by the Sissling Pub Company, a division of M&B. Food is available all day, while the handpumps offer Young's Bitter, Wells Bombardier and Fuller's London Pride. Call 01234 359687.

## Pheasant, Kimbolton Road, Bedford

This large pub on the B660 north of the town reopened some months ago after refurbishment. The former games room has been extended to create a new dining area, with home-cooked lunches and evening meals available Monday to Saturday and from 12 to 6 on Sunday. Booking for Sunday lunch is advised. There is a comfortable, open drinking area with TV showing sports, with a large patio and children's play area outside. Landlords Richard and Cathy Armsden offer Wells Eagle IPA and Bombardier, plus a guest ale from the Wells & Young's range. Sorry for missing this in our last issue. Call 01234 409301.

## Cross Keys, High Street, Bedford

This town centre pub is now promoted as a "wine and champagne bar", but it still offers a choice of real ales – we found Young's Bitter, Fuller's London Pride and Greene King IPA all available on a recent visit. The choice of champagne looks decent, too. The bars are open all day, with food served Monday to Saturday from 12 to 4pm. There is live

music on Friday evening and karaoke on Sunday. Call 01234 343551.

## Kings Arms, St Mary's Street, Bedford

Landlord Sean O'Donnell now offers two changing guest ales on the handpumps, as well as Greene King IPA. Recent guests include Bath Gem, Everards Tiger and the monthly Greene King specials. Call 01234 354494.

## White Horse, Newnham Avenue, Bedford

Congratulations to licensees Nigel and Sue Anstead for adding the prestigious Proud of Pubs Award to their existing clutch of medals and certificates. Proud of Pubs is a national campaign sponsored by The Publican trade newspaper to recognise licensees who take the most pride and pleasure in running a community pub. The award was presented at a Parliamentary Beer Group dinner in July. Call 01234 409306.

## Bar Citrus, Harpur Street, Bedford

This modern Charles Wells bar in the shopping

centre has been re-launched under new manager Omar Hassani, who also runs the Corner House in St Neots. The pub serves lunches from 11.30 to 5.30 Monday to Saturday and now opens for drinks until 7pm Sunday. Wells Eagle IPA and occasional guest ales are available on handpump. Call 01234 273843.



## Red Lion, Wilstead

Landlords Alyson and Chris Smith are planning their first beer festival over the weekend 18th to 20th September. Details are not final as we go to press, but there will be at least ten real ales, housed in a marquee in the pub garden. There will be a barbeque on Saturday and live music on Sunday, with a bouncy castle and other family delights. Call 01234 740246.

# Festival Time in Bedford

**B**EDFORD's own "Oktoberfest" will soon be back. The 32nd annual celebration of real ale, cider, perry and foreign beer in the town will be held at the Corn Exchange in St Paul's Square, from Wednesday 7th to Saturday 10th October.

Founded by local CAMRA members, the festival has been held every autumn since 1978. During this time, it has grown, first to include cider, perry and foreign beer, then spreading upstairs to take in the Howard Room and balcony. The 32nd annual festival will be as attractive as ever.

## Over 100 real ales and 30 ciders

The festival will be similar in size to last year, with more than 100 different real ales, about 30 brands of real cider and perry, and a range of draught and bottled beers from Belgium and other European countries. All draught beers and ciders will be dispensed by gravity, direct from the cask.

Although only a handful of Bedfordshire pubs sell real cider or perry (made from pears), the popularity of these traditional fermented fruit drinks has earned "cider" a regular place in the festival's title. As with real ale, there is a world of difference between real cider or perry and the processed keg ciders usually available in this region. CAMRA has



proclaimed October as "Cider and Perry Month".

The festival will sell no keg beers or processed ciders, nor will any of the products on sale be dispensed under gas pressure.

The festival beer and cider lists will be posted on the branch website at [www.northbedscamra.org.uk](http://www.northbedscamra.org.uk) during September and will be printed in the free souvenir programme given to visitors.

## Real ale is cool

Every indoor beer festival has trouble keeping real ales in good condition. Despite air conditioning, the main hall is bound to warm up during an evening session packed with up to 800 people, but heat does no favours to the quality of real ale.

To ensure that only high quality beers are served, the festival will use power chillers and cooling jackets around the casks. The pint delivered to your glass will remain in good condition throughout the week.

## Foreign beer and food

As well as British real ales, cider and perry in the main hall, the foreign beer bar in the Howard Room upstairs will offer a wide range of speciality draught and bottled beers from Belgium, Germany and other countries.

The Howard Room and adjacent balcony will also provide a quiet area for sitting out and enjoying hot and cold meals and snacks from the Corn Exchange catering service. A varied menu for lunchtime and evening will be available every day.

## Lined glasses mean full pints

Souvenir glasses sponsored by Wells & Young's will be issued to visitors for £2 on sale or return. If you like the glass, you are welcome to take it home as a souvenir. All glasses will be oversized and lined for pint and half-pint, supporting CAMRA's campaign for full measure.

The regular engraver will gladly personalise your glass or other objects for you. Engraved glasses cannot be returned for refunds when you leave.



### Buy your guides here

The CAMRA shop and tombola will be run by CAMRA East Beds Branch members. You can buy a wide range of shirts, books and souvenirs from CAMRA and various breweries, including the brand new Good Beer Guide 2010. You can also win a host of attractive prizes on the tombola and *Shut the Box* pub game.

### Entertainment

The festival offers live music in the main hall on Wednesday and Saturday evenings. Popular local entertainer **Dr Busker** and his notorious musical wit will get the festival off to a good start on Wednesday, while local group **Hair of the Dog** will bring the event to a musical close on Saturday evening.

The **Bedford Morris Men** are expected to perform in the hall at lunchtime on Saturday, as part of their Bedford Day of Dance.

### Help local charity

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

### Entry free before 5pm, but no children

Check the poster in this issue for opening hours and evening admission charges. Get in free by arriving before 5pm and remember that there may

be a queue at the door by mid-evening on Friday.

CAMRA members get free entry at any time. If you plan to come several times, join CAMRA on day one and get in free for the rest of the week.

The hall lift will be available for visitors with restricted mobility. Ask festival staff at the door to arrange lift access direct from the street. To make the best use of space for drinkers, the organisers regret that no one under age 18 will be admitted to the festival.

### Smoking pass-outs

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

### Don't drink and drive

If you must drive to the festival, take advantage of the **free soft drinks** and make sure someone else drives the next day. Even better, take a bus, train or taxi home.

## STAFF NEEDED!

Call **01234 768294** for staffing form,  
or complete online form at  
[www.northbedscamra.org.uk](http://www.northbedscamra.org.uk)

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Indian Restaurant  
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Full menu also available

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Monday - Saturday 5.30pm - 11.30pm  
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Sunday 5.30pm - 10.30pm



# Oakham ales

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Tel 01733 370500

# Beer Festivals

## St Ives Beer Festival (Booze on the Ouse)

Thu 10 to Sat 12 September at Burgess Hall, St Ives Recreation Centre, Westwood Road, St Ives PE27 6WU. Open Thu 6-10.45, Fri 5-10.45, Sat 12-10.45. Admission Thu/Fri 6-7pm £1, after 7pm £2, Sat all day. CAMRA members free. More than 55 cask beers, plus real cider and foreign beers, hot and cold food, free soft drinks for drivers. See poster below. [www.huntscamra.org.uk](http://www.huntscamra.org.uk)

## 18th Letchworth Beer & Cider Festival

Thu 17 to Sat 19 September at Plinston Hall, Broadway (rail stn 450m). Open Thu 5-11, Fri/Sat 12-11, admission £2, Fri £1 before 4pm, CAMRA members free. 50 real ales including local brews, excellent range of cider, perry and foreign beers. No music. Hot and cold food, tombola and CAMRA products. See poster in this issue. [www.camranorthherts.org.uk](http://www.camranorthherts.org.uk)

## St Albans Beer Festival

Wed 30 Sep to Sat 3 Oct at the Alban Arena, Civic Centre (rail stn 10 min). Open: Wed 5-10.30, Thu-Sat 11-10.30. More than 300 real ales, cider, perry, bottle-conditioned beers and a wide range of foreign beers. Daily breweriana auctions and prize quiz Sat, live music Sat eve. Easy travel by train from Bedford. See poster right for admission charges and other details – CAMRA members admitted free. [www.stalbanbeerfestival.com](http://www.stalbanbeerfestival.com)

## Oxford Beer Festival

Thu 15 to Sat 17 October at Oxford Town Hall, St Aldates. Open Thu 5-11, Fri 11-11, Sat 11-8. Check website for admission charges, beer list and other details. Frequent X5 express buses from Bedford. [www.oxfordcamra.org.uk](http://www.oxfordcamra.org.uk)

## Milton Keynes Beer Festival (Concrete Pint)

Thu 29 to Sat 31 Oct at The Pitz, Woughton Campus Leisure Centre, Leadenhall, MK6 5EJ. Open 12-11, admission £3 Thu/Fri after 5pm, CAMRA members free. More than 50 real ales plus cider and perry, hot food and live music Sat eve. Use X5 bus from Bedford to CMK, then local route 5. See poster in this issue. [www.mkcamra.org.uk](http://www.mkcamra.org.uk)

**ST ALBANS BEER FESTIVAL**  
2009

ARENA 30th Sept - 3rd Oct ARENA  
ALBAN ARENA, ST ALBANS

OVER 300 REAL ALES plus CIDERS, PERRIES & FOREIGN BEERS

Wednesday 30th Sept 5.00pm - 10.30pm £2.50  
Thursday 1st Oct 11.00am - 10.30pm £2.50 (£2.00 before 4.00pm)  
Friday 2nd Oct 11.00am - 10.30pm £3.00 (£2.00 before 4.00pm)  
Saturday 3rd Oct 11.00am - 10.30pm £4.00 (£2.00 before 4.00pm)

CAMRA members free at all times Ticket box office 01727 400000

Saturday Night Live on Stage - The Hamsters

Don't drink and drive. Use the train or bus. No 2nd hand sale of 18 on or above 1800.  
[www.stalbanbeerfestival.com](http://www.stalbanbeerfestival.com) Contact: [realales@yahoo.com](mailto:realales@yahoo.com) St Albans

**ST IVES BEER FESTIVAL**

AXE THE BEER TAX  
CAMPAIGN FOR REAL ALE

BOOZE ON THE OUSE

10-12 September 2009

55+ Real ales  
lots of Real cider  
tons of Foreign beer  
piles of Food & soft drinks

VENUE Burgess Hall, St Ivo Centre, Westwood Road, St Ives, PE27 6WU  
OPENING TIMES  
Thu 6pm-10.45pm, Fri 5pm-10.45pm, Sat all day from 12noon-10.45pm  
Families welcome until 8pm

ADMISSION (including programme)  
£2.00 Thu & Fri from 7pm  
£1.00 All day Saturday  
CAMRA members free admission  
Early Bird admission Thu 6-7pm and Fri 5-7pm: £1.00

[www.huntscamra.org.uk/festival](http://www.huntscamra.org.uk/festival) for more details



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## The Wellington Arms

40 Wellington Street, Bedford

**BEDFORDSHIRE PUB OF  
THE YEAR 2008**

**01234 308033**

### Visit Our Other Pubs:

The Globe

43 Winfield Road,  
Dunstable LU6 1LS

01582 512300

**SOUTH BEDFORDSHIRE  
PUB OF THE YEAR 2008**

Brewery Tap  
Shefford

01462 628448

The Elm Tree

Orchard Street, Cambridge

01223 502632

# 32<sup>nd</sup> Bedford Beer & Cider Festival

Corn Exchange, St Paul's Square, Bedford MK40 1SL

Wed 7<sup>th</sup> - Sat 10<sup>th</sup>

October 2009

Logo by Suni UK Ltd - www.suniscreen.co.uk



**Over 100 real ales! 30 ciders and perries!  
Draught and bottled foreign beers!**

## Opening hours

Wed 4-11pm

Thu-Sat 11.30am - 11pm

## Admission

FREE admission before 5pm

After 5pm: Wed £2, Thu £3, Fri £4, Sat £1

CAMRA members free at all times

Pass-outs for smokers from 5pm

Wheelchair access to all floors

**NO ONE UNDER AGE 18 ADMITTED**

## Sponsor a cask of ale!

£50 puts your business on the bar

[sponsor@northbedscamra.org.uk](mailto:sponsor@northbedscamra.org.uk)

Organised by CAMRA North Bedfordshire

## Other attractions

- Souvenir glasses £2 sale or return
- Tasty hot and cold food
- Free soft drinks
- Tombola & Shut the Box pub game
- Clothing, gifts and books for sale
- Engraver

## Volunteers needed!

Phone 01234 822698

[staffing@northbedscamra.org.uk](mailto:staffing@northbedscamra.org.uk)

## Live entertainment

Wed eve: Dr Busker

Sat lunch: Bedford Morris Men

Sat eve: Hair of the Dog

[www.northbedscamra.org.uk](http://www.northbedscamra.org.uk)



**CAMPAIGN  
FOR  
REAL ALE**

# Villagers Rally to Save Pub

*The six month campaign to re-open the Five Bells in Riseley has reached a critical stage, following sale of the premises to a property developer and a planning application for change of use.*



## Less than the highest bidder

In our last issue we reported the village campaign to re-open the Five Bells after it was closed by Greene King last December. Although it was advertised for sale as a pub, there was always the risk that it might be sold for development.

Although an offer to buy the premises as a pub for the full asking price of £300,000 was made in July, Greene King decided to accept a slightly lower offer from a private developer interested in developing the site for new housing.

## Important amenities

Although the village has another pub in the Good Beer Guide listed Fox & Hounds, it has no facilities for games, sports teams and other traditional pub activities. Campaigners to save the Five Bells feel there is enough local support for another, family-orientated, traditional pub.

Since the Five Bells closed, Riseley's skittles, pool, darts and football teams have all had to find new homes outside the village. A village-wide survey reported an almost universal desire to keep the Five Bells open, with 85 per cent of villagers pledging to use it if it reopened.

## The campaign

The Save the Five Bells Campaign, led by villager Martyn Wady, believes the Five Bells is a potentially viable pub business. They argue that its

decline was mainly due to neglect and lack of investment by Greene King and offering the tenancy to inexperienced licensees. They also claim that the pub could become a successful business as a free house under sympathetic management, while letting the pub close will have a permanent, detrimental effect on the village.

Campaign chairman Martyn Wady said: "A village resident is willing to buy the Bells and keep it as a pub. Even though he offered more than the developer, Greene King decided to sell it for development. All through this campaign we tried to work with Greene King to find a solution that suits everyone, but no one has returned our phone calls, replied to our letters or offered to work with us in any way. It's as if they were planning to sell to a developer all along."

## Planning application

An application for change of use to residential was submitted to Bedford Borough Council at the end of July. As the Firkin went to press, the campaign was working hard on persuading the council to reject the application.

The campaign has also set up an open petition on its website at [www.savethefivebells.org.uk](http://www.savethefivebells.org.uk). Although public response to the planning application had to be in by 26th August, readers may still be able to sign the petition. So visit the website and add your name to help save the pub!

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## Pubs of the Year 2009

*CAMRA's Bedfordshire Pub of the Year 2009 is The Globe in Dunstable.*

**A**fter objective comparison between the three branch winners, the Globe in Dunstable won narrowly on points against the Three Cups, Bedford, and Golden Pheasant,

Biggleswade, to take the Bedfordshire Pub of the Year title for 2009.

The Globe, a corner local in Winfield Street just off High Street North, was bought by brewers B&T and re-opened as a real ale house in October 2005, on similar lines to the Wellington Arms in Bedford. Since then it has gone from strength to strength, winning several CAMRA awards and being widely regarded as one of the best pubs in the area.

A bank of handpumps greets the visitor, offering a range of B&T beers as well as guest ales from small and micro-breweries. The pub's winning formula is good beer, a friendly welcome, attracting a mix of interesting customers and good conversation. There is no jukebox, pool table or fruit machines. The Globe has



The Globe, Dunstable – Beds POTY 2009

been South Beds branch Pub of the Year for three successive years and has earned its accolade as CAMRA's best pub in Bedfordshire for 2009.

The Globe has gone on to compete with county winners from Cambridgeshire, Essex, Hertfordshire, Norfolk and Suffolk for the East Anglia Pub of the Year title, but the result was not declared before the Firkin went to press. The winner will compete with the best pubs in other regions for the national Pub of the Year title, to be declared in the New Year.

Meanwhile, Tony and Debbie Kennedy at the Three Cups have been enjoying their North Beds Pub of the Year title. A framed certificate was presented to them in May.

## Use the Bedfordshire Pub Guide!

The three Bedfordshire CAMRA branches – East, North and South – have worked together to produce a new online guide to pubs in the county.

You can search the guide by pub name, town, village or postcode, and download details to plan individual visits or a local pub crawl. You can even compile and print out your own personal guide to a whole town or village – all free of charge to you and the pubs!

All pubs, hotel bars and sports ground bars open to the public in Bedfordshire and Luton are listed, although full details and a photo are included only where real ale is sold.

You can help us keep the guide up to date. Whether you are the licensee, a pub regular or an occasional visitor, please send amendments c/o the Firkin or email [pubguide@northbedscamra.org.uk](mailto:pubguide@northbedscamra.org.uk) [www.bedspubs.org.uk](http://www.bedspubs.org.uk)

**Red Lion Country Hotel**

Wotton Bassett  
MK3 7 6AZ  
01208 563117  
Owner: Charles Wells  
Suppliers: Reulmo & Robert Safford  
Brewer: Tennent's  
Licensing area: Mid Beds District Council  
CAMRA Branch: North Beds  
<http://redlionhotel.co.uk>  
Mobile: 079 914 217  
Wells Bottling (UK)  
pubs

Opening Times:  
11.00-04.30, 16.30-21.00  
Phone:  
12.00-04.00, 16.30-21.00  
Traditional country hotel serving a fine selection of home-cooked food in the bar and restaurant. The bar, warmed by an open fire in winter, offers a selection of board games. The large garden has a covered area and feature bedouin's grey area. Accommodation is in six rooms, some with four-poster beds. Recently refurbished after damage by a lorry caused extensive damage.



# CAMRA hits 100,000!

CAMRA, the Campaign for Real Ale, met one of its key targets this summer when membership numbers reached the magic 100,000 mark.

**C**AMRA members throughout the country were delighted at the news. This is a landmark moment for the Campaign after 38 years fighting for the future of real ale and choice in the brewing and pubs industry.

## No room for complacency

Despite its many successes, CAMRA has pledged to push middle-age to one side as it steps up campaigns to save Britain's pubs and get a fair deal for beer drinkers. As the UK heads for a general election, CAMRA wants to see reform of the beer tie, fair taxes on beer, minimum price regulations to stamp out loss-leaders in supermarkets, zero duty rate on low strength beers, planning law reforms to protect pubs and new policies to protect and promote community pubs.

Chief Executive Mike Benner said: "We are overjoyed at reaching 100,000 members, brought together by our passion for great British beer and community pubs. But while we may relax and raise a glass or two to celebrate, we are not complacent and the hard work campaigning for drinkers' rights will continue."

## Campaigning tools

CAMRA was formed in 1971 by Michael Hardman, Jim Makin, Graham Lees and Bill Mellor, while they were bemoaning the state of British beer and pubs during a holiday in Ireland. Its popularity quickly grew and membership levels rose sharply to more than 5,000 by the end of 1973.

CAMRA adopted a number of campaigning tools that remain to this day. The year 1974 saw the first Good Beer Guide, selling 30,000 copies in the first few months. In the same year, the very first CAMRA beer festival was held in Cambridge, with half the beer selling out on the first day. CAMRA's first national beer festival took place in 1975 at Covent Garden in London.

## Secret of success

CAMRA co-founder Michael Hardman, was

delighted with CAMRA's success. "We never believed in 1971 that one day we would have 100,000 members. We would have hailed it a roaring success if we had managed to attract 1,000 like-minded souls, but we didn't bank on the huge support waiting for such a campaign. The secret of CAMRA's success has always been the huge contribution from ordinary members – a motley bunch of young and old, rich and poor, men and women, bosses and workers, fat and thin, northern and southern.

"These are the remarkable people who have made CAMRA Europe's most successful single-issue consumer organisation and fostered the emergence of thousands of new breweries around the world."

CAMRA's rising membership in recent years has been attributed to a larger number of consumers trying real ale for the first time. In the last year alone, membership increased by 9.7 per cent, while numbers have almost doubled since the dawn of the 21st century.

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## Champion Beers of Britain

*RUDGATE Ruby Mild from York is CAMRA's Champion Beer of Britain 2009. The winner emerged from blind tasting panels at the Great British Beer Festival in August.*

**T**he category champions from regional heats throughout the country were compared by panels of brewers, beer writers and journalists and the national category winners were selected. All the beers were tasted blind so the judges did not know their identity. The best of the winners was declared Champion Beer of Britain.

Rudgate Ruby Mild (4.4% abv) is described in the Good Beer Guide 2009 as "a nutty, rich ruby ale, stronger than usual for a mild". The York brewed real ale was chosen from over sixty finalists.

Roger Protz, editor of the Good Beer Guide and chairman of the final judging panel said: "It's a tremendous boost for the mild category. It's good to see a classic British traditional beer making such a comeback in the age of golden ales and much paler beers. Its victory should invigorate the whole mild ale category."

An elated Craig Lee, owner of Rudgate brewery, said: "It's an excellent achievement. We have come close in previous years and are really proud to have won the Champion Beer of Britain. It's unbelievable, and we hope our beer helps popularise the cause of real ale."

The Silver award went to Oakham Attila from Peterborough, this year's Winter Beer of Britain, and the Bronze to West Berkshire's Dr Hexter's Healer.

The category awards were:

### Supreme champions

Gold Rudgate Ruby Mild  
Silver Oakham Attila  
Bronze West Berkshire Dr Hexter's Healer

### Milds

Gold Rudgate Ruby Mild  
Silver Bank Top Dark Mild  
Bronze Highland Dark Munro

### Bitters

Gold Surrey Hills Ranmore Ale  
Silver Butcombe Bitter  
Jt Bronze Humpty Dumpty Little Sharpie  
Triple fff Alton's Pride

### Best Bitters

Gold Southport Golden Sands  
Silver Buntingford Britannia  
Jt Bronze Evan Evans Cwrw  
Thornbridge Lord Marples  
Vale VPA

### Golden Ales

Gold Dark Star American Pale Ale  
Jt Silver Adnams Explorer  
St Austell Proper Job

### Strong Bitters

Gold West Berkshire Dr Hexter's Healer  
Silver Thornbridge Kipling  
Bronze Grain Tamarind IPA

### Speciality Beers

Gold Nethergate Umbel Magna  
Silver Wentworth Bumble Beer  
Bronze Amber Chocolate Orange Stout

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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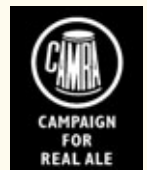
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# The White Horse

Newnham Ave, Bedford



## Beer and Banger Festival

Wed 4th to Sun 8th Nov

Beer Festival - 11am to 11pm

Supporting British Sausage week

Wed 4th - Charity Xmas Fayre

Programme of events

Ring or call in for details

**01234 409306**

[www.whitehorsebedford.co.uk](http://www.whitehorsebedford.co.uk)



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**18TH -20TH SEPTEMBER**

**01234 781585**



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### WEDNESDAY 21ST - SUNDAY 25TH OCTOBER

FEATURING OVER 100 TRADITIONAL REAL ALES,  
CIDERS AND PERRIES.

OPEN ALL DAY EVERY DAY FROM 12PM

FREE ADMISSION, SNACKS AVAILABLE DAILY.

BBQ THURSDAY, FRIDAY & SATURDAY EVENING.

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Local community pub  
 Attractive garden and front patio  
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 Real Ales, Fine Food, Ample Parking  
 and a Large Beer Garden

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It takes all sorts to campaign for real ale

## Join CAMRA today...

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](http://www.camra.org.uk) or call 01727 867201. All forms should be addressed to Membership Secretary, CAMRA, 230 Hatfield Road, St Albans, AL1 4LW.

**Your Details** Applications will be processed within 21 days

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  £22

Joint Membership (Partner at the same address) £25  £27

For Young Member and concessionary rates please visit [www.camra.org.uk](http://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 ..... Mem Form 0108

Signed ..... Date .....

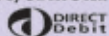
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Save money by paying by Direct Debit

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



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 230 Hatfield Road, St Albans, Herts AL1 4LW



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To the Manager Bank or Building Society

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Postcode

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Reference Number

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Name Postcode

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• If the amount 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.

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• 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. January and March. Social and campaigning events are usually held on the second Thursday of each month.

Guests are welcome at social events, but members have priority on brewery visits. For latest information check *What's Brewing*, or visit the branch website at [www.northbedscamra.org.uk](http://www.northbedscamra.org.uk)

## SEPTEMBER

### Thursday 17 – Northampton social

Social visiting five Northampton pubs in GBG 2009, starting away from the town centre at pubs most visitors do not know. Coach leaves the Wellington Arms at 7pm sharp, £10 payable in advance. Book seats with John Martin by 12 Sept latest.

### Thursday 24 – branch meeting

Branch business meeting at Three Cups, Bedford, 8 for 8.15pm. CAMRA members only.

## OCTOBER

### Wednesday 7 to Saturday 10 – Bedford Beer & Cider Festival

Open Wed 4-11, Thu-Sat 11.30-11. See separate feature and poster for details. Volunteers needed to help on the bar, glasses and admission. Don't miss it! Call 01234 768294 for a staffing form or complete online version at [www.northbedscamra.org.uk](http://www.northbedscamra.org.uk)

### Thursday 29 – brewery visit

Festival staff visit to Potbelly brewery, Kettering. Festival staff have priority, but spare places may

be available – check with John Martin. Early evening start from Wellington Arms, time and cost to be confirmed.

## NOVEMBER

### Thursday 12 – brewery visit

Visit to B&T Brewery, Shefford. Details to be confirmed – check website or What's Brewing.

### Thursday 19 – branch meeting

Branch business meeting at Three Cups, Bedford, 8 for 8.15pm. CAMRA members only.

## DECEMBER

### Thursday 17 – Christmas social

Venue and other details to be confirmed – check website or next issue of Firkin.



**Letchworth Garden City**  
17th-19th September 2009

**50+ Cask Beers - Foreign Beer**  
**Cider - Perry - Wine**  
Tombola, Products, Hot & Cold Food

**Thur 17th Sept. 5pm - 11pm**  
**Fri 18th & Sat 19th Sept. 12noon - 11pm**  
**Plinston, Broadway, SG6 3NX**

Entry: £2 with 50% discount before 4pm  
CAMRA, EBCU members & OAPs FREE  
Family Area available Saturday till 7pm  
Check [www.camranorthherts.org.uk](http://www.camranorthherts.org.uk) for info  
Organisers reserve the right to refuse admission

# SPONSOR A BEER CASK!

Put your business on the bar by sponsoring a cask of real ale at Bedford Beer & Cider Festival.

For just £50, your company name and logo will be posted on the beer stillage throughout the four-day festival.

Call 01234 822698

email [sponsor@northbedscamra.org.uk](mailto:sponsor@northbedscamra.org.uk)

Or visit [www.northbedscamra.org.uk](http://www.northbedscamra.org.uk)

## Milton Keynes Beer Festival 2009



At 'The Pitz',  
Woughton Centre,  
Rainbow Drive,  
Leadenhall  
MK6 5EJ

28th - 31st October

Noon till 11pm

50 Beers + Ciders & Perry

For information or further details contact Carl Dillow on 07740 092520, or email: [festival@mkcamra.org.uk](mailto:festival@mkcamra.org.uk).  
Website - [www.mkcamra.org.uk/beerfestival.htm](http://www.mkcamra.org.uk/beerfestival.htm)  
Bus routes 5, 7, 29 or 39 from CMK or Bletchley Station (daytime only)  
5E or 7E (evenings). Stop is Oldbrook Christian Centre.

Don't drink and drive - use Skyline Taxis 01908 222111

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*Bob and Wendy Mitchell invite you to their unique unspoilt village local with its own special atmosphere*

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**2nd - 4th OCTOBER**

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Friday 25<sup>th</sup> and Saturday 26<sup>th</sup> September 2009

- Exclusive HALF PRICE admission for CAMRA members – prices from just £4.89 on Friday and £9.79 on Saturday.
- Excellent programme of racing.
- Over 150 real ales, ciders and perries to sample supplied predominantly from local craft brewers. All at £1.25 per half pint and £2.50 per pint. Free tasting notes provided.
- Hot and cold food available all day.
- Gates and Bars open at 11am. Last orders 4.55pm on Friday and 5.30pm on Saturday.
- Live music on both days.
- Free parking or a 7 minute walk from Ascot Railway Station.



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or visit [ascot.co.uk](http://ascot.co.uk) quote **CAMRA09**.

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