

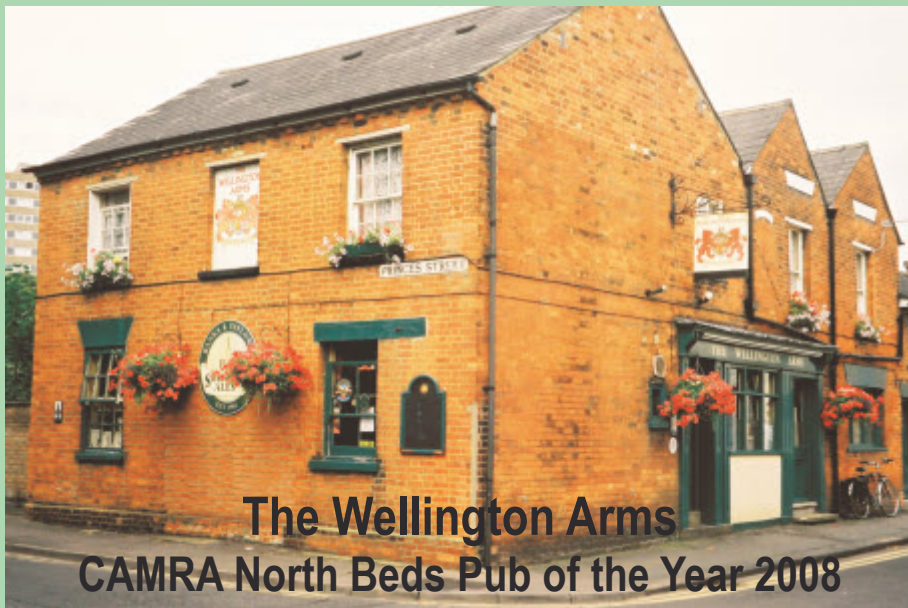
The Firkin



CAMPAIGN
FOR
REAL ALE

Newsletter of CAMRA North Bedfordshire Branch
Spring 2008 **Vol 33 No 1** **FREE!**

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The Wellington Arms
CAMRA North Beds Pub of the Year 2008

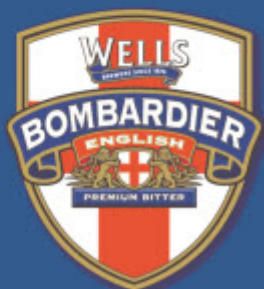
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The Campaign for Real Ale is a consumer organisation founded in 1971

Wells Young's

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BREWERS OF SPECIALIST BEERS



www.wellsandyoungs.co.uk

We need action now!

CHANCELLOR Alistair Darling has spoken. As we all know, excise duty on beer has gone up by 4p a pint. CAMRA's appeal for a modest cut to help stem community pub closures has fallen on deaf ears. However, a survey released in March reveals that an average 57 pubs now close every month.

A gloomy time ahead

CAMRA has been calling for a modest 1p per pint cut in excise duty to help reduce the number of pubs closing because of rising costs and falling beer sales. It is also seeking changes to planning law to prevent pub demolitions and change of use from pubs to shops, cafes and restaurants without planning permission.

CAMRA's survey has shown that an average 57 British pubs now close every month – a small increase on last year's figure of 56. The majority of these are community pubs providing a safe social centre for local people and a supervised environment for selling and drinking alcohol. The survey also suggests that 31 per cent of pubs closing permanently are being demolished, while 36 per cent are converted to shops, cafes and restaurants and 33 per cent to some other use, mostly residential.

Sixty-eight CAMRA branches across the UK (including Bedfordshire) provided the figures that revealed the staggering level of pub closures. As the survey counted closures recorded throughout 2007, the effects of the smoking ban introduced last year in England and Wales are not yet fully evident.

Beer prices are expected to rise significantly this year with strong inflation in malt, hops and energy costs. The Chancellor's 4p on a pint will only make the situation worse for pubs squeezed between unavoidable cost increases and customers having less cash to spend. Pubs – especially community pubs without a busy meals trade – will find it tough to survive.

Give beer a break

Mike Benner, CAMRA's Chief Executive, said: "Britain's pubs provide an essential amenity for communities and a place for people to enjoy alcohol sociably in a regulated environment. Yet the Government's high tax policies coupled with increasing costs are crippling them. We need

immediate action to stop the number of pub closures spiraling out of control, making it impossible for many people to benefit from the amenity of a local pub."

Mr Benner added: "Pub beer prices have increased above inflation over the last ten years and the Chancellor ought to give beer a break. Supermarket beer prices, on the other hand, have actually fallen in real terms, often making beer cheaper than bottled water. Supermarkets can absorb tax rises while small pub operators can't. The clear effect of this is to drive consumers away from the pub and into their armchairs to drink cheap alcohol. We want the Government to recognise that the great British pub is the solution to Britain's binge drinking problems. We need policies and action to support pubs, not to close them.

"Recent calls from the BMA and others for significant increases in alcohol excise duty are misguided and will be ineffective in combating binge drinking. Higher taxes will kill British pubs, force drinking underground and fuel smuggling and cross-border shopping. We need action now before last orders ring for the British pub."

Drinking at home comes cheaper

Price has a big influence on people choosing to buy in supermarkets and drink at home. Another survey commissioned by CAMRA in December 2007 shows that 27 per cent of people who prefer to drink at home said price was the main influence on their decision.

It also revealed that 72 per cent of people think it is unfair that responsible drinkers have to pay for an irresponsible minority through high taxes. A significant 68 per cent of adults agree that a pub is a responsible place to drink alcohol.

With the threat of closure facing community pubs around the country, we need a 'rescue plan' and a reduction in excise duty, not the Chancellor's 4p increase.



Pub news

Royal Oak, Kempston

A belated welcome to Colin and Sue Flynn, who took over this lively community local on Woburn Road (picture below) after the previous, long-serving landlord retired. Lunches are served daily from 12 to 2pm (3pm Sunday and 7pm Saturday), and real Greene King IPA is available on hand pump.



New team at the Royal Oak, Kempston

Devonshire Arms, Dudley St, Bedford

Landlady Valerie Walter is planning another spring beer festival from Thursday 15th to Sunday 19th May. The courtyard at the side of the pubs will be pressed into service for additional beer stillage. See advert on page 13 or call 01234 359329 for further details.

Swan with Two Nicks, Sharnbrook

Welcome to Mick and Michelle Hunter, who took over this friendly village local in September. A good range of home-made pub food is available daily except Sunday evening, with Wells Eagle IPA and guest beers on the pumps and a range of wines. Games and TV are popular in the public bar, with a quieter lounge leading out to a smart rear patio garden. Call 01234 781585.

Royal Oak, Roxton

Welcome to new licensee Peter Osborn, who arrived in October. Wells Eagle IPA and Young's Bitter are available on hand pump.

Bull, London Road, Bedford

Welcome to new landlady Jane Bellamy, who recently took over at this large suburban pub south of the river. The single bar is divided into separate drinking, eating and games areas. A range of meals is available until 9pm, with a roast on Sunday, curry and pint on Thursday, regular meal deals and real Greene King IPA and Abbot. There is a large car park and garden, with families made welcome.

White Horse, Keysoe

David and Tracie, new arrivals at this handsome, thatched pub at the Keysoe Row crossroads, have old connections, as David's father was a previous landlord. Traditional pub meals are served Tuesday to Saturday and Sunday lunchtime, with Wells Eagle IPA and a guest beer on handpump. A conservatory behind the bar provides pool and darts, and leads to a large garden with children's play area. Call 01234 376363

Oakley Arms, Harrold

Welcome to Philip, Trudy and Ben Norman, who took over this handsome, partly thatched old inn next to the village hall in November. The food trade is now important, offering traditional pub fare with a continental theme, using local produce and free-range meat where possible. Plans are in hand to expand the lounge/restaurant. Wells Eagle IPA and a changing guest beer are available. Call new number 01234 720002 for further details or to book tables.



Continental theme at the Oakley Arms, Harrold



An Italian twist at the Royal George, Stagsden

Royal George, Stagsden

A warm welcome to Marco and Judith White, who took the helm at this village local in January. Traditional English dishes “with an Italian twist” are served every day except Sunday evening, with Wells Eagle IPA and a guest beer on the bar – Courage Directors on a recent visit. Games and TV are popular in the public bar, while meals can be taken in the lounge/restaurant. The enormous garden includes a play area and enough space for children to get lost! Book for meals, using the new number 01234 826885.

Three Cranes, Turvey

Familiar faces Cliff and Hayley Elbourne, formerly at the Royal George, Stagsden, and the Old Mill, Newton Blossomville, are now managing the Three Cranes. The pub offers accommodation and a range of fine food and wine, with Greene King IPA, Abbot and three guest ales on the bar. The split-level bar area offers inviting corners for drinking and conversation. Meals are served daily until 9.30pm (8pm on Sunday). Call 01234 881305 or visit www.threecranes-turvey.com

Flower Pot, Tavistock Street, Bedford

Welcome to Darren Hunt, new manager at this old town centre pub. Fuller’s London Pride and changing guest beers are available at the bar, while lunches are served seven days a week. There is a regular quiz on Wednesday evenings and live music on Fridays. The bar walls provide home for a splendid gallery of old Bedford pictures. Parking is difficult – use side streets or the Queen Street multi-storey 200 yards to the rear.

Carpenters Arms, Cranfield

A warm welcome to Dennis Pole and his daughter Catherine, who took over this popular High Street pub in November. So far they have made few changes, with good quality Wells Eagle IPA and guest beers available on the bar.

Cock, Pavenham

Landlord Brendan Brokinsha is planning a family day and mini beer festival for Spring Bank Holiday Monday, 26th May. The beer tent will offer about four guest beers, with food available all day and plenty of fun for all the family. Call 01234 822834 for details.

Red Lion, Stevington

Welcome to Dan and Amy, who recently took over at this prominent pub by the village cross. Home-cooked, traditional pub meals including grilled steaks and pies are served Monday to Friday, with Greene King IPA, Old Speckled Hen and a guest beer (currently Timothy Taylor Landlord) on the bar. There is a large, attractive garden for fine weather, a separate games room and live music on Sunday, while karaoke on Saturday starts in April.

Citrus Bar, Harpur Street, Bedford

This modern town centre bar on the site of the old Stanley Arms has served real Wells Eagle IPA on handpump for most of the past year, but sadly we failed to notice.



Chequers, Yelden

Landlady Kathryn Filsell has refurbished this *Good Beer Guide* listed free house near the Northants border. Although the bar looks a lot smarter (picture above), the choice of real ales and cider remains the same.

Special pub awards

CAMRA North Bedfordshire Branch has announced two special awards for significant improvements to local pubs.

Most Improved Pub

CAMRA North Beds has decided to make a Most Improved Pub award to the **White Horse** in Newnham Avenue, Bedford.

Until a few years ago a rather uninteresting, 1930s suburban beer and games house that had seen better days, the White Horse got a major make-over by Charles Wells and has since established itself as an excellent pub diner, offering quality Wells & Young's and guest beers and providing a good range of home-prepared meals.

The pub now does a brisk trade in good value food, with a regular Sunday roast and occasional theme evenings. There are regular quiz nights and live music, and areas of the through bar can be booked for parties.

Under licensees Nigel and Sue Anstead and their hard-working staff, the White Horse has already earned several local business awards. It offers an excellent model for what can be done for a neglected pub with a bit of investment, a lick of paint and determined leadership from able entrepreneurs.

Congratulations to Nigel, Sue and their team at the White Horse for creating a fine pub that has earned itself a well-deserved reputation for high quality real ales.



The White Horse - Most Improved Pub 2007



Innovation award

To mark an exceptional initiative, North Beds branch will also make a special Innovation Award to the **Charles Wells Pub Company** for re-opening the Bedford Arms in Bromham Road, Bedford, in May last year, as a *Speciality Beer House*. A down-market town centre pub that had seen much better days was refurbished and re-opened as a venue for drinkers, with the emphasis on real ales.

The pub is well supplied with handpumps and offers a range of guest beers from around the country, as well as Wells & Young's regular real ales. With landlord Eric Mills at the helm, the pub has quickly gained a reputation as one of the best real ale pubs in town.

Although hot and cold lunches are available on weekdays, the pub is mainly a place for beer, conversation and meeting friends, like most pubs used to be. In fine weather, the neat garden at the rear provides a relaxed outdoor drinking area. Five regular and six changing guest beers are available, plus a range of quality bottled and draught beers from Belgium and other European countries.

The Pub Company has also re-launched the Golden Pheasant in Biggleswade as a Speciality Beer House, run by active East Beds CAMRA member John Walsh. The company is considering conversion of suitable pubs in other town centres into a similar format.

Wellington Arms wins POTY

CAMRA's North Bedfordshire Pub of the Year 2008 is the Wellington Arms, Bedford. Although owned by local company Burlison Inns, the pub has been run as a B&T Brewery tenancy since 1998 and quickly became a favourite with real ale drinkers.

Managed for the first nine years by Eric Mills and since last May by Royston Beer and Lesley Griffin, the "Wellie" has established itself as one of the foremost local pubs for quality real ale.

With a row of 14 handpumps lining the entire bar, it offers a constantly changing variety of guest beers, mainly from micro-breweries, as well as a selection of B&T's own beers and two real ciders. It is also a well known venue for quality bottled and draught beers from Belgium and elsewhere.

The pub is open all day from 12 noon seven days a week, although food is limited to filled rolls on weekdays.

The Wellington Arms has won the branch Pub of the Year title five times before – in fact every year from 2000 to 2004.

Next stop the county?

Meanwhile, CAMRA's South and East Beds branches have selected the **Globe, Dunstable**, and the **Engineers Arms, Henlow**, as their respective Pubs of the Year 2008. All three pubs are worthy winners, but they now compete head



14 handpumps at the Wellington Arms

on for the Bedfordshire county title and entry into the national Pub of the Year competition.

The Wellington Arms won the East Anglia regional title in 2001 and the Engineers Arms followed in 2003, but no Bedfordshire pub has yet won the national award. So there is much to play for!

B&T Brewery also deserves congratulations for two out of its three local pubs collecting Bedfordshire branch POTY awards in the same year.

Old Spot wins national title

CAMRA's National Pub of the Year 2007 is the **Old Spot Inn, Dursley, Gloucestershire**. The award was announced during Community Pubs Week in February.

The Old Spot Inn is a 100-year-old free house, named after the Gloucestershire Old Spot pig. It was sympathetically restored by its owner, and offers an intimate atmosphere enhanced by log fires and brewery memorabilia. It offers six real ales, mainly from micro-brewers and an excellent menu popular with walkers on the Cotswold Way. The secluded garden has a boules piste.

Julian Hough, CAMRA's Pubs Director and one of the final judges said: "The Old Spot Inn is a great example of how successful a well-run com-

munity pub can be. I would like to congratulate everybody at the Old Spot Inn on being judged Britain's finest pub."

Runners up

The other pubs shortlisted for the final judging round were the **Blue Peter Hotel** at Kirkcolum, Dumfries & Galloway, the **Land of Liberty, Peace & Plenty** at Heronsgate, Herts, and the **Turks Head** in St Helens, Merseyside.

The Land of Liberty, Peace and Plenty had earlier won the East Anglia title against regional county winners including the Engineers Arms at Henlow. A full list of regional winners can be found at www.camra.org.uk



Spring beer festivals

Hitchin Beer & Cider Festival

Fri 14 to Sat 15 March at Hitchin Town Hall, Brand Street. (bus 5 min, train 20 min). Open Fri 12-11, Sat 11-11, admission £1 Fri before 4pm, otherwise £2.50, CAMRA and Round Table members free. 50 real ales plus a good range of cider, perry and foreign beers. Quiet festival – no music. Disabled access/toilets, souvenir glasses, hot and cold food. Stagecoach Mars buses from Bedford and Shefford.

www.camranorthherts.org.uk

Winslow Beer Festival

Fri 14 to Sat 15 March at Winslow Public Hall, off Elmfields Way, Winslow, Bucks. Organised in association with Lions Club to aid local charities. Open Fri 6-11, Sat 11-7 and 7-11, admission £5 each session including souvenir glass and programme. CAMRA members get complimentary beer voucher. Approx 40 real ales plus cider, light refreshments available. On Buckingham to Aylesbury bus route.

www.winslowlions.org.uk/beerfestival

Coventry Beer Festival

Fri 11 to Sat 12 April at Coventry RFC ground, Butts Park Arena (rail station 10-15 min). Open 12-4, 6-11. Admission £1 lunchtimes, £2 eves, CAMRA members free. Ample parking, coach parties welcome. More than 85 real ales including specials from local breweries, ciders and country wines. Food available at all sessions.

<http://uk.geocities.com/covcamra/index.html>

31st Bedford Beer & Cider Festival

Wed 8th to Sat 11th October 2008
Bedford Corn Exchange

Volunteers needed

Contact organiser John Martin
on 01234 768294 or email
chairman@northbedscamra.org.uk

25th Rugby Beer Festival

Wed 14 to Sat 17 May at Thornfield Bowling Club, Bruce Williams Way CV22 5LL. Open Wed 7-10 (CAMRA members only), Thu 6-11, Fri 5.30-11, Sat 12-11, admission Thu/Sat £1.50, Fri £2.50, CAMRA members free. More than 60 real ales, 12 farmhouse ciders, hot and cold food. Family room Sat lunch, live music Sat eve.

www.rugbycamra.org.uk

35th Cambridge Beer Festival

Wed 19 to Mon 24 May under canvas on Jesus Green (bus station 5 min). Plans are still being finalised, but the bar is likely to feature well over 120 breweries, plus a range of traditional ciders, a large selection of foreign beers and hot and cold food. X5 express bus from Bedford.

www.cambridge-camra.org.uk

23rd Colchester Real Ale & Cider Festival

Tue 27 to Sat 31 May at Colchester Arts Centre. Open Tue 6-11, Wed-Sat 12-11, admission £1, after 6.30 £2.50, CAMRA members free. Over 100 real ales plus cider, perry, local wines and foreign beers. Food available all sessions, children welcome to 7pm. Live music Tue/Sat eves.

www.colchestercamra.org.uk

3rd Delapre Abbey Beer Festival

Fri 29 to Mon 31 May at Delapre Abbey, Northampton. Open air event with marquee. Open Thu 5-11, Fri/Sat 12-11, admission £2 Fri/Sat after 7pm, CAMRA members free. Over 150 real ales plus cider, perry and local wines, food available all sessions. Live music Fri/Sat. Stagecoach P1 bus from Bedford. www.northantscamra.org.uk

Trading standards

If you complain about short measure, lack of a visible price list or misleading promotion and do not get a satisfactory response, contact the *Bedfordshire Trading Standards Service*, County Hall, Cauldwell Street, Bedford, MK42 9AP. Tel. 01234 228897.

www.tradingstandards.gov.uk/bedfordshire

Champion winter ales

WICKWAR Brewery's Station Porter is CAMRA's Supreme Champion Winter Beer of Britain 2008.

The title was awarded by a panel of CAMRA experts and beer writers at the National Winter Ales Festival in Manchester in January.

The *Good Beer Guide 2008* describes the 6.1% abv porter from Gloucestershire as "a rich, smooth, dark ruby-brown ale. Starts with a roast malt; coffee, chocolate and dark fruit then develops a complex, spicy, bittersweet taste and a long roast finish."

Festival organiser Steve Prescott congratulated Wickwar on its victory: "It's great to see a porter winning Supreme Champion, as this beer style is in danger of disappearing from the British pub. I sincerely hope people will be inspired to try more porter on the back of Wickwar's success."

On hearing the news, Kevin Newbould, Wickwar's Key Accounts Director said: "We are very pleased to have been voted the best winter beer in Britain and are delighted that everybody feels the same way about this wonderful beer as we do. Let's hope we see a resurgence in people trying more porters in the near future."

Other winners

The Silver Champion award went to **Robinson's Old Tom** from Stockport and the Bronze to **Hop Back Entire Stout** from Wiltshire. The category award winners were:

Wilden May Day

Wilden VA Lower School

Monday 5th May 2008, 1pm to 5.30pm

Real cider and perry bar

May Queen

Bedford Pipe Band

Magician and other side shows

Admission £1, senior citizens 50p

Children free

In aid of the school and local charities

Old Ales & Strong Milds

Gold – Purple Moose Dark Side of the Moose
Silver – West Berks Maggs Magnificent Mild
Bronze – Highland Dark Munro

Stouts

Gold – Hop Back Entire Stout (Wiltshire)
Silver – Spitting Feathers Old Wavertonian
Bronze – Spire Sergeant Pepper Stout

Porters

Gold – Wickwar Station Porter
Silver – Elland 1872 Porter
Bronze – Acorn Old Moor Porter

Barley Wines

Gold – Robinson's Old Tom
Silver – Durham Benedictus
Bronze – Mighty Oak Saxon Song

The Flower Pot

Tavistock St, Bedford

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Spotlight on Clophill

CLOPHILL has three pubs – two on the Green in the village centre and one is a short walk. It is easier than many villages to reach by public transport: Stagecoach bus S1 runs up the A6 between Luton and Bedford. The last bus north-bound Monday to Friday leaves at 8.59 pm.



The Flying Horse

This large, Grade II listed Beefeater inn faces the Green, with its back to the A6/A507 roundabout. It offers a restaurant and a separate bar divided into smaller areas. It is open all day every day for food and drink, with a range of popular meals.

Landlord Adam Bolton offers the unusual combination of Greene King IPA and Wells Bombarrier on handpump. Families are welcome in the restaurant and garden, and both access and toilets are wheelchair-friendly. Call 01525 860293.

The Green Man

Facing the Flying Horse across the Green, the Green Man is an old, oak-beamed village local with a splendid bar and smaller lounge/restaurant operating as “La Stalla Ristorante”.



Hosts Giuseppe, Peter and Amelia Morelli offer a variety of excellent Italian dishes, with Greene King IPA and Abbot on handpump.

The pub is closed on Monday and Tuesday lunchtime, but otherwise opens for lunch (12-3) and evening (6-11) sessions, and on Sunday all day from 12 to 9pm. Families are welcome in the restaurant and garden. This is a quiet pub without noisy games or music. Call 01525 860352.

The Stone Jug

A few minutes walk along Back Street, off the A6 north of the village centre, brings you to the Stone Jug, an award-winning free house and Bedfordshire CAMRA Pub of the Year 2006.

The building was created from three 17th-century stone cottages providing an L-shaped bar and a small function/family room leading into a rear patio garden. The modest car park can fill up quickly on busy evenings.



Owners Joyce and Vikki Stevens offer B&T Shefford Bitter, Fuller’s London Pride and Young’s Bitter, plus two changing guest ales and real cider and perry. Good value home-made lunches are available Tuesday to Saturday, but no food in the evenings. The bar closes on Monday to Thursday afternoons, but is open all day from Friday to Sunday. Call 01525 860526.

For further information about these and all other pubs in Bedfordshire, visit the new CAMRA guide at www.bedspubs.org.uk



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Run My Pub

A NEW initiative has been launched on the internet to help save a great British tradition. With about 57 pubs closing every month (see page 3), runmypub.com hopes to reverse the trend by creating the first virtual community pub.

This is a new concept aimed at attracting both aspiring publicans and individuals interested in the licensed trade to buy their own boozier. Subscribers are invited to join through the website and buy a share. This entitles them to a say in everything about a prospective pub purchase, from the location to the type of beer and snacks on offer.

Phil Womack from *runmypub.com* explained the idea. "People are astonished when they find out how many pubs are actually closing every month. This is a chance to do something about it. Members of the scheme will vote on everything from the location of the pub, type of pub, décor, entertainment, the beers, the food, and even the staff who work there!"

CAMRA spokesman Tony Jerome commented: "*runmypub.com* sounds a great idea. It will appeal to a lot of people out there who have always dreamed of owning their own pub. Buying a pub can cost a lot of money, but this scheme lets pub

lovers have a slice of the action for just £25 a year! Who knows, in months to come this scheme could help save many pubs currently under threat of closure."

The new scheme is a similar concept to *myfootballclub.com*, where members recently provided the funds to buy Blue Square Conference football club Ebbsfleet United.

Members will be kept fully informed of progress and will be asked to vote on all decisions. Once a pub is open, they will be invited to use the facilities and will also be able to view the establishment via a live webcam.

Phil Womack added: "It is the members who will shape the pub and, together, work to make it a success. Once we have enough members in place we will be consulting them about a first purchase, and the decisions will be up to them."

Phil is keen to emphasise that joining the scheme is not an investment opportunity, but the chance to have a say in all aspects of running a pub.

For further information, visit the website at www.runmypub.com



New guide to West Coast USA

Planning a trip to California and the US West Coast? Even if you can't be there, explore the area where American micro-brewing was born from the comfort of your armchair!

America's West Coast is the epicentre of a brewing revolution. It may surprise you, but the USA now offers more beer styles than anywhere else and its flourishing brewing industry has a growing reputation for quality and innovation.

The **Good Beer Guide West Coast USA** was written by British beer writers Ben McFarland and Tom Sandham. While travelling extensively in America, they developed an infectious enthusiasm for its exciting beers and brewing scene.

This full-colour, illustrated guide lists several hundred breweries, beers and great places to find them, with information on travel and accommodation, beer festivals, and bespoke 'Beer routes' for planning complete vacations.

Available by mail order from the CAMRA Shop at £14.99 + £2.50 P&P (members save £2). Call 01727 867201 or visit <http://shop.camra.org.uk>





Brewery news

Polypins from White Park

Founded by enthusiasts Alan and Peter Kelly only six months ago, this infant micro operates in a farmyard barn on the northern outskirts of Cranfield. The name comes from the owners' herd of White Park rare breed cattle, now fattening up nicely on the spent malt added to their diet.

Since brewing began in October, the beer range has expanded with **White Park Blonde** (4% abv) and winter seasonal **Nightjar Bedfordshire Porter** (4.5%) joining **First Flight Bitter** (3.7%).

As well as supplying 9-gallon firkins for local pubs and clubs, White Park retails its beers in 36 pint polypins or 18 pint half-polypins, filled on the day of collection. Pump clips for all three beers are available to collectors at £2 each. Phone orders to 01234 721383 for collection and payment at the brewery on the following Saturday. Visit www.whiteparkbrewery.co.uk

Concrete Cow has four beers

Founded last summer in Bradwell, Milton Keynes, and named after the new city's infamous landmark, Concrete Cow Brewery has become a regular supplier to local pubs and clubs. It now offers four beers: **Midsummer Ale** (3.7% abv), a hoppy golden ale made with some wheat, **Cock 'n' Bull Story**, a dark amber, malty ale (4.1%), **Old Bloomer**, a dark ruby best bitter (4.7%) and **Watling Gold**, a bright 4.5% abv golden ale.

To order, call 07889 665745 or visit the website at www.concretecowbrewery.co.uk, which also provides a list of regular outlets.

Greene King XX wins award

Greene King's XX Mild took CAMRA's Champion Mild of East Anglia title at the Colchester Winter Ale Festival in January. Justin Adams, Greene King Brewing Company MD said: "The lower abv of mild has a loyal fan base and we look forward to continue serving them well."

Unfortunately, while the XX fan base in Suffolk may be well served, fans in Bedfordshire fare less well, with the beer proving hard to find in local pubs. However, XX is now a regular on the bar at the Three Cups in Bedford. Do give it a try!

S&N doomed

The small world of global brewers is about to get even smaller, as Scottish & Newcastle succumbs to a joint bid from Carlsberg and Heineken. The uneasy partnership between the two brewing empires will cost £8 billion and lead to a carve-up of S&N's trading operations worldwide, with each cherry-picking the breweries and brands it wants.

CAMRA has condemned the takeover and is seeking assurances from Heineken, which will take S&N's UK activities, about the future of the company's real ale interests – especially Waverley TBS, a major real ale distributor, the contract brewing of Theakston's Best Bitter and the partnership with the Caledonian Brewing Company.

Chief Executive Mike Benner said: "The relentless obsession with pushing global lager brands is a failing strategy. The inevitable result of consolidation is brewery closures, brand losses and less choice for Britain's consumers."

The Devonshire Arms

7th Annual Mini Beer Festival 2008

From 5.30 pm
Thurs 15th May - Sun 18th May



A selection of varied &
unique ales from
around the U.K.



32 Dudley Street, Bedford
01234 359329

Club of the Year 2009

CAMRA is inviting club members and officials throughout the country to apply for the title Club of the Year 2009.

Co-ordinator John Holland explained what it is about. "Thousands of clubs across the country offer a terrific place to enjoy a pint of good quality real ale and the company of friends. Our annual Club of the Year competition is a well regarded national contest to decide which club shows the greatest commitment to high quality real ale.

"The Club of the Year 2008 winner will be announced in May but we are already keen to receive nominations for next year's competition."

Self-nominated entries must be submitted by 31st March, although CAMRA branches have another month to submit their own nominations. CAMRA believes about 30,000 clubs are eligible for the competition. The winner will be announced in May 2009.

Club of the Year 2007 was the Greetland Community & Sporting Association in West Yorkshire. The judges' report said: "This club is what a community centre is all about – young and old mixing with the more sporty types, whether it be outdoor or indoor events. Good quality beers are fairly priced."

Club members and officials do not have to be CAMRA members to nominate their own club. However, if more than one club is nominated from within any of CAMRA's 200 branches, the local branch must decide which should be entered for the competition. Clubs that discriminate on the basis of dress, shape, size, gender, sexuality, colour, ethnic origin, or religion will not be considered.

Nominations should be sent to Ian Charlton, 11 Oxford Road, St. Johns, Wakefield NW 3 LB, or by email to incarnation@bluestone

Use the new Bedfordshire guide!

The three Bedfordshire CAMRA Branches – East, North and South – have worked together to produce a new online guide to pubs in the county. After much preparation, it was launched at the Bedford Beer & Cider Festival in October last year.

You can search for pubs by 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 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.

It will be hard to keep up to date, but you can help. Whether you are the licensee, a pub regular or an occasional visitor, please send updates to the Firkin (details p18), or email pubguide@northbedscamra.org.uk



Devonshire Arms
32 Dudley Street Bedford
MK40 3TB
Directions: 1 mile east of town centre
01234 356329
Owner: Charles Wells
CAMRA Branch: North Beds
Wells Eagle IPA [H]
Wells Bombardier [H]
Guest Ales: Two changing regularly [H]
☀️☀️☀️ heated, lit pagoda in garden
🚗 Stagecoach 4 (200 yards)
Opening Times:
Mon-Thu 17.30-23.00
Fri 14.00-23.00
Sat 12.00-23.00
Sun 12.00-23.00
Pleasant two-bar local in a quiet residential area near Russell Park, east of the town centre. Decorated with attractive floral hanging baskets in summer. Good wine is available by the jug. Food is occasionally available for special events, but customers are welcome to bring in their own. An annual beer festival is held in May.
Pubguid: 31/01/2009

www.bedspubs.org.uk



Branch diary

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

Guests are always welcome at social events, but members have priority on brewery visits. For the latest information, check the members' monthly newspaper, *What's Brewing*, or visit the branch website at www.northbedscamra.org.uk

Monday 17 March – BBCF meeting

Meeting to plan the 31st Bedford Beer & Cider Festival in October, 8.15pm at the Three Cups, Newnham Street, Bedford.

Volunteers are needed to help organise the festival and to work behind the bar and in other functions at the event itself. Contact chief organiser John Martin on 01234 768294, or email chairman@northbedscamra.org.uk

Thursday 20 March – Branch meeting

Branch business meeting, 8.15pm at the Bedford Arms, Bromham Road, Bedford. All CAMRA members welcome.

Friday 10 April – Brewery visit

Visit to Great Oakley Brewery and its brewery tap, the Malt Shovel in Northampton. Bus leaves Wellington Arms, Bedford, at 6.15pm, returning about midnight. Cost £15 payable on booking.

Read the Firkin online

To save administration and postage costs, our mailing service to subscribers is being phased out as current commitments come to an end.

If you cannot find a copy of the Firkin at your local pub or live outside our distribution area, visit the branch website, click the News tab and download a full PDF copy of this and all other issues since autumn 2006.

www.northbedscamra.org.uk

NOTE: Visit now fully booked – contact John Martin (above) to join the reserve list.

Thursday 8 May – East Beds tour

Tour of selected *Good Beer Guide* pubs in East Bedfordshire, finishing at the Engineers Arms, Henlow. Bus leaves Wellington Arms, Bedford at 7pm. Cost £12 to cover bus and a light buffet, payable on booking. Contact John Martin to book a seat on the bus.

Thursday 15 May – Branch meeting

Branch meeting, 8.15pm at a venue to be confirmed. All CAMRA members welcome.

Thursday 12 June – Cambs tour

A day out in Cambridgeshire, details to be confirmed. Check the branch website or *What's Brewing* for further details.

The White Horse



Local beer and food festival
Fri 2nd to Mon 5th May

Beer Festival – Noon to 11pm

Local Farmers Fayre Sat, Sun & Mon

Programme of events

Ring or call in for details

Experience a flavour of the best in Beds

Newnham Avenue, Bedford
01234 409306



Join CAMRA today!

THE Campaign for Real Ale was founded in 1971 to keep real ale alive. Thirty-seven years later we have 90,000 members and more than 600 breweries brewing over 2,500 different varieties of real ale in Britain. So what does CAMRA do?

Fight pub closures

CAMRA research shows that 57 pubs on average close every month across the country. 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 continually presses 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 to suit 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.
 - 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 90,000 other members throughout Britain and help campaign for quality real ale and good pubs.

Single membership costs only £22 a year, reduced to £13 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.

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- excellent prices
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01234 353856

15 Union Street, Bedford MK40 2SF

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Tuesday to Saturday 9.30am to 5pm
Bank Holiday Saturdays 9.30am to 2pm

It takes all sorts to campaign for real ale

Save money by paying by Direct Debit!

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 or call 01727 867201. All forms should be addressed to Membership Secretary, CAMRA, 230 Hatfield Road, St Albans, AL1 4LW.



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 _____

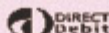
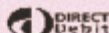
Applications will be processed within 21 days

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



Name and full postal address of your Bank or Building Society

To the Manager Bank or Building Society
Address
Postcode

Originator's Identification Number

9 2 6 1 2 9

FOR CAMRA OFFICIAL USE ONLY

This is not part of the instruction to your Bank or Building Society

Membership Number

Name

Postcode

Name(s) of Account Holder (s)

Bank or Building Society Account Number

Branch Sort Code

Reference Number

Signature(s)

Date

Banks and Building Societies may not accept Direct Debit Instructions for some types of accounts.

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 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.
- If an error is made by CAMRA or your Bank or Building Society you are guaranteed a full and immediate refund from your bank or 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.

Join 90,000 members of CAMRA and help fight for Britain's beer heritage

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Contact us

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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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Printed by Lodge Printers Ltd, Hamerton Road, Upton, Huntingdon, PE28 5YA.

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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. Our readers also include pub and club licensees.

- Circulation about 3,000 copies every quarter, delivered to almost every pub and real ale club in north Bedfordshire. Full layout including adverts 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 the date in the footer bar below

To enquire or place an advert, contact:

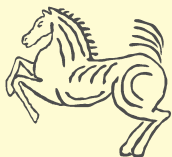
Neil Richards on 01536 358670 or 07710 281381

n.richards@btinternet.com



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Tracie and David would like to welcome you to their family run pub to enjoy:

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01234 376363

whitehorsedt@btinternet.com

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Traditional pub with 13 permanent handpumps – 11 real ales

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01582 512300, www.globe-pub.co.uk



Also visit the Wellington Arms, Bedford

40-42 Wellington Street (14 handpumps)

North Beds CAMRA Pub of the Year 2008



www.banksandtaylor.com



**WHATEVER YOU DO,
TAKE PRIDE.**