

# The Firkkin



CAMPAIGN  
FOR  
REAL ALE

Newsletter of CAMRA North Bedfordshire Branch  
Autumn 2007 Vol 32 No 3 FREE!



## Bedford Beer & Cider Festival Wed 4th to Sat 7th October

Full details pages 2-5

*Photo left: last year's festival  
with all hands at the bar*

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**3rd - 6th October 2007**

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

# 30<sup>th</sup> Bedford Beer & Cider Festival

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



**3rd - 6th October 2007**

A chance to enjoy 110+ real ales from the length and breadth of the United Kingdom; along with more than more than 30 traditional ciders, perries from counties you never knew existed!

## Admission charges:

Free to CAMRA members at all times, please show your CAMRA membership card

**FREE** admission to all before 5pm on all days

£2 after 5pm on Wed, Thu & Sat  
£3 after 5pm on Fri

## Opening Times:

Wed 4pm~11 pm

Thu, Fri & Sat 11.30 am~11 pm

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

- ▶ Foreign Speciality beers
- ▶ Live music on Wed and Sat evenings
- ▶ Tasty hot and cold food
- ▶ Clothing, gifts and books for sale
- ▶ Tombola and Shut the box
- ▶ Exclusive souvenir festival glass
- ▶ Sponsor a cask of ale



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*Festival volunteers needed!*

Contact Peter Argyle on 01234 822 698  
or email: [festival@northbedscamra.org.uk](mailto:festival@northbedscamra.org.uk)

This is a totally non-smoking festival



# Bedford Beer & Cider Festival

**BEDFORD's annual "Oktoberfest" is with us again. This year's 30th celebration of real ale, cider, perry and foreign beer will be held at the Corn Exchange in St Paul's Square, from Wednesday 3rd to Saturday 6th October.**

The festival was founded by local CAMRA members in 1978 and has been held in the town every autumn since – all except one at the Corn Exchange. In 1988 the event had to move to Queen's Park while the its usual home was extensively refurbished. The milestone 30th festival should be more attractive than ever.

## 110 real ales and 30 ciders

This year's festival will offer more than 110 different real ales, 30 different brands of real cider and perry, and a wide 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 currently sell real cider or its stable mate 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 more commonly available in pubs.

## Check the branch website

Although it is too early to name the beers and ciders as we go to press, the final list will be posted at [www.northbedscamra.org.uk](http://www.northbedscamra.org.uk) when the final order is confirmed in September. Details will also be printed in the free souvenir pro-



*Cider and perry always sell fast*



**3rd - 6th October 2007**

gramme given to visitors. The beer list will feature a range of beers from north-western England this year, although locally brewed ales from Wells & Young's, B&T and Potton will of course be included.

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

## 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 over 800 people, but heat does no favours to real ale quality.

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

*(Continued page 4)*

Festival logo designed by Ian Lilley of Suni UK Ltd, Shefford. [www.suniscreen.co.uk](http://www.suniscreen.co.uk)  
Festival photos by Mark Lindsay-White and Peter Argyle

# Bedford Beer & Cider Festival (continued)

## Foreign beers 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 list is not yet decided, but will certainly include are beers.

The Howard Room and the 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. Catering chief Sunil Kalyan and his team will provide food at all sessions, with a varied menu during the week.

## Bring the family before 5pm

Children *under adult supervision* will be admitted to the balcony and part of the Howard Room until 5pm, at the organisers' discretion. Unfortunately, the festival cannot accommodate minors in the evening or provide a supervised crèche for young children.

Children and young people under age 18 may not remain in the main hall, except during transit to and from the Howard Room or balcony.

## Wheels have access

The hall lift will be available for those with baby buggies or using wheelchairs. Visitors with restricted mobility should ask festival staff at the door to arrange lift access direct from a side door at street level.



*Morris Men bring colour on Saturday*



*Shirts, books and souvenirs in the shop*

## Lined glasses mean full pints

Souvenir glasses with the festival logo and sponsored by the *Wells & Young's Brewing Company* will be issued to visitors for a £2 deposit. You can either return your glass when you leave and get a full refund, or take it home as a souvenir.

All glasses will be oversized with pint and half-pint lines, supporting CAMRA's campaign to outlaw short measure. You get a full 20 fluid ounce pint of beer here!

## Buy your guides here

Side stalls will include a CAMRA shop and tombola, operated again by CAMRA East Beds Branch members. You can buy a wide range of shirts, books and souvenirs from CAMRA and various breweries, including the new *Good Beer Guide 2008*, almost straight off the press. You can also win a host of attractive prizes on the tombola and *Shut the Box* game.

The glass engraver will gladly personalise your glass for you, while guest bookseller **Beer Inn Print** offers a range of publications on beer, pubs and brewing.

## Entertainment

Live music will be played in the main hall on Wednesday and Saturday evenings, with only modest amplification.

On Wednesday evening, the JAS4 jazz quintet will get the festival off to a rousing start, while popular local entertainer **Dr Busker** and his infamous musical wit will bring the festival to a cheerful close on Saturday evening. We fully expect them to appear in pirate costume and demand regular draughts of beer with proper buccaneering gusto!

## Be a pirate!

Join Dr Busker and his crew by wearing pirate gear for the Saturday evening session. A prize will be awarded for the best pirate costume in the hall.

The **Bedford Morris Men**, almost certainly with visiting teams from around the country, will bring a touch of colour by performing in the main hall on Saturday lunchtime, as part of their Bedford Day of Dance. Morris men are renowned for their ability to find good real ale and for drinking a lot of it!

### Use the cloakroom and help charity

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

### Join CAMRA – get in free

Check the poster on page 2 for festival hours and admission charges. Get in free by arriving before 5pm and remember that there may well be a queue at the door by mid-evening on Friday.

CAMRA members carrying a current membership card are admitted free every evening, but it will not entitle them to jump any queue at the door. If you plan to come several times, why not join CAMRA on day one and get in free for the rest of the week?

### Don't drink and drive

Please do not risk your own and others' lives by drinking and driving home. If you must drive, use the free soft drinks kindly sponsored by beer

## Sponsor a beer cask!

Promote your business by sponsoring a cask of ale at Bedford Beer & Cider Festival. For just £50, your name and logo will be posted on the beer stillage throughout the four day festival.

Call 01234 822698 or email  
festival@northbedscamra.org.uk

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



*Dr Busker and friend in pirate gear in 2003*

## No smoking anywhere

Smoking is now prohibited throughout the Corn Exchange. As there is no suitable outside area available, no provision can be made for smokers. Evening pass-outs will not be granted to those wishing to smoke in the street.

supplier **Waverley TBS** and make sure someone else drives you to the festival the next day.

Even better, take a bus, train or taxi home. Train operator First Capital Connect is once again helping to promote the festival along the Bedford to Brighton line.

### Help required!

Volunteers are needed to help behind the bars and glasses counter, to help set up and dismantle the festival, and to work behind the scenes. If you are a local CAMRA member or a friend of real ale, why not give it a try? Although there is no pay, it is great fun, you get a fair ration of free beer and cheap food, and have the pleasure of helping run one of the most popular regular events in Bedford.

To volunteer, call organiser Peter Argyle on 01234 822698 or email  
festival@northbedscamra.org.uk

# Brewery news

## Ringwood falls to Marston's

CAMRA fears a new wave of consolidation in pubs and brewing may be set off following the purchase of Hampshire independent Ringwood in July by the mighty Marston's Group.

CAMRA Chief Executive, Mike Benner said: "The practice of larger breweries acquiring smaller competitors is a race where the only loser is the consumer. As one of the larger breweries buys a brewery and expands its estate, competitors start hunting for their next purchase to keep up. CAMRA fears that more smaller breweries will be lost if the race continues."



Mr Benner continued: "In the last three years, another Hampshire brewery, Gales, has been bought and closed by Fuller's and Greene King has bought and closed Hardys and Hansons in Nottingham, as well as buying and closing Ridley's in Essex. However, Marston's has invested in Jennings of Cumbria since taking it over and we must hope they apply the same model with Ringwood. But which brewery is next in line for acquisition?"

CAMRA has sought assurance that Marston's will continue making all Ringwood's beers available to tied and free pubs in and around Hampshire and not substitute Marston's own brands.



## But Archers is saved

Meanwhile, Archers Brewery of Swindon, which hit financial problems recently and was forced to call in administrators, has been bought by a private investor, local businessman John Williams.

Although Archers has continued trading, uncertainty over its future has created concern for customers. Business development manager Chris Rossi told the Morning Advertiser: "We're absolutely delighted to have a new owner and look forward to a very healthy future."

Archers, based in the Great Western Railway locomotive works in Swindon, produces award-winning ales for the independent pub sector and distributes throughout the UK using its own transport fleet. The company brews about 10,000 barrels a year but employs just 20 people.

## All Cock and Bull

The first brewery in Milton Keynes is getting under steam in September. Former home brewer Dan Bonner is launching the Concrete Cow Brewery from an industrial unit in Bradwell, with a range of real ales planned to his own recipes. The brewery is of course named after the new city's most famous work of art, situated little more than a stone's throw from the brewery site.

The new brewery has two fermenters capable of brewing five and a half barrels (3,000 pints) of hand-crafted real ale a week. The first ale will be named **Cock & Bull** after two coaching inns in Stony Stratford where the tradition of rubbishy gossip is said to have originated. You can find the story on the BBC Three Counties radio website.

A pale, thirst-quenching brew called Midsummer Ale will also be available shortly. Although beers will be available in local pubs during September, the new brewery will be formally "launched" at CAMRA's Concrete Pint Beer Festival in Milton Keynes in October.



# Pub News

## Wellington Arms, Bedford

Following Eric Mills' move to the Bedford Arms, the "Wellie" is now managed by familiar staff Royston Beer and Lesley Griffin. The bar has been tidied up and some chill cabinets removed, but otherwise it is business as usual, with 14 handpumps offering much the widest choice of real ales in Bedford as well as two real ciders and an extensive range of draught and bottled foreign beers. Apart from B&T's own range, the real ales are almost entirely drawn from other independent regionals and micro-breweries.



*New team at the Wellington Arms*

## Bedford Arms, Souldrop

Landlords Sally and Don, whose arrival was reported in our last issue, have been offering beers from Potbelly in Kettering among the regularly changing guests – as far as we know their first regular appearance in Bedfordshire. Potbelly brews a fine range of real ales that deserve to be better known in this area.

## Royal Oak, Carlton

Landlords Ian and Andrea are holding their first beer festival over the weekend 7th to 9th September, in aid of the Macmillan Nurses. The barn will offer 16 real ales, many from independent small brewers, plus a draught cider. Different bands will play each day and food will include evening barbecues on Friday and Saturday, and a pig roast on Sunday. Call 01234 720441 for details.



*Charity beer festival at the Royal Oak, Carlton*

## Greene King pubs sold to Admiral

Greene King has been pruning its tied estate in this area, with a batch of pubs sold to Admiral Taverns at the end of last year. Customers may not notice a lot of change, however, as current tenants have largely stayed put and Greene King beers remain on the bar.



**Bedfordshire's leading stockists of bottled Real Ales**

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# Autumn beer festivals

## Booze On The Ouse (St Ives)

*Thu 13 to Sat 15 September at Burgess Hall, St Ivo Recreation Centre, Westwood Rd, St Ives.* Open Thu 6-10.45pm, Fri 5-10.45, Sat 12-10.45. Admission Thu/Fri eves £2, Sat £1 all day, CAMRA members free. More than 50 real ales plus real cider, perry and foreign beers. Happy hours Thu 6-7 and Fri 5-7 – admission £1 and reduced price draught beer. Food available at all sessions. Free soft drinks for designated drivers. [www.huntscamra.org.uk](http://www.huntscamra.org.uk)

## 25th Ipswich Beer Festival

*Wed 19 to Sat 22 September at the Corn Exchange, King Street (behind the town hall).* Open Wed 5 to 11, Thu-Sat 11-11. Admission lunch-times £1, Wed-Fri eves £2, Sat eve £5. Students Wed-Fri eves £1, CAMRA members free except Sat eve £3. Wide range of real ales and selected draught German beers. Live entertainment on Wed, Fri and Sat eves. [www.ipswichcamra.com](http://www.ipswichcamra.com)

## Letchworth Beer & Cider Festival

*Thu 20 to Sat 22 September at Plinston Hall, Broadway (near station).* Open Thu 5-11, Fri /Sat 12-11. Admission £1, £2 after 4pm, CAMRA members free. 50 Real Ales including many local brews, plus good range of cider, perry and foreign beers, A quiet festival with plain, good conversation. Hot and cold food available all sessions. See display on page 10.

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

## 1st Rochford Cider and Perry Festival

*Sat 22 to Sun 23 September at Blanchfields, 1 Southend Road, Rochford, Essex.* Open Sat 11-11, Sun 12-10.30, admission free. More than 10 ciders and 4 perries. Celebrate the Autumn Equinox with some fine craft cider and perry! [www.seecamra.org.uk](http://www.seecamra.org.uk)

## St Albans Beer Festival

*Wed 26 to Sat 29 September at Alban Arena, Civic Centre (rail station 10 min).* Up to 300 real ales, ciders and foreign beers in the city's main performance venue in the town centre. See display opposite. [www.stalbinsbeerfestival.com](http://www.stalbinsbeerfestival.com)

## National Apple Day at Bromham

*Sun 14 October at Bromham Mill (off A428 at the western end of Bromham Bridge).* A family fun day celebrating our national apple heritage. Features a range of real cider and perry from CAMRA East Beds, as well as many other attractions. Admission adults £4, children and parking free. Concessions to pensioners and the unwaged, but not to CAMRA members. *See display page 15.*

## 31st Nottingham Beer & Cider Festival

*Thu 18 to Sun 21 October at Victoria Leisure Centre, Sneinton (rail station 15 min).* Open Thu/Fri 11-11, Sat 10-11, Sun 12-3. Admission Thu/Fri £2, after 5pm £5, Sat £3, Sun free. CAMRA members free all times. Over 400 real ales, plus ciders and country wines – about 300 beers available Thursday with 100 more on Saturday. Hot food available Thu-Sat. Live music Fri/sat eves – one of two halls always music free. Midland Mainline trains from Bedford. [www.nottinghamcamra.org](http://www.nottinghamcamra.org)

## 1st Cambridge OctoberFest

*Fri 19 to Sat 20 October at the University Sports and Social Club, Mill Lane.* Open Fri 5-10.30, Sat 12-10.30, admission £2, CAMRA members free. Range of local and foreign beers, hot and old food. No under-18s admitted. [www.cambridge-camra.org.uk/waf](http://www.cambridge-camra.org.uk/waf)

## Concrete Pint Beer Festival (MK)

*Thu 25 to Sat 27 October at the Pitz, Woughton Centre, Leadenhall, Milton Keynes.* Open 12 to about midnight, admission Thu/Fri after 6pm £3, Sat free, CAMRA members free. Approx 50 real ales plus cider and perry. Check website for beer list and other details. [www.mkcamra.org.uk](http://www.mkcamra.org.uk)

## Hebfest 2007

*Fri 26 to Sat 27 October at Memorial Hall, Forebury (Off Knight St), Sawbridgeworth, Herts (rail and bus 5 min).* Open 11-11, admission £2 after 5pm, CAMRA members free. 30 draught real ales plus cider, perry, bottle-conditioned and foreign beers. Call 07971 211142 or email [beerex@camra.org.uk](mailto:beerex@camra.org.uk)



26<sup>th</sup>- 29<sup>th</sup> September

ALBAN ARENA  ST ALBANS

UP TO 300 REAL ALES plus CIDERS, PERRIES & FOREIGN BEERS

Wed 26<sup>th</sup> Sep. 5.00 pm - 10.30 pm. Thu - Sat 11.00 am - 10.30 pm

Admission prices: Wed. £2.50. Thu-Sat before 4.00 pm. £2.00. after 4.00 pm. £2.50. Fri. £3.00. Sat. £4.00

CAMRA MEMBERS FREE EVERY DAY, ANY TIME. NO ONE UNDER THE AGE OF 18 CAN BE ADMITTED.  
[www.stalbanbeerfestival.com](http://www.stalbanbeerfestival.com) Box office 01727 844488 Contact [realale@stalban.com](mailto:realale@stalban.com)

Rockin' the House on Saturday night **Nine Below Zero**

Don't drink and drive. Use the train or bus



Provided by St Albans City & District Council, organised in partnership by Surrey Connection



# Champion Beers of Britain

## HOBSONS MILD from Cleobury Mortimer in Shropshire is Supreme Champion Beer of Britain 2007.

Every August, CAMRA's Great British Beer Festival in London hosts the Champion Beer of Britain awards. Winners are chosen from a final shortlist of more than 50 in eight categories by a panel of brewers, beer writers and journalists. All beers are tasted blind, so the judges do not know which they are judging.

Hobsons Mild is described in CAMRA's Good Beer Guide 2007 as: "A classic mild. Complex layers of taste come from roasted malts that predominate and give lots of flavour."

Roger Protz, one of the judges and editor of the Good Beer Guide, said: "It's a great victory for a traditional British beer. It's bursting with flavour and, unusually for a mild, it's got plenty of hop character. It's great to see a classic copper coloured beer take the top award."

Nick Davis, Director of Hobsons said: "What a great surprise! It's a nutty mild and despite having only 3.2 per cent alcohol it's packed full of flavour. I would like to thank all the team in Cleobury Mortimer for their outstanding work in achieving this prestigious award."

The Silver award went to **Mighty Oak Maldon Gold** from Essex and Bronze to **Green Jack Ripper** from Suffolk.

### Supreme Champions

<i>Gold</i>	Hobsons Mild
<i>Silver</i>	Mighty Oak Maldon Gold
<i>Bronze</i>	Green Jack Ripper

### Milds

<i>Gold</i>	Hobsons Mild
<i>Silver</i>	Nottingham Rock Mild
<i>Bronze</i>	Brains Dark

### Bitters

<i>Gold</i>	Castle Rock Harvest Pale
<i>Silver</i>	Twickenham Crane Sundancer
<i>Joint Bronze</i>	Surrey Hills Ranmore Ale Fyne Piper's Gold

### Best Bitters

<i>Gold Purple</i>	Moose Glaslyn Ale
<i>Silver</i>	George Wright Pipe Dream
<i>Joint Bronze</i>	Fuller's London Pride Nethergate Suffolk County Station House Buzzin'

### Strong Bitters

<i>Gold</i>	York Centurion's Ghost
<i>Silver</i>	Inveralmond Lia Fail
<i>Bronze</i>	Brains SA Gold

### Speciality Beers

<i>Gold</i>	Nethergate Umbel Magna
<i>Silver</i>	Little Valley Hebden Wheat
<i>Bronze</i>	St Peter's Grapefruit

### Golden Ales

<i>Gold</i>	Mighty Oak Maldon Gold
<i>Silver</i>	Oak Leaf Hole Hearted
<i>Bronze</i>	Otley 01

**LETCWORTH GARDEN CITY**  
**Beer & Cider Festival**  
 September 20th – 22nd  
 Plinston Hall, Broadway



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

Thur 20th, 5pm -11pm  
 Fri 21st and Sat 22nd, 12noon -11pm

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

  
 Not Smoking

  
 CAMPAIGN  
 FOR  
 REAL ALE

# Match beer with your food

**The finest beers in the land have been matched with traditional food by CAMRA and Food from Britain. Gold, Silver and Bronze award winners in this year's Champion Beers of Britain have been matched with fine food from across the UK in association with Food from Britain, which was sponsored the competition.**

Charlotte Lawson, director of Food from Britain, said: "We are delighted to be the sponsors of the Champion Beer of Britain Awards and be involved for the second year running. It reflects how important local beers are to Britain's quality regional food and drink."

Here are three matches out of the exercise at the Great British Beer Festival in August, with tasting notes from GBG 2007 and match comments from CAMRA's Senior Marketing Manager, Georgina Rudman (GR):

## **Hobsons Mild**

**Supreme Champion 2007: Hobsons, Cleobury Mortimer, Shropshire.**

*GBG: "A classic mild. Complex layers of taste come from roasted malts that predominate and give lots of flavour."*

GR: "Drinkers in Shropshire are spoilt for choice – not only is the county the home of the UK Slow Food movement, but it is blessed with a plethora of great regional food producers. Why not make things especially easy by treating yourself to a sausage from the Ludlow Sausage Company, which through its Ludlow Sausage Trail also delivers Hobsons beers along with its free range meat."

## **Maldon Gold**

**Champion Silver 2007 from Mighty Oak, Essex.**

*GBG: "Golden ale with a floral aroma and hints of lemon peel. Earthier hop tones are off-set by sweet vanilla in the taste."*

GR: "Sampling Essex oysters is essential for any visiting beer and food fan and you cannot beat a dozen washed down with Maldon Gold. Or try

using the shellfish in a range of great recipes with local produce. For some inspiration, visit [www.maldonoyster.com/recipes.asp](http://www.maldonoyster.com/recipes.asp)."

## **Green Jack Ripper**

**Champion Bronze 2007 from Green Jack Brewery, Suffolk.**

*GBG: "A light coloured beer brewed as homage to Belgian trappist ales, with sweet notes and a strong hoppy flavour."*

GR: "The wonderful Ripper beer deserves an equally robust and flavoursome partner, so why not introduce it to the creamy, soft, luxurious and blue-veined Suffolk Blue. To find out where you can get hold of this excellent Suffolk cheese, visit [www.suffolkcheese.co.uk](http://www.suffolkcheese.co.uk)."

Matching ales to fine local food is creating growing interest. We will print some good local examples in future issues of *Firkin*.

## *The Royal George*



**Wells Eagle IPA + Young's Special  
Guest ales changing weekly  
Food served daily except Wed  
Traditional pub games  
Relaxed atmosphere  
Heated patio and smoking area  
Car park at rear**

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# Good pubs up north



## Three Compasses, Upper Dean

A most attractive, thatched and boarded country pub at the southern edge of the village, this is a popular destination for hearty meals. Landlady Patricia Wooding's kitchen produces some very appetising dishes, including a regular Sunday roast. Wells Eagle IPA and Bombardier are available.

The pub is open daily from 12 noon, but closes from 3 to 6 (4 to 7 on Sunday) and there are no lunches on Tuesday. The games area at the rear can get busy on darts and skittles match nights and it is wise to book by Saturday evening for Sunday meals – call 01234 708346. Cedar bus route 152 runs from Bedford.

## St John Arms, Melchbourne

A former gamekeeper's lodge a good half mile out of Melchbourne village, this is a real community pub with a warm welcome. Although it was sold by Greene King to Admiral Taverns last



year, the regular real ales are still Greene King IPA and Abbot, plus a changing guest beer.

The pub is open all day, but landlord John Wright has a relaxed attitude to the clock and will rustle up snacks and meals at any reasonable time of day. Pool, skittles and darts are played in a separate room, while a converted barn comes into use for used for occasional functions. The large rear garden can accommodate campers and caravans. It is a popular meeting place for bikers, with regular motorcycle rallies held for charity.

Stagecoach bus 125 from Bedford runs past the pub. Call 01234 708238.



## Chequers, Yelden

Formerly an undistinguished national chain pub with uninteresting beer, the Chequers was re-launched some years ago as a free house featuring quality real ales and ciders. Current owner Kathryn Filsell has kept up the good beer, adding good home-cooked food with occasional ticket-only guest chef days. The pumps serve Fuller's London Pride, three changing guest beers and two real ciders, plus Greene King Abbot drawn direct from the cask in the cellar.

The pub is closed Monday and Tuesday lunch-times, but opens Wednesday and Thursday from 12 to 2 and every evening from 5pm, all day on Sunday. Food is not available Sunday evening, Monday or Tuesday. The separate games room doubles as a family room, although families have access to the large lawned garden in fine weather.

Yelden village lies on the Three Shires Way walkers' route and is served by Stagecoach bus 125 from Bedford and Rushden. Call 01933 356383.



# Apples and pears

OCTOBER was declared **National Cider and Perry Month** by CAMRA some years ago. The aim was to persuade more people to take an interest in these traditional and deliciously fruity drinks and to help promote the mainly small craft producers who make them.

CAMRA hopes that as their popularity increases, traditional cider and perry will find a permanent place on the bar in more British pubs.

Owen Morris, CAMRA Press Officer and a member of the Cider and Perry campaigning committee said: "Preconceptions of cider and the people who drink it have been shattered. It is now regarded as a 'drink to be seen with'. CAMRA believes people are ready to be seen drinking the real thing, rather than the processed, gassy offerings that pass too often for cider and perry.

"Once drinkers enjoy a real cider or perry – where the fruit has simply been pressed and allowed to ferment without any need for additives – then we are certain the cider renaissance

will continue. Why not ask your local to stock a real cider or perry in October?"

Real cider is a long-established traditional drink fermented naturally from apples. It is neither carbonated nor pasteurised. As cider is made from apples, perry is made from perry pears, special varieties usually smaller and harder than dessert fruit.

A wide range of cider and perry will be available locally during October at the **Bedford Beer & Cider Festival** and on the CAMRA cider bar at the **Apple Day** celebrations at Bromham Mill. Sales are always brisk at both events, with little left by the end of the day. Cider and perry are now available at most CAMRA festivals, not only in the traditional fruit-growing areas. The number of local pubs stocking real cider or perry is also growing slowly.

Visit [www.camra.org.uk/cidermonth](http://www.camra.org.uk/cidermonth) to find other cider events promoted by local CAMRA branches around the country.

**ENGINEERS ARMS**  
HENLOW

**THE 12TH HENLOW BEER FESTIVAL**

ENGINEERS ARMS  
HIGH STREET, HENLOW, BEDS.  
01462 812284

**WEDNESDAY 17TH OCTOBER**  
**- 24TH OCTOBER**

THURSDAY 18TH  
THE INFAMOUS DR BUSKER

**FEATURING OVER 100 TRADITIONAL  
REAL ALES, CIDERS & PERRIES**

OPEN ALL DAY EVERY DAY FROM 12 PM  
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BBQ THURSDAY, FRIDAY & SATURDAY

NEAREST TRAIN STATION:- ARLESEY (LONDON KINGS CROSS - PETERBOROUGH)  
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# Good Beer Guide 2008

SEPTEMBER sees the release of the 35th anniversary edition of CAMRA's invaluable travelling companion for the discerning real ale drinker – the new *Good Beer Guide 2008*.

## The beer drinker's bible

The first *Good Beer Guide* was published by CAMRA in 1974 at 75p. It listed 104 breweries and selected pubs in England, Wales and the Isle of Man. The *Good Beer Guide 2008* is a much bigger beast, featuring more than 600 UK breweries and over 4,500 pubs serving high quality real ale.

CAMRA press officer Owen Morris said: "In the first edition the editor offered the guide 'to help people searching for a decent drop of ale'. The *Good Beer Guide* has served this purpose well every year since and is now so iconic that it is often known as the beer drinker's bible.

"CAMRA's network of volunteers works tirelessly to make sure that only pubs serving the highest quality real ale are considered for entry. When you buy your copy of the *Good Beer Guide 2008*, you can be sure that 35 years' worth of dedication to finding a great pint of the nation's favourite drink is in your hands."

## So what's in the new edition?

- Edited by Glenfiddich Award winning drinks writer Roger Protz
- The number one best-selling guide to pubs selling fine quality real ale
- Quick reference, county by county guides, clear maps and simple directions
- Over 4,500 of the best pubs with beer lists, opening hours, pub food information, family facilities and accommodation
- A detailed list of British breweries, listing all regular real ales and many seasonal brews
- Features on beer, pubs, the brewing industry and current CAMRA campaigns

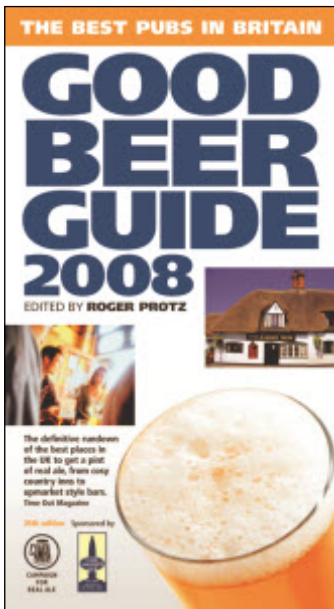
## Buy your copy now!

The *Good Beer Guide 2008* is available in mid-September from all good bookshops, or by mail order from CAMRA, price £14.99 +£1.50 P&P. CAMRA members save £3.99.

Call 01727 867201 or visit [www.camra.org.uk/books](http://www.camra.org.uk/books).

The guide is also available from all CAMRA festivals, including the **Bedford Beer & Cider Festival** in October.

**The new *Good Beer Guide* also makes a fine gift for Christmas!**



## New Beds pub guide

THE three Bedfordshire CAMRA branches published occasional real ale guides to the county since the mid-1970s. The last guide, a 96-page pocket paperback, was published as *Beer Inn Beds* in April 2003.

A new guide is now being prepared, but this time to be launched on the internet. It will include every pub and hotel bar open to

the public in Bedfordshire and Luton, although more details will be given for those offering real ale.

The new guide will be launched shortly, as soon as the extensive surveys of pubs and other bars in the county have been completed. Visitors to the site will be able to search by town, village or postcode and download details to help plan pub visits or a local pub crawl - all free of charge!



# Branch diary

BRANCH business meetings are normally held on the third Thursday of uneven months, e.g. September and November. Social events are usually held in the second week of every month.

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

## Thursday 13 September

Shefford pub crawl – Steamer 7.10pm, Woolpack 7.40, Black Swan 8.10, Bridge 8.40, White Hart 9.10, White Swan 9.40, Brewery Tap 10.10. M3 bus leaves Bedford bus station 6.35, last bus back from Shefford 10.56. All welcome.

## Thursday 20 September

Branch meeting, 8pm, Bedford Arms, Bromham Road, Bedford. All CAMRA members welcome.

## Wednesday 3 to Saturday 7 October

30th Bedford Beer & Cider Festival at the Corn Exchange, St Paul's Square. See pages 2-5 for details. Don't miss it!

## Thursday 8 November

Visit to Great Oakley Brewery and the Malt Shovel in Northampton. Details to be announced – check branch website.

## Thursday 15 November

Branch meeting, 8pm at the Bedford Arms, Bedford. All CAMRA members welcome.

## Thursday 20 December

Branch Christmas party, 8pm at the Bedford Arms, Bedford. Details to be announced – check branch website.

## Get Firkin by post

If you can't find the *Firkin* at your pub or club, get it by post. To get the next four copies, send a cheque for £1 (payable to CAMRA North Beds) to *Tony Burke, 3 Bracken Place, Bedford MK41 0TG*.

CAMRA members living within the North Beds branch area are entitled to copies by post free of charge. Call Tony Burke on 01234 273676, by post as above, or email [membership@northbedscamra.org.uk](mailto:membership@northbedscamra.org.uk)

## Trading standards

If you complain to a licensee about short measure, lack of a visible price list or misleading promotion of products, and do not get a satisfactory response, contact *Bedfordshire Trading Standards Service* at County Hall, Cauldwell Street, Bedford, MK42 9AP. Tel. 01234 228280.

## National Apple Day

Bromham Mill & Gallery  
Sunday 14th October  
11am - 4.30pm

Join us for our annual celebration of  
the Brilliant British Apple

Taste, eat, drink, try and buy local apples  
Apple pressing, bobbing, peeling  
Big Food Fayre with Bedfordshire clangers

Cider and perry with CAMRA

Story telling  
Family art activities  
Puppet shows  
Apple identification

Adults £4.50

Concessions and unaccompanied £2.50  
Children and parking free

3 miles west of Bedford - signs from A428  
For further details call 01234 824330



# Join CAMRA today!

**THE Campaign for Real Ale was founded in 1971 to keep real ale alive. Thirty-six years later we have about 87,000 members and more than 600 real ale breweries brewing over 2,500 different varieties of real ale in Britain. So what does CAMRA do?**

## Fight pub closures

CAMRA research shows that at least 26 pubs 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 served contain less than 100% liquid? Consumers lose over a million pounds a day due to short measure.

CAMRA continues to lobby 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 of pubs are restricted to selling beers bought from the brewery or pub company to which they are tied. CAMRA is campaigning 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.
- Motivating over 5,000 volunteers to survey pubs, work at beer festivals and actively campaign for real ale and pubs.

To read more about CAMRA's successful campaigning, visit [www.camra.org.uk](http://www.camra.org.uk)

## Join CAMRA today!

If you care about these issues and want to help make a difference, join CAMRA today! For less than the price of a pint a month, you can help 87,000 other members across Britain campaign for quality real ale and good pubs.

To join CAMRA, use the form opposite, call 01727 867201, visit [www.camra.org.uk/join-us](http://www.camra.org.uk/join-us) or visit the membership stand at any CAMRA beer festival.

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**Opening Hours:**  
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](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

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 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 .....

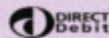
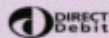
Signed ..... Date .....

Applications will be processed within 21 days



### 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



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 date 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.

detach and retain this section

Name and full postal address of your Bank or Building Society

To the Manager Bank or Building Society

Address

Postcode

Name(s) of Account Holder (s)

Bank or Building Society Account Number

Branch Sort Code

Reference Number

Originator's Identification Number

9 2 6 1 2 9

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

Membership Number

Name

Postcode

Instructions to your Bank or Building Society

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.

Signature(s)

Date

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

Join 87,000 members of CAMRA and help fight for Britain's beer heritage

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# Contact us

CAMRA North Bedfordshire Branch is currently run by an interim committee pending the election of a new chairman and secretary. Current contacts are:

## Socials

John Martin – 01234 768294

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

## Finance

Mike Benyon

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

## Membership and Pubs

Tony Burke – 01234 273676

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

## Beer & Cider Festival

Peter Argyle – 01234 822698

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

## Newsletter

Peter Argyle – 01234 822698

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

## Website

Peter Lamswood

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

# 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 decent items of interest 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.

**Edited by Peter Argyle**  
**65 Wingfield Road, Bromham,**  
**Bedford, MK43 8JY**  
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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

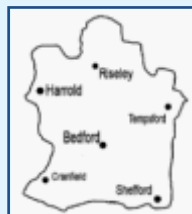
Produced by local beer drinkers for local beer drinkers -- a select target audience. Our readers use shops and taxis to get home, buy insurance and drive cars, as well as spending time in the pub. Our readers also include pub and club licensees.

- Circulation 3,000 copies every quarter, delivered to almost every pub and real ale club in north Bedfordshire. Full layout also posted online for 12 months at [www.northbedscamra.org.uk](http://www.northbedscamra.org.uk)
- Simple artwork created at no extra cost, or supply your own
- Reserve space in the next issue by **1 November 2007**

### To enquire or to place an advert, contact:

Neil Richards on 01536 358670 or 07710 281381

[n.richards@btinternet.com](mailto:n.richards@btinternet.com)



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**50 Real Ales, Cider and Perry**

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