

The Firkin



CAMPAIGN
FOR
REAL ALE

Newsletter of CAMRA North Bedfordshire Branch
Summer 2007 Vol 32 No 2 FREE!

Wells launch speciality beer houses



MD Anthony Wallis (left), landlord Eric Mills and director Peter Wells celebrate at the Bedford Arms

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New look for Bedford Arms

THE Bedford Arms in Bromham Road, Bedford, boarded up and looking neglected for the past 18 months, has re-opened as one of Charles Wells Pub Company's first "Speciality Beer Houses".

The neglected look was misleading, however, as the pub interior has been stripped out and completely refitted, with a new bar sporting no fewer than 10 handpumps. While about half offer Wells & Young's Bedford-brewed real ales, including the recently acquired Courage Directors, the remainder serve a range of guest beers, many from micro-brewers not often available in Charles Wells pubs.

Real cider and foreign beers

The pub also offers a real draught cider or perry, a good range of bottled beers and a selection of draught and bottled beers from Belgium and other countries.

A range of pub food is being launched, with the accent on traditional dishes such as ploughman's lunch, sausage and mash, and fish in beer batter. There is no noisy music or late night events for the young – this is a place to chat to friends over a pint of decent beer, like town pubs used to be.

The new Bedford Arms is run by Eric Mills, widely praised for creating a great success at the Wellington Arms in Bedford. An active local CAMRA member, he also lends his expertise to managing the bars at CAMRA's Bedford Beer & Cider Festival. With Eric at the helm, the pub is off to a great start.

Meanwhile at the Golden Pheasant

The Bedford Arms is not quite the first of Charles Wells' speciality beer houses, as the **Golden Pheasant** in Biggleswade, run by John Walsh, another active CAMRA member, opened a few weeks earlier. If the concept proves a success, the company may convert suitable urban pubs in other towns into speciality beer houses.

Charles Wells will want licensees and staff with a passion for quality real ale and traditional pub values. Expect an interior furnished with old or reclaimed fittings and furniture, retained original details and a comfortable, relaxed style.



After the smoking ban?

A new survey from CAMRA suggests that forecasts of mass closures and a gloomy future for pubs after the smoking ban comes into force in July may be unduly pessimistic. The key findings suggest that:

- 6.2 million people who regularly visit pubs may visit them more often in future. Of these, 97 per cent are non-smokers.
- 840,000 people who have not used pubs in the past say they will after the smoking ban.
- 93 per cent of real ale drinkers say they are more likely to visit pubs more often, or that their visiting habits will not change.
- 68 per cent of regular smokers say it will not change their pub visiting habits at all.
- Only 3 per cent of all adults asked say they will not visit pubs at all after the ban.
- Smokers are more likely to drink lager than real ale – 43 per cent of lager drinkers admit to smoking, but only 25 per cent of those drinking mainly real ale.

CAMRA Chief Executive Mike Benner said: "This survey shows that non-smokers will be attracted to pubs after the ban comes into force, and many of them would like to find a real ale waiting for them when they get there.

"The smoking ban will be a difficult transition for licensees, but the key will be to ensure that other factors such as quality of real ale, food, atmosphere and welcome are all superb."



Pub News

Three Cups, Newnham Street, Bedford

A warm welcome to new licensees Tony and Debbie Kennedy at this popular community pub east of the town centre. The bars have four hand-pumps dispensing Greene King and guest beers. Lunches are available every day, with daily specials, bargain meals for pensioners on Thursdays and a Sunday roast.

Swan, Cranfield

Licensee Steve Meredith recently returned to the repaired and refurbished **Royal Oak, Woburn**, which had been badly damaged by fire. However, he still holds a lease on the Swan, with new manager Philip in charge. There is still creative cooking and Greene King beers on handpump.

Kings Arms, Cardington

This former Brewers Fayre pub re-opened at the end of May under the M&B flag, after thorough refurbishment. It is much bigger than it looks, with space for up to 150 drinking and dining. New manager Annette Durante is keen to offer a changing variety of real ales.

Woolpack, Wilstead

Welcome to new landlord Bernard Marriott, who has turned one end of the pub into the Marriotts Fine Dining Restaurant with a small menu of home-cooked food. The front of the pub remains the same and offers three ales on handpump – Greene King IPA, Old Speckled Hen and Abbot when we last visited. The pub is now open all day.



Fine dining at the Woolpack



Familiar faces at Souldrop

Bedford Arms, Souldrop

Welcome back to former managers Sally and Don, who have returned to the pub as permanent tenants after a period with the doors firmly shut. A real village community pub with traditional home-cooked pub food and varied real ales – Adnams Bitter and Fuller’s London Pride were both available recently.

Crown, Britannia Road, Bedford

After thorough refurbishment, this corner pub by Bedford Hospital is now run by Bradleigh Probart, formerly at the Clarence and current licensee of the Bell in Queens Park. Although it will probably become a gay bar in the evenings, everyone is welcome. After some years without real ale, the bar offers Young’s Bitter on handpump, with a possible guest ale on the cards.

Royal George, Stagsden

A warm welcome to Paul and Sharon, who took over this refurbished village pub earlier this year. The former lounge and dining room have been knocked into one and there is new furniture in the huge wooded garden. Chef Stuart presides over a creative home-cooked menu with daily specials. Wells Eagle IPA and rotating guest ales on handpump. Booking for meals is advised – see advert on page 15.

Fox & Hounds, Clapham

This pub at the north end of the village has been extensively refurbished. Landlord Mel Carter offers Wells Eagle IPA on handpump.



Pub News

Cross Keys, High Street, Bedford

Welcome to new manager Angela McIsaac at this recently refurbished town centre pub. Angela offers Greene King IPA on handpump, a range of wines by the glass and a range of food up to 8pm (6pm Sat/Sun), with a roast on Sunday.

Star, Clapham

Welcome to Maureen and Gemma, who took on this traditional community local several months ago. A cosy two-bar pub with a strong interest in sport and Wells Eagle IPA on handpump. Gemma clearly has beer in the blood, as her father runs the Paddington in Midland Road, Bedford.

Chequers, Yelden

The annual Chequers beer festival will be held this year from Friday 6th to Sunday 8th July. Landlady Kathryn Filsell is offering a range of beers from surrounding counties and a farmer's market with fresh local produce. Call 01933 312853 or see advert on page 8 for further details.

White Horse, Newnham Avenue, Bedford

Congratulations to licensees Nigel and Sue Anstead for winning the Charles Wells Pub of the Year title. Presenting the award at a special celebration at Towcester racecourse, company chairman Paul Wells said the couple had shown an exemplary approach to business operations, staff training and customer service.

Fleur de Lis, Mill Street, Bedford

Welcome to new landlady Evette Newman, who arrived at this popular town centre pub a few months ago. Wells Eagle IPA is available on handpump.

Swan, Clapham

Apologies for suggesting in our last issue that the Swan may have closed for redevelopment. Charles Wells is looking for a suitable tenant and plans to re-open the pub after refurbishment. The boards and barriers that have made it look so bleak are sadly necessary to prevent theft and vandalism while the pub is unoccupied.

Ye Three Fyshes, Turvey

Welcome to Philip and Dee at this old riverside pub, restored and re-launched by Churchill Taverns in 2005. Greene King IPA and guest ales are available, while the food ranges from bar snacks to formal meals. As Dee has won garden awards, watch for new features in the rear patio garden. The skittle alley with its own bar can be hired for private functions – call 01234 881463 for details.

New Inn, Tavistock Street, Bedford

Welcome to Michael, new arrival at this corner pub just out of the town centre, known as the Corner House until it was re-launched under its old name a few months ago. Wells Eagle IPA is usually available on handpump, there is live entertainment on Fridays, karaoke on Sundays and a heated patio for determined smokers. Snacks and light meals should be available soon.

The Royal George



Wells Eagle + Adnams Broadside

Guest ales changing weekly

Food served daily except Wed

Traditional pub games

Relaxed atmosphere

Patio and quiet beer garden

Car park at rear

Silver Street, Stevington

01234 822184

Showcase of British beer

The Great British Beer Festival 2007 will be held as last year at the Earls Court Arena in London, from Tuesday 7th to Saturday 11th August. Attractions include over 700 real ales, ciders, perries, foreign beers, traditional pub games and daily entertainment. So book your diary for a day trip to London!

New venue breaks records

Last year, the "Showcase of British Beer" moved to Earls Court after fourteen successful years at London Olympia. Over 66,000 people attended the Great British Beer Festival, breaking the previous record crowds by 18,000!

Tony Jerome, CAMRA Marketing Manager, said: "Nobody could have predicted the success of moving to Earls Court. We were amazed that more than 66,000 people visited the event in 2006. Earls Court offers a larger venue than London Olympia and gives us the opportunity to offer a wider range of beers to our visitors. This success is a testament to the 1,000 volunteers who work so hard at the Great British Beer Festival."

For opening times and other details, see the display opposite. Other information about the festival is available from www.gbbf.org.uk



Tasty tipples

The festival will offer over 700 tasty tipples from the smallest microbreweries and large regional brewers – more than ever before! These include wheat beers, golden ales, stouts, porters, bitters, milds, bottle-conditioned beers, cider, perry and real lagers from all over the world.

Other highlights

The festival is not only about beer and cider. You can enjoy good food, live music and other entertainment, traditional games and quizzes in a family-friendly atmosphere. Catch up with friends, unwind after work, or just soak up the festival atmosphere. Other highlights include:

- Family room – everyone under age 18 must remain in the family room and be supervised by a family member.
- Tutored beer tastings – learn to appreciate the different tastes and flavours by attending one of the tutored sessions.
- Corporate hospitality – several packages are available for entertaining colleagues or clients. Email georgina.rudman@camra.org.uk

Book in advance

Admission costs £8 at the door from Tuesday to Friday and £6 on Saturday – CAMRA members get £2 discount. Save £3 (members £1) a day by advance booking through the ticket hotline at 0870 380 0150, or via the online booking site at www.gbbf.org.uk



Win two GBBF tickets!

CAMRA is offering 25 lucky winners a pair of Great British Beer Festival tickets. All you need to do to enter the competition is to email or post your answer to this simple question by Friday 6th July.

When does the Great British Beer Festival 2007 start?

Post your answer to Tony Jerome (GBBF Competition), CAMRA, 230 Hatfield Rd, St Albans, Herts, AL1 4LW, or email it under the title "GBBF Competition 2007" to Tony at tony.jerome@camra.org.uk.

Winners will be notified and sent their tickets by Friday 13th July.

visit www.gbbf.org.uk

Happy
30th
7-11 Aug
2007

Featuring over **700 real ales**, ciders, perries
and **international beer**.

Live Music & Entertainment throughout
the Festival.



30TH GREAT BRITISH BEER FESTIVAL 2007

EARLS COURT, LONDON 7th-11th AUGUST

OPENING TIMES



CAMPAIGN
FOR
REAL ALE

Tuesday 5.00pm – 10.30pm

Wednesday, Thursday & Friday 12 noon – 10.30pm

Saturday 11.00am – 7.00pm

ENTRY **£3-£8** (concessions for CAMRA members)

Advance Ticket Hotline 0870 380 0150

or book tickets online at www.seetickets.com/gbbf **See**

Tickets also available on the door.

Save money, avoid the queues, book in advance

It's quicker and easier to travel to Earls Court by Public Transport. Organised by the Campaign for Real Ale.





Summer beer festivals

5th Welland Valley Beer Festival

Fri 22 to Sun 24 June in nine pubs on the Leics, Northants and Rutland borders. More than 100 real ales and ciders during the festival, traditional pub food, pig roast, barbecues and live entertainment. Free vintage bus service on Saturday only links the nine pubs with Market Harborough bus and rail stations. Festival programme with beer list and bus timetable available at £1 one week beforehand from participating pubs. Midland Mainline trains to Market Harborough from Bedford and Luton. Run in co-operation with CAMRA Northants. For further details, call 07790 197220 or email wellandvalleybf@ntlworld.com

Chelmsford Beer Festival

Tue 10 to Sat 14 July at Moulsham Mill Football Field (rail station 15 min). Open 12-11 daily, admission £3 Tue-Thu eves. £4 Fri eve, £2 Sat eve, free before 7pm and to CAMRA members at

all times. More than 300 real ales, plus ciders and perries, Belgian beers and hot and cold food at all sessions. Live music eves, family fun day Sat afternoon. For further details call 01245 600294 or visit www.chelmsfordcamra.org.uk

Great British Beer Festival

Tue 7 to Sat 11 August at Earl's Court Arena, London. Open Tue 5-10.30, Wed-Fri 12-10.30, Sat 11-7. For admission prices and other details, see pages 6-7, or visit www.gbbf.org.uk

12th Clacton Beer Festival

Wed 22 to Sat 25 August at St James Hall, Tower Road, Clacton-on-Sea. Open Wed 6-11, Thu-Sat 11-11, admission £1, CAMRA members free. More than 50 real ales, plus cider, perry and Belgian beers. Live bands Thu and Sat eves, air show Thu/Fri. Accommodation available via tourist office on 01255 686633. For further details, visit www.clactonbeerfestival.org.uk

30th Peterborough Beer Festival

Tue 21 to Sun 26 August, in three giant marquees on the river embankment off Bishops Road (east of the shopping centre). The second largest beer festival in the UK, offering over 300 real ales plus cider, perry and continental bottled beers. Live music every evening in a separate marquee, food, pub games etc. Open all day Thursday and Saturday. To check details nearer the time, visit www.real-ale.org.uk

BEER FESTIVAL

Fri 6th-Sun 8th July

24 real ales from local breweries

Real draught cider

Barbecue food and restaurant

Fri: live music with Dr Busker

Sat afternoon: car boot sale

Sat eve: Timeless 5-piece band +

Jilly Vicious drag act

Sun: keyboard player, children's entertainer and bouncy castle

Tents welcome

Open Fri 5-11, Sat 12-11, Sun 12-10.30

THE CHEQUERS

High Street, Yelden

01933 356383

Lewes rebels win!

Customer power at the Lewes Arms in Lewes, Sussex, reported in our last issue, seems to have succeeded. Regulars boycotted the pub in protest at new owners Greene King's decision to withdraw Harveys Sussex Best Bitter and picketed the door outside to persuade others to join in. Greene King has finally caved in and re-introduced Harveys bitter, but the town's beer drinkers are watching carefully to make sure it stays that way. Direct action by customers does sometimes work!

30th Bedford festival

PLANNING is now well advanced for CAMRA's 30th Bedford Beer & Cider Festival, which will be held at the Corn Exchange in St Paul's Square from Wednesday 3rd to Saturday 6th October.

Local CAMRA members have run a festival in Bedford every autumn since 1978. All except one has been held in the Corn Exchange – the event had to migrate to Queen's Park in 1988 while its usual home was closed for extensive renovation.

100 real ales

This year's festival will be about the same size as last year, with more than 110 different real ales, 30 brands of real cider and perry, and a wide range of draught and bottled beers from Belgium and other European countries. Even though only a handful of Bedfordshire pubs sell real cider or perry, the growing popularity of these traditional fermented fruit drinks has earned "Cider" its regular place in the festival's title.

Although the local breweries will be featured as usual, the organisers hope to offer a wide selection of real ales from the north-west of England this year. Full beer and cider lists will be printed in the free souvenir programme given to visitors on arrival and posted during September on the branch website at www.northbedscamra.org.uk



Help required

The festival is run entirely by volunteers. The organisers – all unpaid enthusiasts themselves – need many more volunteers to staff the beer and cider bars, the glasses counter, work behind the scenes, or help set up and dismantle the bars and stillage.

All local CAMRA members and their friends are welcome – no experience is necessary! Although there is no pay, helpers get a generous ration of free beer or cider of their choice, and have the pleasure of helping run one of the most popular regular events in Bedford.

To volunteer, call Peter Argyle on 01234 822698, email festival@northbedscamra.org.uk, or download a form from the branch website.

The White Horse



Nigel, Sue and team welcome you to your friendly local

Varied events diary

Casque Mark accredited

Beautiful Beer Gold award

Charles Wells Pub of the Year 2007

Newnham Avenue, Bedford

01234 409306

www.whitehorsebedford.co.uk

Sponsor a beer cask!

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

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

Details at www.northbedscamra.org.uk

Fun trip to Potbelly Brewery

IN our winter issue, we carried a feature on the batch of new microbreweries that have sprung up in surrounding counties, of which two – Nobby’s and Potbelly – are in Kettering, Northants.

A busload of CAMRA members set off to explore the delights of Kettering one evening in April. Although Nobby’s, housed until then at the Alexandra Arms in Victoria Street, was moving to larger premises and sadly could not host a visit, Potbelly fortunately offered more than enough fun to make it a happy evening.

Dedicated to real ales

Housed in an old factory unit in a maze of narrow streets outside the town centre, the brewery has little to identify it except the neatly piled empty casks in the yard. But there was a warm welcome for us inside and a generous supply of the brewery’s real ales.

Founded by business partners Toni Hooper and Glenn Morris, Potbelly started brewing in February 2005. Like most micros, it is dedicated to brewing real ales and its 10 barrel (361 gallon) plant has produced an impressive range of distinct beers in two years.

Award winners

Readers who visited the Bedford Beer & Cider Festival last October may recall several Potbelly beers. Although the festival did not make any formal awards, the Potbelly beers were all excellent and one might well have won the vote if judged objectively against the rest of the range.

Several beers – **Beijing Black**, an unusually strong 4.4 per cent mild, and **Sunny Daze**, a 5.5 per cent golden strong bitter, have already won gold awards at CAMRA festivals.

Made in England

Other beers in the range include **Eastfield IPA**, a true India Pale Ale at 7.0 per cent abv, **Pigs Do Fly!!!**, a light hoppy golden ale with a more modest 4.4 per cent, **Aisling**, a 4 per cent pale bitter with a good balance of malt and hops,



Made in England, a 4.4 per cent medium “English ale” brewed for last year’s Leicester Beer Festival, and **Inner Daze**, a 4.6 per cent light premium bitter.

On the lighter side are **Streaky**, a straw-coloured 3.6 per cent refreshing bitter, **Best**, a medium coloured 3.5 per cent session bitter made with Goldings Hops, and **Ambrosia Mild**, a new, dark 4 per cent brew.

Dynamic business

With such a wide range of different beers in just over two years, Potbelly with its piggy imagery is certainly a dynamic business with ambition. Several ales originally brewed as festival specials have proved good enough to earn a regular place.

New ideas are constantly tested – we were invited to taste an experimental version of Pigs Do Fly with added ginger. Not everyone liked it, but it demonstrated the brewery’s commitment to innovation and new ideas.

Thanks

Potbelly gave us a highly enjoyable evening in Kettering. Many thanks to Toni and Glenn for their hospitality, and our very best wishes for the success of Potbelly Brewery.



*Pump clip images by Tamoko Design
01733 751286, www.tamoko-design.co.uk*

Pub of the Year

As reported in our last issue, CAMRA North Beds Branch has crowned the **Cricketers Arms**, Bedford, as its new Pub of the Year. A framed certificate was presented to licensees Paul and Stephanie at the end of March.

Although the Cricketers went forward to the county stage of the national competition, the Bedfordshire county award has gone once again to the **Engineers Arms**, Henlow, which came out on points above the Cricketers and B&T Brewery's re-launched **Globe** in Dunstable. Our congratulations to Kevin and Claire of the Engineers for running such a consistently fine pub.

The Engineers Arms now becomes Bedfordshire entry for the East Anglia regional round of the competition, which it has won once before in 2003. Its competitors from the other five counties of East Anglia are the Waggon & Horses at Milton (Cambs), the Swan at Little Totham (Essex), the Land of Liberty, Peace & Plenty at Heronsgate (Herts), the Royal Oak at Poringland (Norfolk) and the Rumburgh Buck at Rumburgh (Suffolk).

The regional winner goes on to further stages of the competition, with the final announcement of CAMRA's national Pub of the Year 2007 during Community Pubs Week next February. While the Engineers Arms is a previous East Anglia winner, the Swan at Little Totham managed to clinch the national title in 2005. We will have to wait to see how they all do this time, but they are all excellent pubs and well worth a visit if you are nearby.



Engineers Arms at Henlow again victorious as Pub of The Year Bedfordshire



Paul and Stephanie of the Cricketers Arms receive their North Beds POTY award from branch chairman John Martin. Photo by David Proctor..

New Beds pub guide

THE Bedfordshire CAMRA branches have been publishing real ale guides to the county since the mid 1970s. The last guide, a 96-page pocket-size softback book, was published as *Beer Inn Beds* in April 2003.

Although hard copy pub guides packed with photos and background information are often good sellers, they cannot easily keep up with a fast-moving pub trade and quickly get out of date. The Bedfordshire CAMRA branches will overcome this by publishing their next local guide on the internet.

Every Bedfordshire pub is being surveyed to confirm details, which can be updated regularly as pub businesses change. Unlike CAMRA's *Good Beer Guide* and its rivals, the new guide will include every pub and hotel bar open to the public in Bedfordshire and Luton, although more details will be given if the pub sells real ale.

The new online guide will be published later this year, when the surveys have been completed. Visitors to the website will be able to search by town, village or postcode, and download details to help plan individual pub visits or a local pub crawl – all free of charge. Watch this space!



Champion ciders

CAMRA's Champion Cider and Perry awards for 2007 were announced after an exhaustive contest at the Reading Beer & Cider Festival in May. Judges sampled more than 140 ciders and perries over two days before arriving at the final winners. The National Champions 2007 are:

■ **West Croft Janet's Jungle Juice Cider**

■ **Hartlands Perry**

The Harris family of Brent Knoll in Somerset have produced West Croft cider since 1994 and source their fruit locally. A new orchard planted in 1997 and maintained free from chemicals, supplies the apples for the award-winning Janet's Jungle Juice.

On being told that Janet's Jungle Juice Cider had won Gold, John Harris of West Croft Cider said: "I'm very pleased to have the quality and skills that go into our cider recognised nationally. I last won Gold in 1996 and am delighted to win again."

Hartland's of Tirley in Gloucestershire is a family-run business lasting three generations. It first won the Champion Perry Award in 2003. Owner Derek Hartland is admired by fellow producers for producing consistently high quality products from locally sourced fruit.

Mr Hartland was also overjoyed on being told that his perry had won Gold again, saying: "It is brilliant news to win such a prestigious award, especially when you consider the standards of the other competitors. I'd like to thank my family for their help and support".

CAMRA's cider campaigning chief Gillian Williams was also delighted. "Both West Croft and Hartland's are family firms with exciting, fresh real products. CAMRA is very pleased that the expertise and care of both producers has led to two well-deserved second gold awards."

Kevin Minchew's Perry from Tewkesbury, Gloucestershire, also won a highly commended award.



Cambridge Bitter 3.8% Gold Award

Champion Bitter of Britain 2006

Available all year round:



SEASONAL ALES

Thin Ice 4.7% Jan/Feb Old Wagg 4.0% March/April
Double Swan 4.5% May/June Mad Dog 4.4% July/Aug
Barleymead 4.8% Sept/Oct Old Black Shuck 4.5% Nov
Snickalmas 5.0% Wenceslas Winter Warmer 7.5% Dec

North Brink Brewery, Wisbech, Cambridgeshire Tel: 01945 583160

Take it to the top

A NEW survey by CAMRA has revealed that one in four pints in the UK are served less than 95% full. This is costing beer drinkers a staggering £481 million every year!

The campaign

A nationwide petition has been launched calling for the Government to end short measures as they promised a decade ago. For the first time in its 35 year history, CAMRA has taken advertisements in national newspapers to let consumers know how to make a stand against this unfair practice.

The CAMRA survey of local authorities' trading standards departments has revealed:

- A shocking 26.6 per cent of all pints served are over five per cent short
- The worst example found was 13 per cent under a full pint
- 76 per cent of pub goers want the Government to stick to its promise to ensure drinkers get a full pint

Beer drinkers lose £1.3 million every day by paying for a full pint but receiving less than 100 per cent liquid in the glass.

The promise

CAMRA is not criticising decent pub landlords who do their best to serve a fair pint in brim-measure glasses, but the rogue pubs and pub companies who exploit the law as it is. Setting a level playing field for everyone will ensure that a pint means 20 fluid ounces of liquid for everyone.

Labour made an election promise to legislate against short measure in 1997, but has signally failed to take action. CAMRA calculates that this has cost consumers £4.5 billion over the ten years.

CAMRA Chief Executive Mike Benner said: "It is a disgrace that up to a quarter of all pints served in the UK are less than 95 per cent liquid when the consumer is paying for a full pint every time. Labour promised to introduce legislation to end this unfair practice ten years ago and the continuing cost to beer drinkers from the Government's inaction has now run into billions of pounds."

The petition

CAMRA has set up a petition addressed to the Prime Minister, for consumers to call for legislation that a pint must not be less than 20 oz liquid.

You can complete the petition form online at www.takeittothetop.co.uk, or via the home page at www.camra.org.uk. Paper forms will also be available at CAMRA beer festivals throughout the UK.

Mike Benner added: "This is not just a problem that affects real ale drinkers. Lager drinkers and cider drinkers are being short changed too. It is time the Government met its promise and made sure pub goers get the full pint that they pay for every time. I would urge all beer drinkers that are fed up with being ripped off at the bar to sign CAMRA's *Take it to the top* petition and help us make a difference."

Sign the petition now!

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ENTIRE BAR AND JANITORIAL NEEDS**



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New CAMRA guides

Good Beer Guide

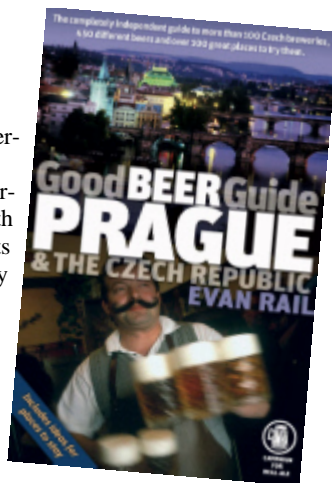
Prague & the Czech Republic

CAMRA's new guide to more than 100 Czech breweries, 450 different beers and over 100 great places to try them.

The Czech Republic has been called the world's greatest beer-drinking nation, consuming over 281 pints per head each year. With listings and ratings for virtually every Czech beer, this guide lets readers "go native", escape the crowds and discover some truly remarkable beers, many unknown outside their homeland.

- Take a full-body beer bath at the Chodovar brewery
- Enjoy a free, open-air rock concert at the Pelhrimov brewery
- Taste 30 independent Czech beers at a locals-only beer festival in Olomouc
- Stay in a medieval brewery-hotel in the hilltop town of Stramberk
- Drink the country's strongest beer, X-33, with 12.6% alcohol and the taste of a fine Sauternes
- Mix with the locals in a tram-theme pub, hidden away in a quiet corner of Prague
- Shop for more than 200 bottles of Czech beer at one of Prague's specialty beer shops
- Discover the difference between unpasteurised Pilsner Urquell (only available in the Czech Republic) and the exported version

Available from all good bookshops, or by mail order from CAMRA £12.99 (CAMRA members £10.99). Call 01727 967201 or visit www.camra.org.uk/books



Beer Lover's Guide to Cricket

Beer and cricket have gone hand in hand since the birth of the game. CAMRA's new guide explores this happy partnership.

Written by award-winning *Good Beer Guide* editor Roger Protz, it includes profiles of all the First Class County Grounds, the best real ale pubs near each ground and stories of memorable matches such as the Edgbaston test of 2006, Ian Botham's demolition of the Australians at Headingley in 1981 and a reminder of Douglas Jardine's infamous body line tour down under.

The guide also includes:

- Real ales served at pubs near the ground.
- Whether the pub serves food
- Public transport information
- Car Parks
- Accommodation

Inspiration for the book came from a visit to the Bat & Ball pub in Hambledon, Hants, famous as the birthplace of the modern game. A great all-rounder for all beer and cricket fans!

Available from all good bookshops or by mail order from CAMRA at £16.99 (CAMRA members £14.99). Call 01727 867201 or visit www.camra.org.uk/books





Branch diary

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

Thursday 14 June

A day out in Suffolk, visiting Old Cannon and Earl Soham breweries. Cost about £30 depending on level of support. Coach leaves Bedford Arms at 10.45 am. Call John Martin on 01234 768294 or email socials@northbedscamra.org.uk

Thursday 19 July

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

Branch AGM Thursday 12 July

At Wells & Young's Brewery, Havelock Street, Bedford, 8pm. Free buffet, all CAMRA branch members welcome. If you wish to attend this meeting, please call Bill Roffe on 01234 342287 or email secretary@northbedscamra.org.uk

Thursday 16 August

Branch summer evening event, 8pm, venue to be confirmed. Check August *What's Brewing* or branch website for details.

Thursday 30 August

Bedford Beer & Cider Festival committee meeting, 8pm at Bedford Arms, Bedford.

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

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.

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Slow Food

SLOW FOOD is a not-for profit organisation founded in 1989 to counteract fast food and fast life, the disappearance of local food traditions and people's dwindling interest in the food they eat, where it comes from, how it tastes and how our food choices affect the rest of the world.

Slow Food has more than 83,000 members in 107 countries around the world and 850 local groups or "convivia". Members come together to share the everyday joys of food and to celebrate our food heritage and traditions.

Slow Food believes that the food we eat should taste good, that it should be produced in a clean way that does not harm the environment; animal welfare or human health and that its producers should receive fair reward for their work.

Since 1989 Slow Food has grown to 851 convivia all over the world, saved 31 animal breeds, 81 fruit and vegetable varieties, 57 cheeses and 34 cured meats at risk of extinction. It has organised

thousands of dinners and taste workshops, and has published over 70 guides, cookbooks and 53 volumes of the international magazine Slow. It has tasted and catalogued some two million wines and thousands of cheeses, cured meats, breads and traditional pastries in its publications. It has created a network of 5,000 farmers, fishermen and food producers from 130 countries and founded an international University of Gastronomic Sciences.

Slow Food Bedford organises regular foodie events, many in local pubs. We met them at their *Taste, Munch & Glug* evening of food, wine and beer at the Devonshire Arms during Community Pubs Week in February. CAMRA members share their interest in promoting quality food and drink.

For further information about Slow Food, visit www.slowfood.com. To contact the Bedford convivium, call Sue Miller on 07753 780607, or email slowfoodbedford@ntlworld.com



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Your Details

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Forename(s)

Date of Birth (dd/mm/yyyy)

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Please state which CAMRA newsletter you found this form in?

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For 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.

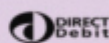
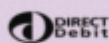
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Banks and Building Societies may not accept Direct Debit Instructions for some types of accounts.

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The Firkin

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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.

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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. The full copy including adverts is also posted online at www.northbedscamra.org.uk
- Simple artwork created at no extra cost, or supply your own
- Space in the next issue should be reserved by **1st August 2007**

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