

The firkin



CAMPAIGN
FOR
REAL ALE

Newsletter of CAMRA North Bedfordshire Branch
Spring 2007 Vol 32 No 1 FREE!

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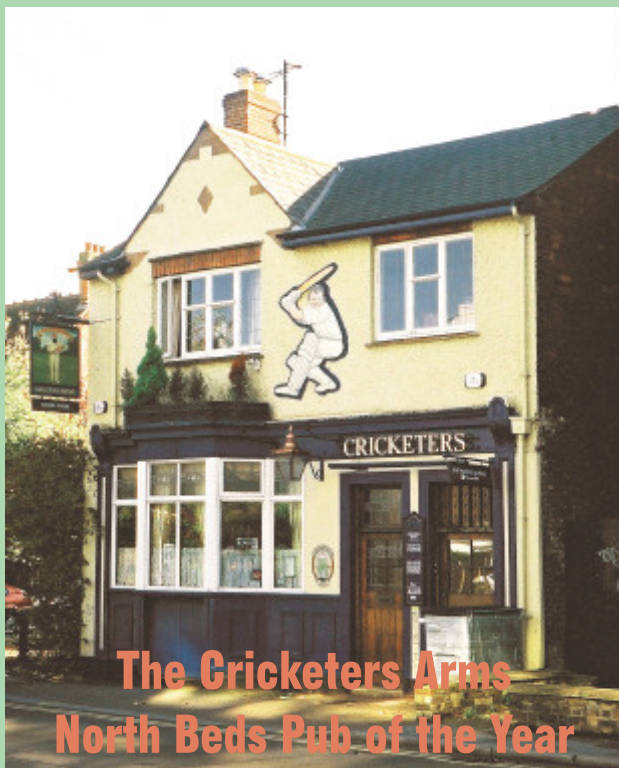
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The Campaign for Real Ale is a consumer organisation founded in 1971



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◆ BITTER ◆

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GOLD AWARD



Champion Bitter of Britain 2006

THE FIVE BELLS



PUB WITH DINING ROOMS

COOKING WITH KILROY

Thomas has gained an enviable wealth of experience having trained with renowned Chef Anton Mosimann to become the youngest Chef Patissier to be employed at Mosimann's Dining Club in Belgravia, as well as The Rit; Hotel & Waterloo House in Bermuda.

A trek to Mt Everest in 1998 led him to open a series of restaurants in Nepal including Kilroy's of Kathmandu & K-too! employing over seventy staff between them.

Today Thomas cooks Modern British Cuisine at The Five Bells, where he has quickly gained notoriety resulting in his nomination as a Local Food Hero on UKTV Network.



"The desserts we tasted were sensational and visually spectacular."

RESTAURANT REVIEW, NORTH BEDFORD LINK

"That was fantastic. This was a little reconnaissance and we will be back."

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Wells & Young's take Courage

BEDFORD brewer Wells & Young's has acquired the Courage beer brands from global giant Scottish & Newcastle. The deal will see W&Y acquire the brewing, marketing and sales rights for the Courage portfolio in a joint venture between the two companies.

Brewing moves to Bedford

The new company, Courage Brands Ltd, sees S&N retain a 17 per cent stake, with Wells & Young's holding the remainder. The portfolio includes cask Courage Best Bitter and Directors. Brewing will be transferred to Bedford in the next few months from the John Smith's brewery in Tadcaster, North Yorkshire

Wells & Young's master brewer Jim Robertson, who spent ten years at the Courage Horsel-down brewery, will be responsible for achieving a close flavour match.

Wells & Young's MD Nigel McNally said the brands had been neglected by S&N. "We have invested £2m in Young's and we're going to do the same for the Courage brands. To put it in perspective, £10,000 was invested in Courage last year."



Matching existing brands

Mr McNally added that he was keen to involve CAMRA in making sure that Bedford brewed Courage matched the existing brands.

John Holland, CAMRA's liaison officer in Tadcaster, gave a cautious welcome to the news. "Ideally, I would have preferred S&N had retained these brands, particularly the real ales, and while I don't see any matching problems, Directors has already moved several times. We want global brewers to have a bigger stake in real ale, not less. However, S&N has never supported these brands, so it can be argued that they can't be any worse off than now.

"I'm worried that S&N may be doing this as the start of a real clear-the-decks exercise so that other production can move to Tadcaster."

Half a million barrels

Annual production from Wells & Young's, itself formed by combining the brewing interests of Charles Wells and Young's last October, is now expected to reach half a million barrels later this year. The Courage brands will contribute

about 20 per cent of this. The Tadcaster brewery will concentrate on S&N's core brands, with John Smiths the only cask beer still brewed there.

We wait with interest to see whether Courage Best and Directors cask beers become available in local Charles Wells pubs.



Wells buys food pubs

THE PUB division of Charles Wells has announced the purchase of ten freehold pubs for £9m. The pubs, five of which include letting accommodation, were bought from Traditional Free houses, a pub company based in East London. They are described as "primarily food-led destination outlets".

Several of the ten are located along the M40 corridor, with others in Derbyshire, Leicestershire, Warwickshire and Staffordshire. Existing tenants will be encouraged to stay on by Charles Wells, which says the acquisition is "part of a seven-point strategy to support licensees in creating successful businesses."

The deal signals a move into new trading territory, according to Anthony Wallis, MD of the Charles Wells Pub Company, who says he is "keen to secure further pub groups or single sites as soon as possible".

The new acquisition brings the Company's pub estate to 260.



Pub News

Greyhound, Haynes

Welcome to Shaun Wilson, new manager at this friendly pub at the south-east edge of Haynes. The pub has been thoroughly refurbished with new soft furnishing, but still offers two separate bars and a conservatory for dining. New menus emphasise good, reasonably priced meals, but Greene King IPA and Abbot remain on the pumps. Play equipment is available outside for families in fine weather.

George & Dragon, Bedford

Welcome to Neil Cunningham, who took over this spacious pub in Mill Street last August.. The pub has a garden, conservatory and upstairs function room, and serves good pub food from noon to 9pm daily. The bar opens until midnight from Thursday to Saturday. Greene King IPA and selected guest beers are available on the bar.

Slaters Arms, Kempston Box End

New tenants took this prominent pub on the Box End Road just before we went to press. The kitchen has been refitted and the lounge refurbished. Greene King IPA and Abbot are still available, but expect new themed food nights, a healthy children's menu, barbecues in the warmer months and the first internet "wi-fi hotspot" that we have come across in a pub in this area. Check the website at www.slatersarms.co.uk



*The Harrows at Cotton End as it used to look
(see opposite page)*



New team at the refurbished Greyhound

Smiths Arms, Kempston

This popular corner local has done well since Sean and Jane White took over about a year ago. In the past few months, a range of guest beers including Young's Special, Young's Winter Warmer and Courage Directors has been available, in addition to the regular Wells Eagle IPA. The pub hosts quizzes, skittles, darts and pool, with teams playing in local leagues.

Bricklayers Arms, Fenlake Rd, Bedford

A belated welcome to landlord Harry Lilley, who took over this popular locals' pub almost a year ago. He serves Greene King IPA and Abbot on handpump.

New Inn, Tavistock Street, Bedford

When the former Corner House was refurbished and re-launched as the New Inn in 2005, its attractions sadly did not include real ale. We are delighted to report that a new handpump has now been fitted on the bar for Wells Eagle IPA. Well, we may lose some real ale outlets, but just occasionally we win one back!

Pheasant, Kimbolton Road, Bedford

Welcome to new landlords Richard & Cathy Armsden, although they are already well known in the area, having previously run the Flower Pot & Cross Keys in the town centre. Wells Eagle and Bombardier are available on the handpumps.

Make May mild

MAY 2007 has once again been designated Mild Month by CAMRA. This annual event is a celebration of Mild, a beer style applauded by those in the know but increasingly difficult to find at the bar.

CAMRA's 197 branches will be taking part in Mild Month and running events to promote mild in May. This may include a crawl around pubs in the local area that sell mild, promotion of mild at beer festivals, or persuading local pubs to stock mild and get drinkers to try a pint.

Although Wells & Young's stopped brewing mild many years ago and Greene King's tasty XX Dark is hard to find in Bedfordshire, B&T brews two – Shefford Dark and Black Dragon. One or both is usually available in B&T's three local pubs.

CAMRA press officer Owen Morris said: "The number of breweries rediscovering the delights of mild is increasing, but unfortunately it is still not widely available in pubs. Consumers who love mild, or even those who are simply curious to try it, should ask for it in their local pub. By letting licensees and breweries know that there is a demand for this flavoursome beer, we could see it make a comeback."

Mild Month pub promotion packs are available from CAMRA. They include leaflets and posters with space for details of events. To order a pack for your pub, call Gillian Dale on 01727 867201 or email gillian.dale@camra.org.uk

For further information, including a list of available milds and details of Mild Month promotions, visit www.camra.org.uk/mild



We lose one pub

The **Swan at Clapham** – the first pub on the High Street coming from Bedford – is the latest community pub to close. It is currently boarded up with barriers suggesting likely redevelopment of the site. With a garden running to the riverbank, it is sure to attract developers' attention.

Clapham still offers three pubs – the Horse & Groom on the south side of the High Street, the Star almost opposite on the north side and the Fox & Hounds at the other end of High Street, at the junction with Folly Lane.

... but may get one back!

The **Harrows at Cotton End**, a former Charles Wells pub on the main A600, was closed several years ago for redevelopment. Although much of the garden and land to the rear has made way for new housing, the building itself is up for sale again – for potential re-opening as a pub! Well, well, these things never cease to surprise us.

If you fancy buying it (asking price £225,000), refurbishing and opening the Harrows, call agent Sidney Phillips on 0981 250333.

The Royal George



Wells Eagle + Adnams Broadside
Guest ales changing weekly
Lunches daily + Sunday 12-2
Restaurant available for parties
Relaxed atmosphere
Patio and quiet beer garden
Car park at rear

Silver Street, Stevington
01234 822184

Spotlight on Russell Park

CAMRA members celebrated Community Pubs Week in February with a “traditional pub crawl” around the Russell Park area of Bedford. East of the town centre between the river and the main Goldington Road, this area of mainly mature terraced and semi-detached housing has become increasingly fashionable.

As parking close to most of the pubs can be difficult, we suggest visiting the area on foot, using bus route 4 from the town centre to Goldington via Castle Road.

Devonshire Arms, Dudley Street

A real community pub with a friendly welcome in the heart of Russell Park’s terraced streets, the “Devvy” has won awards for its summer floral baskets. There is a long front bar with a pool table and a smaller rear lounge suitable for groups needing a spot of quiet. The bar boasts four handpumps serving Wells Eagle IPA and Bombardier, and two guest beers, which were Young’s Special and Brains Bread of Heaven (a 4 per cent abv seasonal brewed to support Welsh Rugby), when we called in February.

Landlady Valerie Walters does not offer regular meals, although food is served for special events. She also has a broad wine list and sells wine by the jug. Customers are welcome to bring their own food, including fish and chips from the excellent shop in nearby Denmark Street. There is a new outdoor area in the neat rear garden, including a small pavilion ready for smokers to continue their bad habits after the national smok-



Theme evenings at the Devonshire Arms



A fine river view at the Embankment Hotel

ing ban starts in July. A conservatory along the side of the pub is used for an annual spring beer festival – see advert on page 13 for details.

The “Devvy” hosts occasional theme evenings, which have recently included food and drink presentations by Slow Food Bedford, part of an international real food campaign. Their next event here will probably be in April.

Embankment Hotel

Overlooking the River Great Ouse, this attractive Victorian hotel offers one of the best views in town. The lounge bar at the rear is open all day, but there are also tables outside at the front for patrons to enjoy the view in fine weather. Although the Embankment is a residential hotel with 20 en-suite bedrooms, the bar and restaurant are open to non-residents. The bar carries four handpumps offering Wells Eagle IPA, Bombardier and two guest beers.

As you would expect of a hotel, the restaurant offers a full à la carte menu, but light bites, salads, sandwiches and traditional pub meals are available in the lounge. There is a carvery with a choice of roasts on Sunday and you can even get afternoon tea with posh smoked salmon sandwiches.

Gordon Arms, Castle Road

Near the western end of the area, the Gordon Arms is another community pub with two bars and an outside drinking area that will undoubtedly be a refuge for determined smokers after July. Real Wells Eagle IPA and occasional guest beers are available on the bar.

This pub has another arm to its business, however, with **The Ent.shed**, a venue for live music, comedy evenings and private events. The two even share a front entrance. The Ent.shed can accommodate 100 people for dining and is available to hire for wedding receptions and parties. Call the pub on 01234 409297 for further details.

Unfortunately, the current tenants were about to leave when we called in February and we do not yet know what changes the new team may make after they take over. Watch our regular Pub News feature for an update.



You can hire the Ent.shed at the Gordon Arms

Fox & Hounds, Goldington Road

This large suburban pub with its bright yellow colour forms an unmistakable landmark on the main A428. It offers a number of drinking and dining areas, and a private room upstairs that can be hired for meetings and functions. The pool tables and large TV screens offering TV sport attract a mixed clientele. It can be a busy place in the evenings, with live bands performing fairly often and regular karaoke evenings.

Although real Greene King IPA should be available on the bar, there was sadly none available when we called during our Russell Park pub crawl in February. That was not good enough for CAMRA members, so we naturally moved straight on.



A brisk food trade at the White Horse

White Horse, Newnham Avenue

Another large suburban pub just off the A428, but the White Horse is much quieter and concentrates on providing good real ales and good value food. Following a thorough refurbishment a couple of years ago, a through lounge now runs on three sides of a square around a central bar. Wells Eagle IPA and Bombardier are available from the handpumps, with regularly changing guest beers – Young's Special was on when we visited on our February pub crawl.

The pub does a brisk trade in good value food, with a regular Sunday roast and occasional theme evenings. There are regular quiz nights on Tuesdays and Sundays, and live music on Monday evenings. The licensees and staff have won several brewery and local business awards for good customer service.

Landlord Nigel Anstead is running his first pub beer festival over the May Day holiday weekend this year. The fare will include locally produced beer and food. *More details in advert on page 10.*



Live bands and karaoke at the Fox & Hounds



Spring beer festivals

Leicester Beer Festival

Wed 14 to Sat 17 March at Charo-Tar Patidar Samaj, Bay St, off St Margarets Way (rail station 15 min). Open Wed 5-11, Thu-Sat 11-11. Admission Wed £2, Thu after 4pm £2, Fri after 4pm £3, Sat all day £2, CAMRA members free. Approx 180 beers including special brews from Leics and Rutland, over 30 real ciders, local wines and apple juice. Authentic curries plus English food with vegetarian choices. Souvenir festival glass £2 refundable. Daily Midland Main Line trains from Bedford, with free shuttle from rail station Thu/Fri 10.45 and 11.30 am only. For further details call 0116 2531604 or 0116 2711043.

www.camra.org.uk/leicester

Dunstable Beer Festival

Following a successful Luton Beer Festival in its new venue in February, CAMRA South Beds will not be running its smaller sister in Dunstable this spring. Its future is under review.

Hitchin Beer & Cider Festival

Fri 16 to Sat 17 March at Town Hall, Brand Street (bus 5 min, rail station 20 min). Organised in association with Hitchin Round Table. Open Fri 12-11, Sat 11-11. Admission £1 Fri before 3pm, otherwise £2.50, CAMRA and Round Table members free. Larger than ever with two halls and more seating. 50 real ales with a good range of cider, perry and foreign beers. Quiet festival – no music. Disabled access, souvenir glasses, hot and cold food, tombola and CAMRA shop. Stagecoach Mars bus services from Bedford and Shefford. www.nherts-camra.org.uk

London Drinker Beer & Cider Festival

Wed 28 to Fri 30 March at Camden Centre, Bidborough St, London (near St Pancras stn). Open Wed/Thu 12-3, 5-10.30, Fri 12-10.30, last entry 10pm. Admission Wed/Thu lunchtimes free, otherwise £3 (CAMRA members £1.50). Wide selection of UK beers, ciders and imported beers. Range of food is available at all sessions. www.camranorthlondon.org.uk/lbfb

Coventry Beer Festival

Fri 13 to Sat 14 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 at all times. Ample parking, coach parties welcome. More than 85 real ales including specials from local breweries, ciders and country wines. Souvenir glass £2 refundable. Range of food available at all sessions. www.uk.geocities.com/covcamra/index.html

34th Cambridge Beer Festival

Mon 21 to Sat 26 May, under canvas on Jesus Green (bus station 5 min). Open Mon-Fri 11-3, 5-10.30, Sat 11-10.30. Admission £2.50 after 5pm, CAMRA members free. Over 170 real ales including local brewery brands, 60 ciders and perries, large selection of foreign beers. Hot and cold food includes the famous cheese counter. Family day Saturday with children's entertainers, but no live music. Easy journey from Bedford by X5 Express bus. cambridge-camra.org.uk

2007 HITCHIN BEER & CIDER FESTIVAL
"The Best of Beers"

CIDER PERRY
TOMBOLA SHOP
HOT FOOD FOREIGN BEER

50 CASK BEERS
MORE BEER THAN EVER BEFORE!

HITCHIN TOWN HALL, BRAND STREET, HITCHIN

Fri 23rd March, 12-11 Sat 24th March, 11-11

ENTRY: £1 FRI LUNCH, £2.50 ALL OTHER TIMES
ROUND TABLE, CAMRA, EBCU & OAPs FREE

Check www.nherts-camra.org.uk for info
Organisers reserve the right to refuse admission

Non Smoking

Cricketers Arms is new Pub of the Year

EVERY year, CAMRA runs a Pub of the Year competition. Each of about 200 branches selects its own Pub of the Year, then the best is selected for each county, followed by selection of the best in each of 16 regions. The national winner is chosen from a shortlist of four and announced during Community Pubs Week in February.

Real ale enthusiasts

North Bedfordshire CAMRA has chosen the **Cricketers Arms** in Goldington Road, Bedford, as its new Pub of the Year.

The Cricketers Arms has been one of the most improved pubs in our branch area in the past few years, earning itself a place in the last two issues of CAMRA's national *Good Beer Guide*. Licensees Paul Davis and Stephanie Law are enthusiastic about offering high quality real ales and well deserve their new Pub of the Year award.

A framed certificate will be presented to Paul and Stephanie in a few weeks time. The pub will also compete against the branch winners from East and South Beds for the Bedfordshire Pub of the Year 2007 title and entry into the regional round of the competition.

Uncle Tom Cobley and all

CAMRA's National Pub of the Year 2006 is the **Tom Cobley Tavern** at Spreyton, Devon. The judges were bowled over by the warm welcome, fantastic service, wonderful home-cooked food and high quality real ales.

This 16th-century village inn has been run by Roger and Carol Cudlip for the last four years. In that time they have turned it into a classic community pub and a popular meeting place for local groups, sporting teams and residents.

Landlord Roger Cudlip said: "I am absolutely over the moon. This is the highest accolade CAMRA can give to a pub and we could not be more delighted that it has been given to us.

"Our success is down to the support of the villagers. We look after them and they look after us in exchange. The Tom Cobley Tavern is a proper rural community pub with a mixed clientele of young and old."

The other top pubs

The three other pubs on the final shortlist were the **Failford Inn** at Failford, Ayrshire, the **West Riding Refreshment Rooms** at Dewsbury Station in West Yorkshire and the **Dove Street Inn** at Ipswich.

As reported in our last issue, the Dove Street Inn saw off last year's North Beds and Bedfordshire Pub of the Year, the Stone Jug in Clophill, at the regional round of the competition.

For more information on the regional and national winners, visit www.camra.org.uk



Sign of the times?

IN THIS age of branding and corporate images we are used to the manufacturer's logo on every pack of widgets. But pubs have long been their own best advertisement, with the owner's identity confined to corporate colours and discreet lettering on the pub sign.

So what on earth persuaded Greene King to replace the traditional pictorial signs in front of its pubs with a boring, standardised corporate format? Does emphasising corporate style at the expense of the pub's individual identity really have commercial value?

Surely customers use a pub because they like the atmosphere, the beer, the food, the other patrons and the hard-working people who keep the place, not because it belongs to Greene King or any other pub chain.



Planning consent

Many people both inside and outside CAMRA are unhappy with these new signs and are asking whether anything can be done to prevent them. The legal position is this:

If the pub is a listed building and the sign is attached to it, then Listed Building Consent is needed to replace it. Planning consent is also required if the sign is illuminated.

Other pub signs elsewhere come under the Advertisement Consent Regulations. Where a sign on an existing free standing pole is replaced, the local council can serve notice under these regulations, especially in a sensitive conservation area. The action taken depends on council's policy and its attitude to enforcement.

Campaigning

CAMRA is taking up the issue with Greene King, but we can all do our bit to campaign against these boring new signs.

If one of them has been foisted on your local and you hate it, write to Greene King and ask for the old one back. Encourage other pub regulars to do the same. If enough people protest, Greene King may start worrying about customer loyalty and take notice. Send your views to:

Mr Rooney Anand, Chief Executive, Greene King plc, Westgate Brewery, Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk, IP33 1QT.

Removing our traditional pub signs in favour of boring corporate uniformity is a step too far. Don't let them do it!

The White Horse



**Local beer and food festival
Fri 4 to Mon 7 May**

Beer festival – 12 noon to 11pm

Local farmers market Sun & Mon

Local BBQ – Sunday 12 to 5pm

Local hog roast – Monday 12 to 5pm

Experience a flavour of the best in Beds.

**Newnham Avenue, Bedford
01234 409306**

Champion winter ales

SUPREME Champion Winter Beer of Britain 2007 is Ripper from the Green Jack Brewery in Lowestoft, Suffolk.

The title was awarded by a panel of judges in January, at CAMRA's National Winter Ales Festival in Manchester.

The 8.5 per cent abv barley wine is described as "A light coloured beer brewed as a homage to Belgian trappist ales, with sweet notes and a strong hoppy flavour."

Festival organiser Steve Prescott offered Green Jack warm congratulations: "It's great to see a barley wine win the competition yet again. I sincerely hope people will be inspired to try this fantastic beer."

On hearing the news, Green Jack's Head Brewer Tim Dunford said: "This is absolutely incredible. All my life it has been my ambition to win a national award for my beers and I can't believe it has happened."

Other winners

The Silver Champion award went to **Fuller's London Porter** and the Bronze to **Orkney Skullsplitter**. Congratulations to local brewer B&T of Shefford for winning a gold award in the Old Ales and Strong Milds category with **Black Dragon Mild**. The full category awards were:

Old Ales & Strong Milds

Gold – B&T Black Dragon Mild (Beds)
Silver – Orkney Dark Island (Orkney)
Bronze – Rudgate Ruby Mild (North Yorks)

Stouts & Porters

Gold – Fuller's London Porter (London)
Silver – Cairngorm Black Gold (Highlands)
Bronze – St Peter's Old Style Porter (Suffolk)

Barley Wines

Gold – Orkney Skullsplitter (Orkney)
Silver – Green Jack Ripper (Suffolk)
Bronze – Durham Benedictus (Co Durham)



Bedfordshire's leading stockists of bottled Real Ales

Over 100 available and many more obtainable to order

We have a wide range of Malt Whiskies and Exclusive Fine Wines

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Open every day**

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01234 751528**

parklandwinecompany@hotmail.com

The Greyhound



Tony and Iona would like to welcome you to The Greyhound in Haynes. Along with their manager Shaun, they aim to deliver good quality food and a good selection of wines and beers for a great dining experience.

Please call us to book a table or for any information on our menu.

**Northwood End, Haynes
01234 381239**

Rebellion in Lewes

WHILE we are used to Greene King pubs and beers in Bedfordshire, the brewery's activities in Sussex are creating waves of tsunami dimensions.

Some years ago, Greene King took over Beards, a former brewer whose pubs sold the much loved Harveys Sussex Best Bitter from Lewes. It was so popular locally that Greene King allowed its former Beards pubs to continue selling it after the take-over. Best Bitter won the UK Champion Best Bitter award in both 2005 and 2006.

Customers strike

In the eight years since taking over, Greene King has persuaded most former Beards licensees to replace Harveys with Greene King beers, but for customers at the **Lewes Arms** in the East Sussex

county town of Lewes, withdrawal of Harveys Best Bitter was just too much for the customers. They decided to go on strike!

The Lewes Arms has been a superb community local and a firm supporter of Harveys, whose beers have been sold there since the pub opened 200 years ago. Since Harveys was removed, the rebellious locals have boycotted the pub and have even run "vigils" outside to inform passing trade of their discontent with Greene King. The protest group, *Friends of the Lewes Arms*, believe trade at the pub has gone down drastically, hitting Greene King where it hurts most – in the till.

Greene King took the decision to stop selling Harveys at the pub despite a 1,200-signature customer petition and intervention by local MP Norman Baker and the town's mayor.

Absurd situation

Friends of the Lewes Arms say the situation is absurd. Greene King effectively challenged them to boycott their own pub and they have. Former regulars have moved on to other pubs and clubs, but much has been lost, including many charitable activities at the pub.

Although Greene King has certainly lost takings at the pub, this may not mean a lot to a business owning 2,500 pubs. However, the company has also suffered considerable damage to its reputation in Sussex.

Help the campaign

You can follow the local campaign, join the discussion forum and contact the organisers via the internet at www.lewesarms.org.uk

Support is welcome from outside the area and especially from other areas where Greene King is a strong beer supplier.



The Smiths Arms



Your friendly local corner pub

Fine real ales

Wells Eagle IPA + guest beers

Big screen Sky Sports

Skittles, pool and darts

Open all day from 12 noon

**15 Margetts Road, Kempston
01234 840355**

30th Bedford Beer & Cider Festival

Wed 3 to Sat 6 October 2007

Bedford Corn Exchange

Volunteer staff needed

Cyclops – the taste of ale

CAMRA and a group of breweries have launched a new initiative to simplify beer taste qualities. While one in three people would apparently try real ales if they could understand how they taste, Cyclops will remove the mystery.

Declining beer sales have brought beer consumers and brewers together to revitalise the market for real ale. Following the wine industry's success in making wine more accessible to consumers through simple tasting notes, Cyclops will use common language to explain how different real ales should look, smell and taste. Cyclops uses a 1 to 5 scale to help drinkers select beers by the level of sweetness and bitterness they prefer.

Simple language

The new scheme was devised by David Bremner of Everards Brewery in Leicester to help promote its beers to new real ale drinkers. Real ales are described on promotional material such as beer mats, posters, tasting cards and pump-clip crowners, using attractive imagery and simple language. Details can also be printed on the back of beer handpulls to remind bar staff what the each beer is like.

Tony Jerome, CAMRA's Senior Marketing Manager said: "Real ale is an incredibly complex drink with an enormous range of styles and tastes. Cyclops will demystify it and help drinkers find out what a beer will look, smell and taste like before they part with their cash at the bar.

"A great deal of skill and care goes into brewing real ale. A new and fascinating language has arisen from beer tasting. However, our research shows that people less familiar with real ale want easier terms to tell them what the beer tastes like. With Cyclops, younger men and women will quickly learn to appreciate the complex flavours of real ale. We are confident that they will soon become enthusiasts."

CAMRA has produced a Cyclops information leaflet for distribution to pubs across the country,

which it hopes will increase real ale sales for all the breweries participating in the scheme.

Licensees can visit a dedicated website at www.camra.org.uk/cyclops, select tasting notes for the beers on sale in their pubs and drop them into a template to produce posters or beer menus.

Sixteen brewers

The new scheme is called Cyclops after the one-eyed image used on promotional material. Sixteen real ale brewers have already signed up and will be using it to describe their beers.

They are: Caledonian, Camerons, Elgood's, Everards, Fuller's, Hall & Woodhouse (Badger), Hook Norton, Okells, Refresh UK (Hobgoblin), Robinson's, Stonehenge, Titanic, Wadworth, Wells & Young's, Woodforde's and Wolverhampton & Dudley (Banks's and Marston).



The Devonshire Arms

6th Annual Mini Beer Festival 2007

From 5.30 pm
Thur 17th May - Sun 20th May

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

32 Dudley Street, Bedford
01234 359329

A look back 25 years

THIS ISSUE of *Firkin* begins the 32nd annual volume since North Beds CAMRA started publishing a regular newsletter in 1976. In those days it was typed by hand and run off on a copier – it’s getting hard now to remember how well we managed without computers or desktop publishing. It didn’t look as pretty, but the campaigning issues were just as real as they are now.

So what was in the *Firkin* (then *Firkin Weekly*) 25 years ago, in the spring and summer of 1982?

Midsummer Madness

North Bedfordshire CAMRA was promoting a “Masquerade” type treasure hunt to run through the summer of 1982. The prize to the finder was a polypin (4½ gals) of real ale, kindly sponsored by Charles Wells.

“Treasure” might even then have been a rather grand description for an empty beer bottle, but its value lay in the telephone number on a slip of paper inside – to call and claim the prize. Clues to where it was buried were published in successive issues of *Firkin Weekly*.

As the newsletter put it: “This should prove all-round fun for all the family on a summer weekend. And if it means getting about North Bedfordshire visiting one or two real ale pubs, all the better.”

Our archives do not record who found the prize and where, but it got a lot of local press publicity and sure sounds like fun.

Jennings or Bust

A group of “intrepid explorers” left Bedfordshire for the wilds of the Lake District on a mammoth brewery visit. After installing themselves in various pubs in and around Cockermouth, the party set out to sample the delights of the town – Jennings, Jennings and more Jennings.

Following a good night’s sleep and hearty breakfast, they visited Jennings’ 19th century Castle Brewery in the shadow of the dilapidated castle overlooking the river. Despite being small, Jennings then had its own maltings, where the barley was laid out on the floor to germinate before being roasted into malt.

The brewery tour visit was followed by treks to various pubs in and around the Lakes to sample Theakstons, Hartleys and yet more Jennings. *Firkin Weekly* records that Jennings set a maximum price in all their tied houses – 48p a pint for mild and 50p for bitter [*long sigh – Ed*].

Unreal ales

“When is handpumped beer not real ale? – when it’s keg.” A major campaigning issue in 1982 was the misuse of traditional handpumps for keg beers – using the quality image associated with

real ale to sell an inferior product. A pub in Heath and Reach in South Bedfordshire was discovered using a phoney handpump to dispense keg Tetley Bitter, with a traditional cask beer pump clip to make the deception even worse.

Naming and shaming the offending pub, *Firkin Weekly* thundered: “Now, nobody’s saying that there were big signs advertising Tetley’s real ales, cask beers or whatever, but a handpump amongst other cask beers would give most drinkers the impression that here was another real ale.

“A handpump is the sign of cask beer, but there is no legislation that states they must serve only cask beer, nothing to protect the consumer from handpumps being used to dispense any old Tom, Dick or Harry. The sooner brewers and licensees are obliged to inform the drinker that a beer is both cask conditioned and free of extraneous CO₂ the better.”

That particular battle was effectively won by tighter consumer protection laws, following a protracted campaign by CAMRA. Thankfully, cases of phoney handpumps are now very rare.





Branch diary

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

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

Thursday 8 March

Minibus pub crawl in north-eastern border area, possibly including Little Staughton, Upper Dean, Melchbourne and Yelden. Bus leaves Wellington Arms, Bedford, at 7pm prompt. Contribution to transport £5. Call John Martin on 01234 342287 or email socials@northbedscamra.org.uk

Thursday 15 March

Branch business meeting at Bedford North End Club, corner Roff Avenue and Tavistock Street, 8pm prompt. All CAMRA members welcome.

Friday 27 April

Visit to Potbelly and Nobby's breweries in Kettering. Bus leaves Wellington Arms, Bedford, at 5 pm prompt. Charge £20 including fish and chip supper, payable in advance. Book by 22 April latest – call John Martin on 01234 342287 or email socials@northbedscamra.org.uk

Thursday 10 May

Pub crawl in Eaton Socon. Meet at Bedford bus station for 19.40 X5 Express, arriving Eaton Socon 20.04.

Thursday 17 May

Branch business meeting at 8pm prompt, check What's Brewing or branch website for venue. All CAMRA members welcome.

Thursday 14 June

Suffolk brewery tour, details to be advised. Probably an all-day outing, total cost about £40.

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 the 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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Join CAMRA today!

THE Campaign for Real Ale was founded in 1971 to campaign to keep real ale alive. Thirty five years later we have over 84,000 discerning 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.

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 nine out of ten pints served contain less than 100% liquid? Consumers lose

over a million pounds a day from short measure. CAMRA is lobbying the Government to change the law so you get what you pay for – a full 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 brought from the brewery or pub company to which they are tied. CAMRA is campaigning for the introduction of a guest beer law to give licensees the right to serve a guest beer of their choice and will improve the accessibility of real ale in British pubs.

Achievements

Our many successes over the years include:

- Helping change to law to allow pubs to open longer to suit the local community.
- Running a powerful campaign for small brewers' relief, which has helped small breweries to invest money 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, which welcomed over 66,000 visitors this year.
- 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 successes, visit www.camra.org.uk

Join CAMRA today!

If you care about these issues and would like to help make a difference, join CAMRA today! For less than the price of a pint a month, you can help over 84,000 other members across Britain campaign for quality real ale and good pubs.

To join CAMRA, use the form opposite or visit www.camra.org.uk/joinus



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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.

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



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Join 84,000 members of CAMRA and help fight for Britain's beer heritage

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Contact us

Chairman

John Martin – 01234 768294
chairman@northbedscamra.org.uk

Secretary

Bill Roffe – 01234 342287
secretary@northbedscamra.org.uk

Treasurer

Mike Benyon
treasurer@northbedscamra.org.uk

Membership and Pubs

Tony Burke – 01234 273676
membership@northbedscamra.org.uk

Newsletter and festival

Peter Argyle – 01234 822698
firkin@northbedscamra.org.uk

Publicity

Denise Troughton
publicity@northbedscamra.org.uk

Website

Peter Lamswood
admin@northbedscamra.org.uk

The Firkin

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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
Tel 01234 822698
firkin@northbedscamra.org.uk

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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 May 2007**

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Jeffrey Hudson Bitter
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