

# The Firkkin



CAMPAIGN  
FOR  
REAL ALE

FREE

Newsletter of CAMRA North Bedfordshire Branch

Vol 35 No 1

SPRING 2010

## Wellington Arms is North Beds CAMRA's Pub of the Year



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*BRANCH DIARY*

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# Chairman's Corner



I would like to take this opportunity on behalf of the branch to thank Peter Argyle for all the hard work he has put into being editor of *The Firkin* and previously *The Firkin Weakly* over the past nineteen years. Peter has brought our magazine through many changes for the better, up to the latest in full colour. At the same time I wish Fytton Rowland all the best as new editor. He introduces himself on page 5.

The bad weather around Christmas and the start of January clashed with the delivery of the winter edition of *The Firkin* and I can only apologise to our readers for any delays in them reaching your pubs. At the same time I must thank all those who struggled round delivering the magazines in what must be the worst weather conditions for many years.

Our Christmas Party in December at the White Horse in Newnham Avenue, Bedford, was well attended by our members, and thanks are due to Nigel and his staff for another great evening

bringing together old friends and a few new faces. In January, we visited the rural pubs to the South of our area and in February we made a trip around the rural pubs to the West and North of our area. We are limited on these excursions not only by the size of the minibus and but also by the number that the pubs visited can handle. So book your place early! Also in January we had a walking tour around the pubs in Bedford, and this again was well attended and a good time was had by all.

In January I attended a day at the Greene King Brewery in Bury St Edmunds. This proved to be a very interesting day. We were given an in-depth tour of the brewery, visiting many areas not normally visited by visitors. This was followed by a talk on the future of brewing in Britain based on *The Cask Report 2009-2010* (reviewed in our last issue). Most of the questions asked were answered in a very straightforward and honest way.

Please join CAMRA and help the fight against pub closures and for more real ale!

**Don Allan** Branch Chairman



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~ Biddenham ~

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# Wellie wins POTY 2009



**C**AMRA's North Bedfordshire Pub of the Year 2010 is the Wellington Arms in Wellington Street, Bedford. Better known to regulars as the "Wellie", the pub was North Beds' first Pub of Year in 2001 and continued to win the annual award for the following four years, with a sixth branch title in 2008. It went on to win the Bedfordshire county title in 2001 and 2008, and the East Anglia title in 2001, but has never made it to the final shortlist for CAMRA's national Pub of the Year award.

Once a rather run-down street-corner pub, the Wellie was sold by Charles Wells in the early 1990s to regional pub company Burlison Inns, which has leased it to brewers B&T of Shefford since 1998. Although strictly tied to B&T, the pub operates more like a free house with 14 handpumps offering guest real ales from regional and micro-breweries throughout the country, as well as regular beers from B&T and two brands of real cider or perry. In the 12 years since its re-launch, it has become the destination real ale pub for local CAMRA members and visitors to the town, and a regular entry in CAMRA's annual Good Beer Guide.

Managers Royston Beer and Lesley Griffin have worked hard to earn the Wellington Arms its seventh Pub of the Year award. The pub is open daily from 12 noon to 11pm (10.30pm on Sunday) and can be busy with real ale lovers, especially on Friday and Saturday. Food is limited to filled rolls at lunchtime on Monday to Saturday, so don't expect a banquet other than in the wide range of often rare beers in the row of handpumps that fill the bar. A range of speciality draught and bottled beers from Belgium, Germany, the Czech Republic

and other countries is also available.

The pub runs its own beer festival twice a year, usually in the spring and autumn, at which there even more real ales are on offer. However, with the range of beers available every week you could be forgiven for thinking that there is a permanent festival on!

The branch will present a framed certificate to Royston and Lesley in a few weeks' time.

## County and regional winners

Meanwhile, CAMRA's South Beds Branch has chosen another of B&T's pubs, the **Globe at Dunstable**, as its branch Pub of the Year - for the fourth consecutive year. When East Beds Branch has chosen its own new Pub of the Year, the three branch winners will go head to head for CAMRA's Bedfordshire title 2010. The county winner will then compete with the best from around the region for the East Anglia Pub of the Year title.



Last year the **Globe at Dunstable** won the Bedfordshire county title, but the East Anglia title was won by the **Wheatsheaf at Writtle**, near Chelmsford, Essex. Sadly, no East Anglian pub made it to the national shortlist - the final group of four were the **Royal Oak Inn at Wantage**, Oxfordshire, the **Crown Hotel at Worthington**, Greater Manchester, the **Royal Oak at Friday Street**, West Sussex, and the **Kelham Island Tavern in Sheffield**. The winner for 2009 was announced in mid-February, and it was the **Kelham Island Tavern** - retaining the title for a second consecutive year, the first time this has happened in CAMRA's history.



## Your new Firkin editor...

**E**agle-eyed regular readers of *The Firkin* may have noticed a new editor's name in the Winter 2009-10 issue. Now I'd like to introduce myself properly. I'm Fytton Rowland, and I have lived in Bedford for ten years. In an earlier life I worked in publishing as an editor, which may qualify me for this post! For about twenty years until I retired two years ago I was an academic at Loughborough University. My part-time job now is a tour guide at Wells & Young's brewery, where our chairman, Don Allan, is one of my colleagues. Don quickly convinced me that it was time I joined CAMRA. At my first Branch AGM, Peter Argyle said he wanted to stand down as editor and I was silly enough to say I'd be prepared to give a little help on *The Firkin*. And here I am... Peter and I both read the same subject at the same university many years ago, but he was a couple of years before me, so he has handed over to a younger man - just!

My interest in real ale extends to real food, and I am Secretary of the Bedford group of Taste Real Food. I am also a member of the Zero Carbon Castle Group. Logically, I am also a public transport enthusiast. So a new enterprise in Yorkshire, called Beer n Buses, intrigues me. It offers eight-day package holidays combining visits to the scenic parts of Yorkshire and the Northeast with plenty of real-ale opportunities, with the travelling being on buses and trains. The advantages in terms of breathalysers are obvious! For details, see <http://www.BeerandBuses.co.uk>

Finally - please send me some *Letters to the Editor* for publication! My e-mail address is [fyttton@googlemail.com](mailto:fytton@googlemail.com) and the postal address is Fytton Rowland, 73 Dudley Street, Bedford MK40 3TA.

## Great British Beer Festival advance tickets now available!

Advance tickets for the GBBF at Earls Court, London, on 3-7 August 2010 are now available at prices that offer a discount on the door prices. They are priced at £6 for CAMRA members or £8 for non-members for one-day tickets, and £20 for CAMRA members or £23 for non-members for the full five-day ticket. Phone 0844 412 4640 for more details and to book.

## 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 relevant features for publication. Views expressed here may not be those of the Editor, the Campaign for Real Ale, or its North Bedfordshire Branch.

Items for publication in the next issue should reach the Editor by the date at the foot of this page.

Edited by Fytton Rowland

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## Trading Standards

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## Contact us

e-mail officers via our website  
[www.northbedscamra.org.uk](http://www.northbedscamra.org.uk)

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# Pub News

## The Guinea, Moggerhanger

The new licensee Jeff Gunn is on a tenancy. The opening hours are: Sun 1000-2300, Mon-Thu 1200-2300, Fri 1200-2400, Sat 1000-2400. The public bar is no longer in use.

## Carpenters Arms, Cranfield

Welcome to James Shanks who took over The Carps in December 2009 with help from his wife Paula and sons Ashley and Ryan. two handpumps one serving Eagle IPA and the other with a weekly guest ale. Serving classic Pub food freshly cooked to order at lunch times and in the evening seven days a week with on Sunday's a roast dinner. James is hoping when the weather gets a bit better to transform the garden and Vine Patio ready for summer and is hoping to stage a beer festival at the May Bank Holiday.



Three Tuns, Biddenham

## Three Tuns, Biddenham

Welcome to Ian and Manju Jones, new landlords at this popular village pub just off the A4280 west of Bedford. Ian is a CAMRA member and plans to expand the range of real ales. Greene King IPA and Abbot are always available, with XX Mild and Morland Original under the guest handpumps when we called recently. Ian hopes to make XX a regular as soon as he can get another handpump fitted. The food menu offers a range of home-cooked meals, with fresh fish and South Asian dishes a speciality. The pub has an extensive and attractive garden with a secure children's play area. A shelter in the garden will also host regular real ale festivals, with the first taking place over Easter weekend, opening on Good Friday, 2nd April. Call 01234 354847 or visit [www.threetunsbiddenham.com](http://www.threetunsbiddenham.com)

## Bankers Draft, High Street, Bedford

Some unusual guest beers have appeared at this Wetherspoon's Lloyds No 1 pub in the town centre, not always from Wetherspoons' published bi-monthly list. On recent visits we have found Summerskills Guzzale, Bath Dark Hare and White Park Bedford Best from our own local micro-brewery in Cranfield.

## Correction

Apologies both to the campaigners and to our readers for locating the **White Horse** in the wrong village in the *Local pub campaigns* feature in our last issue. While the Five Bells campaign is in Riseley, the White Horse is of course in **Keysoe**.



Carpenters Arms, Cranfield

## Bell, Cotton End

Lorraine Arnold has taken over as licensee of the Bell and currently has two hand pumps serving cask ales on the recent visit these were London Pride and Shepherd Neame Master Brew. This is a traditional small thatched, one bar pub with an interesting collection of airship pictures.

## Knife & Cleaver, Houghton Conquest

The new landlord Steve Georgiou intends to keep the Knife and Cleaver as a quality restaurant and hotel introducing a Greek and continental influence to its menus. At present it has one hand pump serving real ale.

Debbie and Tony  
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# Spring Beer Festivals

### St Neots Booze on the Ouse Beer Festival

Thu 18 to Sat 20 March at the Priory Centre, Priory Lane, PE19 2BH. Open Thu 5-10.45, Fri/Sat 12-10.45, admission Thu/Fri before 7pm £1, Thu eve £2, Fri eve £3, Sat £1 all day, CAMRA members free all sessions. More than 50 cask beers, foreign beers, real cider, souvenir glass, tombola, CAMRA shop. Hot and cold food, free soft drinks for drivers. Regular X5 express buses from Bedford.  
[www.huntscamra.org.uk/festivals](http://www.huntscamra.org.uk/festivals)

### East Anglian Beer Festival

Wed 21 to Sat 24 April at the Corn Exchange, Bury St Edmunds  
 Banbury Beer Festival 2010 Thursday 6th - Saturday 8th May. Details not yet available.  
[www.camra.org.uk/festivals](http://www.camra.org.uk/festivals)

### Banbury Beer Festival

Thu 6 to Sat 8 May at the TA Centre, Oxford Road

OX16 9AN. Admission Thu 5-11 (£1), Fri 12-12 (£2, after 5pm £4), Sat 11-11 (£3, after 5pm £1), CAMRA members free.  
[www.banburybeerfest.org.uk](http://www.banburybeerfest.org.uk)


### 37th Cambridge Beer Festival

Mon 17 to Sat 22 May, under canvas on Jesus Green (bus stn 5 min). Opening hours and admission charges to be confirmed. More than 200 real ales plus corder, English wines and foreign beers. Traditional hot and cold food. Safe footwear essential. Easy journey from Bedford by X5 bus.  
[www.cambridge-camra.org.uk](http://www.cambridge-camra.org.uk)

### Northamptonshire Beer Festival

Thu 27 to Sat 29 May at Delapré Abbey, Northampton. Organised jointly by CAMRA Northants and the Friends of Delapré Abbey.  
[www.northantscamra.org.uk](http://www.northantscamra.org.uk) Bus P1 from Bedford.

# ST NEOTS BEER FESTIVAL



## Booze on the Ouse

**18-20 March 2010**

**Over 50 real ales**      **Foreign beer**  
**Real cider & perry**      **Food & soft drinks**

VENUE Priory Centre, Priory Lane, St Neots, PE19 2BH  
 OPENING TIMES  
 Thu 5pm-10.45pm, Fri 12 noon-10.45pm, Sat 12 noon-10.45pm  
 Families welcome until 8pm

ADMISSION (including programme)  
 Before 7pm: £1  
 After 7pm: £2 Thu, £3 Fri, £1 Sat.  
 CAMRA members free admission all sessions

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

# The White Horse



**Local beer and food festival**  
**Fri 30th April to Mon 3rd May 2010**  
**Beer Festival – Noon to 11pm**  
**Local Farmers Fayre Sat, Sun & Mon**  
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# Champion Beer Of East Anglia: One of ours from North Beds!

Each year all the CAMRA branches in the East Anglia region submit their favourite beers in eleven different categories. B&T Brewery, generally known by its previous name of Banks & Taylor, has been brewing now in its architecturally unremarkable site in Shefford since 1982. A wide range of distinctive beers is produced, and it is pleasing to report that one of their longest established brews, SOD (Shefford Old Dark) won the title of CAMRA Champion beer of East Anglia at the recent Harwich Beer Festival. Shefford Old Dark (SOD) – A.B.V 5% – is a rich, fruity flavoured dark beer with caramel flavours, brewed using Pearl pale malt, Crystal malt, Caramel and Cascade hops.

The top three, with their categories, were: 1st. B&T Shefford Old Dark (Old Ale); 2nd. Milton Nero (Stout); 3rd. Elgood's Cambridge Bitter (Bitter). The other category winners were: Greene King XX Mild (Mild); Milton Pegasus (Best Bitter); Woodforde's Admiral's Revenge (Strong Bitter); Farmer's Puck's Folly (Golden Ales); Fox Grizzly Beer (Speciality Beer); Red Squirrel London Porter (Porter); Adnams Tally Ho! (Barley Wine); Pitfield 1850 London Porter (Bottled Ale).



Whilst B&T beers have won many awards at both CAMRA and industry competitions over the years, this one is particularly important as it will open the entry door to the competition for Champion Beer of Britain at the Great British Beer Festival in August 2010. Someone has to win, so why not B&T? That would indeed be a boost for brewing in Bedfordshire.

There is also news on the pub front where the number of B&T tied houses is gradually increasing. Initially there was The Brewery Tap in Shefford, then the Wellington Arms in Bedford, CAMRA's 2010 North Beds Pub of the Year. Then came the Globe in Dunstable, CAMRA's 2010 South Beds Pub of the Year, followed by the Elm Tree in Cambridge. The latter remains owned by Charles Wells but is let free of tie to B&T, subject to there always being a Wells & Young's beer on the bar. Now there is news

of a fifth pub: The Albion in Amptill, which was once owned by Morris's Amptill brewery back in the 1920s. A succession of ownership changes had seen the pub slump into a pub-chain nonentity, followed by closure late last year. Now it has been purchased by Everards, and let to B&T under Everards' excellent 'Project William' scheme. It is also free of tie, subject to an Everards' beer being on the bar. Some refurbishment of the pub is required, and it is expected to re-open under the B&T banner around Easter.

## Beer without Barley

The Winter 2009 issue of the Milton Keynes & North Bucks CAMRA newsletter, Beer Moos, carried an article by Dave Harris with this title, and this is a summary of it. Dave was diagnosed as coeliac four years ago, which means he is intolerant of gluten, a protein found in wheat and barley, and should not ingest anything made from those grains – disastrous for a beer lover. After a long search, he has found the seemingly impossible – some gluten-free beers. In case anyone in our area has the same problem, I'm passing on some of the names he found.

The Jerusalem Tavern in Britton Street, Clerkenwell, London EC1M 5NA, sells gluten-free beer – 'St Peter's G-Free' (4.2% a.b.v.) from St Peter's Brewery, Bungay, Suffolk, which is made from sorghum. This is a wheat-beer style beer made with Amarillo hops from the USA.

At the GBBF last August, the Unusual Beers Bar featured two products from the Hambleton Brewery – 'GFA Gluten-Free Ale' (4.8% a.b.v.), fruity, hoppy and slightly sweet, and 'GFB Gluten-Free Lager', less sweet, less hoppy, and lighter in colour than GFA. Wold Top brewery near Scarborough in Yorkshire produces 'Against the Grain' (4.5% a.b.v.), a full-flavoured bitter with refreshing bitterness: mostly brewed from maize, it does have some malt in it, but the gluten level is low enough for coeliacs. Greens brew six gluten-free beers, though one of them is rather elusive and all of them are expensive; the main supermarket chains do sometimes stock them, though. 'Discovery' (6% a.b.v.) is a porter, dark, strong and dry, and is Dave's favourite from the range; other Greens' ales are 'Endeavour' (6% a.b.v.) and Herald (4% a.b.v.), while their lagers are 'Pioneer' (5% a.b.v.) and 'Trailblazer' (4% a.b.v.)



The Chequers is situated in Hall End, a cluster of houses separated by fields from the rest of Wootton. Originally a farmhouse, it became a pub early in the twentieth century, and it was later bought by the brewer Charles Wells. It was a thriving business when I arrived in the area in the late 1960s but by the end of the century things were rather different. Trade gradually declined over the last fifteen years or so. One of the results of the poor trading was a lack of investment, and the place began to look seriously neglected. In the spring of 2008 the last tenants gave in their notice and departed. No-one wanted to take it on. I suspect the available trading figures put people off. In May 2009 Wells decided to close the pub and put it with its adjoining field up for sale.

## The Chequers, Wootton – Sometimes a pub closure is for the better

As usual in these circumstances, lots of people who had not used the pub for ages were very unhappy about the closure. Some even formed a group to see whether they could buy the property. However, from the start it appeared that there was some serious interest, and there were lots of rumours. By September the sale was in the hands of the solicitors with an expected completion in October and that the purchasers were intending to retain the licence. Once the sale went through the pub, now a free house, was leased it to a couple with previous experience of the trade. A considerable amount of remedial building work has been done and new furnishings have been installed throughout. One room now functions as the restaurant whilst the other sells a good range of drinks including three ales on draught. The pub re-opened on 15th January with much approval from the local populace.

*John Martin*

## CAMRA Champion Winter Beer of Britain 2010 – National Winter Ales Festival, Manchester

### Elland 1872 Porter is a timeless classic!

1872 Porter from the Elland Brewery, West Yorkshire, has today been crowned the Supreme Champion Winter Beer of Britain 2010 at the National Winter Ales Festival in Manchester. The 6.5% a.b.v. porter is described in the Good Beer Guide as a 'creamy, full-flavoured porter, with rich liquorice flavours with a hint of chocolate from roast malt, and a soft but satisfying aftertaste of bittersweet roast and malt.'

Graham Donning, National Winter Ales Festival organiser, said 'A timeless classic well worthy of this accolade. It has won many awards at CAMRA beer festivals in the past, and it's great to see this small brewer achieving such success.'

Winning today is especially sweet for Dave

Sanders, Head Brewer at Elland, who said:

'It absolutely brilliant; we came second last year and I am thrilled to finish on top in 2010. We originally started brewing this beer at the West Yorkshire brewery, so there's quite a history behind this Victorian recipe.'

In the Overall awards, Silver went to Breconshire's Ramblers Ruin, whilst the Bronze medal went to Acorn's Gorlovka Imperial Stout. The Champion Winter Beer of Britain competition is sponsored by JD Wetherspoon. Drinkers at the National Winter Ales Festival were able to sample the winning brews, as well as a formidable selection of over 200 different beers, including a range of ciders and perries. Elland's 1872 Porter will now enter into the final of the Champion Beer of Britain competition at the Great British Beer Festival, Earls Court, London, in August 2010.





**WHATEVER YOU DO,  
TAKE PRIDE.**

# Three Threads; or, the Great Meux Explosion

In the eighteenth century the favourite tipple was 'three threads', a mixture of unhopped sweet ale, a lighter hopped beer and 'tuppenny', a strong beer costing two old pence a quart. Three threads (a.k.a. 'entire butt') was a pain for bar staff, as they had to go to three barrels to serve each pint. In 1722 Ralph Harwood of the Bell Brewery in Shoreditch replicated the strength and taste of the mix in one cask. This became accepted and was copied by the other big brewers in the capital. Its success spread, especially among the market porters, and it was soon named after them, 'porter'.

Porter was a robust, substantial, dark brown beer with a creamy head. It was very heavily hopped, which meant it could be kept all year and the imbibers didn't have to put up with substandard rubbish between the optimal brewing times of October and March. Due to its increased stability, the landlords loved it. It was very strong, with an ABV of about 7%, much stronger than today's premium beers.

There were various kinds of porter and the blackest and strongest were known as 'extra stout porters'. This name soon contracted to simply 'stout'. An Irish brewer heard about the drink's popularity and he came to London to get the recipe. He took the recipe home to his Dublin brewery and started to make it. His name was Arthur Guinness.

Porter was a great improvement on previous drinks. Its darker, dryer taste was achieved by deeply roasting the malt and mashing the mixture at a much higher temperature than used previously. To be commercially viable, much larger vessels were made and only the largest London brewers had the assets to afford them. In 1760, Samuel Whitbread's Chiswell Street Brewery built a Porter Tun room which was second in size only to Westminster Hall, and held a massive beer vat. Other big brewers then started to compete. Henry

Thrale's porter vat upon completion could hold a hundred people sitting down to dine. The Meux brewery was not to be outdone and built one sixty feet wide by twenty-three feet high, and had two hundred people dining inside. They then topped the competition by building a second that was only slightly smaller.

Alas, in 1814 the Meux's Horse Shoe Brewery tragedy occurred. The wooden brewery vat, which stood at the junction of Oxford Street and Tottenham Court Road, holding over a million pints of porter, developed a crack in one of its massive iron hoops. A workman noticed it, but he thought it wouldn't be a problem as each hoop weighed about a quarter of a ton and there were twenty-nine of them. A few hours later there was an explosion so loud that it was heard five miles away. The vat had burst and the force exploded the second vat. The one-foot thick, twenty-five foot high brewery walls had no chance, and the surrounding streets were awash with beer.

Many people drowned in the initial wave, and others were crushed in the stampede to drink from the gutters, which in turn hampered rescuers trying to save those trapped in the rubble. The dead bodies were taken to a house to be identified by their grieving relatives. Unfortunately they were accompanied by sightseers who were paying the house-owner to view the cadavers. There were so many people there that the floor collapsed under their weight, and this killed many more. The survivors in hospital reeked of beer, and this caused other patients to riot because they thought that they were not being given alcohol while the newcomers were.

*Peter Hull*



# Bedford walkabout

Not all branch socials mean hopping from one rural pub to another. Sometimes we just use our legs and work off the beer with a bit of exercise. At the end of January, a group of members strolled from Bedford town centre to Russell Park, calling at six pubs on the way.

## Bedford Arms, Bromham Road

What had been a run-down, town-centre drinking shop was transformed and re-opened in 2007 by Charles Wells as a smart new Speciality Beer House only 200m from the bus station. The pub is now run by Laura and Tom, with help from bar manager Bev. Four regular real ales from Wells and Young's are always available, plus about five guest beers usually from different breweries. Bar meals are available daily, with a roast on Sunday.

## Bear, High Street

This is the now only surviving traditional pub in the High Street, with a busy back bar for drinkers and a games room with pool at the front. Greene King IPA and a guest beer are always available. There is regular live music in the evening, but you will find a good atmosphere and a mixed clientele at weekends. The outside drinking area to the rear is surprisingly large for such a central location.

## Cricketers Arms, Goldington Road

This friendly, one-bar pub has earned quite a following with regular ale drinkers as well as with rugby fans from the nearby Bedford Blues ground. The pub is not normally open at lunchtime, except on Saturdays when there is a rugby match and on Saturday or Sunday for Six Nations games on TV. Licensees Paul and Stephanie offer Adnams Bitter and a choice of guest beers, often including one from Paul's native Wales.

## Gordon Arms, Castle Road

This had been a scruffy, downmarket place when Charles Wells transformed it into a smart venue nearly two years ago. Experienced local landlords Ray and Ingrid have made an attractive community pub with a bright, friendly atmosphere. A varied menu is served at lunch, evening, and weekend brunch times. The Ent Shed performance venue next door hosts live music and comedy acts, and is available to hire for private functions.

Four regular Wells & Young's beers are available, plus a guest ale changing each week.

## Devonshire Arms, Dudley Street

The "Devvie" is a friendly, two-bar local in a residential side street off Castle Road. Landlady Val worked for the Wells brewery for many years. Wells Eagle IPA, sometimes Bombardier and normally one or two guest beers are available, with wines also available by the jug. The pub opens evenings only from Monday to Thursday. The pleasant garden includes a grape vine, with separate spaces for smokers and non-smokers. The annual beer festival in May is popular with locals and customers from further away.

## White Horse, Newnham Avenue

This large suburban pub near the traffic lights on Goldington Road was a downmarket pub transformed by Charles Wells into a fine venue with a warm welcome. Award-winning landlords Nigel and Sue have helped create a highly successful pub with good beer and food, and successful at charity fund-raising. Wells Eagle IPA, Bombardier and two guest beers are always available, with quiz nights on Sunday and Tuesday, and an "open-mike" night on Monday. The pub's two annual beer and food festivals in May and November attract support from beyond the local area. Find more details on these and all other pubs in Bedfordshire in CAMRA's online pub guide at [www.bedspubs.co.uk](http://www.bedspubs.co.uk)



Bedford Arms, Bromham Rd

# OFT re-opens inquiry into UK pubs market

CAMRA has reached agreement with the Office of Fair Trading (OFT) to stay its appeal to the Competition Appeal Tribunal challenging the OFT's initial response to CAMRA's super-complaint in October 2009. CAMRA's appeal is now stayed until Sunday August 1st 2010 to enable the OFT to consider further evidence of anti-competitive behaviour by the large pub owning companies. The OFT will now conduct an open public consultation before reaching a final decision.

CAMRA's super-complaint argued that anti-competitive practices are inflating pub beer prices by around 50 pence a pint, restricting consumer choice and leading to chronic underinvestment in the nation's pubs.

Mike Benner, CAMRA Chief Executive, said: 'We are delighted that the OFT has responded to our appeal by agreeing to conduct an open

consultation and I encourage all parties to use this opportunity to submit further evidence of anti-competitive practice. The consultation will lead to a new and final decision from the OFT.

We are hopeful that on re-examination of the pubs market the OFT will decide to act against anti-competitive behaviour in order to deliver a fair deal for consumers. CAMRA looks forward to working with the OFT to deliver reform of the beer tie so that the pub market works in the interests of consumers.'



CAMPAIGN FOR REAL ALE

## Use the Bedfordshire Pub Guide!

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

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

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

You can help us keep the guide up to date. Whether you are the licensee, a pub regular or an

occasional visitor, please send amendments c/o the Firkin or email [pubguide@northbedscamra.org.uk](mailto:pubguide@northbedscamra.org.uk) [www.bedspubs.org.uk](http://www.bedspubs.org.uk)

### Half Moon

108 High Street Kempston MK42 7BN  
01234 832454  
Owner: Charles Wells  
Licensee: Roger & Mickey McElroy  
Status: Tenancy  
Licensing area: Bedford Borough

CAMRA Branch: North Beds  
Cottage Dist (H)  
Wells Eagle IPA (H)  
Wells Bombardier (H)

PA, @, #, %, &, \*, ^, ~, `

on path

Stagecoach 1, 2, VI

Opening Times:

Mon-Thu 12:00-15:00, 18:00-23:00

Fri 12:00-15:00, 17:00-23:00

Sat-Sun 12:00-18:00, 19:00-23:00

Neals:

Mon-Sat 12:00-14:00

Non-Fri 18:00-20:00

This pub, which is well supported by the local community, has a comfortable lounge bar and a public bar with various traditional games. The pub has a number of beams in the local leagues. There is a large garden with a children's play area, which is well used in good weather. The River Great Ouse is nearby with its popular walks.





# Join CAMRA today!

**T**HE Campaign for Real Ale was founded in 1971 to keep real ale alive. Thirty-seven years later we have over 98,000 members and more than 600 British breweries brewing over 2,500 different varieties of real ale. So what does CAMRA do?

## Fight pub closures

CAMRA research shows that over 80 pubs closed every month across the country during 2008. Most of these are local community pubs, often run down by their owners and turned into private houses for a quick profit. Many communities no longer have a pub at all. CAMRA works through initiatives such as the Community Pubs Foundation and Pub is the Hub to stop unnecessary pub closures. The next one under threat might be your local!

## Fight short measure

Did you realise that 9 out of 10 "pints" of draught beer contain less than 100% liquid? Consumers lose over a million pounds a day through short measure. CAMRA is pressing the Government to change the law so you get what you pay for – a full 20 fluid ounce pint every time.

## Promote guest beers

Six out of ten pubs are unable to offer a guest beer of their choice. Two thirds are tied to a single brewery or to a pub company that restricts what they can buy. CAMRA campaigns for a guest beer law to give licensees the right to serve a guest beer of their choice and to improve the accessibility of real ale in British pubs.

## Achievements

CAMRA's many achievements include:

- Helping change the law to allow pubs to open longer where it suits 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 Arena.

- Encouraging more than 5,000 volunteers to survey pubs, organise and work at beer festivals, and actively campaign for real ale and pubs.
- Read more about CAMRA's successful campaigning at [www.camra.org.uk](http://www.camra.org.uk)

## Join CAMRA today!

If you want to make a difference, join CAMRA today! For less than the price of a pint a month, you can join 100,000 other members throughout Britain and help campaign for quality real ale and good pubs.

Single membership costs only £22 a year, reduced to £14 over age 60, under age 26, unemployed or disabled. Save £2 a year and get three months free if you pay by direct debit. Use the form opposite, call 01727 867201 or visit [www.camra.org.uk/joinus](http://www.camra.org.uk/joinus).

*The Salutation*

## 4th Easter Beer Festival

*2nd - 5th April*

**Friday**  
Dr Busker

**Saturday**  
Viking re-enactment in aid of Spinal Research in Beer Garden

**15+ Real Ales available**

**20 High Street, Blunham**  
**01767 640620**

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 Young Member and concessionary rates please visit [www.camra.org.uk](http://www.camra.org.uk) or call 01727 867201.

I wish to join the Campaign for Real Ale, and agree to abide by the Memorandum and Articles of Association.

I enclose a cheque for .....

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

Applications will be processed within 21 days Mem Form 0108



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

Please fill in the form and send to: Campaign for Real Ale Ltd, 230 Hatfield Road, St Albans, Herts AL1 4LW



**Name and full postal address of your Bank or Building Society**

To the Manager Bank or Building Society

Address

Postcode

**Name(s) of Account Holder (s)**

**Bank or Building Society Account Number**

**Branch Sort Code**

**Reference Number**

**Originators Identification Number**

9 2 6 1 2 9

**FOR CAMRA OFFICIAL USE ONLY**

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

Membership Number

Name

Postcode

**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

**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 amounts to be paid or the payment dates change CAMRA will notify you 10 working days in advance of your account being debited or as otherwise agreed.

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

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

# Branch Diary



BRANCH business meetings are normally held on the third Thursday of alternate months, e.g. January and March. Social and campaigning events are usually held on the second Thursday of each month. Guests are welcome at social events, but members have priority on brewery visits. To book places on trips, call John Martin on 01234 768294 or email [socials@northbedscamra.org.uk](mailto:socials@northbedscamra.org.uk). For the latest information, check *What's Brewing*, or visit the branch website at [www.northbedscamra.org.uk](http://www.northbedscamra.org.uk)

## MARCH

**Thursday 25th March – Branch meeting**  
Business meeting at the Three Cups, Newnham Street, Bedford, 8 for 8.15pm.  
CAMRA members only.

## APRIL

**Thursday 1st April – Presentation at the Wellington Arms**

Presentation to the Wellington Arms, Wellington Street, Bedfords North Beds CAMRA's Pub of the Year at 6 p.m. Followed by a visit to Hoggley's Brewery near Towcester leaving at 6.45 p.m. – which is fully booked with a waiting list.

**Monday 26th April – Beer Festival Committee meeting**

At the Three Cups, Newnham Street, Bedford 8.00 pm for 8.15 p.m.

## MAY

**Thursday 6th May – Pub Tour of South Beds**  
Details from John Martin .

**Thursday 27th May – Branch Meeting**

Business meeting at the Three Cups, Newnham Street, Bedford, 8 for 8.15pm. CAMRA members only.

## JUNE

**Thursday 10th June – A visit to six Brewery taps in the Black Country.**

Departs the Wellington Arms at 10.00 a.m. Cost will be in the order of £46 each to include lunch and supper. Bookings are now being taken for this day out.

## JULY

**Thursday 8th July – Branch Annual general Meeting and Buffet**

At the Ent Shed, the Gordon Arms, Castle Road, Bedford, starting at 8 p.m.

**Thursday 22nd July – Branch Meeting**

Business meeting at the Three Cups, Newnham Street, Bedford, 8 for 8.15pm.  
CAMRA members only.

More details from the branch Social Organiser, John Martin [socials@tipsi.powernet.co.uk](mailto:socials@tipsi.powernet.co.uk)

## 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. They 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 is also posted online for at least a year 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 1st May

To enquire or place an advert, contact:  
Neil Richards on 01536 358670 or 07710 281381 or email: [n.richards@btinternet.com](mailto:n.richards@btinternet.com)

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LIVE MUSIC

WED, FRI + SAT

**3** large heated smoking areas



**SUMMER BEER FESTIVAL**

see website for details

'Rock and Ale' every weekend with up to

**16** Ales & ciders

from **£1.85** per pint as at March 2010

Open 10am (11am Sunday) til' late Monday - Sunday!

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ALES TO DATE

**240**

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**2010**

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East of  
St Neots

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**CAMRA East Anglian Pub of the Year 2008**

## Home of *Son of Sid* Microbrewery

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



## St Georges Day Weekend

### Beer Festival

**23rd-25th April**

*Dr Busker - Fri night*

DRINK MORE LOCALLY BREWED BEER



## The Wellington Arms

40 Wellington Street, Bedford

**BEDFORDSHIRE PUB OF  
THE YEAR 2008**

01234 308033

### Visit Our Other Pubs:

The Globe  
43 Winfield Road,  
Dunstable LU6 1LS  
01582 512300

**SOUTH BEDFORDSHIRE  
PUB OF THE YEAR 2008**

Brewery Tap  
Shefford  
01462 628448

The Elm Tree  
Orchard Street, Cambridge  
01223 502632