

# B E E R      FREE

# In B E E D      (S)



Newsletter of the South Bedfordshire Branch of CAMRA

Circulation: 3500

Autumn 2009

# CAMRA

(Campaign for Real Ale)

## Celebrates

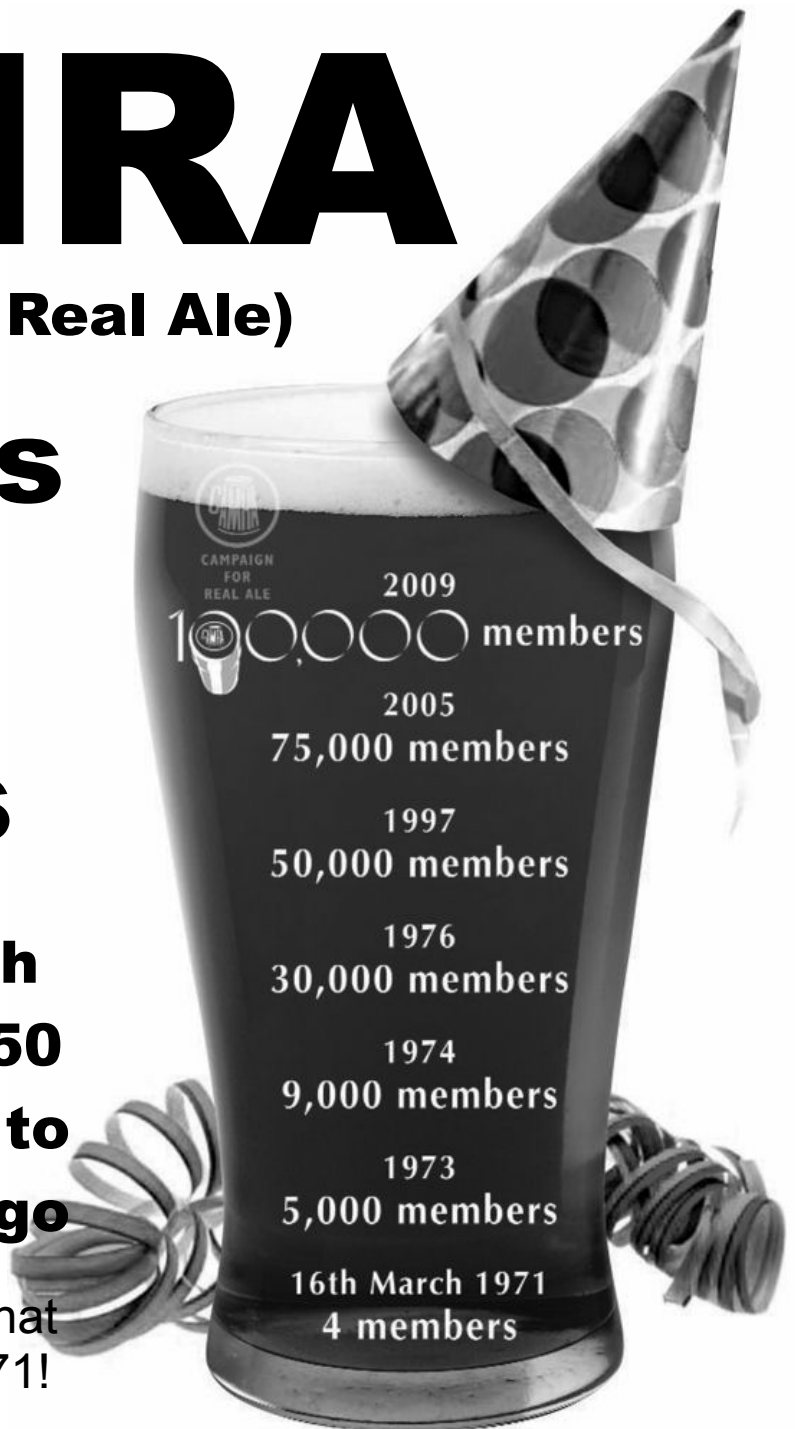
# 100,000

# members

....and locally, South  
Beds CAMRA has 650  
members compared to  
only 300 a decade ago

Not bad for an organisation that  
started with 4 members in 1971!

(See page 30)





# Campaign For Real Ale

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## South Bedfordshire CAMRA Social Diary

*(Thursday evening 8.30 pm  
unless otherwise stated)*

- 22<sup>nd</sup> Oct - Lynmore, Sharpenhoe, Chequers, Streatley then White Hart, Upper Sundon  
29<sup>th</sup> Oct - Hare, Ship then White Horse, Linslade  
5<sup>th</sup> Nov - Cross Keys then Old Farm Inn, Totternhoe  
12<sup>th</sup> Nov - Cricketers then Chequers, Caddington  
19<sup>th</sup> Nov - **VICTORIA, DUNSTABLE (AGM)**  
26<sup>th</sup> Nov - Live & Let Live, Pegsdon and Musgrave Arms, Crown & Noahs Ark, Shillington  
3<sup>rd</sup> Dec - Plough, Wingfield then Queens Head, Tebworth  
10<sup>th</sup> Dec - Pre-Christmas non-driving Luton Crawl *(details TBC - see website)*  
17<sup>th</sup> Dec - Pre-Christmas non-driving Dunstable Crawl *(details TBC - see website)*  
7<sup>th</sup> Jan - Red Lion, Roebuck, Black Horse and Golden Bell, Leighton Buzzard  
14<sup>th</sup> Jan - Globe, Dunstable (Good Beer Guide Selection Meeting)

Contact Dave Oakley for further details. For latest social diary venues visit [www.sbedscamra.org.uk](http://www.sbedscamra.org.uk).

New members are especially welcome. Car pools are in use in Dunstable and Houghton Regis.

**[www.sbedscamra.org.uk](http://www.sbedscamra.org.uk) for latest South Beds CAMRA news**

**Next Issue : Winter 2010**

**Copy Deadline : 8th January 2010**

## BEER InBED(s)

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The views expressed in Beer in Bed(s) are not necessarily those of the Editor, CAMRA, or its South Beds branch. South Beds CAMRA accepts no liability in relation to the accuracy of advertisements. Readers must rely on their own enquiries. Inclusion of an advertisement does not imply endorsement by CAMRA. The Editor reserves the right to shorten any submissions for length or libel.

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## Trading Standards

If you have complaints about short measure, lack of a price list or misleading promotion of products and fail to get a satisfactory response, contact the Bedfordshire Trading Standards Service at County Hall, Cauldwell Street, Bedford, MK42 9AP. Tel. 01234 228280.

Luton Trading Standards: 01582 547130.

# Editor's Ramblings

Has anybody purchased a camera, mobile phone, iPod and a pair of sunglasses from e-bay recently? If so (a) they might be mine and (b) I'd like to know the name and address of the cowardly (expletive deleted) 'person' who you bought them from - especially if they were Belgian, having had the exact same things nicked from me when I was in Brussels recently on a South Beds CAMRA group visit.

It's hard to believe and a lesson for all. There were 8 of us sitting around a table in a non-crowded bar and they still managed to nick a backpack from the back of my chair without anybody noticing.

At least there were no tickets, passports or money in the bag.

....and more importantly they didn't manage to ruin what had been a fantastic and enjoyable few days with a great group of people in and around Brussels and Ghent.

I see that Coors Light is claiming in recent advertising to be "*the world's most refreshing beer*".

How do they get away with it I hear you ask?

Well, it's because this type of advertising claim is referred to as "puffery" which as a legal term refers to promotional statements and claims that express subjective rather than objective views, such that no reasonable person would take literally.

I'm far too polite, but maybe you have a subjective view and possibly a slightly ruder word that covers such claims?

Coors also describe the beer as "*Light tasting ice cold mountain refreshment*" which makes me wonder if they've bottled snow? Of course if there are any skiers out there you may recall the good advice to "never eat (drink) yellow snow"....

In the news recently was a pub in County Durham that had banned mobile phones. I'm not sure I can give it my whole hearted blessing but there are times it could possibly be useful. For instance when the wife calls to ask/demand "Where are you?" and "When are you coming home" it may be a good and legitimate excuse that you might just get away with (although more probably it would simply get you in deeper trouble.... "*BUT, you knew the phone was ringing didn't you!*").

Even better in South Bedfordshire is that genuinely some villages/towns are mobile free zones on some networks. Many a time I have been able to ignore a call/text from the wife because I genuinely didn't receive it. Woburn is a good case in point, I honestly can't get a signal anywhere in the village and not only that I have proved it to my wife so she fully understands. I do think though that she is starting to wonder why I only ever seem to go drinking in Woburn.....

And finally, I've wanted to mention this for a while. For many years there's been a sign in the window of a shop in High Street North, Dunstable advertising

**"GIGANTIC Mirror Sale".**

Am I the only one who thinks that maybe there's no demand for gigantic mirrors?

As for the "massive antique sale" that I read about this week.....

*Steve Pullan*

## Advertising Rates

Full page            £50

Half page            £30

Quarter page       £20

Artwork can be provided.

Please contact the Editor for more details (see opposite page).

**BEER  
InBED(s)**

Copy  
Deadline

Ready for  
Distribution

Winter

8th January

21st January



## ***CAMRA Young Members***

Since the last issue of Beer in Bed(s), the media has been reporting almost flat-out on the surge in popularity of real ale amongst women and younger people.

In August I was asked to participate in a talk radio show based in Liverpool, discussing real ale's resurgence amongst younger people. The presenter, himself a young person, and the listeners of the show seemed unanimous that real ale has become 'cool' once again.

The evidence is plain to see when you visit any beer festival - whether CAMRA organised or not - and observe the number of women and younger people who come along to enjoy the beer on offer. At the recent St Albans beer festival, a record 9,000 people attended the event with admission queues snaking through St Albans town centre. Even at smaller, lesser-known festivals, such as the first Westoning village beer festival this August bank

holiday just gone, it was good to see so many women and young people discovering the delights of real ale.

Of course, we can't expect everyone to love real ale. It was great to see a wide range of foreign beers and lagers on offer at the Great British Beer Festival and the St Albans beer festival this year - ensuring that there's something for everyone. With so many different types of beer to discover, it's impossible to say you don't like any of them!

In other news, CAMRA have announced that they will be continuing their JD Wetherspoon new members' vouchers scheme, meaning that all CAMRA members will continue to receive £20 worth of Wetherspoons' vouchers every year - more than paying for the £15 it costs to join CAMRA as an under-26! To claim your vouchers, plus many other membership benefits, join CAMRA online today at [www.camra.org.uk](http://www.camra.org.uk) or phone 01727 867201. Alternatively, there's a membership form at the back of this issue of Beer in Bed(s).

*Adam Croft*

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## ***Local Brewery News***

### ***Tring***

Tring Brewery is finally moving to a new site located on Dunsley Farm in a new 6500 sq ft building opposite Tesco. The site is to undergo a makeover in the coming months, with a larger brewing plant being installed and will be up and running early next year. They will soon have a new page on the website showing progress as the site is developed.

**Monthly Specials:** Phantom Monk 4.0% (October); A sticky End 4.7% (November); Prancer & Dancer 4.2% (December)

**Seasonal Specials:** Santa's Little Helper 4.8% (late November/December).

### ***Buntingford***

[www.buntingford-brewery.co.uk](http://www.buntingford-brewery.co.uk) now features an interactive map showing all their regular outlets. The only one in South Beds is the

Saracen's Head, Dunstable, but other local pubs stock their beers from time to time.

They'll be doubling their capacity in October and new beers "coming soon" are **Pomone 4.0%** a "golden-ish beer with a shot of Cascade hops". **Witch Project 4.1%** a "dark Halloween brew". **Night Owl 4.2%** a "sort of dark bitter/porter/whatever style beer" and **Oatmeal Stout 4.4%** a "stout brewed with oats!"

### ***Concrete Cow***

Redway Bitter 3.9% is their latest brew which hit the pubs in late August. As the name suggests it is a red beer using only Bramling Cross hops for a blackcurrant and liquorice flavour with aromas of ripe summer berries.

Dan says that the brewery encouragingly just had its best month yet for beer sales and he's hoping that he'll get even busier in the coming months.

# THE VICTORIA

## DUNSTABLE



# ‘AUTUMN’ BEER FESTIVAL

**THURS 29<sup>TH</sup> OCT to SUN 1<sup>ST</sup> NOV**

**APPROX. 12 BEERS**

**RED & WHITE WINES FROM AROUND THE WORLD**

### **DINING TIMES**

**12 - 7 MON TO FRI; 12 - 4 SAT; 12-30 - 4-30 SUNDAY ROASTS**

Open till midnight weekdays  
and later at weekends

Smokers welcome in our  
heated Beer Garden

# ***Good Beer Guide Selection and Pub of the Year***

I'm often asked, "Why isn't *pub x* in the Good Beer Guide?" usually by a publican or a dedicated regular of a particular pub.

The primary, overriding requirement for being in the Guide is simply to serve consistently well-kept beer. A pub doesn't have to have twelve hand pumps or have an enormous throughput of guest beers *[although these points may help to tip the balance when it comes to down selecting the final entries]*.

It's no good however having the best kept beer around if we don't know about it. As a branch we visit as many pubs in our area as we can throughout the year on our regular Thursday socials (and also as individuals), but we can't visit them all. We therefore also rely on receiving nominations of potentially good pubs from members at any time of the year.

A list is published around October and members are encouraged to visit as many of the nominated pubs as possible and provide further feedback.

The South Beds branch of CAMRA has an allocation of 22 pubs and those are selected at our January branch meeting\*. Members are asked to only vote for pubs that they have visited on at least a few occasions and where they know consistently good beer is served.

Some reserves are also chosen, because for a few months after selection, amendments can be made including the removal of pubs that have fallen below standard or closed or changed management. This last point can be contentious because it can take time to decide if the new management will serve consistently good beer. (This may also mean that a pub is deemed ineligible in the original selection process.) This leaves us open to the possibility that a good pub is not included in the next Good Beer Guide – but we'd rather this than select a pub in that turns out to fall below the standard as this would devalue the Guide.

**\* The selection meeting is due to be held on 14th January 2010 at the Globe, Dunstable.**

The Guide is then published at the beginning of September.

If you disagree with Guide entries then we recommend that you get involved and have your say. You don't have to come to the meetings, you can just contact us by email or phone – but remember, it is a democratic process.

**Note:** We can only accept nominations and votes for Good Beer Guide entries from local CAMRA members. Please include CAMRA membership number on any communication.

## **Pub of the Year**

To be pub of the year you need to do more than just serve consistently good beer, although this is the most important factor.

The pub of the year has to be welcoming to all clientele, it has to be somewhere that is enjoyable to be with friends, family or on your own and décor, standard of the toilets, general ambience etc. are all considered. They will be sympathetic to CAMRA causes and they will know and communicate with the local branch. Value for money is an important factor – this doesn't just mean how cheap the beer is, but has the overall experience been worth the effort and cost.

Like entries for the Good Beer Guide, we accept nominations for the branch pub of the year any time throughout the year.

The South Beds winner is chosen at our January branch meeting and announced at the Luton Beer Festival in February.

The branch winner then goes up against the other two Bedfordshire branch winners for the county pub of the year award. The county winner then competes against the other five counties in the East Anglia region: Cambridgeshire, Norfolk, Suffolk, Essex and Hertfordshire. The national pub of the year is then chosen from the sixteen regional winners.

*Mike Coombes*  
Bedfordshire CAMRA Area Organiser

# The Farmers Boy 01582 872207

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Good Beer Guide

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8 real ales 2 ciders

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Check out our website for more details  
[www.thefarmersboykensworth.co.uk](http://www.thefarmersboykensworth.co.uk)

# ***The Ampthill Mob Ride Again***

With a group reaching 16 at the peak we spent a great day touring the pubs of Ampthill - a nice picturesque town that sports six good real ale pubs.

A large group took country buses from Dunstable arriving good and hungry in Ampthill at 10.30. Here the group met up with more hungry South Beds crew members to enjoy an excellent breakfast at the Ossory Arms.

They provide a special menu for Saturday & Sunday mornings, ranging from a breakfast bap (Sara's) to a good size breakfast (Bell's) to a huge breakfast (Skip's). Yes - many went for the big one and many supplemented this with some Ruddles Best or GK IPA (too early for me though).

Then a short walk up the High Street, passing many of the quaint shops and buildings, found us at the White Hart Hotel with its wonderful 20 window Georgian façade, famous fireplace and mural. We rearranged the seating in the lounge bar, as you have to with such a large group and enjoyed Young's Special, GK IPA or London Pride. Most starting carefully with half pints (pacing).

After the walk up the slight hill most members were still 'pacing' themselves in the Prince of Wales, a Charles Wells pub. Here we found Wells Eagle & Bombardier. It was good to see the pub dispensing in oversized glasses. This is a modern bar with many customers already enjoying a Saturday lunch. There was more furniture arranging needed to provide two drinking circles. Then we risked getting lost by taking the shortcut up the quaint hill and through the back roads to the Queens Head.

There was a Wedding group here which added to a nice Saturday lunchtime atmosphere. Inside the pub, the cosy main bar was lit by candles (as always) with Kew Gold, Bombardier and Eagle on tap. There was also an excellent cider 'Thatchers Cheddar Valley'. Several of the group sampled this 'glowing orange' nectar, but carefully as it's 6%. Not 'that' strong for a cider but mixing with beer?

How does that rhyme go?

It was nice and sunny by this time so we sat out in the small front garden on the wooden benches facing the road and watched the world go by. Some had managed to become hungry enough by now for lunch - others had a couple more beers! (pacing officially over!)

Then it was on down the road to the Old Sun - a nice pub with chatty locals, friendly bar staff and landlord. This was an Enterprise Pub until just a couple of weeks ago when Charles Wells took over. The landlord will still have a good choice of real ales, not necessarily restricted to CW. Available today were London Pride, Young's Special, Adnams Broadside, Adnams Best & St Austell Tribute.

The group split here, some in the large garden, braving the spitting rain and some sitting at the bar where the Nachos and sweet chilli dip was constantly replenished (nice).

The walls are adorned in one section of the pub with caricature drawings of past landlords and regulars - very funny and a great idea. Organised events are not restricted to the usual pub games either - ferret racing anyone?

It was then back to the start point then at the Ossory Arms. Here the group performed more furniture removals to create a large drinking circle (hard work all this!).

Sadly the Albion Arms was not open, having changed ownership and is facing an uncertain future, so our final pub of the day entailed a short walk to the Engine & Tender. Another Olde Worlde traditional feel pub. Here we found GK IPA, Abbot and LBW (as in leg before wicket - something to do with cricket!).

After a few more beers it was time for the parting of the ways and all staggered off in different directions. The main contingent headed South on the bus (which was not only 'on time' but arrived to the actual second as timetabled). The singing on the bus turned a few heads "*...will I play the wild rover - no never no more*". We definitely need more practice. ...so MUST do this trip again!

It was goodbye to some at Flitwick then on to Dunstable and the Globe for some much



needed liquid refreshment (joke). Available here was - lots! Then finally the last five - six if you count me twice (you have to see the photo of me and my clone!) ended up in a Dunstable Curry House. Beer available here was..... nothing! - so we drank Adam's Ale with ice. The food was great though.

So then it was home after a great day with a great bunch of people. Thanks to all.

And you, dear reader, are very welcome to join us on any of our day trips or Thursday socials (especially if you know the lyrics to the Wild Rover!)

Keep up to date with 'where we are' and 'what we are doing' on the inside page of your

favourite pub-lication, Beer in Bed(s) and make contact with any of the listed members.

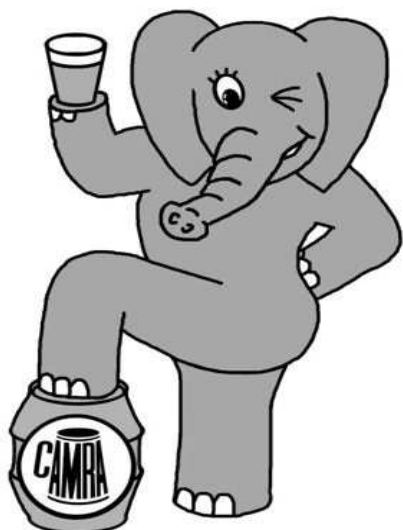
Hope to see you in an ale house somewhere, sometime.....

*"I've been a wild rover for many a year, and I spent all my money on whiskey and beer.....(hic)"*

*Steve Harris*

*No space in this edition to include reports on all South Beds trips over recent months, but look out for possible reports on a Brussels weekend and a joint day out with East & North Beds branch in Belgravia (London) in future newsletters or on the website.*

## **The Elephant returns.....**



# **27<sup>TH</sup> LUTON BEER FESTIVAL**

**18<sup>th</sup> - 20<sup>th</sup> FEBRUARY 2010**

**90 Real Ales**

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FOR  
REAL ALE**

*Volunteers always needed - please contact Mike Coombes (Festival Organiser)*

# Diary of an Intrepid Cyclist



Two beer festivals (Station Hotel, Woburn Sands & Westoning Recreation Club), two counties (Bucks and Beds) and too many miles in-between! But it had to be done (no it didn't!).

The relatively uneventful cycle up the A5 did make me ponder the question of "what did the Roman's ever do for me?" Straight roads they were undoubtedly good at but if they were so smart, and they clearly weren't, shouldn't they at least have removed the hills? There are two vast mountain sized lumps in the road between Hockliffe and Potsgrove which any decent and bike friendly civil engineer would have removed. Had Hadrian, Caesar or whoever given more time to road planning than walls or salad recipes then they would have gone up in my estimation. If they'd have bothered to ask their legions for opinions then I'm sure they too would have agreed with me.

My mountainous journey took me through Little Brickhill and unexpectedly and disappointingly through Woburn (I hadn't planned a Woburn dog-leg). Still the longer route was pleasant. I arrived at the never-visited-before Station Hotel and was keen to try a couple of beers as the beer list had looked good. On arrival there was bad news in that landlord Kevin wasn't at the pub yet and until he arrived the festival beers weren't available. Further disappointment ensued as the Concrete Cow beer on the bar wasn't on so I made do with a half of Adnams East Green. A pleasant enough drink but I'd hoped for more.

I was sitting in the outside courtyard, no more than 10 paces from the converted out building where the festival beers were stored, getting more than a little depressed that so much fine sounding beer was so near yet so far. Thankfully Kevin turned up and started the grand unlocking ceremony. It was a bit like the Harrod's January sale (which probably starts in November nowadays) with people barging and shoving their way to the front of the queue with the demonic glazed eyes of some hideous extra from a horror movie. As I was the only one there at that time it was shall I say a little embarrassing!

There were about 10 ales featuring some excellent local breweries - Pot Belly, Silverstone,

Tring, Oakham and others and also a couple of ciders including a "Rum Cask Cider" which more than did what it said on the tin. The beers were good and I wished Kevin luck with the rest of the weekend and climbed back on my trusted steed and headed for Westoning.

10 miles and about 45 minutes later I arrived at Westoning Recreation Club. It was their first festival and they'd lined up about 10 beers and it was one of those events where you hope that somebody's considerable efforts are rewarded by a successful event.

Adam (our Branch and Regional Young Members' Secretary) had volunteered his help with the festival and seemed to be revelling in the cellarman role that he'd adopted. All good cellarmen take great pleasure in decorating ceilings (or preferably willing helpers/innocent by-standers) with high pressure jets of beer when barrels full of highly combustible liquid are vented. Better still, when the hard peg itself acts like a projectile and dents the ceiling as was Adam's case (story).

I was also glad to see that there were many Beer in Bed(s) newsletters on show....but was less glad that they were being put to good use in swatting wasps that had invaded the premises!

After a few beers and some sociable chatting in the afternoon's sunshine it was time to climb back on the bike for the last few miles home....whilst crossing a few more mountain ranges that those inconsiderate, useless, incompetent Roman's had singularly failed to remove from the cycling map of Bedfordshire!

## The Station Hotel

presents the





# ODDFELLOWS ARMS TODDINGTON

*CAMRA Good Beer Guide 2010*

2 Conger Lane, Toddington. Tel. 01525 872021

# BEER FESTIVAL

18 Real Ales - 13 at a time

Thurs 19th - Sun 22nd November

Thurs + Fri Open at 5pm;  
Sat + Sun All Day from Noon  
(Advanced tasting Thurs 19th from 12 - 3pm)

*Includes  
Charity Race Night  
on  
Sat 21st November*



# Pub News in Brief

In **AMPTHILL** the **Old Sun** has been sold to Charles Wells and although a few changes must be expected let's hope that they continue to serve their range of good and interesting ales. At the **Queens Head** it seems that real cider isn't just for festivals - Paul tends to have an interesting one on more frequently now.

In **ASPLEY HEATH** the **Fir Tree** continues to serve Wells Eagle IPA and Bombardier. Pizzas are available eat-in or takeaway in addition to a full menu. The Greene King owned **Royal Oak** is a traditional drinkers pub so no food, but will gladly serve you GK IPA or Abbot.

In **DUNSTABLE** the **Star & Garter** has installed extra handpumps giving the potential to increase the beers from the three currently available. The **Victoria** continues to serve some excellent ales and usually has an "ale of the week" at £2.50.

In **EATON BRAY** the **Five Bells** has closed and it's pub future looks a little bleak, leaving the **White Horse** as the only pub in the village. We were sad to hear about the death of Mick Todd, who was the landlord of the Hope and Anchor (now Cafe Masala) until it closed around 2003. Mick was listed in the Good Beer Guide for eight years and provided a rare local outlet for Vale beers.

In **EVERSHOLT** the **Green Man** has three ales including a varying guest and has re-introduced Homemade Curry or Beer Battered Fish & Chips for eat-in or takeaway on Monday nights. They will also be hosting a Fireworks & BBQ evening on 5th November.

There was a serious fire at the **Spotted Dog** in **FLAMSTEAD** on Monday 21st Sept which started about 4pm. The pub is now roofless but the good news was that nobody was hurt.

In **FLITTON** Bobbi & Ian continue their good work at the **Jolly Coopers** and have recently extended food hours to include all day Saturday and up to 8pm on Sunday. Ales are Wells Eagle, Adnams Broadside and a rotating guest ale, all served in reliably good condition.

In **HEATH & REACH** there are new licensees at the **Axe & Compass** - welcome to Brian

and Becke Jollands who took over on 1st August. Brian is keen on sports and cider and four draught Westons ciders have already made an appearance and he is be hoping to increase the beer range too (from the current house beer Train Robbers Brew only). Becke will concentrate on producing "fresh home-made comfort food".

In **HOUGHTON REGIS** the **Dog & Duck** has re-introduced real ales and currently has two varying ales from the Charles Wells portfolio.

In **LEIGHTON BUZZARD** the **Golden Bell** has added a couple of real ciders (from Westons) to complement their range of four real ales which includes both regular and usually some interesting guest ales. The **Red Lion** will be installing a couple of additional handpumps in the front bar to give the ales a visible presence there. Current range is GK Abbot, Black Sheep Ale and a guest. Ginny is also hoping to hold a mini beer festival before Christmas. The **Hare** in Linslade should be commended for their recent Battle of Britain weekend when any member of the RAF, past or present, was entitled to a pint on the house.



*Gardeners Call , Luton*

In **LUTON** the **Gardeners Call** has XX Mild, IPA, Abbot and a GK guest. Ridley's Witchfinder is lined up for October and St Austell Proper Job should follow with Abbot Reserve and Rocking Rudolph appearing before Christmas. Food is also back on the menu as Li has now returned from China. The **Black Horse** still has a good selection of ales and ciders and is reportedly undergoing a redecoration.

# PARTY ROAST

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The **Anglers Retreat** in **MARSWORTH** has just held another successful beer festival and continues to serve up a good selection of ales and food. Convenient for autumn and winter walking around the Tring Reservoirs too.

In **MAULDEN** Richard, Karen & Family have taken over at the **White Hart** and Bryan and Helen (father/daughter) are now in charge at the **George**. We wish them all well in their new ventures. The **Black Horse** has added a second beer - Old Speckled Hen, alongside the GK IPA. At the **Dog & Badger** recently there was the usual Wells Eagle IPA but also an interesting guest - Clarks Rams Revenge (replacing the Directors). Hopefully more interesting guest ales to follow?

The **Rose & Crown** in **RIDGMONT** has replaced Directors with Young's Bitter. It also serves Eagle and Broadside. Food is good too.

In **SHILLINGTON** Michael & Julie who run the Musgrave Arms have also taken on the **Crown**. The ales are GK IPA, Woodfordes Wherry and a guest. They also have a new chef and menu with emphasis on fresh food.

Lily & Dave at the **Rising Sun** in **SLIP END** continue to serve 3 real ales and we'd like to thank them for hosting an excellent Malaysian birthday meal for one of our regular members.

In **STREATLEY** the Greene King owned **Chequers** is one of a few local pubs that sell 5 real ales (and has done so for many years).

The Queens Head in **TEBWORTH** has now been "done up" inside and out. Beer, welcome and humour remain the same!

In **WESTONING** the **Chequers** has re-opened with the restaurant returning to it's previous location at the rear of the pub. They currently have a single, varying ale.

.....  
*Closed pubs are an increasingly unwelcome feature of the South Beds landscape - Chalk Hill (Dunstable), Salisbury Arms (Luton), Five Bells (Eaton Bray), French Horn (Steppingley), Royal Oak (Woburn) to name a few. Some will hopefully re-open but others will not.*

*Don't let YOUR local become a thing of the past.*

**USE IT OR LOSE IT!**

# ***I Like a Nice Tune...!***

Graeme Meek is a local singer and songwriter who, by his own confession, has been around on the folk scene for longer than he cares to remember (or probably CAN remember!)

A few of his songs have connections with Bedfordshire pubs and breweries and some are about traditions that are maintained at certain pubs at appropriate times of year.

Published on the opposite page is **Bedfordshire Ale**, a song that bemoans the loss of pubs and breweries from Bedfordshire. Although written over 25 years ago in 1983, it is still highly relevant in today's troubled pub times. Other songs include:

**More Time, Gentlemen Please** (Weathercock, Aspley Guise - inspired by the 2003 CAMRA Beds Beer Guide which repeated the story that there were different licensing hours in the two bars as the county border divided the pub)

**Toddington Tour** (An annual tour by Redbornstoke Morris & friends of all Toddington's pubs. This song is sung at the end of the tour.)

**Plough Monday Song** (Sung every year at The Cross Keys, Pulloxhill on Plough Monday, the first Monday after Epiphany)

**Charles Wells & Josephine Grimbley** (The story of Charles Wells who, in 1876, gave up a promising sea career to marry his sweet-

heart. When he returned to Bedford he set up the brewery that bears his name. The original story was printed on the label of Josephine Grimbley's Ale produced by Wells in 1999)

You may also have seen some of his songs on display in pubs in the county :

**Lime Burning** can be seen on the wall in the bar at The Old Farm, Totternhoe :

**Plough Monday Song** and **The Bedfordshire Clanger** are displayed at the Cross Keys, Pulloxhill.)

It is through the display, some years ago, of **The Ghost of Lady de Grey** at the George in Silsoe (where the haunting is supposed to take place) that another well-known singer in the world of folk music discovered it and decided to record it.

Many of the songs have been published in Bedfordshire County Life Magazine and recorded by his song duo, **Life & Times** which also features his long time music partner Barry Goodman.

If you wish to find out more about his local songs then visit [www.lifeandtimes.info](http://www.lifeandtimes.info) and go to 'Bedfordshire Songs' and the 'Stories in The Songs' page.

*(Graeme is also an occasional ale drinker as I found out when I bumped into him by chance in the Old Sun, Harlington recently - Ed)*

*CAMRA LocAle is an excellent new initiative that promotes pubs stocking locally brewed real ale. The scheme builds on a growing consumer demand for quality local produce and an increased awareness of 'green' issues.*



*Everyone benefits from pubs stocking locally brewed real ales - local pubs, local breweries, the local economy and local consumers.*

*The South Bedfordshire Branch of CAMRA defines 'local' as within approx. 25 miles of a pub and we include B&T, Buntingford, Chiltern, Concrete Cow, Potton, Red Squirrel, Tring, Wells & Youngs and White Park.*

*Look out for handpumps in your local pub sporting an additional CAMRA LocAle banner stating "This real ale is locally brewed"*

*If your local pub regularly serves a local real ale and the landlord/landlady wants some LocAle publicity material then let us know or ask them to contact us.*

***If they don't serve a local real ale then ask them to do so!***

# BEDFORDSHIRE ALE

WORDS AND MUSIC  
BY GRAEME MEEK

HEARTILY

Dear friends who are gathered, I bid you a welcome but challenge you, here, to re-  
member the days when Bedfordshire brewers all o-ver the county made ales we all  
loved and the ales we all praised. Here's a health to the strength and the beauty of  
Bedfordshire ale. Here's a ale 2.

1. Dear friends who are gathered, I bid you a welcome  
But challenge you, here, to remember the days  
When Bedfordshire brewers all over the county  
Made ales we all loved and the ales we all praised.  
Here's a health  
To the strength and the beauty of Bedfordshire Ale  
Here's a health  
To the strength and the beauty of Bedfordshire Ale.
2. Today there's Greene King hails from Biggleswade town  
And there's Charles Wells from Bedford with ales of  
renown;  
And Luton boasts Whitbread, a giant in brewing,  
But where are the brewers who once served our towns?
3. For J W Greens was the old Luton brewery,  
And Flowers from Stratford which Greens then became;  
And Bennetts of Dunstable ceased in their brewing  
When Manns came from London, their business to gain.  
Here's a health...
4. Now Lurke Street in Bedford was the home of a brewer  
Of many fine ales, it was Fullers by name;  
And Biggleswade town, it was blessed with another:  
The Wells and Winch brewery of Bedfordshire fame.  
Here's a health...
5. And do you remember the good old ale houses  
That once blessed our streets just to give us good cheer?  
So many, alas, they are no longer with us  
And we are the poorer for the loss of good beer.
6. For in Luton once stood The Lea Bridge and The Panama,  
The Fox, The Black Bull and in Park Street, The Goat;  
And in New Bedford Road stood the old Crown and  
Anchor  
Where good Thomas Sworder brewed strong ales of note.  
Here's a health...
7. And so is the story through all of our county.  
In time will there be no ales Bedfordshire born?  
Then let us all hope that the wheel turns full circle,  
With God on our side, then the ale tide will turn.  
Here's a health...

Copyright © Graeme Meek 1983



Years ago most towns had their own local brewers and pubs were more plentiful. This song affectionately remembers some of the old names in Bedfordshire brewing and some of the pubs which have vanished from the streets of Luton.

Both Whitbread and Greene King have closed or left the county since this song was first written.

The optimism in the last verse is for the new small breweries like Banks and Taylor of Shefford, The Old Stables Brewery at Sandy, Potton Brewery, the now defunct Two Henries Brewery at Turvey and the short-lived Coney Hall Brewery in Luton.

This song is recorded on *Strawplait & Bonelace*, Fellside Recordings FE043 & FE043/c  
Graeme Meek is a member of song duo *Life and Times* and dance band *Time of Your Life*.  
see [www.lifeandtimes.info](http://www.lifeandtimes.info), [www.lifeandtimes.org.uk](http://www.lifeandtimes.org.uk), [www.timeofyourlife.info](http://www.timeofyourlife.info), [www.lifeandtimes.me.uk](http://www.lifeandtimes.me.uk),  
[www.myspace.com/broadsidesrevisited](http://www.myspace.com/broadsidesrevisited) & [www.myspace.com/englishceilidh](http://www.myspace.com/englishceilidh)

# ***The World's Longest Pub Crawl?***

350 miles, 11 hours and just 4 pubs. Sounds high on miles and hours, low on miles per hour and short of pubs doesn't it?

But what the pubs lacked in number they were supposed to make up in quality. These weren't just any pubs, these were the four winners of the Essex, Suffolk, Norfolk and Cambridgeshire Pubs of the Year (POTY) competitions, as voted for by the local CAMRA branches, and we were taking part in the judging for the East Anglian POTY.

The additional interest from the South Beds CAMRA perspective was that the Globe in Dunstable had been voted the Bedfordshire POTY and we were interested to see and weigh up their competition.

The East Anglian tour had been planned by Mike Coombes (Branch Secretary) and his father John, who had more than kindly agreed to do most of the driving. I was picked up at 10.30 am followed by Roy our Branch Chairman. We then headed due east and down a little bit towards the Wheatsheaf in the village of Writtle near Chelmsford, the Essex POTY.

A couple of days before the trip we'd been to the Half Moon at Hitchin, the Hertfordshire POTY and the 6th and final pub in the East Anglian competition. It's a good, friendly and well kept pub that many of us have visited on several occasions before. It always has a good range of six ales, including guest ales, which in my experience are invariably served in good condition. The Church End Pheasant Plucker and Newby Wake HMS Warrior didn't let us down. For those keen on cider and perry the pub scores highly and had by far the best range of any of the six finalists - a small blackboard lists 4 ciders and 2 perries from several producers. We were there until about 10.30 pm and tapas were still being served which was a good feature.

We arrived in Writtle at 12.15 pm and would have been a little earlier if somebody in Essex Council had not decided to dig up, not to mention close some of the approach roads. We parked in the car park and then realised

that we were heading into the wrong pub! Swiftly changing direction we crossed the road and entered the Wheatsheaf. First impressions were very good - it's a small, cosy, well kept, two-bar pub with a few outside benches where people were enjoying a beer in the summer sunshine. There was a friendly greeting from behind the bar from people proudly sporting their blue Essex Pub of the Year T shirts. The pub may be small but the beer range wasn't - six beers in all, with several from Mighty Oak including Oscar Wilde Mild. We tried most of them and they were all in top condition. A few Sunday lunchtime nibbles were provided on the bar as many pubs do - always a nice touch. It was the kind of pub that I would happily have stayed longer in and if I was ever passing through or near Writtle again I would definitely pay it a visit.



After motoring for an hour or so we arrived at the Fox & Hounds in Thurston in Suffolk, just to the east of Bury St. Edmunds. The recent history of the pub is a good news story as it was saved from demolition and has been turned into a thriving community pub. That local community were much in evidence when we arrived, boosted no doubt by the televised Ipswich football match being shown on Sky in the public/sports bar. The large and comfortable main bar has a separate diners' area and we'd planned take advantage of their "good home-cooked food", but we were running a little late and disappointingly too late for lunch!



On the beer side there were six ales including a couple from Woodfordes and a local beer from the Old Cannon Brewery - the slightly smaller of the two local Bury St Edmunds breweries!.

Another hour's driving took us into Norfolk and our most easterly point of the day - the Artichoke at Broome. Scrubbed tables, wooden settles and a part flagstoned floor created a good impression as you walked in. It's a genuine freehouse dealing in beer, food and conversation (no machines, TV's or music) with eight ales including Maulden's, RCH, Okells, Elgoods (mild) and Triple fff (the latter two were on a £2 a pint deal). Four were on hand-pump and four on gravity from the store room which is visible from the bar. The staff were friendly and the hot baps we had were good, and they were badly needed too after many hours on the road. Unfortunately on this visit beer quality was OK rather than exceptional. If the pub was closer I would gladly make return visits to what undoubtedly is a good pub and prove my suspicions that we had simply been a little unlucky with the beers.

We now had our longest drive of the day to the Boat at Whittlesey in Cambridgeshire. This is an Elgood's pub with four of their ales on gravity (sometimes there are more) and also four ciders/perries all from Westons. It has a large, fairly basic, public bar and a smaller lounge with an unusual boat shaped bar. The pub was fairly quiet and we were able to chat

with the landlady, who is clearly keen that they to do things their way for the benefit of themselves and their customers. This includes the gravity dispense, which they insisted on, and Elgoods have gone along with. This was probably the most 'locals' focused pub of the day and had it been busier we may have experienced its true atmosphere.

We'd completed the pubs on the worlds longest pub crawl but poor John still had a few hours driving left to get us all home. I was dropped off at 9.30pm. He'd done a sterling job and it was certainly much appreciated by me. It had been an interesting but long day.

The last pub of the six was the Globe in Dunstable, a pub that I didn't have to pay a special visit too (although any excuse to pay another visit is always useful.)

As for the best pub? All I can personally say is that the Globe has a great chance of winning.....as does the Wheatsheaf in Essex.

*Steve Pullan*

*The East Anglian Pub of the Year was announced in September and the winner was the Wheatsheaf in Writtle, Essex.*

*Both commiserations and congratulations should go to the Globe as they may have failed by a whisker in their quest to be East Anglian Pub of the Year, but they are still the deserved winners of the Bedfordshire Pub of the Year.*

## **Bedfordshire Online Pub Guide**

The three CAMRA Branches in Bedfordshire - South Beds, North Beds and East Beds, have collaborated to produce an online Bedfordshire Pub Guide.

**[www.bedspubs.org.uk](http://www.bedspubs.org.uk)**

Visitors to the site are able to search by pub name, town, village or postcode, to help plan individual pub visits or a local pub crawl - **ALL FREE OF CHARGE.**

All pubs are listed but a full entry is only be provided if the pub sells real ale.

*It will be a difficult task to keep it up to date, but you can help. Whether you are the licensee, pub regular or occasional visitor. Please send updates to Mike Coombes, Branch Secretary & Webmaster or Steve Pullan, Newsletter Editor.*

# **CAMRA Champion Beer of Britain 2009**



## **Rudgate Ruby Mild (4.4%)**



Described in CAMRA's Good Beer Guide as a 'nutty, rich ruby ale, stronger than usual for a mild.' It was chosen as the overall winner at this year's Great British Beer Festival at Earls Court from over sixty finalists.

Roger Protz, Chairman of the final judging panel said: *"It's a tremendous boost for the mild category. It's good to see a classic British traditional beer making such a comeback in the age of golden ales and much paler beers in general. Its victory should invigorate the whole mild ale category."*

An elated Craig Lee, Rudgate's brewery owner, said: *"It's an excellent achievement, we've come close in previous years, and we are really proud to have won the Champion Beer of Britain. It's unbelievable, and we hope our beer helps popularise the cause of real ale."*

### **Local CAMRA Beer Festivals**

#### **15th Watford Beer Festival**

West Herts Sports Club, Park Avenue, Watford. WD18 7HP

19th - 21st Nov (Thu-Sat)

4pm-11pm Thu; 11-11pm Fri/Sat

£2 (free to CAMRA & Sports Club Members)

70 real ales plus cider/perry

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

#### **Concrete Pint Beer Festival (Milton Keynes)**

'The Pitz', Woughton Campus Leisure Centre, Leadenhall. MK6 5EJ

29th - 31st Oct (Thu-Sat)

Thu/Fri/Sat 12-11pm

£3 entry to non-CAMRA members after 5pm Thu/Fri

50 real ales plus cider/perry

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

#### **Aylesbury Beer Festival**

(Annual charity event held in conjunction with the 'Florence Nightingale Hospice' charity)

Eskdale Road Community Centre, Stoke Mandeville

30th - 31st Oct (Fri-Sat)

30 real ales plus cider/perry

Held near Stoke Mandeville station (on 300 bus route)

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

### **Local Pub Beer Festivals**

**Engineers Arms, Henlow** (100 ales)

Weds 21st - Sun 25th October

**Half Moon, Hitchin** (25 ales)

Thurs 22nd - Sun 25th October

**Globe, Dunstable** (50 ales)

Thurs 22nd - Sun 25th October

**Gary Cooper, Dunstable and White House, Luton - JD Wetherspoons** (50 ales)

Weds 28th October - Sun 15th November

**Old Sun, Harlington** (14 ales)

Fri 23rd - Sun 25th October

**Victoria, Dunstable** (12 ales)

Thurs 29th October - Sun 1st November

**Red Lion, Preston** (25 ales)

Thurs 29th - Sat 31st October

**Farmers Boy, Kensworth** (8 ales)

Fri 13th - Sun 15th November

**Oddfellows, Toddington** (18 ales)

Thurs 19th - Sun 22nd November

# Thursday Socials

The following pages contain reports based on pubs visited on our Thursday evening 'Socials'. They reflect what we found on those visits and should give you a flavour of what can be expected should you wish to visit them.

## July 9th

### **Three Horseshoes and Ye Olde Swan, Cheddington and Swan, Northall**

Tonight's first call was the **Three Horseshoes** at Cheddington. Entrance is via a lobby that has a service hatch with a bar leading off to either side. Saloon one side and the Public bar the other which our group chose. It has unusual décor, the hefty wide plank floorboards give a feeling of solidity and the historic photos of the pub displayed on the walls are interesting. On offer was GK IPA and Old Speckled Hen both in very good condition.

Next was the **Ye Olde Swan**. A lovely looking pub that beckons the drinker in with its thatched roof, colourful flowers and old world charm. Inside, the pub is split into several different sections each with its own feel, all low ceilings and "olde worlde". A long, more modern bar, contrasts well joining several of the areas. Available were Courage Best, Wadworth 6X, & St Austell Tribute. A connection for those of us from Dunstable is that the landlord used to run the Norman King.

The **Swan** at Northall was the final stop. The pub was buzzing tonight following a football team meeting. There's a really nice courtyard with plenty of bench seating but it was just a bit too cold to sit outside. There are 5 hand-pumps dispensing the amber liquid: GK IPA & Abbot, Shepherd Neame Spitfire, Fullers London Pride and Young's Bitter.

## 16th July

### **Green Man, Eversholt**

Thanks to James & Louise for allowing us to use the tables (and to re-arrange them!) at the far end of the bar to hold our July Branch Meeting.

Since taking over a few years ago they have built up a good trade and are a good example of what can be achieved with a village pub if you have ideas and enthusiasm (and perhaps

the freedom of a free house).

As well as the main bar there is a pleasant courtyard to the rear and a separate dining area where you can enjoy James' cooking.

South Beds meeting agendas feature numerous "beer breaks" and we were able to enjoy Robinsons Tit for tat, Elgoods Summer Sunset and London Pride. The range will vary and as James is keen on his ales you can expect that they will be served in good condition.

## 23rd July

### **Black Horse, White Hart, George and Dog & Badger, Maulden**

A few pubs to visit and we started in the Greene King owned **Black Horse** at the Ampthill end of the village. It's a small pub with a sizeable garden and GK IPA only. A little quiet when we first arrived but we soon altered that! It's one of those traditional pubs for drinking rather than eating and as with many of that ilk needs to be actively supported.



*White Hart, Maulden*

We moved on to the **White Hart** which is an attractive thatched pub several times the size of the Black Horse with outside tables front and back and with a cosy drinkers area and plenty of room for diners. GK IPA and Taylor's Landlord were on the handpumps, though you will often find three ales.

# Thursday Socials

Our ranks had as often the case swelled into double figures and we now headed for the **George**. It's a fair stroll from the White Hart (that's why we took the cars!) and has had the best beer range in the village for several years, though with a recent change in ownership the local beer, that was a good feature, seemed to be no longer.

It's a two-bar pub - a public/games bar with pool table and the other catering more for diners, but lateish on a Thursday night it was where we gathered to continue conversations and to sample the Young's Bitter, Adnam's Bitter and St Austell Tribute.

We then moved on to the **Dog & Badger** which seems to be doing fine since being taken over by Charles Wells a couple of years ago. Unfortunately by the time we got there around 10.30 they'd closed up as they'd run out of customers which brought a premature end to our evening in Maulden.

## 30th July

**Highwayman, Greyhound, Froth & Elbow, Star & Garter, Saracens Head and Victoria, Dunstable (South)**

Even for most of those living in Dunstable it is a fair stroll to the **Highwayman** at the far southern end of town. In recent years they used to serve a couple of Greene King ales but currently only IPA (in good nick though). It's a large modern furnished pub for eating & drinking and has about 50 motel style rooms. Heading north into town we reached the **Greyhound**, also furnished in a modern style and which always has one varying ale - Thwaites Original on this visit.

A couple of doors down is the **Froth & Elbow** a more traditional style pub, usually with two or three ales. On this occasion they only had Adnams Broadside as the Elgoods Summer Sunset had just finished.

The **Star & Garter** was next on our list and has improved it's beer range over recent years thanks to the efforts of Kym - the current landlord. Wadworth 6X, Taylor's Landlord, Hook Norton Hooky Gold and Rebellion

Smugglers made it hard to choose and according to Kym there may be an even greater choice soon as he's adding more handpumps. Our final pub of the Dunstable South tour should have been the **Saracen's Head** - another High Street South pub where the beer range is now vastly improved on days gone by. Local brewery Buntingford's beers are usually much in evidence but due to a private function and accompanying loud music we decided to give it a miss.



*Star & Garter, Dunstable*

Instead we made a not-too-difficult decision to end the evening at the **Victoria** where Val and Dave were holding their umpteenth beer festival. Why do I think we may have made it there anyway before closing time? The dozen or so beers were as you would expect from the Vic in fine form.

For anybody visiting Dunstable intending to visit the Globe or Victoria there are definitely some hostelrys in High Street South that may be worth adding to your itinerary.

## 13th August

**Bedford Arms, Angel, Red Lion, Oddfellows Arms, Griffin Hotel and Sow & Pigs, Toddington**

The evening started at the south end of town at the Charles Wells owned **Bedford Arms**. Eagle IPA is the only one real ale but speaking to a regular it is usually in good nick as it was on this visit.

Next was the the **Angel** (Greene King) with its outside courtyard which was proving popular

even at 9 pm. Three ales were available - GK IPA, the seasonal GK beer LBW and the slightly more unexpected Batemans XXXB, which seemed a favoured choice amongst our crowd.

At the **Oddfellows Arms** we were expecting the best ale range of the evening and weren't disappointed with George Wright Brewing Co's Blonde Moment and Hadrian & Border Reivers IPA as well as the regular beers London Pride and Adnams Broadside.

A few visited the rather quiet **Red Lion** and sampled the one real ale Courage Best (in good nick). Another group went for a reccie at the **Griffin Hotel**, another Greene King pub that was offering more than a standard GK beer range with seasonal ale St Edmunds alongside Batemans XXXB and the regular GK IPA. The Griffin was refurbished last year and it was the first time some of us had been in and thought that they'd done a good job with its large modern looking bar, dining room to the rear and a separate pool area.

Our final pub was the third Greene King pub of

the evening, the **Sow & Pigs**. A few weeks previously the painters' had been in to spruce the pub up and they'd done a good job. It was looker neater and tidier than it perhaps had for years yet still retained the pub's fundamental character. 4 ales were available with GK IPA, Morlands Original, Abbot (gravity) and local Cranfield brewery White Park Blonde.

**20th August**

**Blackbirds, Wheatsheaf, Crown and Swan, Flitwick.**

The **Blackbirds** to the north of the town on the Ampthill road was our starting point. The pub is often busy with both drinkers and diners and probably has a younger feel than most of the Flitwick pubs (along with the Bumble Bee). As a Greene King pub the ales were unsurprisingly from that brewery - IPA, Old Speckled Hen and seasonal beer LBW.

A few doors along was the **Wheatsheaf** (Charles Wells) In contrast to the Blackbirds it is more traditional in style with its two bar layout and probably attracts an older clien-



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### Fish & Chips

Every Thursday 6 'til 9pm

**Takeaway Fish of the Day in Norma's homemade crispy batter with hand cut chips, cooked in beef dripping £4.95**

Also available

**Mushy Peas 50p • Scampi & Chips £6.95**

**Sausage & Chips £5.95**

(eat in add £1)

### Sunday Carvery

Every Sunday Noon 'til 3pm

**A carvery of at least 3 meats, 4 freshly cooked vegetables, home made Yorkshire Pudding and a choice of potatoes - £7.50**

**Children's portions available.**

**PRIVATE PARTIES CATERED FOR AT COMPETITIVE RATES**

# Thursday Socials (cont.)

tele. There is usually only one ale - Eagle IPA although occasionally they may add another but don't expect it. It was also busy as there was a darts match taking place in the public bar so we occupied the lounge bar and did our best to ignore plates of food that were being placed on a nearby table for the darts players!

Next was the **Crown** at the other end of the village and not far from the White Horse that recently disappeared forever from the Beds pub map - it has now been demolished with new houses/flats occupying the site. It serves as a very final reminder of what happens to pubs if they're not sufficiently supported.

The Crown, which had Courage Best as their sole real ale, was busy and has two bars including a games room to the front.

Final pub was the **Swan** which sits slightly below the level of the road alongside the railway line by the main roundabouts in the centre of the town. For many years it only served Eagle IPA but now also offers Young's Bitter. There is a handpump in either bar so don't be afraid to ask what ales they have on if it looks like they only have one. It's another good traditional pub and arguably the most reliable beer in town over recent years.

## 27th August

### ***Flying Fox, Potsgrove then to Cock Hotel and Axe & Compass, Heath & Reach***

Some confusion amongst the Thursday evening regulars as the newsletter itinerary included the Cock Hotel whereas the website didn't.

That confusion came later as we'd started off at the **Flying Fox** at Potsgrove which previously, before it's Vintage Inns 'reincarnation', was known as the Fox & Hounds. Potsgrove may not be familiar to all but the pub is easy to find as it's located just off the A5 at the Heath & Reach roundabout. It's a food 'pub' (owned by Mitchells & Butler I think) in the middle of nowhere yet does attract many diners from the nearby area. It does however for such a food type outlet have a good range of ales - Wells Bombardier, Wadworth 6X and

Everards Sunchaser though the range does vary. Our driver for the evening also recommended the fresh orange juice!



*Flying Fox, Potsgrove*

The **Cock Hotel** officially or otherwise was our next stop. It was less busy than the Flying Fox with London Pride, GK Abbot and Tetley on the handpumps. The 'pub' has a separate restaurant and a pleasant courtyard garden.

Moving on to the other end of the village we reached the **Axe & Compass** to find that it was under new management - welcome to Brian and Becke (see *Pub News in Brief* on page 12). Alongside their house beer "Great Train Robbery" there were four Westons ciders available and they gave a strong hint on how Brian would like to see things develop.

## 3rd September

### ***Weathercock, Anchor, and Wheatsheaf Aspley Guise. Station Hotel, Woburn Sands and White Horse, Husborne Crawley.***

The **Weathercock** appears to be at the south end of Woburn Sands in Buckinghamshire, but because of the nuances of the County boundary it is actually in Aspley Guise in Bedfordshire. It's Greene King owned with IPA and Abbot. As it was on the quiet side we didn't stay long, and as the **Station Hotel** (in Bucks) is only 300 yards down the road, we decided on a quick additional visit.

They'd had a beer festival over the Bank Holiday weekend and were selling the beer off at £1.15 a pint. Landlord Kevin took us to the out-buildings where the beers were racked and though there wasn't much left most was very drinkable - for example the Oakham Inferno was still in excellent condition.

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Anyone up to the challenge  
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On to the **Anchor** (Charles Wells) in central Aspley Guise which had Eagle IPA and nearly Caledonian 80/-. I say "nearly" as it had recently run out which was a little disappointing. However the Eagle was in good form and landlord Terry did a nifty bit of cellar work and added Youngs Kew Gold to the pumps before we left. We occupied the traditional public bar though the dining room/lounge offers a contrast if you prefer more comfort.

Next on our itinerary was the **Wheatsheaf** which we discovered had closed early that evening through lack of customers. The car park was the scene of much head scratching to decide where to go next. A few headed for home but some of us decided on the **White Horse** at Husborne Crawley.



*White Horse, Husborne Crawley*

It was open (much to our collective relief) and Angie made us feel welcome after our traumatic and beer-less visit to the Wheatsheaf. We further calmed our nerves with Ringwood Best or Black Sheep Bitter. The latter was the monthly guest ale which was due to change soon.

### **10th September**

#### **Hibbert Arms, Mother Redcap, Globe and Black Horse, Luton**

A tour of the pubs on the North side of the ring road started at 8.30 at the **Hibbert Arms**. An ex-Greene King one-bar pub now owned by Admiral Taverns and run by landlord Steve, who was able to chat to us briefly before heading off to their dominoes match at the Wheelwrights.

There is sufficient trade for one real ale, so smartly they have one real ale, which is often an interesting one selected from a monthly list

of a dozen ales by Steve or some of the regulars. If they agree it's a good one then I understand it's Steve's choice, if not then I think it's blame the regulars time!

So a few Jennings Crag Rat's were ordered and supped before heading just around the corner to the **Mother Redcap**, another one-bar pub this time still owned by Greene King and serving up IPA and Abbot. It was good to talk to a couple of the locals who remembered it from it's "jug & bottle" days when it was a two-bar pub with an off sales serving hatch.

An amusing side show were the poor girls from Magners' who kept trying to tempt us with free samples, although they soon realised that they had picked the wrong group and the wrong night and seemed to enjoy the irony themselves!

Another 100 yard walk took us to the **Globe** and a choice of IPA's - GK or Caledonian Deuchars (regular beers) and Black Sheep Bitter (guest). There were a few musicians strumming guitars and squeezing accordions which provided pleasant musical accompaniment to our conversation and beer drinking.

Finally we moved on to the **Black Horse** where, as expected, we found the best beer range of the evening - Oakham JHB, Idle Brewery Grunter and Cotswold Spring Brewery Old English Rose. The latter being an obvious choice for many of us seeing that Stan the landlord from the English Rose had joined us for the evening! The Black Horse always has real cider - Weston's Old Rosie, which kept the cider drinkers happy too.

### **17th September**

#### **Bull, Barton le Clay**

The **Bull** in Barton proclaims "A cask of ale performs more miracles than a church full of Saints" and tonight the not too saintly members of South Beds CAMRA gathered in the function room of the Bull to discuss all matters 'beer' and to sample the casks. Available were Hook Norton Hooky Dark (3.2%), Sharpe's Doom Bar (4.0%), Adnams Broadside (4.7%) & Hopback Summer Lightning (5.0%).

No actual miracles were performed other than the meeting finishing early enough for us to adjourn to the bar for more banter and beer!



# ***Thursday Socials (cont.)***

The bar is L shaped on two levels, cosy with oak beams, sturdy wooden furniture and beer related quotes adorning the walls.

Our thanks to Bob for a nice pub, good beer and the use of the function room for our branch meeting.

## ***24th September***

### ***Old Sun and Carpenters Arms, Harlington and Queens Head, Tebworth***

Steve and Doug have done a great job on the **Old Sun** since taking over last November and it was there that we started our crawl of all the Harlington pubs (both of them!).

Four ales is the norm with Adnams Bitter, Taylor's Landlord and St Austell Tribute as the 'permanents' and the guest beer for the evening was Cameron's Monkey Stout (4.4%). The latter proved very popular with all who'd turned up - in fact for the first round I think it was the only beer ordered!

Doug is keen on his ales (Steve is still a little in denial!) and this keenness is evident not only in the beer range, but also in the beer festival that is lined up for the weekend of 23rd-25th October and that is expected to feature winning beers from the judging at this year's Great British Beer Festival.

Moving on, we headed up the hill a couple of hundred yards to the **Carpenters Arms** and another good choice of ales with Young's Bitter, Cottage Golden Arrow, and local brewery Potton's Village Bike. The 4th handpump had a White Horse pumpclip but the sticker on the pump clearly, not to mention disappointingly, stated that it wouldn't be on until the following day.

The Dunstable based drinkers decided to leave early and pay an additional visit to the **Queens Head**, Tebworth on the way home. As usual we enjoyed Colin's entertaining stories as well as the Courage Directors and Adnams Broadside 'on gravity' straight from the cellar and Wells Eagle IPA on handpump. Being observant we noticed that the pub had been visited by the painters and decorators and was looking a bit brighter and lighter.

## ***1st October***

### ***Compasses, Greenfield & Chequers and Cross keys, Pulloxhill***

The **Compasses** was busy when we arrived, which was good to see, and if their ales are always as good as the Clarks Ram's Revenge that we sampled then I can understand it! They usually have one or two guest ales alongside Wells Eagle IPA and guest ales on next were Wadworth Malt & Hops and Wychwood Hobgoblin so expect some interesting choices if you visit.

We had a friendly greeting from landlady Laura and an apology from her on behalf of her customers who'd drunk the other guest ale!

Please note It has a ceiling height which may cause problems to anybody over 6 feet 2!

A short drive took us to the **Chequers** at Pulloxhill. It's a well run pub with a dining room (with some good sounding food) and a traditional bar with a quarry tiled floor and a welcoming real fire in Winter. Ales were Shepherd Neame Spitfire and GK IPA on this visit.

The pub also doubles up as the village shop and sells newspapers, milk, coffee, eggs, shampoo, batteries and a few other lines.

A walk through the village took us to the **Cross Keys** which every summer has one of the best pub floral displays in Bedfordshire.

The bar is old with a traditional feel and several small cosy rooms with real beams make it very welcoming. The Bombardier, Eagle and Broadside were welcoming too and were in good nick. There is a popular restaurant in an extension at the rear of the pub.

We're also very glad to report that all the work to restore the pub after it's fire of a few months ago has now been completed. Peter and Sheila, who have been at the helm for around 40 years, did an excellent job keeping the pub open for business even though their living quarters had been destroyed.

***Why not come along and join our Thursday Socials which are listed on page 2 and also on our website [www.sbedscamra.org.uk](http://www.sbedscamra.org.uk)***

# A “Twother” Sir?

The Government has unveiled proposals for a new imperial glass size which means that pubs will soon be able to legally offer a two-thirds of a pint measure (also known as a “twother”).

The proposal for the new legal measure comes after pressure from the pub trade to allow more flexibility in serving draught beer and cider – particularly higher strength versions.

The plans, “to become law at the first available opportunity” were unveiled in a government response to the National Measurement Office’s consultation on specified quantities. The government has also moved to reassure people the measure will not replace the traditional pint.

Lord Drayson, science and innovation minister, said: “There is no question of replacing the British pint, but introducing the option of a new

imperial measure is good news for consumers, providing them with more choice.”

The British Beer & Pub Association welcomed the announcement. Chief executive Brigid Simmonds said: “We are delighted the government has legalised the two thirds of a pint. Pubs will now enjoy greater flexibility and our customers will now be able to have even greater choice about how to enjoy their beer.”

But Tony Payne, chief executive of the Federation of Licensed Victuallers Associations, said a new measure could be confusing for drinkers.

“If some pubs have it and some pubs don’t that could be confusing for customers. I just can’t see many pubs doing this.”

He also suggested that people who normally drink a half could be encouraged to go for a two thirds.

## **CAMRA Good Beer Guide 2010**

***Britain's Best-Selling, Independent Guide to Good Beer and Good Pubs***

Now in its 37th year, CAMRA’s Good Beer Guide is fully revised and updated, with details of more than 4,500 pubs across the country serving the best real ale.

From country inns to urban style bars and backstreet boozers, all selected and reviewed by CAMRA members, this is your definitive guide to finding the perfect pint.

Complete entries for over 4,500 urban and rural pubs, giving details of food, opening hours, beer gardens, accommodation, transport links, pub history, disabled access and facilities for families.

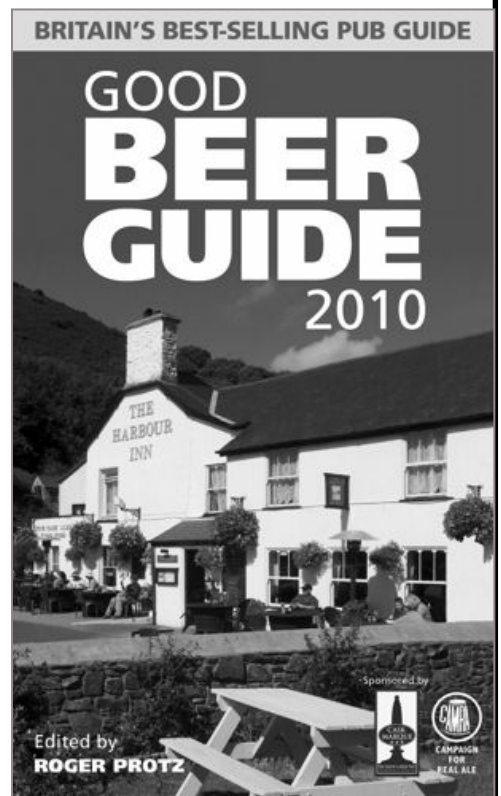
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Unique brewery section listing all the breweries in the UK - micro, regional and national - that brew real ale, with tasting notes for hundreds of their beers

**£10.00\* (online members price) £14.99\* (non-members)**

\* Prices subject to CAMRA’s standard postage and packaging charges



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

# ***Stories From Around The Web***

## **Grand Master or Grand Drunk?**

A leading French chess player turned up drunk and dozed off after just 11 moves in an international tournament in Kolkata, losing the round on technical grounds.

Grandmaster Vladislav Tkachiev arrived for Thursday's match against India's Praveen Kumar in such an inebriated state that he could hardly sit in his chair and soon fell asleep, resting his head on the table, Hindustan Times newspaper reported.

Indian papers carried pictures of the world number 58 sleeping and the organisers' futile attempts to wake him up. The game was awarded to the Indian on the technical ground of Tkachiev being unable to complete his moves within the stipulated time of an hour and 30 minutes, the paper said.

The player was warned and reprimanded by the organisers afterwards but allowed to take part in the remainder of the competition.

## **Achtung! Who's Hidden my Airfield?**

A drunk German pilot had to be guided to land by a rescue helicopter after he radioed the control tower to ask where it was 'hiding'.

The 65-year-old amateur pilot had allegedly drunk beer and wine before taking to the skies above Thuringia in his Cessna light aircraft. Once airborne, he served himself some cocktails while at the controls. Two hours later he was apparently so inebriated that he was unable to read the instruments telling him where the Schoengleida airfield was.

"Come on, I know you're down there," he radioed. "Where the bloody hell have you hidden yourself?"

Control tower staff say he also sang a few songs, cracked a mother-in-law joke and told

them to "pull their fingers out as I've got a party to go to".

The tower scrambled a rescue helicopter which homed in on the Cessna 50 miles west of the airport and gave instructions for the pilot to follow it back.

Officials at Schoengleida said the pilot, who has not been named, made a safe landing. The man was unsteady on his feet and smelt of alcohol as he wobbled from the cockpit to his parked car. Concerned airfield authorities alerted police.

He was stopped on the way home, breathalysed and found to be nearly four times over the legal limit for driving. Now he has lost his driving licence - and his pilot's licence.

## **Drunk and Naked in New Zealand**

An extremely drunk, naked man lost his way at a New Zealand hotel and ended up sleeping in the wrong room, forcing its female occupant to hide in the bathroom, local media reported.

The 29 year-old Australian man had gone back the hotel in the resort town of Queenstown with a woman, but got up in the night and wandered into a bedroom where a couple were sleeping.

"He was a bit surprised that there were two people in his room and he was butt naked," Sergeant Steve Watt of Queenstown police told the Southland Times.

As the intruder slept, the startled woman took refuge in the bathroom as her husband summoned hotel staff.

The man could not remember whom he had been with nor what room he had been in. Police gave him a ride home clad in a hotel bathrobe, but let him off after the guests and hotel decided not to press charges. "It was far too funny," said Watt.

# ***Cider With Ros - ie***

While you're waiting for the fruits of your labour after following my instructions on how to make cider in the previous issue you're probably looking for something nice to drink in the meantime. Fortunately I've done the ground work for you and forced myself to drink a few pints in the interests of scientific research. So here's a list of local hostelryes in South Bedfordshire where you can find some of the real stuff:



<b>Amphill</b>	<b>Queens Head</b> not guaranteed to have cider but when they do, it's worth searching out as it's not your more common varieties.
<b>Dunstable</b>	<b>Globe Westons</b> Old Rosie and Perry
<b>Heath &amp; Reach</b>	<b>Axe &amp; Compasses</b> Westons cider available
<b>Leighton Buzzard</b>	<b>Golden Bell</b> Westons Old Rosie and Traditional Scrumpy
<b>Luton</b>	<b>Black Horse</b> Westons Old Rosie and maybe the occasional perry; <b>Bricklayers Arms</b> Westons Perry
<b>Toddington</b>	<b>Oddfellows Arms</b> Westons Old Rosie and extra goodies during their regular beer festivals

If this isn't enough for you, I can suggest a few other places for you which are not too far away:

<b>Aldbury</b>	<b>Valiant Trooper</b> local cider from Millwhites
<b>Bedford</b>	<b>Wellington Arms</b> Addlestons Cloudy and Westons cider/perry
<b>Clophill</b>	<b>Stone Jug</b> Westons Old Rosie and sometimes Perry
<b>Henlow</b>	<b>Engineers Arms</b> always a good selection of ciders & perries
<b>Hitchin</b>	<b>Half Moon</b>
<b>Stevenage</b>	<b>Our Mutual Friend</b>



I recently finally made it to the Rising Sun on the Grand Union Canal in Berkhamsted which I'd heard served 7 ciders. Imagine my delight when I found that they had 17! Yes, they had extra stock for their October cider festival. If you like your cider then the Rising Sun is the place for you.

This list is not exhaustive and if you know of any gems out there PLEASE let me know and I'll make sure that they are added to the list on our website.

Any questions or queries just drop me an email.

*Cheers,*

*Ros Coombes*

Email: [cider@sbedscamra.org.uk](mailto:cider@sbedscamra.org.uk)

[www.sbedscamra.org.uk/cider.index.asp](http://www.sbedscamra.org.uk/cider.index.asp)

***PS If anyone has any spare apples please let me know on 07971 021882 or by e-mail***

**\*\*\*\* STOP PRESS \*\*\*\***  
**CAMRA's National Cider**  
**Pub of the Year 2009 is**  
**The Orchard Inn**  
**Bristol. BS1 6XT**

# October is Cider & Perry Month

Unlike real ale production, which can happen at any time of the year, real cider & perry can only be made when the fruit is ripe. Great skill goes into producing both products. Great store is placed by the Craft Brewer in the quality of ingredients and variety of flavours created by the malt, hops, yeast and water used to brew the beer.

It is a 'producer' rather than a 'brewer' that makes cider & perry. They may use a mixture of bittersweet and bittersharp cider apples or sweet dessert apples, or a mixture of the two to make cider; but perry can only be made from specialised perry pears, which are high in natural tannin.

The choosing, pressing and blending of the fruit to make cider is just as much of a craft as making beer and produces a vast range of tastes, styles and aromas, similar to those produced in fine wine. Like wine, each year's fruit produces a unique vintage, so much so

that cider and perry have been sometimes called 'The Wine of the West'.

October is a very active time for producers, especially for those who make only a small amount of cider. Harvest time for cider fruit is roughly from September to November and by October production is in full flow.

CAMRA has now set October aside as Cider & Perry Month.

**Look out for  
pubs bearing  
the new  
"REAL CIDER  
SOLD HERE"  
stickers**



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## Letters to the Editor....

*In the summer issue of Beer in Bed(s) your ramblings on the Magners Pear Cider advertisement contains a glaring inexactitude. Your irritation with the phrase 'pear cider' is understandable, but your statement regarding the making of perry from pears is most definitely incorrect. Perry can only be made from perry pears, which are indigenous to, and only grown in, a limited and specifically designated area of southwest England. Were you to make a drink from other pears and call it perry there would be a wide variety of companies and organisations competing to haul you into court!*

*So if you want these people to stop using the phrase 'pear cider', you need to come up with an alternative which is legal.*

*Alan Birkbeck*

*You mentioned in the last Beer in Bed(s) that a well known company was making cider with pears and that it should not be called cider as*

*the Oxford English dictionary says that cider is a drink made from apples.*

*On the 25 August on BBC Breakfast they did a piece on pear cider saying how popular it has become. They went live to an outside broadcast to interview a Hertfordshire Perry maker and he said that his business was up as people where trying his Perry, which can only be made from selected variety of pears normally Blakeney Reds.*

*I would personally say that this new marketing that is making pear cider popular will soon end, but that hopefully some people would have tried Perry along the way.*

*Will these big company's turn their attentions to applejack a spirit? The term "applejack" derives from "jacking", a term for freeze distillation.*

*From the fermented juice, with an alcohol content of less than ten percent, the concentrated result contains thirty to forty percent alcohol, is slightly sweet, and usually tastes and smells of apples.*

*David Carr*



CAMRA is delighted to announce for the first time in their 38 year history that they have 100,000 members.

On hearing the landmark figure co-founder Michael Hardman, said:

*'We would never have believed in 1971 that one day we would have 100,000 members. We would have hailed it as a roaring success if we had managed to attract 1,000 like-minded souls, but we didn't bank on the huge support that was lying in wait for just such a campaign to come along. The secret of CAMRA's success from its early days right up to now, is the contribution made by these members: an eclectic bunch of young and old, rich and poor, men and women, bosses and workers, fat and thin, northern and southern.'*

## **But how did it all happen?**

### **1971 - where it all began...**

CAMRA was founded in 1971 by Michael Hardman, Jim Makin, Graham Lees and Bill Mellor, when an idea of a campaign arose whilst they were bemoaning the state of British beer and pubs whilst on holiday in Ireland.

### **1973 - the word starts to spread...**

Popularity for the then named 'Campaign for the Revitalisation of Ale' quickly grew, and by the end of 1973 there were 5,000 members.

### **1974 - membership grows...**

By 1974, the membership number had risen to 9,000 and the first branches had been formed of which there are over 200 today!

### **1976 - first major success...**

In 1976, CAMRA campaigned for breweries to reveal the OG's (Original Gravity) of their beers after they had initially refused. By testing the beers themselves, CAMRA published the OGs in the 1976 Good Beer Guide. It is now common practice for breweries to promote the strength of the beer on promotional material

and on pump-clips, helping consumers know what they are drinking.

### **Breweries persuaded to continue brewing real ale**

The membership continued to grow following CAMRA's success to persuade breweries such as Bateman's not to close, despite some of the family wanting to sell up, and Fuller's to reverse their decision to stop brewing real ale. Imagine a Fuller's pub with no Pride today?

### **Real campaigning success**

More recently CAMRA actively supported the campaign for licensing laws that allowed pubs to stay open beyond the traditional 11pm closing time and all day Sunday.

There are now approximately 700 breweries in Britain brewing more than 2,500 different ales and many have benefited from Progressive Beer Duty, which CAMRA campaigned for, giving small brewers tax relief.

The variety of real ales now available to enjoy is probably CAMRA's biggest success.

*Why not enjoy a pint of real ale or two in the comfort of a CAMRA Good Beer Guide pub that you helped to select?*

*How about taking advantage of the free or reduced entry to CAMRA beer festivals?*

*....or maybe even volunteer to help at the next Luton Beer Festival in February?*

*Why not venture out on a South Beds CAMRA Thursday 'Social' night and explore some of the great pubs that we have in our area? Or join us on one of our days out?*

*If you join CAMRA, whether you become 'active' in the local branch or not, you can share in the the knowledge that you have joined a successful organisation that does its best to support pubs and promote real ale.*

*....and what a smashing Christmas present!*

It takes all sorts to campaign for real ale

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Please state which CAMRA newsletter you found this form in? .....

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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



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