

SECOND MK MICROPUB OPENS IN STONY!



Less than a year after Milton Keynes' first micropub, the Biergarten in Wolverton, opened, our city now boasts a second one. The Beer Bear in Stony Stratford opened its doors on April 15th.

The micropub is in a historic Victorian building at 86 High Street, Stony, and is brought to

us by local beer champion Franz Florack, who gave us the Biergarten.

Announcing the new micropub, Franz said "We had such a warm reception in Milton Keynes when we opened The Biergarten and have been doing brilliantly in our first year. We feel that the time is right to introduce our fellow beer community to an even bigger selection of excellent beer and to increase the local brewers' visibility too. Beer Bear will offer The Biergarten's brilliant community spirit in a historical building and with even greater variety."



A crowdfunding site launched to fund the new venture raised £6331 when it closed in mid-April, over double the target of £3000. At the opening on Saturday April 15th over 400 people drank over 650 pints of beer, getting the Bear off to a flying start.

The new micropub will be open from noon to 8pm Tuesdays to Thursdays, noon to 10pm Friday and Saturday, and noon to 6pm on Sundays. It is closed Mondays. It will have one firkin of Real Ale on tap and four kegs. Three of these will be keykeg, so are also classed by CAMRA as Real Ale. The fourth will be craft keg. There will also be about 150 different bottles and cans from London, Bristol, Yorkshire and the local area to drink in or take away.

Milton Keynes and North Bucks CAMRA welcomes this new addition to our local beer scene and wishes it every success.



Editor's Beef

Diary Dates

Locking Horns

*Brewery &
LocAle News*

Pub News

*Branch Pub
Awards 2017*

*Brewport Pagnell
former Newport
Pagnell Breweries*

*Save The Queen's
Head Tebworth*

*A Surprising First
for Milton Keynes*

*Ten Green (or
Brown!) Bottles*

*Branch Team Wins
Pub Quiz*

*Glasses, Graves,
and Good Beer
Belgium Trip 2017*

*WOT we did at the
CAMRA AGM 2017*

Membership Form

FEATURED IN THIS ISSUE

The Wheatsheaf

Maids Moreton

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www.greatoakleybrewery.co.uk



Editor's Beef

Firstly, my apologies for the late running of this service and any inconvenience this may have caused. On my return from another trip to the other side of the world at the end of March I found the cupboard was bare in terms of articles for the forthcoming issue.



Many thanks to the Branch stalwarts who then stepped into the breach to supply excellent copy on very short notice. However we really do need more contributors. This is Milton Keynes beer lovers' magazine and I'd like to hope there are beer lovers out there who have something to say. Articles and contributions to editor@mkcamra.org.uk are always most welcome!

Most of all we are always chronically short of accurate, verifiable Pub, Club and Brewery News. In particular I'd appeal to local brewers and pub/club landlords: this is your opportunity to publicise news, events, new beers and ciders etc. It gives you FREE PUBLICITY! All you need to do is take advantage of it. Drop us a line...

Meanwhile, in the wider world, a General Election campaign is in progress as we write. CAMRA is not a party political organisation. But we do urge all parties not to forget that traditional real ale and cider, enjoyed in a traditional pub or club, is an important and we believe constructive part of our national culture and something which is part of the unique contribution our country can make to the world.

Promoting responsible drinking in thriving local pubs and clubs, rather than "pre-loading" on cheap canned keg fizz flogged off cheap as a loss leader by supermarkets before lurching inebriatedly onto the streets, is surely the better way for society, especially its younger adult members, to go. Local pubs and clubs also generate local employment and, if shorn rather than skinned by the tax man, income for the Treasury.

Whatever the complexion of the next Government, we hope as it wrestles with Brexit and other thorny national issues it will give us more of the tightening up, announced on March 24th, of planning loopholes enabling much loved local pubs to be demolished or converted into shops etc. without a planning application. Also more of the welcome rates relief offered to pubs in the outgoing Chancellor's Spring Budget. But less of the 2p a pint increase in beer duty and penny on a pint of cider announced at the same time. The Beer Duty Escalator policy, to which this would be an unwelcome return, contributed to 3700 pub closures, a 24% fall in pub beer sales, and the loss of 75,000 jobs.

We hope candidates campaigning, and voters voting, will keep our unique beer, cider, pub and club culture and its interests in mind in the Election.

Cheers!

Steve Brady
Editor

NEXT ISSUE

The next issue of Beer Moos will be published on or around Sept 1st. We must have your stories, news and advertisements by: Aug 21st. Late copy cannot be guaranteed entry.

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It will be apparent that a number of Branch Offices remain vacant this year. If you are a member of MK & NB CAMRA and might be interested in filling any of them, please contact our Chairman, David Martin (contact details above), who will be happy to advise what the posts involve.

Trading Standards

If you have a complaint about any unfair trading practice, such as short measures or misleading product promotion, contact Milton Keynes Trading Standards at PO BOX 105, Civic Offices, 1 Saxon Gate East, Milton Keynes MK9 3HH Telephone 01908 252433. Email: tsd@milton-keynes.gov.uk or Buckingham Trading Standards at 5-7 Walton Street, Aylesbury, Bucks HP20 1UP, Tel: 08454 040506. Local Bus information & timetables are available at www.arrivabus.co.uk

To Advertise

To place an advert or enquire about our rate card please contact: Neil Richards - 01536 358670



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Diary Dates

Please note that diary information is always subject to change. Check online for latest information at

www.mkcamra.org.uk

Branch meetings are held on a variable day in the first week of every month. For dates and venues see website.

JUNE

Weds 7th - Branch Meeting, 8pm, The Cannon, High Street, Newport Pagnell

Thurs 15th - South-West MK Pub Crawl. Meet at the Prince George, Tattenhoe, at 19:00. Taxi to the Lowndes Arms, Whaddon, then return to the Nut and Squirrel, Westcroft.

Fri 23rd - Evening Social from 19:00 onwards at the Conservative Club, High Street, Stony Stratford, who are holding a Beer Festival.

JULY

Branch Meeting in first week.

Tues 11th - Bletchley Crawl. Meet 19:30 at the Three Trees. Thence to the Old Swan and the Eight Belles.

Sat 22nd - Lavendon and Olney Afternoon Crawl. Meet Green Man Lavendon, 12:30 (Bus 21 from CMK Point 11:41, Newport 11:59, Olney 12:13). Or Two Brewers, Olney 15:00.

AUGUST

Branch Meeting in first week.

Tues 8th to Sat 12th - Great British Beer Festival at Olympia. Get your tickets from <https://www.gbbf.org.uk/>
Thurs 10th - Quiz Night at the Cricketers, Oldbrook. Meet there at 19:00.

Fri 11th - Branch Day Trip by Train to Great British Beer Festival. Meet 11:00 CMK Rail Station.

Sat 19th - Winslow and Buckingham Afternoon Crawl. Meet 12 noon in George, Winslow. X60 bus from CMK.

SEPTEMBER

Branch Meeting in first week.

Sat 2nd - Stony Stratford Afternoon Crawl. Meet 15:00 in the George, Stony High St.

Thurs 14th - Great Horwood Social. Meet Wetherspoons CMK 19:30 for shared taxis to The Crown and The Swan and return.

OCTOBER

Branch Meeting in first week.

Sat 7th - Newport Pagnell Crawl. Meet in The Bull 12:30.

See website for further information.

If you would like to receive details of Branch events by email, please contact social@mkcamra.org.uk

Have you Scored yet?

CAMRA's National Beer Scoring System (NBSS) is an easy 0-5 point scale for judging beer quality. It is used to find out which pubs consistently sell well kept ale. The results help us to decide which pubs to consider for the Good Beer Guide. All CAMRA members can submit beer scores for any pub in the UK.

Please go to whatpub.com and log in using your membership number and password. Locate the pub's web page. If you are using the desktop version, Beer Scoring appears on the right hand side of the page. If you are using the mobile version, click on the *Submit Beer Scores* tab.

Enter the date that you visited the pub, the name of the brewery and the name of the beer. Using the scale below, select your score. Once complete, click on Submit Score. If you would like more information on beer scoring, please contact database@mkcamra.org.uk

0	No Real Ale	No cask-conditioned ale available
1	Poor	Beer that is anything from barely drinkable to drinkable with considerable resentment.
2	Average	Competently kept, drinkable pint but doesn't inspire in any way, not worth moving to another pub but you drink the beer without really noticing.
3	Good	Good beer in good form. You may cancel plans to move to the next pub. You want to stay for another pint and may seek out the beer again.
4	Very Good	Excellent beer in excellent condition.
5	Perfect	Probably the best you are ever likely to find. A seasoned drinker will award this score very rarely.

Locking Horns

A space for, and to spark, frank and open debate on issues around Real Ale and Cider. Views expressed are purely those of the authors. In this issue Bucks Star Brewer and CAMRA member Datis Gol gives us

AN ECO GROWL



What I love about beer is that it is an ancient drink some 7,000 years old with evidence of its earliest existence found in an area once called Mesopotamia, today bordering Iran and Iraq. To this day, quality beer is regarded by the vast majority of the drinking community, including me, as a very important and essential beverage.

A pertinent question facing beer-drinkers today is whether they wish to be served the purest form of beer, a drink which requires delicate management by a skilful publican, or beer which is subjected to the mainstream dispense method, devised to maximise its shelf-life and allow a more hands-off approach to beer management. This is a debate which appears to pit members of the beer-drinking community against each other, with the thrust of the argument about the use of CO₂ in mainstream dispense, primarily because of the impact it has on the quality of the beer. The point, as I consider it, is that technology is being used as a substitute for human skill and talent and it is at the expense of a smooth, quality real beer.

Technological innovation attempts to address the key dispense issue by way of key kegs, which introduce a barrier between the CO₂ and the beer. There is an ecological consequence of key kegs which is the waste packaging created after each use, although I'm confident that with time, the waste packaging element will be addressed. A zero-waste approach to consumerism

is being given more and more serious consideration as we become aware of the environmental footprint we are leaving behind, not forgetting the North Pacific garbage patch, estimated to be 3 times the size of the UK. Given that one of Bucks Star Beers core values is about ecology, we believe it is important to invest in zero-waste solutions and therefore devised the Growler Swap scheme, which we recently started to trial at some farmers markets. Growlers are reusable glass vessels and work in the same way as casks, except they involve smaller quantities, so it accommodates the requirements of individual drinkers. The vessels are costly, which means that in order to encourage locals to buy into the scheme, we have to sell the vessels at a small loss. However, I hope that customers of the scheme will appreciate the beer enough to return for a Swap - saving the planet can really start with a beer!



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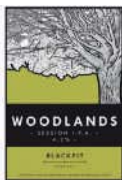
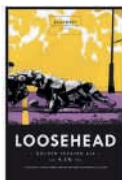
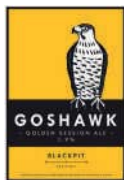
www.THEMITRE.org.uk

Brewery & LocAle News

Abington is a new brewery which was started by Peter Brown as a home brewery in Abington, Northampton and was set up as a company last year. It is now producing commercially in 50 litre batches at the family garden centre in Buckingham. It is offering Nelson, a 5.5% golden ale, in bottles available from the Buckingham Garden Centre.



Blackpit Brewery in Stowe is opening on June 17th. Information about their opening party and news of their brews is available on their website, www.blackpitbrewery.co.uk. They will initially be brewing Goshawk, a 3.9% golden summer session ale, Loosehead, a 4.2% golden ale, and Woodlands, a 4.2% IPA. They cuckoo-brewed the first 16-gallon batch of Loosehead at Towcester Mill Brewery so it could be sold at the two Twickenham real ale bars at the RBS Six Nations fixture on Sunday, 26th February. We wish both these new arrivals every success!



Bucks Star Brewery was finalist in three categories at the Small and Medium Enterprise Bucks Business Awards - Buckingham Business of the Year, Cranfield University Entrepreneur of the Year and Open University Green Business of the Year.

Bucks Star also won runner up jointly with a marketing company called Red Giraffe in the OU Green Business of the Year. The awards ceremony was held at the Double Tree Hilton Hotel at MK Don's Stadium.

They are helping organise, and will be represented at, the Bucks Festival, organised by Small Business Events MK, which is being held on 3rd June 2017 at York House in Stony Stratford, MK11 1JQ. Please visit www.smallbusinessevents.co.uk for further information. Entrance is free to members of the public.



Builders have now begun work on refurbishing the Brewery's fire-damaged premises at Stonebridge, Milton

Keynes, with a view to Bucks Star returning home as soon as possible. They are also looking to recruit a graduate trainee brewer

– if interested send your covering letter and CV to info@bucksstar.beer.

Horne's Brewery's beers were a sell-out at the recent Spring Beer Fest at York House in Stony Stratford. The Bow Brickhill brewery is getting its beer about - the Kings Head in Holt, Norfolk, are featuring Horne's as a guest brewery for the month of May.



The brewery will shortly be brewing a new beer for summer, which will be launched at an evening event at the Beer Bear as part of their crowd funder campaign.

Brewer Ryan Horne told Beer Moos: "Business is very good at the moment and it's looking to be a busy summer ahead. We are attending several food and drink festivals throughout the summer, so keep up to date with where we are by following our Facebook and Twitter feeds. Also exciting news...plans are afoot for an expansion of the brewery later in the year!"

Rockhopper Brewery of Luton, run by Darren Oakley, has recently launched two new brews, although they will vary them slightly in each batch to keep things interesting. Pale is brewed using New Zealand Cascade hops and has citrus overtones. Saison is described as "a cross between a Belgian saison and a hopped up, but malty pale ale. You'll get yeast derived fruity esters and a gentle spiciness traditional to the saison style married to a good malt character, and a different hop/flavour profile with each variation." Both beers are available



from the Biergarten in Wolverton, the Woburn Ale House in Woburn and the Bald Buzzard in Leighton Buzzard.

Whistling Kite of Kettering closed at the New Year. The brewing equipment was sold to a buyer in Serbia. Živel! **XT** in Long Crendon have completed the refurbishment of their brewery shop and tasting room. The new look is designed for the beer lover who wants to sample a selection of draught XT and Animal beers where they



are brewed. The improved tasting room will have longer opening hours and a wider range of beers and other drinks to try and buy.



XT is a founding member of the Oxford Brewers Alliance, which is a group of 14 local breweries. The Alliance promoted Oxford Beer Week in early May.

New Beers for Spring will include XT 666 described as "the number of the

yeast beast, weighing in at 6.66% South Seas Black Magic, a dark and moody beer heavily hopped with Green Bullet, Wakatu, and Dr Rudi hops from New Zealand. They say the Devil finds wort for idle hands".



The National Trust Waddesdon estate commissioned XT to brew another batch of the Quince Ale – made with quince from the famous Rothschild estate. This special ale will only be available from the Waddesdon shop.



XT's Animal range is joined by ORCA – a 4.6% "SMASH" beer: Single Malt Single Hop – pale English Maris Otter malt paired with Wakatu hops – highlighting the delights

of this perfect pair.

Pub News

The **Biergarten** in Wolverton continues to hold its popular Bierclub events on the third Wednesday of every month. They will also be selling beer at the Milton Keynes annual Summer Feast of local produce at Bradwell Abbey on Sunday July 17th.

The **Bletchley Arms**, which surprisingly is in Bletchley, is now being worked on by the builders and is expected to re-open as the town's first Wetherspoon's in August.



The **Bull & Butcher** at Akeley reopened in February with new tenants. This has been a solid real ale pub and hopefully this will continue.

The **Cannon** in Newport Pagnell High Street, a long-standing beer drinkers' favourite, has been given a facelift. However our reporter found four good beers on handpump as always.



The **Cowper's Oak** at Weston Underwood, a fine village pub which has often appeared in the Good Beer Guide, is up for sale. Local residents feared it might be closed and turned into a house, so the local Parish Council applied successfully to Milton Keynes Council to have the pub designated as an Asset of Community Value.



As a spokesman for Weston Underwood Parish Council put it: "The Cowper's Oak is a traditional, successful community-focused village pub with a highly-regarded restaurant, function room, beer garden and children's play area. This allows local residents to socialise without leaving the village and it is very much regarded as the hub of village life." The parish council adds that the pub also attracts visitors from other parts of Milton Keynes and is a popular stop for local walkers.

ACV status will now give this much-loved pub, which has been serving the village since the 19th Century, substantial protection.



As an object lesson in the likely alternative for the people of Weston Underwood, the former **Green Man** in Silver Street, Newport Pagnell is up for sale for nearly £3/4

million as a "fully renovated five-bedroom family home with character features." It was more valuable to the local community, if not the current vendor, as a much-loved local serving excellent beer.

The **Lamb**, Stoke Goldington, a regular in the Good Beer Guide, continues to hold its monthly folk music sessions on the fourth Friday of every month. Over the summer, they



will be holding their annual Salcey Saunter on Thursday July 27th, at which a large selection of vintage cars assembles in the pub car park. They also plan to hold a local music festival, Woodstock 2017, in their garden some time in in September.



The Good Beer Guide-listed **Mitre** in Buckingham, our 2015 Pub of the Year, has been sold to Peter Edwards, a business/musical friend of the late licensee Keith Templeman.

We wish Peter every success in keeping the Mitre up to

the superb standard set by the late lamented Keith and maintained since his passing by his widow Jane.

The **Prince of Wales** at Steeple Claydon is a village pub that is bucking the trend of pub closures. In May last year the pub was throwing beer away because there were no customers to drink it. At that time Frank Mahon and his partner Hillary took over as tenants having moved from the **Phoenix**. They quickly built up the trade, and the pub is now turning over twenty barrels a week of which six are cask ale. Frank has also acquired Cask Marque accreditation for his expertise in the cellar. The pub is now a true community pub, the hub of the village. Various organisations hold regular meetings in the pub, these include the village football club, which the pub sponsors, the allotment society and a fishing club. The pub also organises a Christmas meal for the over 70s. It runs a darts team, a dominoes team and an Aunt Sally team who all play in local leagues. A Chinese takeaway from a nearby village has relocated into the kitchen and restaurant at the pub.

The **Swan** in Milton Keynes Village has won the title of 'Best Pub in Buckinghamshire' for the second year running at The National Pub & Bar Awards.

In the 2016 Pub & Bar Awards, the Swan subsequently



went on to win 'Best Pub in the South East'. The 94 "Best in County" pubs across the UK

are in the running to be named Best Pub in Britain at the National Pub & Bar Awards grand final at BAFTA in London on Tuesday 23rd May.

The Swan deserves all the more credit for these achievements as just before Christmas 2011 the pub was devastated by fire just two days after it had re-opened following an extensive refurbishment.



The **Wheatsheaf**, Bow Brickhill, reopened as the **Wheatsheaf Bar and Grill** on April 27th after a £120,000 refurbishment. It is run by local company Heroic Pubs,

which also owns the Anchor at Aspley Guise and the Knife & Cleaver at Houghton Conquest. Head chef at The Wheatsheaf Pub & Grill is Lewis Moore from Deanshanger,

who has worked at The Birch at Woburn and the Hand & Flowers in Marlow. He is currently working at Heroic Pubs' Anchor at Aspley Guise. The menu will focus on chargrilled premium British steaks and daily changing fish and shellfish specials. We wish the relaunched pub every success.

The **White Hart** in Sherington suffered a fire on April 10th, but prompt action by local firemen saved the pub. 30 firefighters from Newport Pagnell, Olney, Broughton, Great Holm and Winslow used three main jets, two hose reels, eight sets of breathing apparatus, a turntable ladder and a thermal imaging device to get everyone out unharmed. The pub remains open for beer and its annual Beer Festival over the May Day Bank Holiday weekend went ahead as usual.

Club News



On Saturday 15th April Milton Keynes & North Bucks CAMRA Vice-Chairman Alan Fursdon presented the Branch Club of the Year Certificate to Sheila Tompkins, Secretary of the **Club, Hanslope**. A number of local CAMRA members went along to enjoy the convivial surroundings of this excellent club, to which CAMRA members are welcome



for a nominal charge of 50p a head.

KEEP US POSTED!

Why not get your beer/cider-related events listed on our Branch website: www.mkcamra.org.uk

Email us on: webmaster@mkcamra.org.uk

Or post on our Social Media accounts:

Facebook: <https://m.facebook.com/mkcamra/>

Twitter: [@MKCAMRA](https://twitter.com/MKCAMRA)

Branch Pub Awards 2017



Franzi Florack of the Biergarten receives her certificate



Pub of the Year - Milton Keynes, Wetherspoons



Pub of the Year - Milton Keynes, Wetherspoons

Milton Keynes and North Bucks Branch Pub of the Year 2017 is Wetherspoons', Silbury Boulevard, Central Milton Keynes. On Tuesday 21st March Branch Chairman David Martin presented Spoons' manager and active CAMRA Branch member Alex Jonas with his certificate. This is the second time this vibrant local branch of this pro-Real-Ale pub chain has won this honour.

Cider Pub of the Year was the Red Lion Fenny Stratford.

Awards were also made to the Cross Keys, Woolstone for Most Improved Pub. The Chairman's Award for Contribution to the MK Beer Scene was shared between the Draft House, CMK, and the Biergarten Wolverton. Franzi Florack of the Biergarten received her certificate from Branch Chairman David Martin at the Spring Beer Festival at York House, Wolverton on Saturday 25th March.



Guy Plumb of the Red Lion receives his Cider Pub of the Year certificate



Most Improved Pub - Cross Keys, Woolstone

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Brewport Pagnell

former Newport Pagnell Breweries

There used to be two notable breweries in Newport Pagnell. There was Rogers's Brewery, often simply referred to as Newport Brewery, which once stood where the building containing Boots and Newport Pagnell Medical Centre now stands, and Wilmer's, located behind The Cannon. Both have interesting histories with fires, bankruptcies, financial shenanigans, and – demonstrating that there is indeed nothing new under the sun – takeovers and closures.

There was also The Cannon Brewery or Wilmer's Brewery, which was run in its heyday by William and John Wilmer. Again it was very successful. Eventually it was taken over by the Aylesbury Brewery Company. During the Second World War the public house connected with this brewery was known as the 'Gin Shop' and was popular with local farmers and tradesmen.

Rogers's Brewery, the Brewery House and Brewery Cottage



Standing proudly between the Dolphin pub and the building which Boots now occupies, stands Brewery House, a listed building with a

Queen Anne frontage (1702-14) and magnificent front door case and porch. Some original 18th century panelling still features inside but its tall four imposing chimneys were taken down in the 1960's and restored in the 1990's. Research showed that the fine frontage was an addition to a much older stone building. A firm of solicitors is currently based there.

In the 1770s the house belonged to one Thomas Holt a local attorney and steward to the Lord of the Manor who went bankrupt in 1779 and disappeared in disgrace from the town. The next resident was Thomas Meacher, a brewer from Ivinghoe, who founded a malting next to the house in the 1780s. A newspaper reference mentions a fire at the malting in 1791 and in 1810 the luckless Meacher was declared bankrupt as well. By this time however he had got a brewery going on the site in Market Hill where the Health Centre now is. But there must have been a jinx on the enterprise because the new owners, William Stapleton and Thomas Warriner Baseley, went

bankrupt in turn in 1816. Despite all this, the brewery was establishing itself and had 20 freehold and leasehold public houses when it was purchased by Joseph Parsons, a brewer from St Albans, and his brother-in-law Dr John Rogers, a surgeon. Thomas Rogers, the father of John, was also a doctor, and had previously run a malting at the back of the Rose and Crown in Silver Street, but he too had died bankrupt.

Things did however begin to improve at the brewery, and it became very successful. After Joseph Parsons's death the brewery was



incorporated as Rogers and Co. and traded under that name till taken over in 1875. When John Rogers died in 1859 the company passed to yet another doctor in the family - George Osborn Rogers MD - and yet another brother-in-law, one William Bateman Bull. When he wasn't running the brewery, William Bull trained nonconformist preachers, which some might think a somewhat contradictory combination, bringing to mind Oliver Goldsmith's sardonic lines:

*When Methodist preachers come down,
A-preaching that drinking is sinful,
I'll wager the rascals a crown,
They always preach best with a skinful!*

Bull was a friend of Rev John Newton of Olney, the anti-slavery campaigner and author of Amazing Grace, and of the poet William Cowper.

In 1875 the brewery and its estate of by now 34 tied houses were sold to Allfrey and Lovell of Bedford for the sum of £20,100. They changed the name to the Newport Pagnell Brewery Company and ran it till 1919 when another Bedford-based company whose name, Charles Wells, may be familiar to readers, took it over. They had their own brewery and only wanted the public houses to augment their estate, and brewing ceased. The old Newport brewery stood empty till 1924 when it was leased to W J Cooper, an agricultural engineer from Gayhurst.

Cooper bought the premises outright in 1928, established a factory called Phoenix Works on the site, and lived at Brewery House. The company had another small plant by

the canal wharf in Great Linford but the site is now given over to housing. In 1994 the old Newport works, which by this time included a car dealership, was demolished to make way for the new health centre.

There's some continuity in this, because Rogers's beers - stout in particular - were recommended by Dr Rogers as a cure-all-cum-pick-me-up for any locals feeling poorly. Nice as the medicine undoubtedly was, one suspects that too enthusiastic resort to it might have left the patient feeling even more poorly the following morning!

Next to the brewery, on what is now the road leading to Queens Avenue, there used to be a cottage, called Brewery Cottage. This had once been the original Green Man public house with a license granted in 1784. Rogers's head brewer, one Charles Silsby, lived in Brewery Cottage and seems to have been a rather eccentric character. He kept a pet monkey that went with him everywhere, sometimes drinking beer from the barrels, getting drunk and falling in, and having to be rescued. They didn't bother much with Health and Safety in those days!

Charles Silsby died in 1861 and for a few years his son lived in the cottage and ran a cooper's shop there, but within three years the cottage was demolished to make way for a cattle market which lasted till the early 1950s when Queen's Avenue was built. Beer Moos (moo-hoo!) regrets its passing.....!!



John Wilmer and Sons - The Cannon Brewery



Less eventful and somewhat less picaresque was the story of Newport's other significant brewery. The Wilmers were a

family from Gayhurst and in 1860, brothers William and John Wilmer set up a brewery behind the Cannon public house. Known as the Cannon Brewery, it produced mineral waters as well as beers. Some of its bottles have been preserved in the town museum in Silver Street. Under the management of George Sampson of Lathbury, Wilmers brewed on the site till the late 1920s, when Aylesbury Brewery Company (ABC) bought the pub, but closed the brewery. The brewery buildings, including its tall chimney, were demolished in 1980, bringing the history of brewing

in Newport Pagnell to a close.

The town now awaits some enterprising local craft brewer to restart it!

Jim Scott

The author is indebted to Newport Pagnell Historical Society for information on the town's brewing past. Their website is a treasure-trove of fascinating local history.

Visit it here www.mkheritage.co.uk/nphs

More details can be found here http://clutch.open.ac.uk/schools/greenpark99/newport_brewery6.html

Save The Queen's Head Tebworth

Please help us save our local!

MK and North Bucks Branch received this appeal for help from a pub not far outside our area. We think it's a deserving cause.



The Queen's Head, Tebworth, Bedfordshire is under imminent threat of closure. Yet another local pub could be lost to developers! Charles Wells have placed the pub on the market and have rejected our initial offer so we desperately need to raise more funds to buy and renovate our village pub.

Our vision is to create a beautiful pub and garden that is the hub of our community and beyond; a free house serving quality ales, food and drink, a range of community services, and a sustainable community garden. We want to continue popular events such as Friday night music sessions and monthly folk night but we also have exciting plans for regular beer (and cider) festivals, outdoor food and music events, workshops and more!

We have formed a Community Interest Company and have already raised over £150,000 from within our small community but we need more. We launched our Crowd Funding campaign via www.crowdfunder.co.uk at Folk Night at the Queen's Head on Wednesday 5th April 2017. We need to spread our message far and wide.

Please 'like' and 'share' on Facebook page

<https://www.facebook.com/savethequeenshead/#>

Follow us on Twitter: [@savetheQH](https://twitter.com/savetheQH)

Please follow us, request all CAMRA members to follow us and re-tweet our tweets far and wide!

Please look us up on www.crowdfunder.co.uk and either donate to our cause, or buy community shares (for a range of tempting rewards) in a wonderful community pub.

A Surprising First for Milton Keynes

Most people know that Milton Keynes – specifically Bletchley – was the location of the famous code breakers of World War Two. But how many realise that it was also the birthplace of the drink now known as Bloody Mary? The story has only come to light thanks to papers recently discovered in Spain by Professor Rolf Piola at the University of Navarra while researching the archives of Spanish king Philip II.



It all happened in Great Linford in the 1550s at the then newly-built Nag's Head inn. Queen Mary Tudor was determined to return Reformation England to the Catholic fold by the simple expedient of burning Protestants – heretics in her view – at the stake. And when on her royal travels she came to witness this edifying spectacle outside St Andrew's church, the royal retinue would seek refreshment in the Nag's Head which was the only suitable place in the neighbourhood at the time – the manor wasn't built till 1678, over 100 years later.

This left Thomas Shouler, the Nag's Head landlord, with the problem of what to serve a monarch who, if you got on the wrong side of her, could make your life (or death!) very nasty indeed. But her courtiers came to his rescue for, to remain in the feared queen's favour, they always travelled with extensive supplies of exotic delicacies to tickle the royal palate.

By the time the retinue had reached Linford many of these were exhausted. However there did remain a small cask of vodka, the very first in the country, which Tsar Ivan the Terrible, who ruled Muscovy (as Russia was then called) from 1547 to 1584, had sent to Queen Mary as a coronation gift. And they also had a few examples of a new and hugely expensive fruit grown from seeds brought from South America in 1519 by the conquistador Hernan Cortez and gifted to the queen's husband Philip II of Spain – the tomato. Ice in those days was cut from frozen lakes and rivers in winters and stored in igloo-like ice-houses for use in the rest of the year, so a horseman

was dispatched to the also newly-built Grange at North Crawley for supplies from the ice-house there – at the time this was the nearest to Great Linford.

Thus when the queen came to the inn ready for refreshment, a concoction of vodka, crushed tomatoes, and ice was offered her by a very nervous landlord. It was served in a pewter bowl with a silver spoon and must have looked – and tasted – very odd, for early tomatoes were much harsher than modern varieties; they were even nicknamed 'poison apples!' But it seems that the queen liked it – indeed she several times commanded the bowl to be refilled – and the landlord and royal courtiers heaved discrete sighs of relief.

With the queen's favouring it, this drink – named a Royal Mary in her honour – became fashionable among those rich enough to afford its ingredients. And when Queen Mary died in 1558 to be succeeded by her half-sister Elizabeth, it became known as Bloody Mary as did the queen for whose pleasure it was created.

So, next time you order a Bloody Mary in your local, remember it all started in Great Linford, right here in Milton Keynes. And some people say we have no history!

Continued on page 15

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Ten Green (or Brown!) Bottles

Beer can get sunburn! The same ultra-violet rays in sunlight that turn us to lobsters or to toast react with substances in hops to produce very off flavours. Americans call this 'skunking', as the contaminant produced is the very same stuff that skunks spray in self-defence. Adding sunblock to beer would do little to enhance its taste, so it's important to shield beer from UV in the first place. In casks, kegs, or cans that's not a problem, but you have to take steps if the beer is bottled.

Beer bottles are usually made of glass rather than plastic. Glass normally has a clear to greenish tint, but for beer, dark brown is to be preferred. Technically this is called amber glass, and it gets its colour from adding iron, sulphur, and carbon to the glass melt. This kind of glass absorbs nearly all ultra-violet and other harmful rays falling on it, which is why nowadays most beers come in dark brown bottles. Dark green bottles offer some protection, but not as complete as brown.

In times past, bottles came in any number of shapes shades and sizes, but today they are mostly standardised at 30 centilitres (cl) in the Netherlands, and 33cl and 50cl in most of the world including the UK and Europe. 33cl is just over a half pint in old money and 50cl a little under a full one (0.58 and 0.88 for pedants!)

Non-metric USA has its own standards, 12 US fluid ounces (35.5cl) being the commonest. (By the way, drinkers nostalgic for pre-metric Imperial measures should bear in mind that US fluid ounces are not the same as our old ones.)

Shapes are mostly standardised too, to allow bottles to fit automatic filling machines. Familiar ones are the dumpy Steinie bottles preferred by many Belgian brewers (e.g Duvel, Achouffe), and the slenderer shapes that most other brewers use. Larger sizes in Europe are 75cl – the same volume as a standard wine bottle – and in the US they have 22 US fl oz (65cl) 'Bombers' and, for the seriously thirsty, 40 US fl oz (120cl) 'Forties.' A recent



fashion in craft-beer bars is the Growler – a refillable flask whose volume varies – 1 and 2 litres or 64 and 32 US fl oz.

Newport Pagnell museum houses a large collection of historic beer bottles and containers, and most of them are of local origin. Their website contains a fascinating detailed article on the collection and can be visited here www.mkheritage.co.uk/nphs. The museum is only open once a month, on the final Sunday. Details are all in the website.

Jim Scott

BRANCH TEAM WINS PUB QUIZ

On Tuesday February 28th Milton Keynes and North Bucks Branch held a Branch Social at the Draft House in Central Milton Keynes. As they were holding their weekly Pub Quiz some of the dozen CAMRA members who turned up entered the quiz.

Beer – at least Real Ale! - clearly doesn't addle your brains because the Branch team comprising Jenny Ellway, Jim Scott, Phil Swinbank and our Vice-Chairman Alan Fursdon won the Quiz!



Why don't you come along and join the fun on one of our Branch Socials. See Branch Diary in this issue for details!

Glasses, Graves, and Good Beer Belgium Trip 2017

Five-thirty am starts don't suit everybody! Yet that was the small hour when our coach, and driver Colin, had to set out from its base in Henley-in-Arden for this year's cross-channel trip to Belgium, calling at Northampton and Milton Keynes Coachway to collect its contingent of cheerful travellers. The morning was misty but, even so, there were no motorway problems, and we arrived at the Channel Tunnel terminal in good time for the 10.50 am crossing.

Watches advanced to Continental Time, we made good progress to our first stop, Brasserie Thiriez in Esquelbec in northern France. This quite large brewery sits in a village behind Dunkirk and has a pleasant garden and characterful visitor centre, where, after an inspection of the brewery, three beers were on draught for us. Some of us had tasted Thiriez beers at the recent Stevenage beer festival so knew already how excellent they were; the others had the pleasure of finding out, and it was all too soon that we piled back on our coach for the short drive to our hotel in Ostend where we would spend the next three nights.

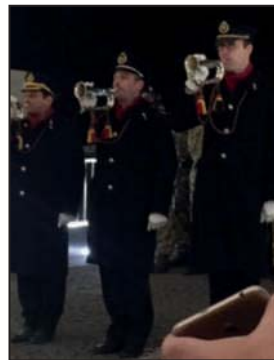


Ostend is quite a big town and has many bars, but for the beer lover there is really only one place and that is 't Botteltje also known as Café Botteltje (it means 'Little Bottle' in Dutch). The beer choice here is truly amazing and it was only a few minutes walk from the hotel, so if the bar staff there had been looking forward to a quiet

evening our group made sure they didn't get one! The signature beer of this bar is Karmeliet Tripel on draft but, so seriously do Belgians take matching their beer with the glass it is served in, that your scribe was firmly informed that all the bar's stock of Karmeliet glasses were in use, and that until some were returned and washed he would have to wait or drink something else. Since there were about 300 other beers to



try from, this was not too tragic, and in any case a clean Karmeliet glass came available about half-an-hour later. Belgium is as noted for its chocolate as for its beer, so next day – St Patrick's Day as it happened – started with a visit to Roose's Chocolate World in Bruges. After that we began a tour of World War One cemeteries. Belgium has been called the 'cockpit of Europe' as so many wars have been fought on its soil, and this was never more the case than during WW1. We visited Tyne Cot cemetery at Passchendaele (11958 graves) and the German



Langemark cemetery at nearby Poelkapelle (24917 graves). In what's now a peaceful rural landscape it's hard but necessary to remember the scale of slaughter just 100 years ago, and how young were many of those who died – often just 16 and 17, bringing to mind the poet A E Housman's lament for

'The Lads Who Will Never Be Old.'

Later we spent time in Ypres, or Ieper in Dutch, or 'Wipers' to British WW1 squaddies. This town looks authentically mediaeval but in fact it dates from the 1920s as the original town was all but destroyed in the war, and Germany rebuilt it as part of its war reparations. After visiting various bars

and eating places (not to mention a raucous fun-fair in the main square!) we attended the sounding of the Last Post at the Menin Gate here. This large structure is inscribed with the names of over 54000 soldiers killed in WW1 with no known graves, and these lists cover its entire surface, reminding us again how very many fell in that war that was supposed to end all wars.

The Belgian Last Post association (www.lastpost.be) states on its website: *'The Last Post, the traditional final salute to the fallen, is played by the buglers in honour of the memory of the soldiers of the former British Empire and its allies, who died in the Ypres Salient during the First World War. It is the intention of the Last Post Association to maintain this daily act of homage in perpetuity.'* And so, at 8pm every evening since the Menin Gate's completion in 1928 except during the Nazi occupation, the Last Post has been sounded here. It is a deeply moving occasion. Next day the coach took most of our group to Knokke-Heist, near the Dutch border, to spend a day on the Kusttram (www.delijn.be/en/kusttram). Sandwiched between France and The Netherlands, Belgium has actually quite a small coastline – much of it lined with cliff-like apartment blocks - and this tram runs its entire 42-mile length. Culture-vultures among us went first to the Casino in Knokke hoping to see the Magritte murals in its ballroom but were politely but firmly refused – one has to apply in advance, with no exceptions. Your reporter, who's something of an 'anorak' was happy to spend the whole day on the tram with a beer-break at De Panne at the southern end – but others did their own thing in this small easy-to-get-around-in country with its excellent and inexpensive public transport.



Come the evening, and it was back to 't Botteltje to help organiser Doug Dillow celebrate his birthday in the only way to do proper justice to the occasion – with lots of delicious Belgian beer, each of course in its correct glass.

When finally we left, a storm had broken outside, and we had to stagger into gale-force winds to get back to the hotel. Yes it was the wind that made us stagger, truly!!!



Sunday was our last day in Ostend. Some of us went to the town's excellent fish market to sample their *matjesfilets* – small raw herrings that have been briefly cured in mild brine and which you eat with chopped raw onion. Delicious, especially when accompanied by Belgian

chips smothered in mayonnaise!

Our last port of call was a brewery loved from previous visits – De Dolle in the village of Esen near Diksmuide. The word 'Dolle' means 'mad' in Dutch but their brewery is anything but mad, with venerable, ancient machinery still in regular use, and beers of the highest quality – their Export Stout is particularly superb. They have a UK importer, so do please look out for De Dolle beers in festivals or in bars with a good Belgian range – apart from the stout, their Oerbier is one to go for.



Then it was aboard our coach bus for an uneventful trip home. Even the infamous M25 was in a friendly mood and we reached Milton Keynes in good time. Thanks as ever to Doug Dillow for organising this much enjoyed event, and to our driver Colin who shepherded a bus-load of toppers without complaint whilst unable to have a beer himself. Doug has hinted of a possible base in the Ardennes in 2018 so watch this space.

Continued on from page 12

The article on page 12 was first published on April 1st, 2017

WOT we did at the CAMRA AGM 2017

After an uneventful journey by coach, bus and train Jenny and I arrived in Bournemouth to be greeted by glorious sunshine. This was to last throughout our visit making concentration on business very difficult.



Just before 4 o'clock we were outside the doors of the Purbeck Suite, which is part of the BIC (Bournemouth International Conference) centre. The doors opened and the small excited crowd of members went in for registration. Once done there is only one place to head for, the members bar. This was a huge circular room with dozens of tables set out and many casks plus key cask bar in the distance. After a short time, about five hours, of meeting people we knew from previous weekends and drinking good beer, we dragged ourselves away to get some sleep.



The next day at 9:30 the serious business of the AGM was convened. There were three formal motions and one special motion. After a show of hands in the hall all were referred to a poll vote. Then the AGM was officially closed and Conference motions could be debated. There were 15 of these: one, number 16, was withdrawn by the proposers.

Just before lunch we had a presentation by our guest speaker Mr. Paul Chase. The subject was the "Anti-alcohol movement" strategies and tactics. It was most illuminating and revealing.

The conference then retired for lunch which we enjoyed in the sunshine by the sea. After lunch, the debate on the motions was resumed. After many lively and sometimes contentious speeches, the conference was closed at 16:30, to resume at 9:30 the next day. There were many places recommended to eat in the excellent handbook provided. We choose the Brewhouse and Kitchen just up the road. This is a small chain of pubs. The one in Bournemouth was busy and lively and served very good beer.

At 9:30 the next morning saw us in the main hall for more motions to be debated despite the temptations of the glorious weather. Two motions numbers 12 and 13 concerned real cider. These are always entertaining as cider people hold very strong views. As we suspected both motions were defeated. The results of the votes are shown elsewhere so I am not repeating them here. Various awards are made during this session. Website of the year. Magazine of the year. Campaigner of the year. To name a few. There was a tribute to an incredibly generous member who left £475,000 to CAMRA in his will. This will be used for a special project in his memory. The results of the vote for the National Executive announced and two current members were replaced by two new members. At 12:30 prompt the conference was closed.

That afternoon we took the bus to Poole and visited various pubs in the quays area. If you are in Poole I would recommend the DRIFT micropub. On the quayside and has great beer. A lovely sunny end to our visit to Bournemouth.

The 2018 members weekend is in Coventry. This could be your opportunity to go and see what happens for yourselves. I can't guarantee the sun!

Alan Fursdon
Branch Vice Chairman

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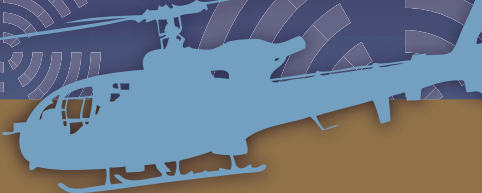
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