

beer moos

Summer 2012

Issue 23

Call Time on the Escalator

Breakdown of tax paid on a
typical pint (£3.10 pub pint)

Excise Duty	50p
V.A.T.	52p
Employment Tax	18p
Business Rates	12p



It's time to save your pint and fight back against this year's budget which saw the government persist with its beer duty escalator.

The 'escalator' is the policy of raising beer tax every year by 2% above inflation, meaning your pint in the pub costs you 5-10p more. This mounting pressure is a strong factor contributing to the closure of 16 pubs every week. Supermarkets can absorb these increases; pubs, with their unavoidably higher overheads, can not.

CAMRA is calling all beer drinkers and pub goers to sign a national e-petition calling for the end of the beer duty escalator. We need 100,000 signatures by October to trigger a high profile parliamentary debate and put pressure on the Government to scrap the escalator at Budget 2013. As we go to press 33,000 have signed, so we really need your help to spread the word to as many people as possible in the hope of reaching 100,000. So please sign the petition and urge others to sign it too.

You can find the petition at www.camra.org.uk/saveyourpint. You do not have to be a CAMRA member to sign it.

With around £1.30 on every pint going to the Treasury in various taxes (see diagram), it's time to save your pint and call time on the beer duty escalator!

CAMRA also has free material to take down your local and join the campaign. Email claire.cain@camra.org.uk to order free beer mats and posters. Each pub-pack contains five A4-size posters and 100 beer mats; please let Claire know how many packs you would like.

FEATURED IN THIS ISSUE

On Yer Bikes!

Pub News

*Grand Ouzel
Ale Trail*

*Trams,
Trappists
and Tripels*

*CAMRA Beer
Festival News*

GBBF 2012

Diary Dates

Leased pub opportunities in your local area



Galleon

Old Wolverton Road | Old Wolverton | Milton Keynes | MK12 5NL

Potential Profit: £28,979 per annum

- Superb looking pub with a canalside location
- Main Road frontage and substantial gardens
- 80 covers with full catering kitchen
- Function room



Star

230 Heath Road | Leighton Buzzard | LU7 8AY

Potential Profit: £27,717 per annum

- Destination food pub with established reputation
- 58 dining covers
- Open plan pub offering a flexible set up
- Situated in an affluent residential area

Find out more about running one of these pubs or similar pubs in the area by contacting

Vicky Brown on 0844 848 3264 or vicky.brown@punchtaverns.com

PUNCH TAVERNS IPHONE APP (Powered by Find My Pub)
is now on ITUNES and FREE to download



PASSIONATE ABOUT OUR PUBS

On Yer Bikes 2012

26 riders took part in our 2012 cycle crawl in support of Community pubs. The weather was kind to us, and we greatly enjoyed the new 12-mile route round nine Milton Keynes pubs. Many thanks to all who came along, to Alan Sanders for organising it, and to landlady Julia Sanderson of Kiln Farm Club where we started, who provided breakfast for us, and added style to the occasion by cycling in glam gear, raising £56 for Willen Hospice.



NEXT ISSUE

The next issue of Beer Moos will be published on: August 30th.
We must have your stories, news and advertisements by: August 23rd.
Late copy cannot be guaranteed entry.

Committee Branch Contacts

Chairman:

Phil Swinbank - 07733 383413
chairman@mkcamra.org.uk

Vice-Chairman:

Jim Scott - 07952 337526

Branch Secretary:

Janet Smith - secretary@mkcamra.org.uk

Branch Contact:

Phil Swinbank - 07733 383413
contact@mkcamra.org.uk

Treasurer:

Doug Dillow - treasurer@mkcamra.org.uk

Membership Secretary:

Phil Rooke - membership@mkcamra.org.uk

Branch Cider Coordinator:

Anne Clark - cider@mkcamra.org.uk

Social Secretary:

Doug Dillow - social@mkcamra.org.uk

Newsletter Editor:

Jim Scott - 07952 337526
editor@mkcamra.org.uk

Branch Young Members Contact:

Vacant

PR Officers:

Jan Taylor and Kim Walton - pr@mkcamra.org.uk

Pubs Officer:

Alan Carter
pubs@mkcamra.org.uk

Webmaster:

Jason Jarratt
webmaster@mkcamra.org.uk

Beer Festival Organiser:

Doug Dillow - festival@mkcamra.org.uk

Trading Standards

If you have a complaint about any unfair trading practice, such as short measure 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



Copyright CAMRA Milton Keynes and North Bucks 2012. All rights reserved. Beer Moos is published by the Milton Keynes Branch of the Campaign for Real Ale. The views expressed are not necessarily those of CAMRA Ltd or its Branches.

NEWS NORTH

Bell and Bear, Emberton has served 379 different real ales since March 2010, if our count is correct. All praise to licensees John and Sophie for this magnificent contribution to real ale variety in our branch area. And – other pubs, insofar as your beer ties permit, please copy!

Kiln Farm Club, Kiln Farm Glamorous in hot pants and high heels, Kiln Farm Club landlady Julia Sanderson raised £56 for Willen Hospice on our bike crawl in February. See separate report on p3.

Watts Arms, Hanslope held a week of events to mark Community Pubs Month. On Tuesday 17th April they hosted a quiz and social evening, and our branch supplied two teams (neither won!) During the evening, licensees Chris and Clair were presented with their Pub of the Year award (see p5). Thursday 19th April was racing night and also the start of their beer festival. Customers enjoyed a good laugh and a little flutter whilst enjoying 13 beers and two ciders, raising in the process £156 for Willen Hospice. The festival ran through to Sunday when again our branch attended and helped the festival sell out.

News East

Carrington Arms, Moulsoe has a beer/cider festival planned for Saturday June 16th, with special emphasis on local brews. There will be live music and a barbecue. For further details visit: www.thecarringtonarms.co.uk

Robin Hood, Clifton Reynes There's music at the Hood on Saturday July 7th with Oasis & Paul Weller Tributes, 8.30pm till late, gates open at 6.30pm, 2 bars & barbecue. Tickets £10.00 are now available from the pub 01234 711574. The Robin Hood is continuing with its themed dining on Wednesday nights. Phone for details or visit: www.therobinhoodpub.co.uk

White Hart, Sherington held its annual beer and sausage festival over the early May Bank Holiday (5-7th May). Customers enjoyed sausages locally sourced in Newport Pagnell, and drank their way through 50 ales and 10 ciders, Several beers came

from Hopping Mad Brewery of Olney, including a festival special called Bangers & Mash Tun.

News West

Woolpack, Buckingham is having a beer festival from Friday 1st June - Tuesday 5th June to celebrate the Queen's Diamond Jubilee. 30 beers, local and national, will be on offer and there will be cider, a hog roast, garden games, and live music. Also planned is a tug of war across the river Great Ouse which flows at the foot of the pub's garden. One imagines the losing team might get rather wet! A £5 entry fee gets you a beer festival glass and programme, with all entry money going to local Buckingham Table charity. To find out more about them visit www.buckinghamtable.org The pub's website is www.buckinghamwoolpack.co.uk

New Inn, Buckingham is open again after recent ups and downs, with Pat and Lesley O'Dowd, late of the Old Green Man at Little Brickhill, in charge. The interior has been refurbished and a skittles table installed, and food is available at all times. Beer Moos wishes Pat and Lesley every success in this characterful traditional pub.

News South

Green Man, Mursley is now a free house and is owned by Lyndon Broom and his wife Helen. The new owners have re-decorated and refurbished the pub and had two real ales from Chiltern Brewery on sale when our spy called, with plans to sell three. There's home cooked food ranging from from sharing platters and ciabattas through to a full roast lunch. Beer Moos wishes Lyndon and Helen every success in this pub which has had a chequered recent history, and we look forward to meeting them at our July social there (see Diary p13). If you want to call in, opening hours are 5-11pm Tues-Friday. 12-2.30pm and 5-11pm, Saturday 12-11, Sunday 12-9pm.

News Central

Bridge, Fenny Stratford was once one of the city's best real ale outlets. We've heard that Fluerefs (an estate agent specialising in licensed premises) advertised an open house viewing of the Bridge in late April with a guide price of £350,000, but as we

go to press, we don't know who, if anyone, bought it or what will happen to it.

Prince Albert, Bradwell Village Beer Moos is delighted to welcome back Dean and Val Davies to a tavern in our area. Formerly of the Victoria Inn, Dean took a career break from the licensed trade, but old voices kept calling, and now he and Val are back behind a bar at the Prince Albert, just over the road from his old pub. The Albert is a Wells tenancy, and the brewery has been refurbishing it and installed a fourth handpump. Dean has been granted a very favourable ale tie, and he hopes to focus on LocAles including Concrete Cow. He and Val also plan to offer quality food made from scratch on the premises.



May 19th is a date for everyone's dairy, for Dean has named that as CAMRA day, with ales on all four pumps at £1.50 a pint while stocks last. Beer Moos wishes Dean and Val every success at the Prince Albert which together with the nearby Victoria is making Bradwell the real ale hub of our city.

Red Lion, Fenny Stratford is hosting a Diamond Jubilee Rolling Beer Festival from May 25th to June 10th. 'Rolling' because when one beer finishes, a different one is put on.

Malsters, Fenny Stratford has reopened. It's being redecorated as we go to press, but is open from 4pm each day. This free house was selling Marston's Pedigree and Brakspear's Bitter when our spy looked in. The pub hopes to hold a beer festival later in the year.

Suffolk Punch, Heelands has been trialling real ale; and has had Concrete Cow beers on sale recently. We hope they will decide to sell real ale permanently.

Brewery News

Buckingham Brewery Beer Moos welcomes this new brewery in Buckingham and wishes

brewer/proprietor Eddie Hynes every success in this enterprise. Two ales – Golden and Bitter – are currently produced both in cask and in bottle. For more information, visit www.buckingham-brewery.co.uk

Concrete Cow From mid-May the brewery will be open on most Saturday mornings from 10am – 1pm for the sale of bottled beers. Phone to confirm before going round – 01908 674265 or 07889 665745.

Gun Dog Ales This new brewery is now up and running in Woodford Halse which isn't in our branch area but is nonetheless LocAle to us. Currently they are producing only one beer – Sun Setter, an IPA at 4.2% ABV. It's run by James Pickering and Sarah Finch.

XT Brewing Co is also fairly new and out of our branch area near Thame, but it is LocAle to us. Visit www.xtbrewing.com to find out more.

Watts Arms

Pub of the Year 2012

Every year, CAMRA branches name a pub in their area as Pub of the Year.



To qualify, the pub must have earned entry into the Good Beer Guide, but whereas selection for the guide is on beer quality alone, judging Pub of the Year takes in the whole pub experience, and in particular its success in furthering the cause of good real ale.

This year's winner is the Watts Arms, Hanslope. Thanks to their enthusiasm and expertise, licensees Chris and Clair Saggars have made the Watts a place of pilgrimage for ale enthusiasts, and are worthy recipients of the 2012 award. Appropriately the award was made during one of the events hosted by the Watts to mark Community Pubs Month.

Take a walk on the mild side

CAMRA has once again dedicated May to mild. Why mild?

Mild was once the most popular style of beer brewed in Britain, its sweet and malty taste (often with hints of toffee and butterscotch) making it a perfect alternative to the deep roasted flavours of porter and stout.

Modern Mild tends to be lowish in strength (around 3.5%) but can go as high as 6%. While traditionally a dark beer, many pale milds are also available and these lighter beers with a fruity aroma and gentler hop taste are a must try for lovers of golden ales. Timothy Taylor Golden Best is a nationally available example.

With over 200 mild beers listed on the national CAMRA website and more and more brewers producing a Mild each year there is something for everyone, so why not get involved this May because your new favourite beer might just be a mild!

All Change On The Buses

If you use the bus to get to the pub, you should be aware of timetable changes in the Milton Keynes area from Sunday 22 April. A number of routes have been revised, including the 32 service between MK and Buckingham, and some have been withdrawn, most notably the Buckingham town circular service 32A.

The major changes are: Route 3 is withdrawn, which affects getting to Woburn Sands and its Station Hotel. It is replaced by extending the 300 service, so not a complete disaster. Most local services will not run from Bletchley to Fenny Stratford any more, so if you want to get to the Red Lion at Fenny Lock, route 18 is now the closest service. Sadly it doesn't run at night. The 32 to Buckingham has major changes - it will now run from Newton Longville via Central Milton Keynes and out to Buckingham on the X5 route. Some journeys divert to serve Maids Moreton (for the Wheatsheaf) as a replacement for the discontinued 32A. The route is no longer circular and doesn't use the A421 west of Bletchley. Arriva's DaySaver ticket has gone up to £3.90 - however its validity remains unchanged. Milton Keynes council is looking to introduce a £4.50 day ticket valid on all operators.

National Policy Planning Framework

CAMRA has welcomed the introduction of pro-pub policies in the new National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). For the first time, councils will have a duty to "plan positively" for key local facilities like pubs - and this will apply to all pubs, not just rural ones or those in local centres. Councils will be obliged to treat leisure development and community facilities as strategic priorities, and safeguard existing community facilities including pubs.

Mike Benner, CAMRA Chief Executive, said: 'CAMRA is pleased that local communities will be able to refer to the NPPF in relation to local planning matters, which is a step towards providing the tools local communities need to influence development in their neighbourhoods and protect their valued local pubs.'

For those interested in reading the complete report the NPPF can be viewed online at www.communities.gov.uk/documents/planningandbuilding/pdf/2115939.pdf

In a Survey in June 2010 - 69% of those polled agreed that a pub is as important to community life as a post office, local shop or community centre.

'Pubs are the Best Social Networking Sites'

New CAMRA research* shows pubs play an integral role throughout the lives of local communities. Findings include:

- Just under 9 in 10 young pub going adults (89%) visit their local pub to meet friends and socialise.
- Out of all UK regular pub goers, 1 in 4 currently married couples (25%) first met their partner down the pub!
- Over 1 in 3 adults (36%) say their local community uses their pub for events such as weddings, christenings and funerals.

Yet since 2008, over 4,500 pubs have closed across the nation. With so many pubs permanently closing their doors, scores of surrounding local communities are left without their social hub. Research commissioned by CAMRA has found that four rural and eight suburban pubs close down every week. You can read a county-by-county breakdown here www.camra.org.uk/countypubclosures

TRING

BREWERY Co.

Here at Tring Brewery we select the finest ingredients and craft them into a variety of sumptuous, award winning ales.

In fact we produce over 25 different cask ales every year... A beer to suit all palates? We'd like to think so.

This is a big task but when our daily focus is on tiny malt grains, fragile hop leaves, and microscopic yeast cells, sometimes it's nice to go big.

For 2012, each of our monthly specials will be brewed using only specially selected UK hop varieties. Look out for these and our other beers in your local pub, or head to our brewery shop located on the outskirts of Tring, Hertfordshire.

www.tringbrewery.co.uk
01442 890721

Victoria Inn



Serving 4 locales, 2 draught ciders and home cooked food (Tuesday-Saturday)

Large garden and play area with ample parking - dogs welcome

Small functions and large BBQs catered for in this family run business

Beer festival and hog roast - Diamond Jubilee and August Bank Holiday weekends

Bradwell Village, Milton Keynes MK13 9AQ
Tel 01908 320808

The Red Lion

Lock View Lane, Bletchley
Milton Keynes
01908-372317

**Milton Keynes
CAMRA Branch
Pub of the Year 2010**

Canalside Location

Family Pub All Welcome

3 Real Ales and 1 Real
Scrumpy Available

The Grand Ouzel Ale Trail Comes of Age - a drinker's public transport guide by Jason Jarratt

Spring has now sprung; the days are getting longer and the temperature is rising as we head towards yet another glorious British summer. Or something like that. This issue's guide combines public transport with some alternative means of getting around, with options for walking, cycling or even jumping on a boat. We'll be looking at the two main waterways running through Milton Keynes, the Grand Union canal and the river Ouzel, concentrating on the portion of both served by bus route 18.



Starting at Bletchley bus station, with the **Park and Enigma Tavern** both offering real ales nearby, route 18 heads into Fenny Stratford, a place we've featured in a previous guide. Since our last look at the area's pubs, the Bridge Inn has changed hands several times and is currently closed. The **Maltsters** has also seen a period of closure but is now open again, this time as a freehouse serving a couple of ales. Some things don't change though and 2010's branch Pub of the Year, the **Red Lion**, continues to serve excellent beers at its pleasant canal side location.

Heading north, the bus and canal run almost parallel towards the village of Simpson. Walkers have the option of a short detour from the tow path to check out the **Inn on the Lake** (formerly the Beacon) on the edge of the Mount Farm industrial area. Given its potentially uninviting location, the pub is actually set in pleasant grounds and offers a relaxing modern interior that was refurbished extensively in 2011. Up to four beers are available, often including LocAle from Concrete Cow brewery.



Back on the canal you can access the **Plough** at Simpson via its garden, which backs on to the tow path. As the pub is located on a sharp bend in the road, you'll need to get off the bus either at the top of The Mount or at Simpson church, both of which are a couple of minutes walk away. The main bar is fairly small with four handpulls dispensing beers from the Wells and Young's range plus a guest. There's a dedicated games room at the front of the pub and a large dining area to the rear, where the food has an Italian twist.

From this point, walkers and cyclists have the option of continuing north along the canal or picking up the river as it meanders through the Ouzel Valley Park. The footpaths alongside the river were re-laid in 2011, so this is an excellent choice if conditions are damp underfoot. Both routes offer good opportunities to see some of our wildlife, such as foxes and kingfishers, as well as rarities like the tall stand of native Black Poplar trees near the Open University or the tiny White-legged Damselfly that has a stronghold in the area. Don't spend too long looking though, as there's beer to be drunk nearby!



Breaking away from the river and heading back towards the canal will bring you to **Ye Olde Swan** at Woughton-on-the-Green. Popular in the summer thanks to its large beer garden, up to four beers are available, mainly from regional breweries although Concrete Cow crops up regularly. Sadly this isn't really a drinkers' pub these days as its restaurant operation dominates, so while the beer is good you may find yourself relegated to small corner of the bar.

Our next pub is a complete contrast, situated in a fairly down trodden area of Milton Keynes. Either head across The Green, or go via the orchards to the rear of the Swan, and you'll find the **Peartree Bridge Inn** on the opposite side of the canal to the tow path. It isn't much to look at but it often offers a beer from the Marston's range at a price J.D. Wetherspoon would struggle to beat. They also have a good reputation for their inexpensive carvery too.



The village of Woolstone is the next stop on the route, reached via the canal or by returning to the Ouzel Valley Park. Following the river will take you past some ancient fishing ponds and, at the far side of the village, a thirteenth century church. Woolstone possibly offers the widest selection of beers outside of central Milton Keynes. The main reason for this claim is the **Cross Keys**, a large thatched Wells and Young's house that now regularly boasts ten ales and two ciders on its array of handpulls. While the Bedford-based brewery's beers feature prominently, there's plenty of room for guest ales, usually LocAles and frequently featuring beer from Northamptonshire. It is very much a

village local, concentrating on beer, entertainment and no-nonsense food. There are seasonal beer festivals that see the choice extended further, backed up with live music and visits from Morris Dancers.

Not to be outdone, the **Barge Inn** five minutes further up Newport Road has upped its game on the ale front. With up to four beers on offer it may not sound as impressive, but the guest ales are frequently interesting and rarely duplicate those available in the Cross Keys. They have also experimented with beer festivals along with other Vintage Inns pubs. Both the interior and exterior are pleasant and comfortable, but do watch your head on the way in, as the oldest part of the pub has a very low ceiling.

At this point our three routes diverge. The canal heads north before turning towards Wolverton, while the river Ouzel skirts around the lakes at Willen before heading off towards Newport Pagnell. The bus continues from the Barge Inn and heads into the town centre, where four **J.D. Wetherspoon** outlets provide a change to make use of your CAMRA vouchers. Don't forget the **Barn** though, our Winter 2011 Pub of the Season, offering up to four beers just a few minutes walk from The Point.

Bradwell Common and the **Countryman** is up next, followed by the **Suffolk Punch** on the far side of Heulands. Both are large estate pubs and while real ale isn't available at all times, the latter has been experimenting with beer from Concrete Cow. It's certainly pleasant enough if you need some refreshments after a stroll around Linford Wood. This is where the bus route reaches an abrupt end, just like this guide, turning back towards Bletchley.

Route 18 is operated by Z&S International, but Arriva's DaySaver tickets are accepted. The service runs roughly hourly, Monday to Saturday, day time only. The last bus departing Bletchley is at 17:07, with the last service in the opposite direction leaving Bradwell at 16:03 (although there are a few later journeys to/from Central MK). All information correct at the time of printing.

Trams, Trappists and Tripels

by Jenny Ellway

Although they have been running annually since 2008, this was the first time that my husband and I have been on one of social secretary Doug Dillow's trips to Belgium.

Our destination was Kortrijk in West Flanders. The coach picked up in Northampton and Milton Keynes and once everyone was aboard, Doug handed out an information pack containing a Kortrijk pub guide, a guide to the coastal tram (more about which later) and some notes on Belgian beer. I found the latter a useful read as, although I have been to Belgium a few times, I am still a novice when it comes to Belgian beer.



Gains Bar

Once safely checked into our hotel, Alan and I went to search out some of the bars listed in the Kortrijk guide, and decided to try first the nearby Gainsbar. There were no familiar faces at the tables outside, but inside, the bar had been taken over completely by our coach party! We joined the happy throng and perused the beer list. With around 100 beers to choose from it was a little daunting, and then I spotted XX Bitter from De Ranke. Being a self-confessed hop addict, this beer certainly hit the spot. Next, I chose a Poperings Hommel, a beer I'd tried for the first time last year, while Alan ordered a Karmeliet, an old favourite of ours. We also had a taste of other people's, including Hopus and Viven Porter, in exchange for a taste of ours. By the time we'd finished these, people had already started to leave to find somewhere to eat and we decided to do the same.

We found a bistro offering food at reasonable prices and around 20 beers, a number of which were unfamiliar to us. Our host said that Omer was the local beer and described it as "strong but nothing special" and said that his personal



Not a seance but an intimate Belgian Bar

favourite was Corsendonk. So that's what we had. After a leisurely dinner, it was back to the hotel for an early night.

Friday morning was free for exploring Kortrijk. We had lunch at the Mouterijtje, which is situated on the island in the river Leie. Their two-course lunch menu seemed reasonable value at 12 euro, so we were not surprised to find half a dozen of our party already there, trying beers from the list of about eighty. I had resolved not to have any alcohol before the afternoon's brewery visit, but decided to compromise with a "low alcohol" beer and was offered Stella Artois or Leffe. I chose Leffe. In Belgium 6% ABV counts as low-strength!

After lunch, our coach was waiting to take us to the Huyghe Brewery at Melle, near Ghent. We were ushered to the bar and offered a choice of Floris krik, Campus (pils), La Guillotine (brewed for the French market), St Idesbald and, of course, the brewery's flagship Delirium Tremens which, they claimed, had been voted best beer in the world.



Old brewkit at Huyghe

First we were shown the old brewery with its fine copper vessels, sadly no longer in use. Next we saw the fermenting room with its rows of tall stainless steel vats. Then we were led along a glass-walled corridor where we peered into the new production area where the brewing equipment is stainless steel

and controlled by computer. We passed through the bottling plant, but being Friday afternoon, production had stopped for cleaning the equipment ready for start-up on Monday morning. Then back to the bar where I tried a glass of St Idesbald. It has a distinctive flavour and suspect is a beer flavoured with coriander. Although I don't normally drink fruit beers, I tried the Floris krik. It has an aroma of almonds and a refreshing taste – a perfect sunny-afternoon-in-the-garden drink.

Our visit over, we set off for Ghent where the upstairs restaurant of the Waterhuis aan de Bierkant had been booked for our evening meal. We chose from a menu of four Flemish dishes: beef stew, chicken waterzooi (a rich thick main-course soup), rabbit cooked with prunes, or chicken vol-au-vent. The beer list was extensive and I settled for a dry-hopped pale house ale called Gandavum. Later, I had a glass of La Chouffe Houblon, an excellent extremely hoppy beer. The old city has a vibrant atmosphere in the evening, so Alan and I enjoyed a pleasant stroll to the café Den Turk where we indulged in Duvel, another old favourite of ours.

Saturday morning, we set off for De Panne, where we were given all-day passes for the Kusttram, a tram that runs along the coast to Knokke. But first, Alan and I took a stroll around the Dumont quarter, a pleasant residential area with individually designed art-deco houses and quite a contrast to the bustling town centre and seafront. We caught the tram at around mid-day and stopped off at Koksijde, the next town along.

This is where we realised that there wouldn't be time to do everything in the guide and we must be selective, so we decided to head straight to 't Botteltje in Ostend, described in Doug's guide as a "must visit" bar. Along the way we met several CAMRA members getting on and off in different towns, heading for their favourite bars. The beer list at 't Botteltje is a weighty tome of around 300 beers. We selected the XX Bitter that we'd enjoyed

so much on Thursday. The food at 't Botteltje is also to be recommended. Alan had fish pie and I chose the house salad, which came with masses of Parma ham, smoked salmon, shrimps, mozzarella and tomato.



'Beery Berties' in Bruges

Then - back to the tram, and after a short stop in Bredene, on to the terminus in Knokke. We had intended to see the Rene Magritte mural in the Casino there, but by now were running out of time, so we returned three stops to Heist where our coach awaited us at the Schildia, a seafood restaurant and bar. From the 180 beers on offer there we chose Brugse Zot, a beer we'd enjoyed on a holiday to Bruges last year. Everyone was talking about the wonderful day they'd had and how it had inspired them to return and stay at one of the coastal towns, taking the tram to a different place each day.




Kusttram

Sunday morning was time to pack the bags and check out of the hotel. But the weekend wasn't quite over as we were going to spend some time in Bruges before heading back to the Tunnel. Once there, several of us had the same idea - head straight for De Garre, a small bar tucked up a narrow alley, and drink the house Tripel. We also bought a box of six Van Steenberge beers in a supermarket to savour at home.

As the coach approached Milton Keynes, we had three cheers for Clive our driver, and three well-deserved cheers for Doug Dillow for organising such an excellent weekend.

BB BUCKINGHAM BREWERY
 Brewing Real Ale
 in the
 Green Heart of England
www.buckingham-brewery.co.uk
 01280422830

bell&bear
 Freehouse
 3/4 Real Ales - All on Rotation
 Only Locales and Obscure Micros
 Intimate separate restaurant
 using only the best local produce
 We want your homegrown veg
 come trade for beer & food!
 MKCAMRA:
 Pub of the Season Spring 2011
 Runner-up Pub of the Year 2011
www.bellandbear.net
twitter.com/bellandbear
facebook.com/bellandbear
 12 High St, Emberton 01234 711565

Nags Head
16th century thatched village pub
Voted MK Citizen Pub of The Year 2009
 Good real ale selection • Cask Marque accredited
 Food served all day everyday
 Traditional Sunday roasts all day Sunday
 Sky Sports and ESPN
 Quiz night every Sunday at 8pm
 Seating Area to rear of Pub

 30 High Street, Great Linford, Milton
 Keynes MK14 5AX Tel: 01908 607449

The Carrington Arms, Moulsoe
Beer & Cider Festival
Saturday 16th June
 Featuring our local breweries
 BBQ using Meat from across Bedfordshire
 BBQ from 1:30pm
 Live Music from 3pm
 Bar Open 12pm til Midnight
 Burger Eating Contest in aid of Willen Hospice

 The Carrington Arms, Moulsoe, 01908 218050 www.thecarringtonarms.co.uk

Diary Dates

Please note that this diary information is always subject to change – check online for latest information at www.mkcamra.org.uk/diary

☞: Items marked with a ☞ symbol are 'official' CAMRA events.

May 2012

☞ **Monday May 28** Branch Meeting, Bell and Bear, Emberton, 8.15pm

June 2012

Friday 1st - Tuesday 5th June Jubilee Beer Festival at Woolpack, Buckingham. £5 entry fee. Our social this month will be a visit here. For date and time see our website www.mkcamra.org.uk - see also Pub News on p4.

☞ **Monday June 25** Branch Meeting, Maltsters Arms, Fenny Stratford MK2 2BQ, 8.15 pm

July 2012

☞ **Thursday July 12** Branch Social, Green Man, Mursley, 8pm.

☞ **Monday July 30** Branch Meeting, New Inn, Bridge Street, Buckingham MK18 1AF, 8.15 pm

August 2012

☞ **August 7 - 11** Great British Beer Festival (GBBF), Olympia, London. www.gbbf.org.uk

☞ **Friday August 10** Branch Visit to GBBF. Meet MK Central station at 11.00 for 11.13 direct train to Olympia. Bletchley times 5 minutes later.

☞ **Tuesday August 28** Branch Meeting, Robin Hood, Clifton Reynes, 8.15pm.

September 2012

☞ **Thursday September 13** Branch Social, Lamb, Stoke Goldington, 8pm.

Looking Ahead

☞ **Wednesday October 17 - Saturday October 20** Concrete Pint Beer Festival at the Buszy, 401 Elder Gate MK9 1LR opposite rail station, same venue as last year. Details to follow.

Bovver Among the Brewers

The All-Party Parliamentary Save the Pub Group has asked the Independent Family Brewers of Britain (IFBB) to expel Young's & Co, on the grounds that is no longer family-run nor a brewer.

To be a member of IFBB a company must actually brew, and have a family member in a senior executive position. The Group contends that Young's, which has sold its entire brewing interest to Charles Wells and is now purely a pub-owning company without family involvement, fails on both counts.

Beer Festival News

The following CAMRA festivals are accessible from Milton Keynes by public transport.

Cambridge Camra Beer Festival, (their 39th) runs from Monday May 21 to Saturday May 26 on Jesus Green in Cambridge, with 200+ ales, 60+ ciders + perries, plus foreign beer, wines + meads. X5 coach from Milton Keynes will deliver you right there! CAMRA members get in free at all times. Details are at www.cambridgebeerfestival.com

Northamptonshire CAMRA Beer Festival runs from 24-26th May in Delapre Abbey Park. Expect around 250 beers and 25 ciders and perries. Entry is £3, free to CAMRA members. Visit www.northamptonshirebeerfestival.org.uk for more information. Buses 33 and X4 from Milton Keynes stop outside but run daytimes only.

Rugby CAMRA Beer Festival is on Friday June 15 (open 3-11) and Saturday June 16 (open 11-11) at Thornfield Bowling Club, Hillmorton Road, Rugby CV22 5LJ – visit www.rugbybeerfestival.com for further details. Free entry to CAMRA members at both sessions. Rugby is 25 minutes from Milton Keynes by Virgin train.

Peterborough CAMRA Beer Mega-festival 21 - 25 August (Bank Holiday weekend). Travel X5 to St Neots (Cambridge Street stop) then train to Peterborough. Slow coach X4 is not recommended unless you have a bladder of cast iron!

A list of all CAMRA festivals is on the national website www.camra.org.uk

Have you Scored yet?

CAMRA's National Beer Scoring System (NBSS) is an easy 0-5 point scale for judging beer quality, and to find out which pubs consistently sell well-kept ale. So we invite all real ale drinkers, not just CAMRA members, to send us their beer scores for pubs both in our area, and elsewhere in the UK. We forward scores for out-of-area pubs to the relevant branches. These results help us decide which pubs to consider for the Good Beer Guide.

E-mail your scores to us at pubs@mkcamra.org.uk, bring them to any of our meetings or social events, or submit them online at www.beerscoring.org.uk. You'll need to give your name, CAMRA Membership Number (if you're a member), Date of Survey, Pub's Name and Location, Beer Name and Brewery, and of course, your score.

0 Undrinkable	No cask ale available, or so poor you have to take it back or can't finish it.
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.

Every Ale Lover Needs a Potbelly!

On 31st March MK CAMRA joined up with Northants CAMRA for a trip to the Potbelly Brewery in Kettering. This brewery was set up in 2005 in spare space in a leather goods warehouse in the back streets of the town. It has a surprisingly spacious bar and games room, where firkins of most of their beers were set up for us to help ourselves.

In two groups during the evening, brewers Ian Loasby and son Aaron led us on a tour of the brewery. At 10 barrels (i.e. brewing 2880 pints at a time), Potbelly is larger than some micro-breweries, but it still wasn't long before we were back in the bar for supper. This was laid on from a fish and chips van set up in the car park, and was washed down with more Potbelly beer.

It would be rude to visit Kettering without dropping into the "Alex" (the Alexandra Arms, home to Julian Church brewery), so we went in there for a quick pint before returning to Northampton and Milton Keynes. Many thanks to the brewery, Doug Dillow, and Karl Tecklenberg for organising an excellent evening.

Phil Swinbank

Great British Beer Festival 2012

August 7th – 11th Olympia, London

WIN free entry to Britain's biggest beer festival!

Because Earls's Court is needed for Olympic Games events, the Great British Beer Festival (GBBF) is back at Olympia for 2012. Festival-goers can expect 800+ real ales, ciders, perries and foreign beers from around the world. Tickets are now available and can be pre-ordered for a discounted price at www.gbbf.org.uk/tickets.

Would you like to get in for free? CAMRA is giving away 25 pairs of GBBF admission tickets. To be in with a shout of winning them, answer the following question correctly and submit your answer, name and address to jon.howard@camra.org.uk by Friday July 6th 2012. Entries can also be posted to- Jon Howard, GBBF Comp, CAMRA, 230 Hatfield Road, St Albans AL1 4LW.

Competition question -

Which brewery's beer was crowned Supreme Champion Beer of Britain at the Great British Beer Festival last year? Was it a) Crouch Vale

b) Mighty Oak or c) Fuller's?

Winners will be notified by Friday July 13th 2012.

Peter's Puzzles Beer Moos is sorry to announce that CAMRA member Peter Ballantyne, compiler of Peter's Puzzles, is bowing out, and says 'Cheerio!' to all his readers. We'd like to thank Peter for producing this very popular feature in all 22 previous issues of our magazine.

The Robin Hood
Clifton Reynes - MK46 5DR
Saturday 7th July
01234 711574

OASIS & PAUL WELLER
Tributes
Definitely & Changing
Mightbe Man
Tickets £10
2 Bars
Barbecue
Gates open 6:30pm

The Bell Inn
Pub & Restaurant
Beachampton

Freshly cooked, homemade, locally sourced food served all day, everyday.

Sunday roasts available from Midday every Sunday.
 Separate children's menu.

Wide range of superb, CAMRA supported real ales & fine wines.

Large beer garden & ample parking.

Weddings, functions, business meetings & barbeques of any size can be catered for.

Visit our website: www.thebellrestaurant.co.uk or call 01908 563861 for any other information

THE WOOLPACK
pub & dining

 Riverside Beer Garden
 Children's Play Area
 Great Food and Cask Ales
 Table Service
 Function Room


JUBILACE FEST
 Friday 1st June - Tuesday 5th June

Over 40 Ales and Ciders
 Live Music on Friday
 Hog Roast and Tug-of-War on Saturday

£5 entry fee into Beer/Cider Festival (entry to pub/garden is free) goes to Buckingham Round Table for support of local charities and includes a JubilAle Glass and a programme

Opening Times
Monday - Thursday 11am - 11pm
Friday - Saturday 11am - 12midnight
Sunday 12noon - 10.30pm

The Woolpack, Well Street, Buckingham
 Tel: 01280 817972 www.buckinghamwoolpack.co.uk

 **The Watts Arms**
 Castlethorpe Road, Hanslope, MK19 7LG.

4 x Cask Ales

Good Beer Guide 2012

Great Traditional Food Served
Between 12 - 2 & 6 - 9

Nice Warm Open Fire

01908 510246
www.thewattsarms.co.uk

6TH ASCOT RACECOURSE CAMRA BEER FESTIVAL

FRIDAY 5TH & SATURDAY 6TH OCTOBER

WHAT DO
YOU LOOK FOR
IN A
FAVOURITE,
DEAR?

A TASTY, WELL
KEPT, PERFECTLY
CONDITIONED,
BRIGHT AND CONSISTENT
PERFORMER
DEAR...

PARADE
RING

ASCOT
RACE
CARD

BEER
FESTIVAL
2012

LIVE
MUSIC
THROUGHOUT
THE DAY

OVER 200

REAL ALES, CIDERS
AND PERRIES INCLUDING A
HIGHLANDS & ISLANDS OF
SCOTLAND REGIONAL BAR

EXCELLENT
PROGRAMME
OF RACING

oneda
www.petedredge.co.uk



Tickets from £18pp, half price entry
for CAMRA members quoting BEER12
0844 346 3000 ascot.co.uk

Ascot