



CAMPAIGN
FOR
REAL ALE

Milton Keynes & North Bucks CAMRA Branch Newsletter

www.mkcamra.org.uk

beer moos

Spring 2009

Issue Eleven

WHERE HAVE ALL THE PUBS GONE?

FEATURED IN THIS ISSUE

Pub and
CAMRA News

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from the
Chair

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Between late 2007 and January 2009, some eight pubs have closed in the Milton Keynes and North Bucks area, and twenty more are up for sale. You may think this is a very small number, but proportionally this figure is much higher than in previous years. In the author's experience of pubs in the Mid-Chilterns area (South Bucks and West Herts), usually around one percent of pubs close each year through loss of trade or conversions to residential use. However, these eight pubs represent a rate of attrition of around 4 percent (out of 210 pubs). This article asks why this is happening, and what might happen to pubs as a result of such closures.

The easiest scapegoats in the industry have been well highlighted:-

- Duty increases higher than the rate of inflation, making visits to the pub more expensive; and
- Loss-leading alcohol sales by the supermarkets.

However MK CAMRA believes that another, more potent reason has been the rise of large pub-owning companies, or 'pubcos.'

The Pubco

Here's the history behind the pubco:-

- Pubcos were the creation of the Beer Orders, a previous law forcing large breweries to sell guest beers in their pubs. In the 1980s and 90s, large brewers sold off their tied estates en masse to these newcomers, which consequently now dominate the pub industry;
- Pubcos are really property investment companies. They don't just buy pubs to run as businesses, but to profit from the increased property value of the pubs they have acquired. Often they seek change of use to residential, as houses fetch higher prices than pubs and, at least until recently, rose in value faster. At heart, many pubcos don't care how their pubs are run because they make greater profits from treating them as property investments, resulting in admitting uninterested landlords, and not investing in the upkeep of the pubs;

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Continued from Front Cover

• Pubcos borrowed heavily to acquire these pubs from the large breweries when property prices were high. In order to service these debts, and pay dividends to shareholders, they charge tenants ever-higher prices for their beer (ordered in bulk from large brewers at massive discounts, which the pubcos pocket), and demand rents that rise faster than inflation, thus hampering and deterring even the best landlords. National pub insolvencies rose by 151% in Oct-Dec 2008 (Price Waterhouse Coopers).

Ultimately, poor landlords and high prices from pubcos have forced customers to go to free houses or to Wetherspoon pubs instead, where prices are cheaper and the choice and quality of the beers usually better.

However, the Credit Crunch has exacerbated the problems with pubcos:-

- Pubco tenants are now getting fewer customers, and are hit by higher running costs (food, utilities, etc.) and risk going out of business if they do not have enough sales turnover to cover the high rents – hence the rise in pub leases for sale – some 20 are currently up for sale in Milton Keynes and North Bucks.
- Pubcos have heavy debts to repay to banks which in the current climate want their loans promptly serviced. Many pubcos are now trying to sell off pubs despite the depressed housing market, and often with covenants preventing future re-use as a pub;
- And for those pubs whose change-of-use applications have failed, pubcos often refuse to sell the freehold to more competent competitors – but this results in derelict pubs.

The likely scenario is that pubcos as a species are doomed to failure. Their business model is no longer sustainable economically and is no longer acceptable socially:-

- MPs are discussing the need for regulatory control over the industry, which may result in price and rent controls; or
- Pubcos may make one final desperate attempt to stay in business, by merging with other pubcos to form a competitor to Wetherspoons, or use the savings of a merger to reduce rents and pass on beer discounts to tenants, (*and pigs might fly! Ed*); or
- Individual landlords may be given the right to purchase the freehold of a community pub from a failed pubco, backed by a mortgage from a High Street lender.

Continued....

NEXT ISSUE

The next issue of Beer Moos will be published on: 1st June.
We must have your stories, news and advertisements by: 20th May.
Late copy cannot be guaranteed entry.

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Trading Standards

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Email: tsd@mkilton-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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Continued from P3...

CAMRA is closely monitoring the situation:

- In 2008, CAMRA's National AGM called for new legislation, requiring pubcos with over 500 pubs to allow managers and tenants the right to stock a beer of their choice outside of the tie.

- The forthcoming results of the CAMRA Pub Watch survey (not related to the similarly named scheme for tackling crime in pubs) will reveal higher rates of pub closures across the country, such as the 10 percent attrition (15 out of 150) already recorded in Oxford.

If any pub licensee has a comment to make about pubcos and the downturn, please feel free to write to us at pubs@mkcamra.org.uk

Kevin Mak
Pubs Officer

Inn View

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Pub News

12-Day Festival at the Globe, Hanslope

Hanslope Wassailers are staging another grand cask ale festival at The Globe this spring. Running from Thursday 2nd till Sunday 5th April, this event is intended to whet – and wet! – beer drinkers' appetites ready for CAMRA's Cask Ale week which starts on Monday 6th April and runs till Easter Monday.

Wassailers are guaranteed a wonderful selection of the best British Ales, all at a credit crunch-busting £2 a pint. Landlady Jenny will be complementing the event with inexpensive bar food – pies, filled rolls and even a selection of shellfish, while host John will be fully supporting Cask Ale week at the Globe's bar. Thus discerning drinkers will be able to enjoy 12 days of non-stop celebration at this great real ale pub.

For more on Hanslope Wassailers visit the Globe's website www.theglobehanslope.co.uk or e-mail Dave at hanslopewassailers@live.com. Bus 33 Milton Keynes – Northampton service passes the door. Jenny and John look forward to welcoming you.

Stoke Goldington Rocks....

70s Rock band Brimstone strikes up at the Lamb in Stoke Goldington, our 2008 Pub of the Year, at 8pm on Saturday March 7th. Maybe time to dig out those flares and platforms, and let it all hang out! The beer will be excellent too.

Coming Attractions at Victoria Inn, Bradwell Village

On Good Friday (April 10th) the Victoria hosts its Annual "Beer and Bun Race". This local tradition, at least half-a-century-old, requires participants to run around the village with a half of ale and a hot cross bun! It's a great family day out, and there will be the usual pig roast and prizes for the winners.

Landlord Dean is also proud to announce his first ever Mild festival to mark CAMRA's May is Mild Month. It's scheduled for early May bank holiday

weekend, Friday 1st to Sunday 4th, with food and entertainment as well as a representative selection of delicious mild ales. For more information contact the Victoria (01908 316355) nearer the time.

Dean also reports the excellent news that real ale now outsells lager in the Victoria, and that he may have to invest in another handpump to keep up with demand.

Little Horwood Pub Saved – for Now:

The Old Crown, in Mursley Road, Little Horwood was closed, and its owner submitted a planning application for change of use to residential. A public parish council meeting was called on Monday 15th December to see if this could be prevented, and two CAMRA committee members went along to offer our advice and support.

The parish council was worried that it could be harder to fight this application because there was another pub in Little Horwood – the Shoulder of Mutton. They wondered if Aylesbury Vale District Council had a "last pub in the village" policy, and so wouldn't fight applications for a second pub's closure, because it would have to foot the legal bill if the applicant won on appeal.

The villagers voted to oppose the change of use application, so Little Horwood Parish Council wrote to Aylesbury Vale DC to object. Beer Moos readers will be pleased to know that application to change the use of The Old Crown to a private dwelling was indeed refused, and the pub is saved, at least for now.

But as we go to press, news has reached us that a further change-of-use application has been made. We'll keep you informed!

Woburn Pub goes Concrete!

Though it's just outside our branch area, Beer Moos readers may like to know that the Royal Oak in Woburn, a genuine free house, is currently selling a range of Concrete Cow beers brewed here in Milton

Keynes. As a bonus, and unlike many other Woburn 'pubs', it's not pretending to be a restaurant either!

Buckingham News

The Woolpack is hosting its usual beer festival over Spring Bank Holiday, May 23rd to 25th. They are also celebrating Cask Ale Week (see CAMRA news on p10 for more on this) from April 6 - 13. This pub has live music on alternate Thursdays; see their website for details:

<http://www.buckinghamwoolpack.co.uk>

The Mitre will be holding a beer festival at Easter Weekend (April 10-13th) which is Cask Ale Week. They haven't decided on ales yet, but Beer Moos knows you can depend on Keith and Jane to get something interesting and unusual!

Music gigs continue at the Mitre every fortnight:

Sat 14 Mar - Red Bullets (Indie). Come prepared to party!!

Sat 28 Mar – Southside Jimmy (Pop/Rock) Guitar rock from Stones to Stereophonics..... and beyond

Sat 4 Apr – Just Nuisance (Rock) Rock with their own distinctive full sound.

Sat 11 Apr – Sheri's Hit Men (60s, 70s, 80s and 90s) Rock, soul, and blues .

Sat 18 Apr – Loz Jones Band (Original) Original material that you'll be humming for the rest of the week.

Sat 16 May – Tall Story (Pop/Rock/Acoustic)

Sat 30 May – Light Alloy (60s) First time at The Mitre and in Buckingham!

All gigs start at 8pm except May 30th when it's 8.30. Further details at:

www.lemonrock.com/mitrebuckingham?page=gigs

The Mitre's junior pool players meet on Saturdays at 3 – 5pm, watched over by members of the pub's pool team.

New Landlord at the Wheatsheaf, Maids Moreton

Beer Moos welcomes new landlord Gary Mantle to this atmospheric traditional country tavern. Gary

Continued....

Pub News Continued



promises to maintain the pub's reputation for excellent food and ale, with an even greater variety of beers than before. We wish him a successful and happy tenure, and look forward to continuing to enjoy the superb ale for which the Wheatsheaf is famous.

Reindeer Reopens

The Reindeer Inn at Westbury has reopened after a four-month closure for refurbishment., Licensees Mick and Louise McLoughlin have presided over an extensive upgrading operation which included removing vast growths of mould from the cellar! Admiral Tavern's beer range is on sale through three handpumps, and there is a tempting-looking food menu. Beer Moos welcomes Mick and Louise to our branch area and wishes them a prosperous tenure.



Padbury Pub Damaged

The New Inn at Padbury has suffered extensive structural damage when a skidding road vehicle struck a wall of the building. The pub, which had only recently undergone extensive refurbishment, will be

closed for several weeks while repairs are carried out. We offer our commiserations to the landlord and landlady, and hope the New Inn will be open again as soon as possible.

News From the Brickhills

The Old Red Lion at Great Brickhill is marking Mother's Day, March 22nd, with a special menu. You can treat your Mum to two courses for £16.95 or £18.95 if she feels up to demolishing three. The pub is also planning a *tapas* evening on March 27 for £20 per head. For details call 01525 261715.

At Little Brickhill, the Old Green Man too has special plans for Mother's Day. They're also introducing a £5 daily lunch and from March to May are offering CAMRA members a pint of real ale for £2 on production of current membership card. Details from 01525 261253.

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Moosings from the Chair

Why excellent real ale pubs sometimes don't go into the Good Beer Guide

We've just finished surveying in North Buckinghamshire for the Good Beer Guide 2010. The results remain a closely-guarded secret until September 2009, but as always there will be disappointments as well as triumphs.

Great pubs that we'd love to add to the GBG and old friends who deserve recognition alike are falling short of the mark, and landlords often ask us why.

Consistent beer quality is the only standard we use when choosing GBG entries. All we insist on is that every ale is served in top condition. The single biggest mistake that many pubs make is serving more beers than their turnover warrants. It really gladdens the eye to see eight beers on sale on handpump. But if they're not all in good condition – usually because the pub's turnover is too low to ensure that beer in each cask is finished before deterioration sets in – then customers are being done no favours, and the pub can find itself excluded from the GBG.

Paradoxically, a pub that serves five exciting beers from far-flung microbreweries will lose out to one that serves just a couple of standard national brews, if one of those exciting beers is tired, flat or vinegary. Even if they exchange that beer when a customer takes it back, the customer shouldn't have to. A GBG-listed pub should not be serving bad pints in the first place.

These days, thanks to cellar cooling equipment, it's rare to be served a warm pint, unless it's a very hot day and the beer has been standing in the lines. But equally, beer that's too cold can dash a pub's chances of going in the GBG. Cask-conditioned ale needs to be stored and served at 12-14 degrees Celsius, even if that means heating a cold cellar in winter to bring it UP to 12 degrees. Equally, if a house keeps its cellar at lager temperature instead of using under-bar cooling to take the lager down to its correct serving temperature, then its chances of getting into the GBG are slim indeed.

We can only include thirteen pubs from North Bucks in the Good Beer Guide, so the competition is fierce. The only way for a pub to muscle its way in is to serve all its ales in great condition, at the proper temperature, ALL the time.

Cheers!

Phil Swinbank

Diary Dates

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

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

MARCH 2009

☞ **Monday 2nd March - 8.30pm**

Branch Meeting, Lamb, Stoke Goldington, this is actually February's meeting!

☞ **Fri March 20 and Sat March 21**

Winslow Lions Beer Festival.

Fri March 27th - Sun 29th

Antwerp Weekend. Places are still available as we go to press. Contact treasurer@mkcamra.org.uk for details.

☞ **Monday 30th March - 8.30pm**

Branch Meeting, New Inn, Buckingham.

APRIL 2009

☞ **Tues 14th April - 8pm**

Social, 3 Horseshoes, Drayton Parslow.

☞ **Sat 25th April - 12.00 noon**

Woburn Sands Pub Crawl starts Royal Oak

☞ **Mon 27th April - 8.30pm**

Branch Meeting, Bell at Beachampton.

MAY 2009

☞ **Sat 9th May**

Rugby Beer Festival, meet CMK rail station for 10.25 train. Pub crawl of Rugby may be included.

☞ **Thurs 14th May - 8pm**

Social, Victoria, Bradwell Village.

☞ **Tues 26th May - 8.30pm**

Branch Meeting, Red Lion, Fenny Stratford.

☞ **Sat 30th May**

Delapre Beer Festival, Northampton, meet CMK rail station for 11.49 train..

Silverstone Brewery

There's a new kid on the local brewery block, and a very fast mover it is! Silverstone Brewery is based at a farm on the edge of Syresham near the celebrated motor-racing circuit, and is LocAle to our branch area.

The brewery was set up in November 2008 under the tutelage of Barry Parrish, a master brewer from Leicestershire, to produce the very finest real ales. Using the best natural ingredients, they produce a cask conditioned beer of the highest quality and taste. With the "Home of British Motor Racing" on the doorstep, branding and merchandising reflect sixty years of motor sport at the world famous Silverstone Circuit.

Production is currently focused on Pitstop bitter, which was premièred at our own Concrete Pint Beer Festival in November. This smooth, hoppy, 3.8% ABV session beer is already being supplied to nearly forty free houses including, in our area, the Mitre in Buckingham, Wheatsheaf and Buckingham Arms in Maids Moreton, Two Brewers at Thornborough, New Inn and Blackbird in Padbury, Bell at Beachampton, Thatched Inn at Adstock, and Crown at Gawcott.

There are four partners in the business, Managing Director Richard Field, Pauline Bacon, the glamorous – and highly effective! – sales person, brewer Matt Warren, and former racing driver David Baines. Pitstop, which beat hundreds of different ales to take the silver award at Quaff Ale/Harlequin Beer Festival in Sheffield, will later be joined by two stronger brews, provisionally named Chequered Flag and Top Gear.

In keeping with its motor racing theme, Silverstone Brewing Company is the proud sponsor of Formula V10, and was delighted to see driver Klaas Zwart, owner of Ascari Cars in Banbury, score two



emphatic victories, and smash the outright lap record, at Jarama in Spain, at the final round of the EURO BOSS championship.

The Silverstone Brewing Company have made a successful start to their venture, which began with a conversation in the Bull and Butcher, Akeley, (run by one of the partners in the business, Pauline Bacon). MD Richard Field is pleased with progress. "We are delighted with the response to Pitstop bitter. Sales and repeat business are strong and we plan to build our customer base and expand gradually, providing a range of the very finest cask conditioned ales and bottled beer."

This, though, is not Syresham's first brewery. The directors were amazed to hear from brewing historian Keith Osborne that another ale maker – King's Brewery – operated in the village for 100 years, between 1854 and 1954. But that's another story, which Beer Moos hopes to bring you in a later issue.

Technical footnote. For readers into technical details, the brewery has a nine-barrel brew length, its equipment came from Fen Ales of Spalding, and it uses English Maris Otter malt, Fuggles and Golding hops, and the Nottingham strain of yeast.



Coming Beer Festivals

The following are some beer festivals over the next three months which are readily reached by public transport from Milton Keynes. This is not an exhaustive list, just some suggestions.

LEICESTER – Wednesday 11th to Saturday 14th March 2009. Charotar Patidar Samaj, Bay Street, Leicester LE1 3EB

200 beers and 30 ciders await you at this Indian cultural centre, whose chefs provide the authentic curries which have become this great festival's hallmark. The venue is 5 minutes from Leicester St Margaret's Coach Station. Frequent coaches NX440 and FK230 from MK Coachway. (See National Express website for exact times) journey time 1 hr. and yes the coaches have toilets! Website: <http://www.leicestercamra.org.uk/Festivals/2009festival.shtml>

LONDON DRINKER – Wednesday 18th to Friday 20th March 2009. Camden Centre, Bidborough Street, London WC1.

This excellent large festival of around 100 beers is an easy stagger from Euston Station. Festival Website: <http://www.camranorthlondon.org.uk/ldbfi/index.html>

BOOZE ON THE OUSE, St NEOTS – Thursday 19th to Saturday 21st March 2009. Priory Centre, St Neots PE19 2BH

Over 40 cask beers plus real cider and foreign beers, souvenir glass, tombola and CAMRA shop. Open Thu 5-10.45pm, Fri 12 noon-10.45pm, Sat 12 noon-10.45pm. Families welcome until 8pm. Admission (includes programme): free to CAMRA members at all sessions. Food all sessions. Free soft drinks for drivers. The X5 Cambridge coach from MK stops right outside the venue. For info tel Andy Shaw on 01480 533893. Festival website: www.hunts.camra.org.uk/festivals

COVENTRY – 27th – 28th March at Coventry Rugby Club, Butts Park CV1 3GE. 90+ beers plus Ciders, Perries + Country Wines. Glass hire £2-refundable. Food avail all sessions. Open: 12noon-4pm, 6pm-11pm Fri + Sat. Entrance: £1 lunch, £2 eve, Free to

Card-carrying CAMRA Members at all times. Train from Bletchley, MK Central or Wolverton. Venue is 10 mins walk from Coventry station. Mick or Louise Madder 024 766 7368. Festival website: <http://uk.geocities.com/covcamra/index.html>

CHARTERS EASTER BEER FESTIVAL – April 9-13 (Easter Weekend) at Town Bridge, Peterborough PE1 1FP. 50+ ales, cider and perry, Belgian and other continental beers, whiskies, and wines. Details 01733 315700. Travel from MK on X4 coach (slow) or X5 to St Neots thence train to Peterborough.

READING – Thursday 30th April to Sunday 3rd May 2009, Kings Meadow, Reading.

Another mega-fest with 430+ales and 140+ciders and perries – a must for cider and beer lovers. Take X5 coach to Oxford, thence train to Reading. Festival is very near Reading station. Website: <http://www.readingbeerfestival.org.uk/>

BANBURY – Thursday 7th to Saturday 9th May 2009 at TA Centre, Oxford Rd, Banbury. Take X5 coach to Bicester North station, thence train to Banbury. Website: <http://www.northoxfordshirecamra.org.uk/festival/>

RUGBY – Thursday 7th to Saturday 9th May 2009 at Thornfield Bowling Club, Bruce William Way, Rugby CV22 5LL. 50+ ales plus chance to crawl the pubs of a great drinking town. Train from Bletchley, MK Central or Wolverton. Website: <http://www.rugbycamra.org.uk/BeerFestival.htm>

CAMBRIDGE – Monday 18th to Saturday 23th May 2009 at Jesus Green, Cambridge. Another large festival with 140 or so ales. Take X5 coach all the way. Website: <http://www.cambridgebeerfestival.com/summer>

Any I've missed? See www.beerfestivals.org for festivals world-wide!

CAMRA and Other News

Winslow Lions Beer Festival

Winslow Lions invite all readers of Beer Moos to their fourth beer festival at Winslow Public Hall, Elmfields Gate, MK18 3JA, .

John Bercow MP will open the festival on Friday evening, 20th March, and Darren Gough, local star of TV's Strictly Come Dancing has been invited as well. Tickets can be bought in advance at the Bell Hotel, Market Square, Winslow from March 1st. They cost £5 for entry per session, which includes a souvenir pint glass and official program with beer tasting guide. Each session will require a separate admission ticket. If you come on Saturday afternoon and wish to stay on for the evening, you can buy a 'Follow-On' ticket for £3. Opening times are:

Friday 20th March 19:00 – 23:00

Saturday 21st March 11:00 – 19:00 (with Six Nations Rugby on TV)

Saturday 21st March 19:00 – 23:00

Visit www.winslowlions.org.uk/beerfestival.html

Historic Northants Ale Comes Back from the Dead

Once upon a time, long before Milton Keynes was dreamed of, there was a rather large brewery in Northampton called Phipps, which brewed an India Pale Ale using a recipe unchanged since the 1930s. But the brewery fell into the hands of the Watneys conglomerate, who closed and demolished it. Phipps IPA seemed to have been consigned to history. But now a new company has been formed to make Phipps beer using the old recipes. It took four years of research, and many interviews with former Phipps brewers now in their 70s and 80s, before the first new pints of Phipps IPA were served in Northampton, appropriately at the Sir Pickering Phipps pub. You can read more at their website <http://phipps-nbc.co.uk> which also tells you where you can find the beer. Look out for it, and, landlords, why not get some in?

Tipplefair 2009

Tipplefair – the annual market for drink-related collectables – returns for the tenth year on Sunday

May 17th to Buckingham Community Centre, Cornwalls Meadow, Buckingham, MK18 1RP. Here, on over 75 stalls, you will find whisky and spirit items, brewery items, bottles, labels, water jugs, bar figures, playing cards, ashtrays, pump clips, bar fonts, openers, beer mats, books, showcards, and many other booze-related things. Admission at 9am costs £4.00, dropping to £1.50 after 10.30am. The event finishes at 2.30pm. For details visit www.tipples.net or telephone 07818 810896 or 01908 262039.

National Cask Ale Week 5th -13th April 2009

You could call it the world's largest real ale festival! National Cask Ale Week brings together the major players in the ale market in a partnership involving CAMRA, Cask Marque, pub chains and major real ale brewers to celebrate the wonderful world of cask ale. The aim is to encourage people who have never tried real ale to give it a go. It's hoped at least 5,000 pubs across the land will take part, with activities such as pub quizzes, meet-the-brewer sessions, pub trails, women's ale nights, and beer tastings. Publicans who want join in should visit www.caskaleweek.co.uk or call Cask Marque on 01206 752212

National Mild Month - May 2009

CAMRA, with the help of pubs and brewers, will once again be celebrating its Mild in May initiative with a new raft of events to promote this endangered beer style. The term 'mild' means 'mildly hopped' - it doesn't refer to alcohol content. Mild beers tend to be of low ABV, but some are stronger than most premium bitters. Though Mild is enjoying a revival in today's real ale market, it still only accounts for an estimated 3-5% of all real ale sales. National Mild Day will be celebrated on Saturday May 9th and more details will be released on CAMRA's national website www.camra.org.uk nearer the time.

CAMRA Champion Winter Beer of Britain 2009 Awards

Oakham Brewery's Attila was crowned Supreme Champion Winter Beer of Britain 2009 by judges at the National Winter Ales Festival. The Silver medal went to Elland Brewery's 1872 Porter, whilst the Bronze medal went to Sarah Hughes's Dark Ruby mild.

A panel of CAMRA experts and leading beer writers judged the competition at the New Century Hall, Manchester. Oakham's Attila will now be entered into the final of the Champion Beer Of Britain competition in August 2009 at the Great British Beer Festival at Earls Court, London.

For the winners in each category see <http://www.camra.org.uk/page.aspx?o=cwbbob>

CAMRA National Pub of the Year 2008

CAMRA's National Pub of the Year for 2008 is the Kelham Island Tavern, Sheffield. The National Pub of the Year competition analyses everything that makes a good pub including the quality of the beer, atmosphere, décor, customer service, clientèle mix and value for money. The Kelham Island Tavern has been a CAMRA Sheffield Pub of the Year for the last four years, and was a regional winner in both 2004 and 2007.

Beer Moos readers visiting Sheffield can find the Kelham Island Tavern at 62 Russell Street, S3 8RW tel: 0114 272 2482. It is well worth the detour from the M1, as much for the superb vegetarian lunches as the splendid real ales, many from its own brewery. Runners-up were the Crown, Stockport, Greater Manchester, Tom Copley Tavern, Spreyton, Devon, and Royal Oak, Ruspur, West Sussex.

NWAF success

The National Winter Ales Festival 2009, held at the New Century Hall, Manchester in January exceeded all expectations, with huge rises in attendance, sales, and membership recruitment. More than 8800 festival-goers came, almost a thousand more than last year. Organisers had to turn people away on the closing evening as most of the casks had run dry. Final totals confirmed the sale of a whopping 3726 gallons (29808 pints!) of beer and 375 gallons of cider and perry.

CAMRA Beer Club

CAMRA Beer Club provides a home delivery service for beer enthusiasts. Every three months, our panel of experts puts together a 20-bottle collection of 5 different bottle-conditioned ales. There's no obligation to take every selection - just pick the ones you want., and they will be delivered for just £39.95 (plus p&p) for CAMRA Members, £44.95 (plus p&p) for non-members. For more information visit www.camrabeerclub.co.uk or phone 0845 4080401.

Could you be a future CAMRA champion brewer?

CAMRA's new book *Brew Your Own British Real Ale* offers its readers the chance to recreate some of Britain's best-loved beers and learn the historic art of brewing. Author Graham Wheeler's beer recipe book is a simple step-by-step guide to producing great ale, breaking down technical jargon to simplify the brewing experience for the reader. Instructions are bullet-pointed and numbered, with the text divided up by simple diagrams. The recipes range from CAMRA Champion beers past and present, to simple ones for beginners. *Brew Your Own British Real Ale* costs £12.99 for CAMRA members and £14.99 for non-members. Buy it from CAMRA's website www.camra.org.uk. The author is an internationally respected authority on home-brewing.

Editor's Note: Beer Moos readers who wish to brew, might also be interested in 'Run a Brewery' workshop weekends in Somerset, where guests can taste, design, brew, label and name their own beers. Visit:

<http://www.theoldciderhouse.co.uk/sb-home.php> for information on dates and prices.

And Finally - news About Moos!

Currently *Beer Moos* is placed in 72 pubs and other outlets. Very few copies are left by the time a new issue comes out, so our message is getting across to the local drinking public. Many thanks to all those who report for, write for and distribute *Beer Moos*, to our publishers who produce it for us to such a high standard and to our advertisers who make it all possible.



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Peters' Puzzles



Score it!

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.

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 your score.

ANSWERS
1. Staves 2. Theakstons 3. Owner and brewer at the Concrete Cow brewery 4. J. D. Wetherspoon 5. New Bradwell 6. Normally about 6 or 7 fluid ounces (one third of a pint) 7. The Lamb and the White Hart 8. Men: maximum 4 units daily (about 1.5 pints of beer), women: 3 units (two small glasses of wine) 9. It has no flat base for standing it on a table (hand held on horseback) 10. White Park brewery (at Cranfield).
TIME WASTER ANSWER
It was black, because the first man at the back could not have seen two white hats (he would then have known that his was black). The middle man must have seen a black hat, because from the first man's answer he knew that his or the front man (or both) must be black, but his own could have been white, so he could not say what colour he was wearing. The front man knew from the second man's answer that he could not be wearing white (because the second man could have identified his own as being black if he had seen a white one in front of him).
LOOK AT THIS ONE AGAIN WHEN YOU HAVEN'T HAD A DRINK!

1. What is the correct name for the curved wooden planks used to make the sides of barrels?
2. Who brews 'Old Peculier' (not Peculiar) ale?
3. Who is Dan Bonner?
4. For what does JDW stand?
5. Where is The Cuba pub?
6. How many fluid ounces does a 'nip' bottle of beer normally hold?
7. Name the two pubs in Stoke Goldington.
8. What are the daily recommended limits of units of alcohol for men and women?
9. What is special about a 'stirrup cup' glass?
10. Who brews Cranfield Bitter?

TIME WASTER

Three explorers were captured by a tribe of cannibals, who very sportingly gave the men a chance to escape, uneaten.

The captives are each tied to a post all facing the same way so that the first one can see the backs of the other two, the second can see only see the back of the third, but not the first, and the third can see neither of the other two. They are shown five hats, three black and two white, then blindfolded. A hat is placed on each man's head, the other two being discarded, out of sight.

The blindfolds are then removed and the men are told that if any of them can determine the colour of their own hat, then all three will be released unharmed.

The man at the back says "I don't know", the centre man also says "I cannot tell", but the front man (who can not see either of the others says "I know! The hat I am wearing is " - WHAT ?, and how did he know?.

[Peter's note: turning this one into a beer related puzzle defeated me!]

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