



Milton Keynes & North Bucks CAMRA Branch Newsletter

Issue One

CHAIRMAN'S WELCOME

FEATURED IN THIS ISSUE

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Welcome to the first (and possibly last – see below) issue of 'Beer Moos'. This is the first issue of the Free(!), newsletter from the Milton Keynes & North Bucks branch of CAMRA, The Campaign for Real Ale. The reason it could be the last, is that we have a competition for you to find us a more fitting name (unless you like the current one), and I'd like to encourage you to take part. There is a prize, see page 10, for details.

What can you expect to find in our newsletter? Well, plenty of news about real ale in and around Milton Keynes for a start. Our area also covers Buckingham, Olney, and Winslow, plus all those lovely villages in between. We'll share information about what's happening locally and sometimes nationally about Real Ale, and we'll tell you what we have been doing and are planning to do in our campaign.

Overall, I'd expect to see that this newsletter shows that not only campaigning for real ale is as relevant as ever, but also fun! I'd also like to encourage anyone who has views on what they read here to feed back any comments via the Editor.

I do hope you enjoy the read and look forward to many successful issues to come.

Chris Scoggins, Chairman.

What Is This Real Ale Anyway?

Social Secretary Jim Scott gets back to the basics of what we're campaigning for!

First, a short biochemistry lesson: all beer is made by partly germinating barley grains, then subjecting them to varying degrees of heat, rather like roasting coffee. Barley so treated is called malt, and is ground for brewing into a coarse meal known as grist. This is steeped in hot water (which brewers always call "liquor"!) for a couple of hours or so, to extract the fermentable sugars, and the resulting sweet liquid, called wort, is boiled with hops, cooled, and fermented with yeast.

After fermentation, the beer – as it now has become – is stored in a conditioning tank for its flavour to develop. One of three things can now happen to it, and here's where the Real Ale bit comes in:

The beer can be racked directly into barrels, with living yeast still in it, ►

Victoria Inn Beer Festival

August Bank Holiday

15 Real Ales
Ciders and Perries available

Pig Roast Sunday
Elvis Impersonator
Childrens Entertainer

Our traditional real ale pub is in the
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Jeffrey Hudson Bitter
3.8% A.B.V.



A golden beer whose aroma is dominated by hops that give characteristic citrus notes. Hops and fruit on the palate are balanced by malt and a bitter base. Dry hoppy finish with soft fruit flavours.



White Dwarf
4.3% A.B.V.



Piercing bitterness in this 'brite' English style wheat beer, mellows to reveal fruit overtones amidst a dry as bone finish. A real thirst quencher.



Bishops Farewell
4.6% A.B.V.



A strong premium beer of structured quality dominated by elaborate fruity hop notes, with a grainy background and dry finish.

SEASONAL ALES

SUBJECT TO AVAILABILITY



CONTINUED FROM P1

SO WHAT IS THIS 'REAL ALE' ANYWAY?

to undergo secondary fermentation in the cask. The phrase 'Real Ale' describes this cask-conditioned beer (but see next paragraph). This living product can be tricky to keep and serve, and has a shortish shelf life, but for taste and flavour it's utterly unequalled. If we were to compare beer and coffee, Real Ale is the equivalent of a fresh-ground brew. Typically (in this part of the country), this type of beer is served from a full-size hand pump; sometimes it is poured straight from a tap on the barrel. Just as various types of (good) coffee have markedly different flavours, so different beers vary enormously in fragrance and taste.

An alternative form of real ale is bottle-conditioned, where the ale is bottled with some live yeast in it. This also counts as real ale, though it tends to be rather gassier than the cask version. It almost always needs careful handling and pouring so as not to disturb the yeast sediment. Examples are Worthington White Shield and Brakspear Triple. It should be stressed that the vast majority of bottled beers are NOT bottle-conditioned (canned beer never is); so read the label with care.

Alternatively, beer can be filtered and pasteurised, for dispense chilled under applied gas pressure. Beer so (mis)treated is called brewery-conditioned. It is easier to keep and serve and, being dead, has a long shelf-life. It is dispensed by external carbon dioxide (CO₂) pressure and is usually referred to as "keg beer". Often, this style of beer has a flattish, boiled-water taste and prickly fizzy-pop effervescence. In coffee terms it's the equivalent of a (rather bad) instant coffee. Watney's Red Barrel and Younger's Tartan are probably the most infamous examples of this offence against good ale!

Brewery-conditioned beer served using a less soluble gas than CO₂, typically nitrogen, is often referred to as "smoothflow" or "nitrokeg". Though often a considerable improvement upon old-style keg beers, it is still a denatured product, with none of the complexity of flavour and aroma that only cask-conditioning can achieve. Pursuing the coffee analogy, nitrokeg is like a freeze-dried instant. Examples are Guinness and John Smith's Smooth.

The Campaign for Real Ale exists to promote and defend the cause of Real Ale, in all its marvellous richness and variety. We're crazy about Real Ale! It's wonderful stuff and we want you to share our enjoyment of it. So, if you aren't in CAMRA already, why not join us? Interested? Fill in the membership form on page 8, and send it to the CAMRA address on that page; or email us at membership@mkcamra.org.uk

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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,
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To Advertise

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

The Beers!

Oxfordshire Ales
are currently producing three different brews...

Triple B - 3.7%
A session bitter, well hopped, with
Styrian and English Golding Hops.

Ingredients
Maltis Otter and Crystal Malts, Styrian
and English Golding Hops.

Colour
Autumn Leaf Brown.



IPA - 4.1%
A full flavoured, well balanced mid range
quality IPA. It's both thirst quenching and
mouthful at the same time, making it a
superb quality ale to be enjoyed by the
connoisseur.

Ingredients
Maltis Otter and Crystal Malts, Cascade,
Challenger and English Golding Hops.

Colour
Chestnut.



All available in nine and eighteen gallon casks.
Racked bright beer to order for special functions.

We are currently working on a number of recipes for our seasonal ales.
So watch out for future beers!

Marshmellow - 4.7%
A classic, strong beer with a generous,
warming flavour. The taste is deliciously
fatty and malty with a lingering
bitter aftertaste.

Ingredients
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Colour
Deep Amber.



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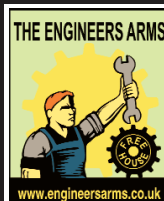
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Moosings from the Chair

Until the launch of this newsletter, we just had an electronic one. One of the key features of that over the last 15 months has been a regular slot where I can 'muse', and effectively talk about what I like on the subject of real ale. Therefore for this first issue of 'Beer Moos', I've been given the opportunity to continue musing...

So what's eating me up at the moment?

It has to be the current climate of the beer industry in the UK, and the shrinking number of once proudly independent local brewers. When I first joined CAMRA back in the 1970s, apart from the obvious advantage of being able to learn about lots of beers I'd never heard of, what appealed to me as a good cause to fight against was that, at the time, breweries were being closed and shut down at a rate of knots.

CAMRA will never be able to stop business 'doing what it does', however, I do believe that without CAMRA, we would now have 1 or 2 brewers, none based in the UK, peddling tasteless, insipid, poor, and quite frankly awful products. We would all be expected to toe the line and drink these beers like proverbial sheep!

So what's changed? Well for a start, the previous legislation enabling our landlords has been taken away from them, thus making their position weaker in relation to the pub owners. Also, despite the lessons learned in the 70s, there are now a number of brewers who once again believe that the best interests of drinkers lie with them now becoming national brewers and taking away regional variations in beers.

CAMRA is therefore as relevant today as ever, and naturally if you are not a member already, I'd like to encourage you to join us. There is a membership application form on page 8.

Just so as you know, and it doesn't actually affect a really local beer, the latest takeover proposal is by Greene King, who have made a hostile bid for Hardy and Hanson's of Nottingham. If this goes

through, it will leave Nottingham with no regional brewer, when just 20 or so years ago there were three of them.

Enough bad news I say! Let's talk a bit about more fun things. [*Like drinking Real Ale – Ed!*].

Now it wouldn't be right for me to encourage you to drink in one pub over another; however, we do run a pub of the year competition, and at the time of writing have just presented the 2006 winner with the award. That pub is the Cannon, in Newport Pagnell, and I have to say, although the beers are of the highest quality, there was a beer available that stood out even more than the rest. The beer is from a brewery that has not been going that long, and is not far away from us, just over the county border in Northamptonshire. The brewery is Great Oakley and the beer was Gobble, at 4.5%. [*If you haven't tried it, I can strongly recommend it! – Ed*]

The advent of micro breweries in the UK has gone from strength to strength, with over 70 new ones started last year. Northamptonshire is now well represented, with Great Oakley joining established micros such as Frog Island etc. We have a few in Buckinghamshire as well: Chiltern, Vale, etc.; but not one in our branch area yet!

Now these may well be all new names to you and they all have several beers in their portfolios. There are many others. How to get to drink these local beers? Ask your local landlord to stock them, if they can!

The other way to get more knowledge is to visit one of the local beer festivals that take place all around the country, where of course discounts on entry, etc, are available for CAMRA members.

I'm going to go off and enjoy a pint now. Thanks for reading, and if you have any comments on what I've said, let me know via the editor please.

Cheers!

Chris

Diary Dates

August

Tuesday 1st - Saturday 5th August

11:00 GBBF Earl's Court, London

Friday 4th August

Meet 10:00 Branch Trip to Great British Beer Festival.

Meet at MK train station

Monday 21st August

20:00 Branch meeting. The Lamb, Stoke Goldington

Saturday 26th - Monday 28th August

Victoria's August bank holiday beer festival.

Victoria Inn, Bradwell Village

September

Monday 4th September

20:00 Branch meeting. Cannon, Newport Pagnell

Date tbc

20:00 Good Beer Guide launch and social.

Victoria Inn, Bradwell Village

October

Saturday 7th October 2006

Arrive 12:00 Grainstore Brewery tour. Oakham

Monday 9th October 2006

20:00 Branch meeting.

Wetherspoons, Midsummer Blvd,

Central Milton Keynes

Thursday 19th October 2006

20:00 Social. The Swan, Astwood

In case of changes for reasons beyond our control, please check our web site diary page at www.mkcamra.org.uk/diary.htm for latest information, or contact the Social Secretary (see contacts list on page 3).

Pub Of The Year

The Cannon Bucks CAMRA



The Cannon has stood in its current position on Newport Pagnell High Street for quite some time – parts of the building go back to around 1480, according to a surveyor, when it was a single-story building.

Around 1780, a second floor was added with a Georgian roof; and the "modern block" that includes the kitchen and the external function room was added around 1830. The room that is now the darts bar was a separate shop, a milliner's, until 1845 when it was joined to the pub.

In 1850, the building was bought by Wilmers, a grain merchants from nearby Sherington, who also started a brewery on the site. It ran in this style till 1905, when Wilmers sold the business to a solicitor from Warwick, one E.L. Warman, who bought it as "The Cannon Brewery" (it was so called because at that time a cannon from the Civil War was on the corner outside it).

Mr Warman proved to be no businessman; by 1910

n - Milton Keynes and CAMRA Pub Of The Year

he and the brewery/pub had gone bankrupt, and Aylesbury Brewing Company bought the pub and brewery from him for the princely sum of £1,500.00.

In 1990, ABC were forced to sell the pub because of the Thatcherite Beer Orders implementation, and it was purchased by Sycamore Taverns (now a part of Enterprise Inns). However, Sycamore had troubles of their own, and the present landlord, Adam Hepburn, bought the pub from them (by this time the on-site brewery was no more) for about 100 times what ABC paid for it in 1910 – just under £150,000.

The pub was first mentioned in the 1996 Good Beer Guide, and has been in every issue since – an achievement that very few other pubs can lay claim to. Last year, the local branch awarded a special certificate to the landlord for 10 consecutive years of GBG entries.

The Cannon is a fully Free House, owned by the landlord with no pubco connection. There are always four real ales on tap, and pump clips for the next couple of brews are on display so that regulars can see what's coming. In addition to Real Ale, The Cannon also stocks a wide range of lagers, smooth-flow beers, Guinness, and bottled drinks both alcoholic and soft.

The Cannon does not serve food – its layout and facilities are not suitable. It is a true “drinkers’ pub”, of the kind that is rarely found these days.

In addition to being a haven for real ale drinkers, the pub has live music about twice a week – jam sessions in the bar every Wednesday evening, and live concerts most Saturday nights in the Function Room at the rear.

See <http://www.cannonlive.org.uk/> for more information on this.



Peter's Puzzles

1. What purpose do 'finings' serve in beer production?
2. What is the name of the only McMullen pub in the MK area, which was gutted by fire in 1995?
3. What does the acronym CAMRA represent?
4. Which brewer sponsors the “Cask Marque” scheme?
5. Which south Buckinghamshire brewery was taken over in 1949 by Strongs?
6. Complete these local MK pub names:
 - a) Suffolk
 - b) Shoulder of
 - c) Bull &
 - d) Fox &
 - e) Engine &
7. Which is the odd one out?
Stone, Beer, Knife, Bath, Wool
8. Which is greater, half a litre or a pint?

Answers on page 10

A horizontal row of four people against a white background. From left to right: a young man with dark hair and a mustache, smiling, wearing a blue shirt and a dark jacket; a woman with dark hair and glasses, smiling, wearing a light blue top; an older man with a grey beard, looking thoughtful with his index finger to his chin, wearing a dark blue shirt; and a man with dark hair, smiling broadly, wearing a dark red shirt. All four individuals have a large, clear glass mug of beer with a thick head of foam placed over their heads, completely obscuring their faces.

Just fill in the form below and send, with a cheque (payable to CAMRA Ltd) or for Three Months Free membership (for those renewing or joining by Direct Debit) complete the Direct Debit Form. All forms should be addressed to membership secretary, CAMRA, 230 Hatfield Road, St Albans, Herts, AL1 4LW. Alternatively you can join online at www.camra.org.uk. Rates for single membership are £18 and joint £21. Concession rates are available on request.

P8

Collectors Corner



For some strange reason it seems to part of the British psyche to collect mementoes of enjoyable events.

Drinking beer is no exception and there exist clubs and organisations to service the needs of collectors of:- Beer mats, Bottle labels, Lapel pins, Beer playing cards, Commemorative bottles, Brewery History, Guinness items, Pub History and Beer cans. In forthcoming issues I will be profiling most of these nine clubs, but if you are an avid collector and can't wait for details, please email me at pete@tip-les.net and I'll see what I can do for you.

There are also specialist collectors fairs and events, so please watch this column for further information. Although most folks collect for the pure pleasure of acquiring lovely or interesting items, I am often asked what particular items are worth; I'm afraid the simple answer is "nothing – unless someone is prepared to pay for them"

I have seen single beer mats sell for over £1,000 each, simply because many collectors wanted them; but on the other hand I have seen a collection of over 1,000 sell for less than £10. The economics of supply and demand apply to collecting too!

If you have interesting or cherished artifacts with a story attached, I would love to feature them in forthcoming issues - please email me.

It is fair to say that the most desirable items are from long gone breweries, but that is not say that current ones do not produce notable advertising stuff - Shepherd Neame is a case in point.

My own particular passion is collecting playing cards issued by UK breweries, of which I have 2,000 different. The oldest of these is from Stansfeld brewery (Fulham) which was issued about 1895. This brewery was taken over in 1914.

Until next time - CHEERS

What's in a Name?

Blandford Fly 5.2%

From Badger Brewery. Named after a singularly unpleasant biting insect that frequents the River Stour. It seems that ginger helps to reduce the pain and swelling caused by the bite of these nasty little beasts, and ginger is one of the ingredients of this beer – clearly, it has a bite all of its own!

Side Pocket for a Toad

This 3.6% beer from Tring Brewery is named for a Hertfordshire saying. A side pocket for a toad is a totally useless item. Think concrete parachute, ash-tray on a motorbike, chocolate fireguard, ballet shoes for a mermaid..... You get the idea.

Personally, I have found this to be decidedly quaffable, and far from useless!

Comments Please...

Do you like the name "Beer Moos" for this newsletter? It's meant to make you think of MK's Concrete Cows, but we're not sure that we are satisfied with it.

If you like it, please tell us. If you think you have a better name, please tell us that also. You can email the editor at editor@mkcamra.org.uk, or phone or text me at 07808 391349.

All opinions & entries will be considered by the editorial board, and the person who suggests the name we select will win a prize. I'm not saying what, but it will be beer-related, and something worth having!

If there is a strong vote to keep this name, or if more than one person selects the winning name, then the prize winner will be selected by a random draw.

The editor's decision is final.



Peter's Puzzles SOLUTIONS

1. Clearing suspended particles in the cask.
2. The Old Beams
3. CAMpaign for Real Ale
4. Wells of Bedford
5. Wethereds of Marlow
6. a) Punch
b) Mutton
c) Butcher
d) Hounds
e) Tender
7. Knife (other are English place names)
8. Pint

Just For Laffs

A white horse walks into a pub and asks for a pint of best bitter. As the barmaid is serving him she remarks that she has a whisky named after him.

The surprised horse replies "GOOD GRIEF! That's amazing - you actually sell a whisky called Dobbin?"

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**Friday: £20 Wilko Johnson, The Hamsters, Eddie & the Hotrods
Danny Bryant's RedEyeBand, Helium Soul, Who's Next? + more**

Saturday: £29 Frankie Miller's Full House Reunion

**The Blockheads, Deborah Bonham, Medicine Hat, Larry Miller
Innes Sibun, The Soul Kitchen, Badger, Litmus, Morph + more**

**Sunday: £25 Mostly Autumn, Bluehorses, John Otway
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