



the

Casket

Campaign for Real Ale

FREE

January 2010



EAST BEDFORDSHIRE
www.eastbedscamra.org.uk casket@eastbedscamra.org.uk



EAST BEDFORDSHIRE CAMRA

XMAS SOCIAL 2009

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Help Charity

There is no charge for the Casket. If you enjoy reading the Casket and/or take a copy home then please consider putting a donation in the Pub's charity box.

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Volume 6

2010

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SG18 0JH

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If you have any complaints about short measure, lack of price lists or misleading promotion of products, contact:

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Tel; 01234 228897

The Casket

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CAMRA East Bedfordshire

Editors: Malcolm Lloyd & Clifford Luff

The views expressed in The Casket are those of individual contributors and do not necessarily represent the policy of CAMRA, the Editors or the East Bedfordshire Branch.

Contributions to the Casket are always Welcome.

For more information see
www.eastbedscamra.org.uk.

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A LETTER FROM THE EDITORS

Once again another year has passed and since the last edition of Casket we have had another successful event manning the CAMRA books and games stands at the Bedford Beer Festival. Our thanks go to Malcolm Lloyd, Geoff Tilbury, Kevin Blackett, Chris Foskitt, Iris Rose, John and Brita Holland and North Beds Personnel for manning the stand. Of course our stands would not have been there if Jacquie and Alan Binnington had not spent so much of their time setting up and manning the stands before and over the festival. Special thanks to them, it is certainly appreciated by the branch. It was sad that as stated in our last edition we were not asked to participate in the Bromham Apple Day this year as we have enjoyed manning the cider stand in the past. We are looking for alternative venues next year.

In Langford the Boot pub has now been turned into an Indian Restaurant and although there is a large display outside the pub heralding an Indian Restaurant in an English Pub no real ale is served. This appears to be converting a pub into another use without the necessity of a planning application. It is a pity a once good local pub has gone this way and on a recent visit to Wells we asked why this should happen and informed that no good landlords are were forthcoming. I am sure that the main reason why decent landlords are not forthcoming is the initial high cost of entering the pub due to the rents imposed, and the cost of the tied drinks supplied by the owning company. There is now a lack of borrowing facilities also for forthcoming licensees.

It is pleasing to read that the National Brewing Centre at Burton-upon Trent is opening after brewer Molson Coors had intended to close it. This is the former Bass Museum and reflects the brewing styles of the United Kingdom. The White Shield Brewery is also based at the site.

An annual barrelage survey adjusted to include an estimate of microbrewery volumes from The British Beer and Pub Association concludes Cask Ale is ideally positioned to be the next big thing. Cask Ale volumes declined slightly in 2008 but Cask Ale sales in both volume and value increased in 2009 to date. Cask Ale's share of total beer sold is showing a long term increase as is the total number of people drinking real ale. Cask Ale is outperforming not only all other types of beer but most other drinks in pubs.

The editors wish all our readers a happy and prosperous New Year.



**CAMPAIGN
FOR
REAL ALE**

CAMRA - Office of Fair Trading Faces Legal Challenge From Consumers

CAMRA, the Campaign for Real Ale, has announced it will issue a legal challenge to the Office of Fair Trading's decision to reject its super-complaint on anti-competitive practices in the UK pub market. CAMRA is pledging funds to the appeal, but is depending on consumers helping to raise further funds to ensure this vital legal challenge can stand the best chance of success.

In October the consumer group criticised the Office of Fair Trading (OFT) for failing to protect consumers by taking no further action to address consumer detriment in the pub market following CAMRA's super-complaint submitted in July. Under the Enterprise Act 2002, CAMRA is entitled to appeal the OFT's decision to the Competition Appeals Tribunal, and has decided upon this course of action to continue fighting anti-competitive practices in the UK pub market.

From Tuesday January 5th 2010, CAMRA is calling upon consumers to visit the CAMRA website (www.camra.org.uk) and contribute to the 'Consumers v. OFT Pub Market Ruling' Campaign Fund.

CAMRA, the Campaign for Real Ale, is a not for profit, independent consumer organisation which campaigns for real ale, real pubs and consumer rights. CAMRA currently has over 107,000 consumers as members.

CAMRA's super-complaint, 'A Fair Share for the Consumer', was published in July and can be viewed at www.camra.org.uk/supercomplaint

CAMRA's super-complaint centred on the need to reform beer tie arrangements to prevent large companies exploiting tie arrangements that prevent tied publicans from buying beer on the open market at fair prices. CAMRA argued that the wholesale prices paid by tied publicans are considerably higher, around £20,000 per year for an average pub, than would prevail in a competitive market. The lack of competition, particularly in areas dominated by tied pub companies, mean that consumers pay higher prices, and suffer a reduced quality of experience and a restricted range of products. CAMRA has calculated that if beer prices had only risen in line with inflation since 1990 then collectively consumers would be better off by £2.5 billion a year.



**OUR 4TH ANNUAL
BEER FESTIVAL WILL TAKE PLACE BETWEEN
THURSDAY 29TH APRIL AND MONDAY 3RD MAY
BIGGER THAN LAST YEAR WITH HOPEFULLY
35 REAL ALES**

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AND ALSO PARTICIPATING IN THE "LOCALE" SCHEME
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Beers by Bus Pass - Henlow to Sandy

Using the 82 Hitchin / Biggleswade and the M3 Biggleswade / Sandy / Bedford



buses it is possible to visit some great pubs in this area without too much walking. On a



cautionary note. The 82 is an hourly service and only runs Monday – Saturday and the last bus out of Biggleswade back to Hitchin leaves at 5.45 prompt. The M3 bus runs a two hourly service on a Sunday between Biggleswade and Bedford.

However, there is a good rail service between Hitchin and Sandy.

This crawl starts at The Crown Henlow (1) – bus stop more or less outside. There are 3 real ales available and London Pride, Adnams, Hop-back have all been on tap recently. Food is available all day. A short walk to the Engineers Arms (2) where you can take your choice from the ever changing list of breweries. The Five Bells is another short walk up the High Street. There are bus stops opposite the Engineers Arms and just outside the Five Bells. They arrive at the Engineers at about 10 past the hour.



The 82 then heads towards Langford. There are bus stops at The Wrestlers and The Plough (17 past the hour). Safely arrived at Biggleswade there are 15 pubs to choose from (see online guide for details).

Continued on page 8



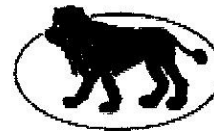
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VISIT US AT WWW.WHITEHORSEBROOM.CO.UK TO VIEW OUR RECENT MENUS

For an excellent pint of Greene King Dark Mild visit the Wheat-sheaf (3) in Lawrence Road (about a 5 minute walk from the Market Square).



The landlord is well known for his Dark Mild and

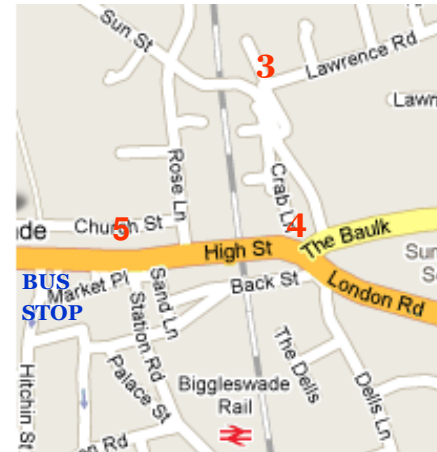
The Wheatsheaf is an old fashioned friendly pub at the end of a row of terrace houses. Retrace your steps to the Stratton House Hotel (4). A very comfortable bar with a changing range of beers on my last visit Wadworths 6X was on offer. Food is available

both in the bar and the restaurant. A short hop away is The Golden Pheasant (5). This is a Grade 11 listed Speciality Ale House always offering 6 real ales, often from Local Micros.

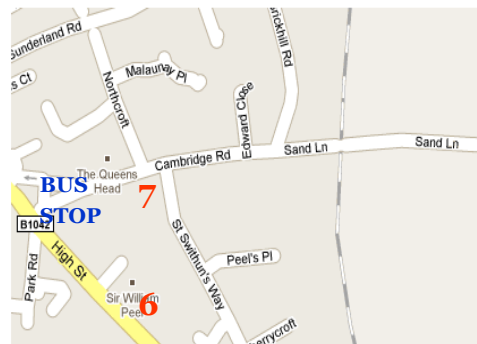


Now catch the M3 to Sandy (it is the Biggles-wade to Bedford bus) and

leaves the Market Square at 15 and 45 minutes past the hour. There are five pubs in Sandy (see on line guide for details).



Alight in Sandy Market Square and walk towards the Church. First stop is The Sir William Peel (6) in the High Street. This is the only true Free House in Sandy offering a choice of 4 beers usually sourced from small independent breweries. Return back to the Market Square, walk past the bus stop to the Queens Head (7). It was



built in 1750 and retains much of the original structure and character. There is a huge welcoming log fire throughout the winter. The beer on offer is from the Green King range, but normally a very good guest ale.

The M3 can now take you back to Biggleswade or onto Bedford. Or you can walk to the station and visit The Bell which is opposite.

Remember there is no 82 on a Sunday. Check all times before travelling.

There are of course other pubs en route you may want to try if you have the time, the ones featured here are my favourites



BUS TIME TABLES

For 82 bus www.centrebus.co.uk

For M3 bus www.stagecoachbus.com/

Malcolm Lloyd

DIARY DATES

January 19th, Branch Social, Golden Pheasant, Biggleswade. 8 pm

February 16th, G.B.G. Selection Meeting, Rising Sun Potton. 8 pm

March 23rd, Branch Social, Chequers, Stotfold. 8 pm
29th March to 5th April. National Cask Ale Week

May 11th, **A.G.M. Engineers Arms, Henlow, 8 pm Start**
22nd Branch trip to Buntingford Brewery, More details later

July 24th Joint branch trip, London Pub Crawl. More details later

BEER FESTIVALS

January 21st to 23rd 14th Cambridge Winter Ale Festival,
The University Social Club in Mill Lane **CAMRA**
20th to 23rd National Winter Ale Festival,
Sheridan Suite, Oldham Road, Manchester **CAMRA**

February 18th to 20th, 27th Luton Beer and Cider Festival at the
Hightown Sports and Arts Centre. **CAMRA**
26th & 27th First Chappel Winter Beer festival. NOTE: This
is a pre-booked ticket event only. See East Anglian
Railway Museum for details

March 18th to 20th 33rd St Neots Beer Festival 'Booze on the Ouse'
Priory Centre, Priory Lane, St Neots **CAMRA**
12th & 13th Hitchin Beer and Cider Festival.
Town Hall, Brand St. Hitchin **CAMRA**

April 29th to 3rd Rising Sun, Potton.
30th to May 2nd Ivy Leaf Clubs first Beer Festival,
Station Rd Langford

May Late May the Stag, Stotfold, see next issue for details



CAMRA launched a scheme called LocAle to help pubs promoting locally produced real ales as well as local breweries.

East Beds Branch has adopted the area for the breweries to be 30 miles from Biggleswade and pubs selling good quality ales.

The benefits of the Locale scheme are to improve consumer choice, enable local breweries to sell more ales so they can expand and benefit the local economy and an increase in local identity and pride.

Breweries that are within 30 miles of Biggleswade are:-

Potton, Potton, Beds.	B&T Shefford, Beds.
White Park, Cranfield, Bucks.	Green Tye, Much Hadham, Herts.
Buntingford, Royston, Herts	Red Squirrel, Hertford. Herts.
Wells & Youngs, Bedford.	Alehouse, St Albans, Herts.
McMullen, Hertford, Herts.	Concrete Cow, Milton Keynes.
Milton, Cambridge, Cambs.	Cambridge Moonshine, Cambs.
Potbelly, Kettering, Northants.	Tring. Tring, Herts.

Pubs that are participating in the scheme are:-

Golden Pheasant, Biggleswade.	
Engineers Arms, Henlow.	Rising Sun, Potton.
Sir William Peel, Sandy.	Stag, Stotfold.
Vicars Inn, Arlesey.	Stratton House Hotel, Biggleswade.

Please Make a visit to these pubs and enjoy local produced ales.

LOCAL NEWS

The Coach and Horses, Stotfold

Reported to have been put on the market at £235.000 by Punch Taverns, the owner. Any takers?.



The White Horse Biggleswade

Now has new tenants Jason and Emma who took over the helm late last year. Want to update the pub to bring it out of the spit and sawdust image it had.



The Engineers Arms Henlow – Simple answer to a tricky problem.

As it is very difficult to try all the ales available on a single visit, Kevin and Clare have come up with an excellent solution. You can now order a tray of 6 x 1/3 pints in a single round.



The Three Tuns Arlesey Sad to report that this lovely thatched roof pub has now been sold to developers.

The Whistle and Flute Biggleswade

Some good news from this pub, tucked away down Mill Lane. They have started to serve real ale, with one hand pump serving Fullers, London Pride.



The Crown Henlow is now a Free House. They still serve their excellent range of food, with the advantage of a third hand pump and an ever changing choice of beers are now available. Wells, Bombardier; Hop Back, GFB; and Green Jack, Canary on my visit.



The Boot Langford

Well I suppose it was too much to hope for, the Boot becoming a proper pub again, no chance of that. All though it's called "an English pub", there's no Real Ale, no pub atmosphere and no where to have a quiet drink on a Friday or Saturday night. It's an Indian Restaurant with a bar serving fizzy drinks. An opportunity missed by Charles Wells to turn it into a great family pub with a large garden.

*The*STAG

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LOCAL BEER FESTIVAL REPORTS



The First Biggleswade Beer Festival took place at **The Golden Pheasant**, from the 4th to 6th of September. There were beers available on tap in a specially constructed bar area to the rear of the pub as well as the usual six in the main bar. Friday evening was very hectic with the landlord, John Walsh being kept very busy.

The Henlow Beer Festival took place recently celebrating “20 years at the Engineers” over 5,000 pints consumed over the five day festival, Landlord Kevin Machin told the Casket “It was a huge success we were somewhat surprised ourselves with current financial restraints people have to endure, it was great to see so many people out supping real ale



Stratton House Hotel held its first beer festival on the 26th and 27th of September.

The idea came from customers comments on their good real ales and their listing in the Good Beer Guide. They had 12 caskets

on racks and 4 on handpump as well as 2 polypins. The beers were generally from local breweries listed in East Beds Camra LocAle scheme. Buntingford Brewery supplied a beer called Stratton Special as well as their Garden City 18. Other local breweries included B&T, Potbelly, Potton, Tring, Milton, Red Squirrel, White Park and Moonshine. Wells sponsored the festival with marketing material and supplied several beers.

Ben thought the festival was very successful and is hoping to hold another festival next spring.

Clifford Luff

A PUB TO VISIT WHILST ON HOLIDAY



The Cherub Inn, Higher St. Dartmouth, Devon dates from 1380 and still retains many of its original features, including some old ships' timbers, it's the oldest building in Dartmouth, but not the oldest pub! It has only been a pub since the early 1970s. The bar is very cosy, with low ceilings and old oak beams in abundance. They serve at least three real ales mostly from local breweries and a cider. The flight of stairs just inside the

door leads to the restaurant, where the food is as good as the beer. A very nice pub indeed.

Malcolm Lloyd

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EAST BEDS CAMRA XMAS SOCIAL

After a long hard year campaigning for the preservation of Real



Ale; what with beer festivals in Hitchin, Letchworth, Cambridge, St Neots, Peterborough, Oxenhope and London; National Pubs week in May, visiting the pubs in the East Beds area by mini bus, all the late night committee meetings, and the inter branch Pub

Tour of London which took place in July. It was time to relax a bit and enjoy some refreshments at the Annual Xmas Social, which took place at the Engineers Arms Henlow on Friday 11th December.

The front bar had been reserved for us the event which was well attended by a large number of branch members. Kevin and Claire had prepared a



superb Chilli served with chips and bread. The beer range was as good as ever, this time consisting of Xmas ales from around



the country. Everybody enjoyed themselves and it was a very pleasant evening. Our thanks go to Kevin and Claire for their hospitality.

Malcolm Lloyd

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OXENHOPE BEER AND MUSIC FESTIVAL

On October 23rd

Nine members of our branch ventured north by rail to the Keighley Worth Valley Railway Oxenhope Beer Festival. This was my third visit to this festival and it lived up to the past festivals with about 140 real ales from all over the country at the railway shed at Oxenhope plus two steam hauled trains with 3 beers on each and Old Spot Brewery having their bar at Keighley. Many local pubs also had a wide range of real ales and one also had a very enjoyable beer festival near Keighley Station.

Drinking real ales whilst travelling through the Yorkshire Dales on a steam railway is a 60's time warp only disturbed when our friendly ticket inspector asks for our tickets. Incidentally our ticket inspector was in the film "The Railway Children". This is a festival where from the arrival at Keighley station everyone is enjoying themselves



including the railway staff who put in long hours to ensure everything works well. Sometimes trains are delayed for various reasons not necessarily by the railway but who cares?- time for another ale from the train bar.





Various live music was played at the railway shed ranging from music from the 50's and 60's to Jazz and Dr Busker who is well known in our area.

Our base was at Haworth where a wide range of Wolverhampton and Dudley ales and good food was available at The Old Hall Inn. This base was ideal for members seeking

other activities besides drinking beer as many ventured on long walks and others sightseeing in Haworth and Skipton.

Unfortunately our weekend passed very quickly and we were soon heading back to Leeds station for our final drink at the Wetherspoons Bar at the station before returning south. We have already rebooked for next year and any further members

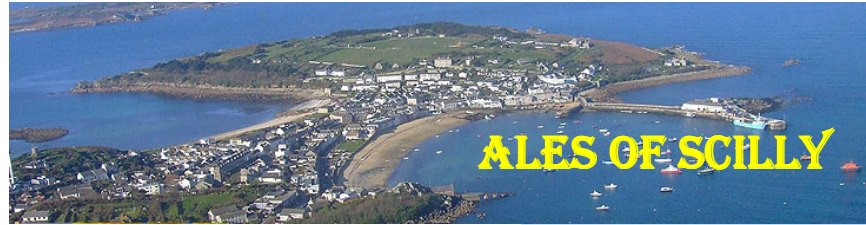
wishing to join us next year please contact the editors. The dates for next year 22nd-25th October 2010

Clifford Luff.



Sightseeing in Skipton.

A beautiful town with a castle, canal basin, market and excellent pubs including The Narrow boat where we enjoyed local ales including "Super Dave". Skipton is also home to the Copper Dragon Brewery. *Christine Lloyd*



During a recent holiday on the Isles of Scilly, it was only fitting that we should visit the most South Westerly pub in the British Isles. The Turks Head on the Isle of St Agnes, reached by a short boat trip from the main island of St Marys. This is a wonderful pub with a fine selection of beers and excellent food. The



TURKS HEAD

current owners have only been there a few years and have made it a very welcoming and friendly pub.



The next place to visit was the most South-Westerly brewery in the British Isles, "Ales of Scilly" which is on St Marys and is run and owned by Mark Praeger. An ex

school teacher he has been brewing on Scilly since 2001. The brewery was relocated to its present site in Hugh Town in 2007. The regular beer, Scuppered, 4.6% is very drinkable and widely available on most islands. Firebrand is one of the seasonal ales at 4.2%. Mark hopes to start to supply bottled beers this year.

Mark is always happy to supply pubs on the mainland although landlords have to collect it from the quay side at Penzance Cornwall.



Guided tours on request, contact details on brewery door

Malcolm Lloyd

CASKET

FREE NEWSLETTER

Dear Reader,

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The Casket is published 3 times a year. Our advertising rates only cover the expense of printing this magazine. The last print run was 1000 copies and is distributed to all 54 pubs in the East Beds CAMRA Area, as well as beer festivals in, Peterborough, Cambridge Hitchin, and Letchworth

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www.sbedscamra.org.uk

For more details

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The Conker Tree Inn? Where's that?. You won't find it in Bedfordshire. However, what you should look for is the new on-line guide to the pubs of Bedfordshire at

www.bedspubs.org.uk



In 2003 the Campaign for Real Ale (CAMRA) produced a booklet entitled Beer in Beds encompassing all public houses in Bedfordshire. Due to the ever changing circumstances surrounding the pub trade the campaign has produced an on-line guide listing all public houses in Bedfordshire, at www.bedspubs.org.uk

Why you should use this guide.

Well.....Have you ever wondered where to take your family out for a special Sunday lunch? Can you take a dog? Is there a car park? Are you planning a walk with a group of friends who will want a pie and a pint at lunch time? Will real ale be served? Is it Casque Marque accredited? Can I watch Sky TV? Will it be shut when I get there? Are you looking for a quiet location? Can I book a room if I don't want to drive home? All these questions and some you haven't even thought of are answered by simply logging on to www.bedspubs.org.uk put in the name of the town / village or the name of a pub and all the information you require is available.

How does it work? Navigating the information is easy. Search by pub name / village or post code. Once you have found the pub click on the post code and this will link through to a map. There is also a photo of every pub for ease of recognition.

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**The National Brewery Centre
will be opening in Burton Upon
Trent next Spring (2010).**

CAMRA is delighted to announce their support for the opening of the National Brewery Centre in Burton-upon-Trent, Staffordshire, in 2010.

Following the closure of the Coors Visitor Centre and Museum of Brewing (formerly the Bass Museum) last year, Planning Solutions Ltd, a British company specialising in the operation of visitor attractions, has announced that it intends to open a revitalised visitor centre and museum at the Horninglow Street site.

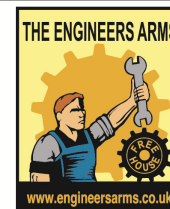
Called The National Brewery Centre, it will retain key elements of the existing facilities, whilst updating and reorganising the site to create a unique visitor attraction that will ensure its success well into the 21st Century. :

www.nationalbrewerycentre.co.uk

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