



the

Casket

Campaign for Real Ale

FREE

September 2010



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



New Freehouse at March Hare, Dunton - see page 4-5

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The Casket

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A LETTER FROM THE EDITORS

The new year started off with 28 members attending the branch AGM held at the Engineer's Arms, Henlow on 11th May, where four members of the committee were standing down. We were unable to fill all the vacant roles on the day, but by the follow-up branch meeting held on 15th June, we were almost back to full strength.

I would like to say a special 'Thank You' to those members who stood down, for their contributions to the branch over the years. John Walsh, in particular for over 15 years as branch secretary and he is now concentrating his efforts on running the successful Golden Pheasant pub in Biggleswade.

Our thanks to Cliff Luff for 4 years as Chairman and joint editor on the 'Casket'. Also Tony Morris for his work on social events and Malcolm Lloyd as joint newsletter editor, both members continue to support the new committee.

It is time to welcome some members joining the committee for the first time. Barry Price, from Sandy takes over as Branch Contact and Secretary. He is keen to help the branch improve communication with the membership and we look forward to his input.

Joanne Freeman from Langford joins as Social Secretary and will organize branch trips with Kevin Machin at the Engineer's Arms. Joanne may also assist me in editing the 'Casket' and being a supply teacher, she is well versed in proof reading and should be able to correct my poor grammar.

Bob Trenholme continues as Brewery Liaison Officer for Potton Brewery. Alan Binnington remains branch Treasurer and is also responsible for Membership assisted by Geoff Tilbury. Kevin Blackett and Peter Josling join as general committee members.

In other news, the branch ran trips to the Stotfold Mill Beer Festival and also to Buntingford Brewery. Some recent social events were organized on Saturday afternoons, with the hope we might attract more members. It has been difficult for members to attend socials on a weekday evening, due to cutbacks in public transport.

Finally, the branch congratulates the Globe in Dunstable, after it was awarded the overall Pub of the Year Award 2010 for Bedfordshire. This is an excellent pub with a mix of B& T beers and guest ales, well worth a visit.

John Goodlet

LOCAL PUB & BREWERY NEWS

The Crown, Stotfold

The editor extends his apologies to the current tenants David Frear & Lynn Jones for missing this change out of the previous two issues of casket. They have been running the pub for over a year now, initially as managers now as tenants GK IPA is the regular ale, with occasional guest ales. Opening hours are Mon - Thu 4-11, Fri 3-11, Sat & Sun 12-11pm.



The Potton Brewery, Potton

Potton Gold, their summer seasonal ale, is available at Potton Brewery outlets. This is a golden ale with a flowery hop aftertaste, ABV 4.1% and very quaffable!

East Beds CAMRA would like to say THANK YOU to the Potton Brewery Company for donating an 18 pint polypin of Shannon IPA @ 3.6% ABV as a prize in the raffle at Bedford Beer Festival this coming October.

The Chequers, Stotfold

The pub re-opened with new tenants towards the end of August after a six week closure and major refurbishment. More details in next issue.

March Hare - Dunton

On Friday August 13th the March Hare at Dunton re-opened its' doors for the first time in nearly 2 years. CAMRA members and long time residents of Langford Janice and John Pritchett purchased the pub from Admiral Taverns on February 19th and started the arduous task of refurbishing the interior. The first task was drying out the inside of the building including 8 inches of water in the cellar. The doors and windows were freed up, after they had become stuck due to lack of use over that period. The floors were relayed and the interior redecorated following the replacement of all electrical and plumbing services. The bar area has been refurbished, the original brickwork has been cleaned and new furniture installed.

[photo of the pub on the front cover]



Up to 4 real ales will be available at present and it is envisaged that John will be supplying beer from his own brewery to be incorporated within the pub later in the year. John has experience in producing his own good beer having won many awards from the Craft Brewing Association for beers from his home brewery including the national prize in 2008. John's love of brewing persuaded him to look for premises to expand into a microbrewery and when the March Hare became available, the opportunity arose to become a landlord as well as a brewer.



At present food is not available, but country pub food will be introduced soon and there are plans to open a village shop within the pub.

In the current climate of 'credit crunch', this is a daring adventure by John and Janice, and we hope that the local community will rally around them and help turn this enterprise into a successful local business. Please try to visit the March Hare and show your support to our newest freehouse. Opening hours may vary in the future, check by phoning the pub on 01767 448093, but for now they are:-

12-3, 6-11 Monday-Friday 12-11 Saturday 12-10.30 Sunday

For those seeking public transport, the E4 bus leaves Biggleswade at 13.30 and hourly in the afternoon, with the last bus returning from Dunton at 19.01 on Mondays to Saturdays.

Cliff Luff

THE MARCH HARE
34 HIGH STREET,
DUNTON, BEDFORDSHIRE SG18 9RR
01462 700540

Sir William Peel - Beer Festival

The 2nd Sir William Peel Beer Festival took place in Sandy from Thursday 22nd until Sunday 25th April and it was another great success, a tribute to Lindsey & her bar staff [Nikki, Cath, Helen, Tracey, Sandra, Caroline, Phil.]

Sandy's Mayor, Geoff White, entered into the spirit of the occasion and opened the Festival the theme of which was "Beers from the Coast". The inside of the pub was decorated to reflect the seaside theme and outside there was a beach area, a boat and those well-loved seaside specialities - the representations of people with no faces which you stick your head through to make yourself look ridiculous. As expected, few could resist the temptation and everybody was in the party spirit from start to finish. Even the weather was excellent throughout.

25 cask beers were available, plus four ciders, one perry, a dozen fruit wines & ten Belgian bottled beers - five fruit, four Trappist and Duvel.

Breweries represented included Adnams (Southwold), Batemans (Wainfleet), Bays (Paignton), Blackfriars (Gt Yarmouth), Bristol Beer Factory, Caledonian (Edinburgh), Coastal (Redruth), St. Austell Famous Railway Tavern (Brightlingsea), Farmers (Maldon), Fox (Heacham), Gargoyles (Dawlish), Green Jack (Lowestoft), Harwich Town, Keltek (Redruth), Mighty Oak (Maldon), Oakleaf (Gosport), Palmers (Bridport), Riverside (Wainfleet), Willy's (Cleethorpe), and Whitstable.



The highlights for me were Whitstable East India Pale Ale, which was the first to sell out and thus beer of the festival and Bays Devon Dumpling from Paignton. The Famous Railway Tavern's Bladderwrack Stout from Brighlingsea didn't suit my palate, but turned out to be my wife's favourite. All the beers (and I tried them all) were in excellent condition and the ciders proved such a hit that Lindsey now keeps 1 or 2 permanently available.

Some of the cider drinkers jumped the gun by pleading for (and being served) their particular beverage before the festival even started and they all agreed that Millwhite's Rum Cask was the star of the show...well it sold out quickest anyway so it must have been. A measure of the success of the festival was that there were only a few pints left over at the close of play on Sunday and the event will, undoubtedly, be repeated next year as a wonderful time was had by all.

Barry Price

Stratton House Hotel - Beer Festival

In Biggleswade, the Stratton House Hotel Beer Festival took place from 1200 on Friday 6th until late on Sunday 8th August in a marquee in part of the hotel car park. The American theme to the festival luckily did not extend to the beer range and stopped at the inflatable cacti and steeds, straw bales for seating and check-shirted bar maids with cowboy hats to add to the colour of the event.

There were around 35 cask ales on offer as well as four ciders, a perry and bottled ales and there was a pleasantly refreshing pricing policy which other beer festivals may like to consider – up to 4.4% ales were £1.80 per pint and over 4.4% ales were £2.20 per pint. Commemorative glasses with a refundable deposit were available if desired and as the alternative to those were plastic glasses, the "Stratton House Hotel" engraved glasses were very popular.

Free pretzels were on hand on Friday and on Sunday afternoon free crisps, cheese and roast potatoes were on the menu. The thoughtful provision of these may have effected the sales of the burgers, hot dogs and Sunday roast rolls which were also available but, even so, there seemed a steady stream of customers for these delicacies.



Apart from the Best Bitter and Golden Sheep from the Black Sheep Brewery in Masham, North Yorkshire, Ben had sourced the rest from local breweries including Buntingford (Herts), Elgoods (Cambs), Milton (Cambs), Moonshine (Cambs), Potbelly (Kettering, Northants), Potton (Beds), Red Squirrel (Herts), Shefford (Beds), Tring (Herts) and a selection from Bedford's Wells and Youngs.

By early Sunday afternoon there was no longer any Moonshine Red Watch Blueberry Ale, Potbelly Crazy Daze, Shefford Fruit Bat & Golden Fox, Trings Fanny Ebbs or Wells and Youngs Farmers Glory and Westons Cider Twist, Old Rosie Scrumpy and Country Perry had also bit the dust (to use the cowboy vernacular). On that basis I suppose it would be fair to say that one of those was the Beer, Cider or Perry of the Festival and, But I missed them as I hadn't tried any of them on Friday, I'd been saving them for my Sunday "session".

All of those I had tried at the three sessions I attended were in excellent condition and I'd like to offer my congratulations to Ben and his young and enthusiastic staff, all of whom provided a friendly and attentive service. I'm sure that there will be a repeat in 2011 and I'd encourage all those who can attend to book their straw bales (or next year's equivalent) now!

Barry Price

Rising Sun - Beer Festival

Now into its 4th year, the Potton Beer Festival, held at the Rising Sun from 29th April—3rd May, returned bigger and better than ever. 40 cask ales, plus ciders, perry and continental bottled beer were on offer. The selection was well chosen, featuring micros from around Britain. One of the first to run out was Dark Side of the Moose from the Purple Moose Brewery in North Wales. Others really enjoyable beers sampled included Westerham, Bramling Cross and the redoubtable Abbeydale Black Mass (at 6.66%!).

Their first venture into August Bank Holiday weekend was the 5th Potton Beer Festival from 26th-29th August. This was another extremely well run festival, adhering closely to the format developed over the four previous May Bank Holiday festivals. On offer this time were about 35 cask ales from a wide selection of British micros from Devon to Orkney; plus ciders, perry and continental bottled beer. Again, Purple Moose was one of the first beers to run out along with their light bitter, Snowdonia. My personal favourites included, Rudgate Ruby Mild and Cairngorm Red Mountain.

Matt Dunkley and his team have done an excellent job in sourcing and serving an interesting range of seldom seen ales for this festival. He and his father have also developed and built their own stillage and cooling system to ensure that the ale are served in tip-top condition. It is hoped that the twice-yearly festival will be repeated in the future.



Visit to Buntingford Brewery

On Saturday June 5th around 35 people attended a joint N Herts & E Beds visit to Buntingford Brewery. A selection of 4 of their excellent beers were complemented by a first-class barbecue (proper meat from a local butcher – none of your supermarket rubbish here!) and the lovely setting, teaming with wildlife, of the Greys Estate. We thank Steve and Katherine for acting as hosts, chefs, tour guides etc. Everyone had a thoroughly enjoyable day.

Tony Morris



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BEDFORDSHIRE PUB OF THE YEAR

**Congratulations to the Globe
in Dunstable**, which for the second year running, was awarded the CAMRA's Bedfordshire Pub of the Year. It was a close competition with the Globe just pipping the Wellington Arms, Bedford and Rising Sun, Potton to the title.

The pub, located on the corner of Winfield Street, just off the High Street North, was bought by B&T brewery and re-opened as a real ale house in October 2005. Since then it has won several CAMRA awards and it now goes on to compete with other county winners from Cambridgeshire, Essex, Hertfordshire, Norfolk and Suffolk for the East Anglia Pub of the Year title.

The pub features a dozen handpumps, offering a range of B&T beers as well as guest ales from small and micro-breweries. The lack of jukebox, pool tables or fruit machines, helps the good mix of customers to enjoy a lively conversation over a quality pint.

The Globe, Dunstable



DIARY DATES

<u>SEPT.</u>	14th, Branch Meeting, Crown, Henlow, 8pm
<u>OCT.</u>	26th, Branch Meeting, Golden Pheasant, Biggleswade 8pm
<u>NOV.</u>	23rd, Branch Meeting, Coach & Horses, Stotfold 8pm
<u>DEC.</u>	10/11th, Christmas Social—to be arranged

BEER FESTIVALS

<u>Sept.</u>	16th-18th Booze on the Ouse Beer Festival, Burgess Hall, St. Ives Recreation Centre, Westwood Rd, St. Ives	CAMRA
	23rd-25th The 19th Letchworth Garden City Beer & Cider Festival, Plinston Hall, Broadway	CAMRA
<u>Oct.</u>	29th Sep – 2 Oct. St. Albans Beer Fest Alban Arena, Civic Court , St. Albans	CAMRA
	6th - 9th Oct. Bedford Beer & Cider Festival, Corn Exchange, St. Pauls Square	CAMRA
	21st-22nd Oct. The Trafalgar Beer Festival The Half Moon, Hitchin	
	20th-24th Oct. The 15th Henlow Beer Festival Engineer's Arms, High Street, Henlow	
	25th-30th Oct. The 33rd Norwich Beer Festival St. Andrew's Hall, St. Andrews Plain	CAMRA
<u>Nov.</u>	23rd-27th Nov. The Rochford Beer & Cider Festival Freight House, Rochford, Essex	CAMRA
	30th Nov-4th Dec. Pigs Ear Beer & Cider Festival Round Chapel, Powerscroft Road, Hackney	CAMRA



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.

Inn Signs - The Green Man

The sign of the *Green Man* has its roots in the world of Pagan beliefs. It is most commonly depicted as a human head, with green leaves instead of hair. Some variations have branches or vines growing from the mouth, nose or ears, often bearing flowers or fruit. It is generally thought to be a symbol of rebirth, representing the cycle of growth each spring. Below is the Green Man in Stanford.



A more practical version of the *Green Man*, uses the full figure of a man dressed in green garments, intended as the sign for a forester, a verderer or ranger. Green was, in fact, the ordinary dress of foresters and woodmen. The tales of Robin Hood refer to his men being dressed in Lincolnshire Green.

A slightly raunchier version of the sign also exists to represent the green or wild woodmen of the Elizabethan shows and festivals. These characters wielded sticks with crackers in pageants, sometimes fighting each other, attacking castles and dragons, or simply clearing the way for processions. These activities bear a close resemblance to the dances of the Morris Men.

Synonymous with this sign is that of the *Wild Man*, such as the one at Streethouses in Yorkshire.

I suspect this sign may have portrayed a naked man, as it had to be covered up, when Queen Victoria was touring the area, so that it should not shock her. A good example of a wild *Green Man* is seen in the carved sign outside the Green Man at Great Offley in Hertfordshire, see below.



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Engineer's Arms visit to Clapham

What can I Say. After a visit to our 15th beer festival by the Eagle I felt obliged to return the compliment. It was a tough call, needing an excuse and all that! So back into the smoke on the late bank holiday weekend in May to try out 45 beers— as I said, tough!

Fair play to the lads, they are tied to one of the big pub/property cartels who charge their tenants twice the going rate for beer, but they put on a great festival. We arrived early doors but it was soon filled up. For a tiny little back street pub, the choice of beer was impressive. From Bowmans Eldorado to TSA Sporrán Warmer, the beer miles extended all over the British Isles, even the Welsh got a look in.

In the short time we were there, the Castle Rock Harvest Pale (this years GBBF winner) sold out, and as if by some strange coincidence, they put on Kelham Island's Easy Rider, just as the news came out about the great Dennis Hopper's demise. Well it seemed like a sign at the time, so we toasted the big man whilst waiting for the BBQ to be fired up. Dave (co-owner), spotted our weariness and much to every ones amusement presented us with what he calls the eagle Ploughman Kebab—cheese, pork pie, pickled egg, pickled onion and gherkin—genius, well it seemed like it at the time.



Each time we tried to leave something seemed to encourage us to stay, not least the quality of the live music. They're a talented lot these Eagle-ites. All the bands to a man are regulars of the eagle and it showed, the atmosphere was great. All walks of life mixing it up and having a fantastic time. We had to leave before the headline act (Strange Fashion) came on, so having heard so much about them, I won't miss them next time. The Eagle like the Engine is a beer festival most weeks, but they do run bigger festivals throughout the year. We will be running another trip sometime in the new year, so watch this space.

Kevin Machin

[Check out the pub's website at www.eaglealehouse.co.uk]

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Edinburgh Rock

My wife and I visited Edinburgh in June to enjoy a concert, at the Usher Hall, by singer/songwriter Jackson Browne and, my main reason for going, multi-instrumentalist David Lindley. Although only in the city for a couple of nights it would have seemed churlish not to have visited some of the city's sights & inns.

Our pub visits took place over two days and as the hotel in which we stayed was very close to Edinburgh Waverley station we opted to walk to the gig via the Halfway House in Fleshmarket Close, a passage of stairs which starts at Market Street opposite the Station and ascends to The Royal Mile on the High Street. A nice touch as you enter the pub is "HWH" in the tiles by the door.

We decided on a single pint after first establishing that the landlord would take "foreign" money. My quip gave rise to an interesting conversation with one of the "regulars" regarding the legality of Scottish money during which I was advised that the highest denomination of legal tender produced by Scottish banks was the two pound coin.



The chat was followed by a pint each of Inveralmond Sunburst (4.8%), a hand-pulled lager-type beer which was totally refreshing and in excellent condition.

As we were determined to enjoy the Jackson Browne/David Lindley event we thought we'd leave any more drinking until after the concert although we passed several interesting looking hostelrys on our way to the Usher Hall.

After a thoroughly entertaining evening we popped out just before the end so that we could get a cab to our next destination – the Cafe Royal in West Register Street – of which I'd seen some excellent reviews. The interior certainly lived up to expectation as we walked in with the left hand wall magnificently covered with six Doulton tile pictures of inventors at the moment of discovery. Unfortunately we were met with the rather disappointing, "Sorry, we've stopped serving", which was something of a surprise as I'd expected Scottish pubs to have much longer licensing hours than our own – it was only about 11.20 p.m. Luckily the Guildford Arms was next door but equally unaccommodating as far as getting a pint was concerned.

I was pretty certain that there would be a decent pub open in the Royal Mile so we crossed Princes Street and strolled across North Bridge at the side of the Balmoral Hotel only to find all the interesting pubs we tried were either closed or closing.

Oh well, there was always tomorrow to look forward to.

The next afternoon, after returning from a bus and sea trip to Inchcolm Island via South Queensferry, we were in the mood to visit a few more of Edinburgh's pubs and attractions. As Edinburgh's tourist trips all start and end at Waverley Bridge we walked from there, away from Princes Street, back up to High Street and along the Royal Mile to Edinburgh Castle. When we came out of the Castle we turned right into Lawnmarket, then descended the steps immediately opposite to a terrace which overlooks West Bow. Down another set of stairs to street level and on the opposite side of the road to the right is the blue-fronted Bow Bar.



From the ten or so real ales on tap Carol had a Taylor's Landlord (4.3%) and I opted to try the Green Jack's Canary (3.8%) which had travelled all the way from Lowestoft, and I'd never even seen any of the beers before. Again both were in excellent condition.

From there we turned left out of the front door and made our way to the bottom of West Bow to Grassmarket from where you can see Candlemaker Row rising on the opposite side of the road.

If you gently ascend Candlemaker Row to the top you come to the statue of Greyfriars Bobby opposite the bar of the same name and just at the side of the bar is the entrance to Greyfriars Kirk Yard.

Easy though it may be to write off the story of the little hound as little more than mawkish sentimentality his faithfulness and the emotions he stirred amongst the wealthy toward the grindingly poor population who lived in this part of the "Old Town" may have helped to slightly alleviate their poverty. Anyway we gave his little head a pat for luck.

Greyfriars is quite an interesting churchyard and burial ground not least because the Dundee weaver and poet (some say he should have stuck to weaving), William Topaz McGonagall, is buried there amidst the great and the good. Mr McGonagall is probably most famous for his "Tay Bridge Disaster" which included the memorable couplet, "And the cry rang out all round the town, Good heavens! The Tay Bridge has blown down." which is probably amongst his finest.

With our back to the Greyfriars Bobby Bar (which may be worth a visit as it sells around three real ales I believe) we crossed the road to Chambers Street and passed the Museum of Scotland and the Royal Museum of Scotland and continued to the bottom until we reached South Bridge Street, the left turn at the T-junction. We then went along South Bridge Street and North Bridge Street until arriving back at the Balmoral Hotel with West Register Street virtually opposite.

continued on next page

We were looking forward to a few pints in the Cafe Royal and Guildford Arms after the disappointment of the previous evening and approached the Cafe Royal with some anticipation only to be assailed by the smell of urine outside the pub which was also very apparent inside the building. There were people drinking inside quite happily and we assumed this was a temporary phenomenon as there had been no such problem the night before.

Even so, we repaired to the Guildford Arms with its nine handpulls. There I sampled a pint of Stewart's Pentland IPA (3.9%), brewed just south of Edinburgh in Loanhead, followed by an Atlas Nimbus (5.0%) while Carol had a couple of halves of lemonade as she was suffering somewhat from the heat.

The weather was so clement that we didn't see a cloud the whole time we were in Edinburgh.

Lemonade is not a drink I would recommend for the budget conscious CAMRA member when visiting the Guildford Arms as it was £1.90 a half compared to the £3.20-£3.50 for a pint of ale.



The atmosphere in the Guildford was very convivial and it would have been very easy to have got comfortable and spent the rest of the day there but we'd been recommended the Doric Tavern back in Market Street so strolled back over North Bridge Street, turned left into High Street, left again into Jeffrey Street then under North Bridge Street to the Doric.

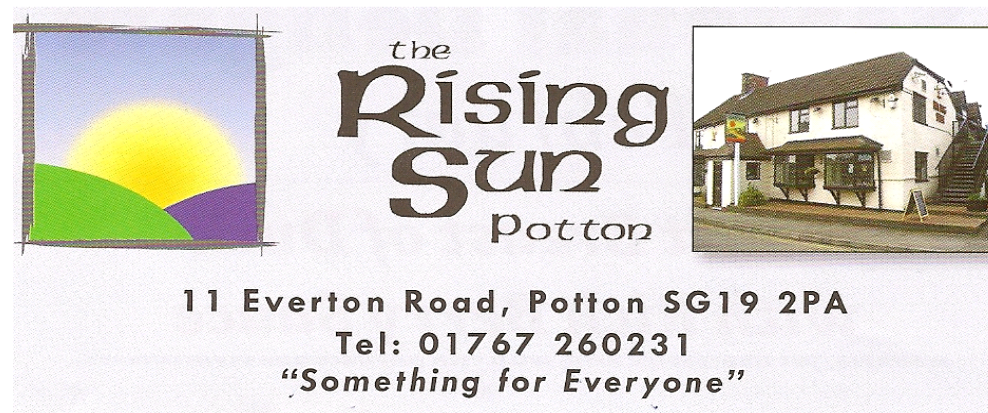


There Carol had a couple of pints of Edinburgh's own Deuchars IPA (3.8%) and I finished off the evening with a pint of Broughton Coulson's EPA (3.4%) and another of Stewart's Copper Cascade (4.1%).

All in all a most enjoyable trip and a taster of a future visit some time to explore some more of the highly rated pubs and bars of the city.

Barry Price

[Editor writes—Thank you Barry, for making this ex-pat feel a bit homesick. For those interested in historic pub architecture, many Edinburgh inns are listed in CAMRA's National Inventory]



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Champion Beers of Britain

Overall winners

Gold—Castle Rock Harvest Pale [Champion Beer of Britain at GBBF 2010]

Silver—Timothy Taylor Landlord

Bronze—Surrey Hills Hammer Mild

Mild category

Gold—Surrey Hills Hammer Mild

Silver—Greene King XX Mild

Joint Bronze—Golcar Dark Mild & Nottingham Rock Ale Mild

Bitter category

Gold—RCH PG Steam

Silver—Moor Revival

Joint Bronze—Orkney Raven & Purple Moose Snowdonia Ale

Best Bitter category

Gold—Timothy Taylor Landlord

Silver—St. Austell Tribute

Joint Bronze—Evan Evans Cwrw & Great Oakley Gobble

Golden Ale category

Gold—Castle Rock Harvest Pale

Silver—Marble Manchester Bitter

Bronze—St. Austell Proper Job

Strong Bitter category

Gold—Thornbridge Jaipur IPA

Silver—Fuller's Gales HSB

Bronze—Beckstones Rev Rob

Speciality Beer category

Gold—Amber Chocolate Orange Stout

Silver—O'Hanlons Port Stout

Bronze—Breconshire Ysbrid y Ddraig

Bottle-conditioned Beers category

Gold—St. Austell Admiral's Ale

Silver—Pitfield 1850 London Porter

Bronze—Great Oakley Delapre Dark

Building a Beer Festival

Most people, Camra members or not, who go to a beer festival probably don't give much thought as to how it all got there, after all you're there to enjoy yourself, not think about hard work. But hard work it certainly is for, in the case of the recent Great British Beer Festival at Earls Court, upwards of a thousand volunteers. Some for only some of the 10 to 12 days it takes to put up, operate and take down, others over the whole year to organise the festival itself.

I am part of a small team (we are always looking for new volunteer helpers!!) known as Camra Games & Collectables, who organise and operate the Tombolas, Pub games and the Breweriana shop at GBBF and also supply equipment and prizes to other beer festivals around the country to do the same. We spend most of the year collecting & buying items for use as prizes and maintaining all of our equipment. We normally operate a working Saturday every month to pack tombola kits and pub games prizes for all the smaller festivals we supply.

GBBF for us really kicks off towards the end of June when we start to pack the thousands of prizes and hundreds of bits of equipment we need, at the warehouse in St Albans and this goes on over every weekend in July. Setting up for the festival itself, starts off with four days transporting everything to Earls Court and setting up all the stands, four days while the festival is open and then two days of packing and transport. All in all, an awful lot of hard work to ensure the visitors to the festival get the best experience we can give them, but very pleasing for us when we achieve it.

And then I to do it all again for our local festival at Bedford in October. Good job I enjoy it!! Come along and help out and I'm sure you will too. With that in mind, we are looking for volunteers to help operate the Tombola stand and the Camra Shop at the Bedford Beer festival during 6th—9th October.

All workers receive free beer and subsidised food and anybody working the evening sessions will be provided with transport home by the branch (it is over the other side of the county after all).

If you are at all interested, contact me on 07701 026489 or at membership@eastbedscamra.org.uk

Alan Binnington

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

The Conker Tree Inn

61 High Street **Pinton**
SG99 3AA
Directions: In village centre off A246
0311 123456
Owner: Free House
CAMRA Branch: Beds
Bodgers Bitter [H]
Guest Ales: Beer Range Varies [H]
P
R

Opening Times:
Mon-Sat 11.00-23.30
Sun 12.00-15.00, 18.00-22.30
Meals:
Mon-Sat 12.00-15.00, 18.30-21.00
Sun 12.00-15.00
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Email: howen.halfmoon@btconnect.com



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