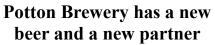
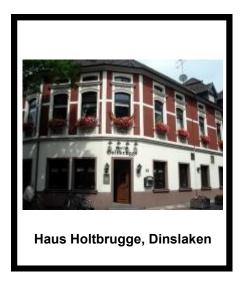


EAST BEDFORDSHIRE

www.eastbedscamra.org.uk casket@eastbedscamra.org.uk







German pub twinned with Engineer's Arms to close

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Issue number 1

Volume 7

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A LETTER FROM THE EDITORS

The autumn months saw the branch visiting Henlow, Biggleswade & Stotfold for meetings, and the year ended with the branch Christmas social at the Engineer's Arms, Henlow. The event was well attended, with more than forty members enjoying the range of ten ales to wash down the excellent curry put on by hosts Kevin and Claire.

Following the glut of pub based beer festivals in spring & summer 2010, there appears to be a change in trend for cider drinkers. Some unusual real ciders have been appearing in the area recently. The 15th Henlow Beer Festival featured more than a dozen ciders & perries including Pookhill – Cider Nouveau 6%, West Croft – Janets Jungle Juice 6.5% & Rosie's – Rampant Ram 7.2%.

On a recent visit to the Stag, Stotfold in November, I discovered that landlord Martin Lang has been using his contacts at the Red Squirrel Brewery, Hertford to source cider from Welsh producer Gwynt Y Ddraig. From a list of 12 ciders available, Fiery Fox 6.5%, Black Dragon 7.2% & Dog Dancer 6.5% had appeared in the Stag.

The Sir William Peel, Sandy has extended it's range of ciders from Weston's with Old Rosie 7.3%, Traditional Scrumpy 6.0% & Cider Twist Winter Spice 4.0% featuring in November. The branch meeting held at the Coach & Horses, Stotfold noted a Cassells cider from Cambridgeshire. Keep an eye on your local pub and let us know if you find any new ciders.

John Goodlet



The Potton Brewery Co.

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www.camra.org.uk

LOCAL PUB NEWS

The White Horse, Arlesey

Welcome to licensee Bob Garcia & his experienced team who took over in October. The opening hours are Sun-Thu 12-10.30pm, Fri/Sat 12-late and the recent changes include live music, quiz & karaoke events on weekends, plus a revamped food menu with a traditional Sunday roast £8.95 for two courses. Check out www.whitehorsearlesey.co.uk for special offers on weekday meals.



King's Arms, Sandy

We welcome Trevor and Catherine James as the new tenants to the Kings Arms and this is their first pub. Since July 20th, 2010 it has been a family run business with the intention of promoting the restaurant & making the garden more family orientated. They can also cater for weddings and special occasions. Opening hours are Mon 3–11, Tue, Wed, Thu 12 –11, Fri & Sat 12-12, Sun 12-11.



The bar serves Greene King IPA & Abbot and one beer from GK Guest Portfolio. Their restaurant has a full menu (except Mondays) till 9pm and a roast on Sunday Lunch only, no evening meals that day.

Brown Bear, Biggleswade

There have been many changes at the Brown Bear in the last year, following a major refurbishment in April 2010. The pub has been transformed into a bright, fresh modern bar under the management of Admiral Taverns. Opening hours are Tue-Thu 12-9, Fri 12-11, Sat 12-10 and Sun 12-7. These is a disco on Friday evenings and live music events should start on Saturdays in the New Year.



Royal Oak, Potton

New tenants Vicky Robins & Colin Page have taken over the helm at the Royal Oak, serving 4 beers from Greene King and their guest portfolio. The pub is now also open & serving food on Monday evenings, as well as the rest of the week



Yorkshire Grey, Biggleswade

A belated welcome to licensee Karen Palmer, Mark & the team at the Yorkshire Grey. They arrived as managers in May 2010 from the Ewe & Lamb, Dunstable. Current opening hours are Sun-Thu 12-11, Fri-Sat 12-12, with food served everyday 12-9. GK IPA & Old Speckled Hen are available on handpump and check out the sports action on a special 3D TV screen.



The Chequers, Stotfold

The branch welcomes Danny Lowe as the Greene King tenant at the Chequers. The pub re-opened in August after a total refurbishment, focusing on quality dining with traditional English fare. Danny had previously run 'The Horns', Bull's Green near Datchworth for 15 years. The Chequers is open 12-3, 6-11 Mon-Thu and 12-3, 6-11.30 Fri/Sat and 11-11 Sun with GK IPA as the regular ale, along with a GK seasonal ale, which was Old Speckled Hen in November, followed by Ruddles Best for Xmas.



General News

As we went to press, four more Greene King pubs were in the process of changing hands. More details to follow in the next issue regarding new tenants in the New Inn, Hopbine & Red Lion, Biggleswade, plus the Chequers, Wrestlingworth. Meanwhile, the Red Lion remains closed in Potton awaiting the review of planning applications for change of use.

Potton Brewery News

Press Release:-

"Potton brewery has recently gained the support of a private investor who has an interest in another microbrewery in East Sussex called White's Brewery. Bob Hearson, one of the owners and Head Brewer at Potton was quoted in saying that: "In times that have been particularly challenging for the pub trade, we saw this as a unique opportunity to share knowledge, and help each other develop on an already award winning line up of beers from both breweries. The knowledge sharing process in still in it's infancy, but we are looking forward to putting out some exciting new beers in the next few months, that we have developed together and are appealing to the local community to support us in this exciting new step." Potton Brewery sees itself an integral part of the local community, and will continue to find ways to promote the award winning beers that are produced in this beautiful market town.

Potton Brewery launched their new beer, Potton Porter, at the John O'Gaunt pub in Sutton on Friday 12th November. The beer is described as ruby sweet with a burnt aftertaste and a hint of liquorice and is 4%ABV. The brewer, Bob and sales manager Dave attended the launch, where the beer was on special offer throughout the evening and well received by the customers. Landlord Les got through a firkin of the ale on the night and when I visited the following Friday he was on his 5th firkin and awaiting a further delivery from the brewery. According to Bob, the brewer, "Drinkers in this area are not that keen on dark beers" but I can assure him that the beer is delicious and I would estimate that at least 50% of the beer drinkers in the pub that night were imbibing it. I did mention to Bob and Dave that this would make a brilliant bottled beer. They both agreed and this could possibly lead to a short bottling run. This brings the current portfolio of beers from Potton Brewery to eight. Look for Potton Porter on sale in:-

John O'Gaunt, Sutton Old Coach House, Potton Rose, Biggleswade Sunrunner, Hitchin CIU Club, Potton White Hart, Campton Pictured below from L to R are Peter Thompson, Head Brewer—Bob Hearson, Production Director—Dave Hutchinson, Sales and Admin Manager.





In 2011 Kuwait will be celebrating the 50th anniversary of its independence and 20th anniversary of its liberation from Iraq. To mark this occasion and its long lasting and deep relationship with Britain the British Embassy have decided to hold a British Beer Festival on the 18th February, 2011 in the Embassy grounds They have contacted ten Micro breweries from the all over Britain including Potton Brewing Company to supply bottles of their beers. Potton have sent a batch of "Shambles" and "Village Bike" which they hope will make an impact as there will be a competition for the most popular beer being served. This could possibly lead to providing an export business world wide through the British Embassy distribution company who are helping with the event.

Although Kuwait is dry, the British Embassy Club, which serves alcohol, is very popular with over ten thousand people using it last year. There will also be a Roast Hog and Chas and his band of 'Chas and Dave' fame will supply the entertainment. What next - Julian Clary as Cultural Attaché?



Bob Trenholme

The 15th Henlow Beer Festival

The biggest pub based beer festival in East Beds celebrated 15 years at the Engineer's Arms in October. Starting up on lunchtime Wednesday 20th and carrying on until late on Sunday 24th, the revellers enjoyed 108 real ales and ciders, sourced from across the British Isles. I popped into the pub on Wednesday lunchtime and managed to get a couple of quick photos of the back bar area, just before the rush began. By the evening the place was rocking and giggling to the music and humorous stories of Dr. Busker, who set the tone for the rest of the festival. On Friday evening, there was an impromptu jam session by a local duo from RAF Henlow.

As always, the majority of ales were served straight from the barrel, on stillage behind a bar set up at the back of the rear garden. The remaining ales were rotating on the 10 handpumps on the main pub bar, these tended to be the stronger beers ranging from 4.6 % Bishop's Farewell up to the mighty 7.5% Attila, both from Oakham brewery. My initial visits to the back bar found the wonderful Wentworth – Liquorice Stout 4.5%, Leatherbritches – Lemongrass & Ginger 3.8% and in keeping with the upcoming Halloween theme, the strange Northumberland – Dracula's Soup 4.5%. On a later visit, I dedicated the session to the strong ales, enjoying Buntingford – Imperial Pale Ale 6.2%, Oakham – Tranquility 6.5%, before settling down to one of my personal favourite beers the deceptively easy drinking Thornbridge - Jaipur IPA 5.9%. By the end of Saturday evening, the majority of ales had been consumed and some extra barrels from the cellar were tapped, to keep the festival going into Sunday.

Over a dozen ciders & parries were served straight from the cellar, featuring New Forest – Snakecatcher 7%, Rosie's – Wicked Wasp 7.4% and Weston's – Cider Twist Raspberry, to name but a few. Accompanying the ales and ciders were a variety of snacks, filled rolls, pies and pizza to soak up the booze, including an excellent range of chicken & vegetable samosas. In the evenings, the hungrier customers feasted on Baz's BBQ, featuring homemade bangers, steak rolls and the popular pig roast.

Following on from his most successful beer festival to date, landlord Kevin Machin is planning a cider & country wine festival for the 17th- 20th February 2011. The event will feature over 40 ciders & perries, plus 15 country wines & meads, accompanied by Ploughmans Lunch and English cheeses. The branch would like to congratulate Kevin & Claire and we wish them well with this daring new venture.

The March Hare in the Village of Dunton

The doors of the March Hare free house at Dunton have been open since the 13th August 2010. For John, Kerry & Janice Pritchett this is the first time that they have been involved with the licensed trade and they are thoroughly enjoying running the pub, including getting to know their customers. The kitchen is currently being renovated so that country pub food can be enjoyed by customers, together with real ales and ciders in 2011.

It is anticipated that the March Hare will become a destination pub for real ale drinkers, therefore John, Janice and Kerry look forward to welcoming CAMRA members to their pub and hope that you all enjoy a convivial real ale in friendly surroundings. John has already been complemented on how he keeps his beers. He takes pride in serving an excellent pint. If you let the March Hare know that you are the driver of a group of 2 or more individuals, the March Hare will give the driver free cokes, lemonades, orange squash, blackcurrant, tea or coffee.

Finally John, Janice and Kerry look forward to meeting all CAMRA members at the March Hare, Dunton.

Janice Pritchett

The Conker Tree Inn? Where's that?. You won't find it in Bedfordshire. However,

what you should look for is the on-line guide to the pubs of Bedfordshire at www.bedspubs.org.uk



DIARY DATES

JAN. 18th, Branch Meeting, Kings Arms, Sandy, 8pm

FEB. 21st, Special Meeting, GBG Selection & Accounts Review,

The Stag, Stotfold, 8pm

MAR. 22nd, Branch Meeting, March Hare, Dunton, 8pm

MAY. 5th, Members Night, Stotfold Mill Beer Festival, Stotfold, 8pm

10th, Branch AGM, Engineer's Arms, Henlow, 8pm

BEER FESTIVALS

<u>Feb.</u> 17th-20th 1st Henlow Cider & Country Wine Festival,

Engineer's Arms, High Street, Henlow

24th-26th The 28th Luton Beer & Cider Festival, Hightown

Sports & Arts Centre, Concorde Street, Luton CAMRA

Mar. 10th–12th The 35th Booze on the Ouse Beer Festival,

Priory Centre, Priory Lane, St. Neots CAMRA

18th - 19th Hitchin Beer & Cider Festival,

Town Hall, Brand St. Hitchin CAMRA

Apr. 14th-17th The 3rd Sir William Peel Beer Festival

High Street, Sandy

28th Apr-1st May. Half Moon Beer Festival,

The Half Moon, Queen Street, Hitchin

28th Apr-1st May. The 6th Potton Beer & Cider Festival,

The Rising Sun, 11 Everton Road, Potton



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.

A Scottish Rev -ale -ation

What a difference a couple of decades makes. As a novice (legal) drinker with a fledgling interest in real ale, I first headed north to taste the beery treats of Scotland in the mid 80s. Vaguely aware of the almost mythical array of malt whisky (beer's distilled cousin) available, I was frankly somewhat disappointed in the beer. An all too familiar tale of industrialisation, buyouts and rationalisation had decimated the Scottish brewing industry to the extent that the vast majority of production was in the hand of three Nationals - Bass (Tennents), Allied (Arrols) and Scottish & Newcastle (McEwans/Youngers). Worse, very little of their production was cask ale, and even that I found somewhat sweet and thin. Ales that were more interesting were few and far between. In addition to a few imports from south of the border, I remember only occasional offerings from the remaining long-established Independents, Maclays and Belhaven, plus one from a Highland micro - Alice Ales

Return visits over the next few years revealed little new to raise a glass to. Although Caledonian Brewery (formerly Lorimer & Clarke) escaped the clutches of its doomed parent company (Vaux) to produce some excellent beers, one by one the Nationals closed or ceased cask production, while among the Independent sector Maclays withdrew from brewing and Belhaven was taken over by Greene King. The few 80s micro pioneers, such as Alice Ales, were mostly short-lived concerns, long since consigned to the great taproom in the sky.

But from the mid to late 90s, CAMRA-led consumer interest in local ale was revived, and new breweries began to appear. Since 2000, there has been an explosion of openings, with nearly 50 breweries (plus a number of contract-brewed beers from 'cuckoo breweries') now in operation; four fifths of them have emerged in the last 10 years. And it's not just the quantity that is impressive, it's the emphasis on high quality and diversity of beer styles, some classic malty Scottish 'heavies' but others truly innovative.

Ten days in Edinburgh and various points north and west at the end of September 2010, revealed how vibrant and diverse the Scottish brewing scene has become. During this time, I supped over 30 different ales from 19 Scottish micros, ranging from Islay in the west to Deeside in the east; and from Sulwath in the south to Orkney in the north. Here is a small selection of my favourites.

CAIRNGORM, TRADE WINDS, 4.3%

This Speyside brewery created in 2001 after merging the Tomintoul and Aviemore Breweries, is probably most famous for its Trade Winds speciality beer. A pint in an Edinburgh bar didn't disappoint. As far removed from traditional Scottish heavy as you can get, this beer is spicy and citric, with elderflower notes and a good bitter finish.



DEESIDE, NECHTAN, 4.1%

Started as Hillside brewery in 2005, it has recently been relocated and renamed. Their Pitchish-themed ales were new to me and I was well impressed with this orangey & very quaffable beer sampled in Douglas Arms in Banchory, which also sold the excellent Inveralmond Ossian.



FYNE ALES, AVALANCHE, 4.5%

The brewery is based in an old milking shed in Cairndow, Argyll but there's nothing cheesy about this beer. A golden ale with far more body and complexity than many of the style, imparting a long refreshing finish.



ORKNEY BREWERY, DARK ISLAND, 4.6%

An old favourite of mine. Red-mahogany in colour with complex bittersweet and chocolate notes, but not overtly bitter. The good news is that the newly extended brewery (now also brewing the Atlas beer range) should mean even more of it is available in future!



STEWART BREWING, EDINBURGH No.3, 4.3%

Established in Loanhead near Edinburgh in 2004, I sampled four of their beers and was so impressed with all of them that I ordered several minicasks for Christmas and New Year drinking. I think No3 may be based on an old Youngers beer of that name. It's certainly a good example of a traditional complex and dark Scottish heavy.



SULWATH, BLACK GALLOWAY, 4.4%

Scotland's most south-westerly brewery based at Castle Douglas, Dumfries & Galloway. I enjoyed 3 beers in their neat little brewery tap just off the High Street (not open evenings). Stand out for me was this porter-style beer with plenty of chocolate malt. One of CAMRA's current Beers of the Year and you won't find me disagreeing.

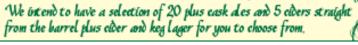


Overall, the future for Scottish beer looks rosier than it has for many years. If you come across these excellent beers anywhere, I would urge you try them. Better still, if you are able to enjoy them with the backdrop of splendid Scottish scenery.

Slainté

Tony Morris



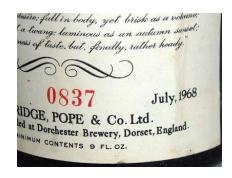


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Thomas Hardy? Ale!

Thomas Hardy's Ale was one of the beers produced by the now defunct "Eldridge Pope" brewery in Dorchester and was originally brewed to celebrate the fortieth anniversary of his death. It was one of Britain's strongest ales and rumour has it that it could be kept unopened for years, improving all the time. Bottles were individually numbered as a measure of their exclusivity and many were bought for special occasions, which may have been one of the reasons production eventually stopped – brilliant though the beer was it was unfortunate that not enough people had "special occasions". Many years ago when visiting Dorset I bought a couple of bottles which are still unopened as I can't remember the occasion for which they were purchased - so, in my own small way, I have given substance to the end of the product's life.



Recently my wife and I visited West Dorset again, an area which is and probably always will be associated with Thomas Hardy who lived most of his life in and around Dorchester from his birth in 1840 to his demise in 1928. This wasn't a bad lifespan when you take into consideration that, at the time of his birth, he was thought to be stillborn until a sharp-eyed nurse saw him move.

West Dorset was the centre of the part of the country he called "Wessex" and the area of most of his novels, stories and poems. Many of the places he obliquely referred to in his writing still exist and would probably be recognisable to him as the rural landscape he described so vividly is still very much unspoiled by development. Additionally some of the pubs he mentions in his novels such as those in "Tess of the d'Urbevilles" still exist so in the village of Evershot (Hardy's Evershead) "The Sow and Acorn" is "The Acorn" and in the same novel he refers to "The Pure Drop Inn" and "Rolliver's" both of which can be found in the village of Marnhull (Hardy's "Marlott") as "The Crown" and "The Blackmore Vale Inn" respectively.

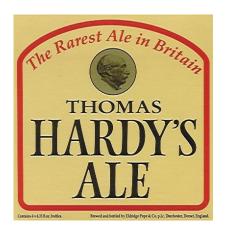
In another of his novels he describes the life of an itinerant who had an horse-drawn press for extracting the juice from apples to make cider and the opening scene of "Under the Greenwood Tree" describes in some detail the anticipation attending the broaching of a new barrel of cider on Christmas Eve. One might draw the conclusion that the author was as keen an observer of the tide of life in inns and pubs as he was of the social behaviour of Dorset's native people and the natural wonders of his county.

Hardy's heart is buried in Stinsford Churchyard only a short walk from his birthplace in Higher Bockhampton, while the rest of his body was interred in "Poets' Corner" at Westminster Abbey. Next to his grave in Stinsford is that of the poet Cecil Day-Lewis and a few miles to the east is Moreton village where T E Lawrence (of Arabia) is buried. One of the reasons for the lack of change in West Dorset since Hardy's time is the abundance of single track roads which criss-cross the countryside, many bordered by the high, thick hedges traditionally grown and managed to keep sheep and cattle in the fields. When driving along these byways it is always useful to remember the last "passing place" or gateway as you will inevitably meet somebody in the middle of nowhere and need to reverse.

For Dorset born people the attractiveness and tranquillity of their county has, perhaps, been marred by the spiralling cost of property, much of it purchased by "outsiders" in much the same way as has happened in attractive towns and villages in Cornwall, Devon, the Lakes, Norfolk and Suffolk, etc. Luckily there are still many unspoilt rural and urban hotels, inns and pubs in the county, which are of interest to the Real Ale drinker.

The almost total absence of any form of public transport, other than between the main towns of Weymouth, Bridport, Dorchester and Lyme Regis, precludes visiting many hostelries off of the "beaten track" as it inevitably leaves one of any party with the unenviable task of driving his or her fellow revellers.





The pubs we visited are listed below from East to West for no other reason than simplicity and we did stray across the border for a worthwhile visit into Devon. Before visiting any of the pubs it would be wise to check the opening times if you have a Good Beer Guide (GBG) and there is an entry for the pub as many of them close in the afternoon.

Blue Raddle, Dorchester
The Boot, Weymouth
The Greyhound Inn, Sydling St. Nicholas
Talbot Arms, Benville
Winyard's Gap Inn, Chedington
The Knapp Inn, Beaminster
New Inn, Eype
Anchor Inn, Seatown
Shave Cross Inn, Shave Cross
Fountain Head, Branscombe

I do have a description of each pub visited, the beers tasted and some photographs of each occasion. However, as I near the bottom of this page, I suspect those details will have to wait for another time and perhaps another issue.

Barry Price

Charity Beer Festival - Paignton, Devon

In early October, we headed to Paignton, Devon for a relative-visiting weekend and, on checking "What's Brewing" discovered that there was a Charity Beer Festival in aid of the local Hospice taking place on the outskirts of town over the weekend, so we thought we would see what was on offer.

Clutching a local map we got on a bus which dropped us off in the middle of a huge residential area. Following the handwritten signs on the lampposts we found our way to the Hookhills & Broadsands Park Community Centre, Paignton.

We arrived at about 3pm and eventually, very reluctantly, left at 7pm. Everybody was welcoming and so pleased to see us. They couldn't believe we had come all the way from Bedford just for their Beer Festival. The entertainment ranged from a bouncy castle (we were tempted!!), through Morris Dancers to local live bands. And, as for the beer well......



Imagine 20 barrels of excellent beer all being sold at £2.00 a pint regardless of strength. **Bays**, the local Paignton Brewery had 4 ales ranging in strength from Best 3.7% through to Devon Dumpling 5.1%. Local breweries featured included **Sharps** Doombar 4.0%, Special 5.0% and **Exmoor** Wild Cat 4.4%. From further afield there was **Harviestoun** Hoptberfest 4.0%, and **Hancocks** Hookhills 3.6% brewed especially for the Festival and Bloody Nora 4.0% a truly wonderful beer which, as far as I was concerned I could have drunk all weekend. Also on offer were **Davenports** Fat Catz 4.0%, **Wychwood** Bountiful 4.0%, **Robinsons** Battering Ram 4.1% and **Batemans** Autumn Fall 4.2%. The larger breweries were represented with **Fullers** London Pride 4.1%, **Adnams** Gunhill 4.0% (Malcolm particularly enjoyed this one) and **Greene King** IPA 3.6%, Abbot 5.0%

Chris Goldsmith, the Treasurer who had organised the event is amazing and totally dedicated to the Community Centre and the local people. He told us that the barrels of beer had been donated either by local businesses or the breweries and therefore all monies raised went straight to Rowcroft, the Torbay & South Devon Hospice. As an extra bonus, the food was good and very reasonably priced as well.

This was the 2nd year for the Beer Festival, which looks like becoming an annual event. We are definitely going back next year and would thoroughly recommend anybody visiting Paignton at the beginning of October to attend. The buses run late into the evening from the Centre into Torquay even on a Sunday. Next year the relative-visiting schedule will definitely be fitted in around the Beer Festival and not the other way around!.

Christine Lloyd



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Haus Haltbrugge Calls Time

It was way back in 2001 when the 'Engineers on Tour' ventured into foreign parts, with an organised trip with Knickerbocker Bier Tours run by Tom Perera an American living in Dinslaken Germany. Since then we have been back twelve times in ten years taking in numerous brewery visits from Diebels and Websters to the small brew houses of the Rhine valley.

Dinslaken is a 750 year old town on the Rhine situated in an area similar to parts of the Black Country (which makes Kevin and a few others feel fairly comfortable) with its mix of heavy industry (much now gone) and small towns where the workers lived close to areas of wild forest and heath land.

Although the local coal mine has closed the area stills holds a high degree of respect for the coal miners with the brewpub Schacht 4/8 in Duisburg becoming almost a shrine / museum to the miner.

What made Dinslaken especially welcoming was finding a local bar the Haus Holtbrugge, much akin to the Engineers and run by Hennes and Bruni (Brunhilde). Friendships were quick to form with everyone mixing together with no airs and graces making it seem a real home from home. And the beers good as well!





Engineers in Dinslaken 2010

German visitors at Bedford 2010

During our recent pilgrimage to Dinslaken when 24 Engineer regulars made the journey, we leant that our spiritual home in Dinslaken the Haus Holtbrugge was sadly going to close and become an Italian restaurant. Hennes had decided to retire and no one in his family wanted to pick up the mantle. Thus one of the nicest, old fashioned German bars we have found will have gone for good.

The memories of singing and drinking until five in the morning will long be with us. Photos of people napping on bars are numerous. Memories of departed friends are also not forgotten, none more than Neil Trussell meandering around having lost his key, passport, memory and well just about everything! Not an uncommon occurrence on visits to Dinslaken.



Every year we try to visit somewhere to expand the cultural (drinking) experience (Dusseldorf, Dortmund, Arnhem etc) and on the last visit we made a return visit to Cologne to savour the delights of Kolsh in all its many varieties, which we did to the full. A few also took in some of the sights as well, including the Chocolate museum (certainly for the Ladies).



Hennes at the bar



Bruni with the Engineers visitors

So ends our 'spiritual home' in Germany. In some ways the end of an era, in others the start of a new one bringing new and cementing existing friendships. Over a hundred people from Bedfordshire have visited Dinslaken on our trips and each will have good memories of Dinslaken and in particular of Hennes, Bruni and the regulars of Holtbrugge's. Despite its demise, we have no intention to end our visits to Dinslaken, we have too many friends to stop going and hopefully we will find a similar welcome in one of the other bars or cafes in the town.

Our sincere thanks go to Hennes and Brunhilde for their great friendship and hospitality over the years and we wish then a happy retirement. Our thanks also go to Tom Perera who first brought us to Dinslaken.

Kevin Machin & Alan Binnington

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