



the

Casket

Campaign for Real Ale

FREE

September 2016



EAST BEDFORDSHIRE

www.eastbedscamra.org.uk

casket@eastbedscamra.org.uk



Wrestlers is latest Asset of Community Value, page 5

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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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The Casket

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A word from the Editor

The East Beds branch continues to campaign for the protection of our local pubs and on 2nd June, Central Bedfordshire Council accepted our application to have the **Royal Oak, Potton** listed as an **Asset of Community Value**. I would like to thank the licensees of the Royal Oak, Colin & Jo Page for helping me with key information for the application forms. Recently two community groups have been active in trying to get ACV status for the **Wrestlers**, Langford & **Sugar Loaf**, Meppershall—see pages 4 & 5 for further details.

The **Crown, Stotfold** has joined the Real Cider scheme, landlord Keith has Westons Old Rosie plus another 2 guest ciders. We also heard from Jan at the **Stag**, that real cider has been re-instated on handpump, we will monitor the pub for a few months to see if it becomes a permanent feature. Branch members will be busy again in October running the Products & Tombola stand at the Bedford Beer festival. We also have a cider stand at the Potton Apple Day and at Fairfield Apple Day events in September. We are still looking for more volunteers, so please check the Dairy Dates for these events on Page 10 and volunteer by contacting Barry Price at secretary@eastbedscamra.org.uk

The national executive of CAMRA has approved a large project to get all Clubs included in **Whatpub**. In East Beds, we had three clubs already on the website, but we have just recently added the **Conservative Club, Stotfold** and during the autumn and winter, we aim to add in more clubs, primarily in Biggleswade and Sandy.

John Goodlet

39th Bedford Beer & Cider Festival

Wednesday 5th to Saturday 8th October 2016
Corn Exchange, St Paul's Square, Bedford MK40 1SL

Wed 4-11, Thu-Sat 12-11

Admission before 5pm: £1

After 5pm: Wed £2, Thu

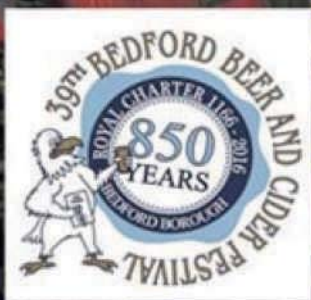
£3, Fri £4, Sat £2

CAMRA members free

No under 18s: ID required

Souvenir glass £2.50 sale
or return

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Wed eve – Sloop Groggy Dogs

Sat lunch – Bedford Morris

Sat eve – Kerry Jo and Carlos



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Pubs News

Kings Arms, Sandy

It was all change again at the **Kings Arms** as recent tenant Coby left after just six months. He was clearly disappointed with the lack of investment by owners Hawthorn Leisure. Meanwhile, after a short closure the pub re-opened on 29th July with Kelly and Adam Cousins in charge. Kelly has lots of local pub experience having been a barmaid at the Sir William Peel recently.



The re-opening event was a "Fun Day" with music, bouncy castles & other entertainment. The pub is going to move forward with a family focus, serving good pub and at least three real ales, including a *house ale* KA Cousins. We don't know yet if the CAMRA members discount will continue. The bar area has been re-decorated and some new furniture provided. A new fence across the petanque pitch has created a secure children's play area with ample seating. Games have been re-introduced - darts, pool and quiz machine, plus Sky Sports TV. There are plans to update the Chalets for letting. The pub is closed on Mondays, but open 1pm-11pm Tue-Thu; 1pm-midnight Fri-Sat; 1pm-10.30pm Sun.

White Horse, Broom

This pub has been closed since spring 2015, however in the early summer, we received confirmation that the pub was sold by Hawthorn Leisure to a new owner and it would become a private house.

Although, we can't take any further action to save this pub, we did ask the Central Bedfordshire Planning Office to keep a close eye on the property as we had received numerous reports that work on a substantial refurbishment was in progress.



But this former pub is a listed building and there hadn't been a planning application to alter any key features. A local planning officer visited the site and reminded the new owners of their obligations. By mid-August, a planning application for "*change of use*" to a residential property was eventually sent to the Planning Office and the building also appears to be a "home base" for a printing company, which may explain some of the refurbishment work.

Sugar Loaf, Meppershall

Still no outcome on the fate of the **Sugar Loaf**, Meppershall as owners Hawthorn Leisure had blocked two attempts by the local community to get the pub listed as an **Asset of Community Vale**.

A third ACV nomination has been accepted by the council, but Hawthorn have countered with a new planning application for “change of use” to convert the pub into a Co-op convenience store. We will have to wait until mid September to hear what the council has decided.

Wrestlers, Langford

The Wrestlers, Langford was sold in September 2015 and the pub closed supposedly for a few months whilst the new owner was refurbished it. A sign outside suggested it would re-open as an Indian restaurant, but one year later we are still no clearer on when the premises will re-open and will it still retain a public bar?



Luckily a local community group nominated the pub as an **Asset of Community Value** on the 12th June with a petition initially of 34 signatures (now circa 50 members). The editor contacted a member of the group for an update and was told that the ACV had been accepted by the council on 3rd August. This is great news and it becomes the sixth pub listed in East Beds. It is unclear what the new owner, Lounge India (Bedfordshire) Limited based in Luton, intends to do with the pub, as there has been no sign of refurbishment work at all.

It was reported that the pub had been advertised “for sale” at some point, but only in Cambridgeshire, not locally. Well done to The Wrestlers Group for getting the pub listed as an ACV, it at least gives some protection against property development. It is up to the new owner now to either re-open the business or sell it on the open market.

Admiral, Clifton

There has been further refurbishment work at the Admiral. The bar area has been spruced up with all the ales now in a line on one side of the bar. It will concentrate on being an original beer house with 3 casks on all the time, one real cider (spring/summer), plus bottled craft beers.



There will still be a strong focus on great British pub food including the big breakfast, Sunday roasts and fish and chips cooked in beef dripping plus other pub classics.

Late News

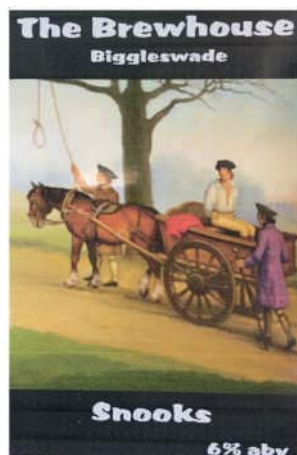
Sadly the **Tudor Oaks, Astwick** which was ‘for sale’ last Autumn failed to attract a suitable buyer and the pub/motel has been closed and looking rather derelict this year.

If you hear of any significant changes at your local pub, please write in and tell us at casket@eastbedscamra.org.uk

The Brewhouse, Biggleswade

The East Beds Pub of the Year 2016 continues to develop and innovate. The **New Inn Ale House & Kitchen** opened a small micro brewery in late April, trading as Brewhouse Biggleswade. The Brewhouse is in a former garage just across the patio area on the east side of the inn. I met up with Andy Medlock who was gave me an update on the brewery and provided photos of the pumpclips. He said:-

The first brew produced was Wicked Lady 4.4% a blonde hoppy ale with citrus notes. This was followed by two other beers Dick Turpin 3.8% a traditional IPA and Snooks 6.0% a strong and dark Black IPA, this is a modern style of ale popular in USA. The beers have been available in New Inn, plus their two sisters pubs The Chequers, Stevenage and Greyhound, Haynes.



The design of the pump-clips shows the strong link Biggleswade has with the old Coaching Trade and the Great North Road. Although production ceased temporarily in late summer to lay a new floor in the Brewhouse, it should be up and running again by early September. The first priority is to brew the same three ales again and feature them regularly in the pubs at the same time. Later in the autumn, you can expect to see some Seasonal or Special ales, possibly in time for the New Inn Halloween beer festival.

It must have been daunting setting up a new brewery business, but the New Inn was fortunate to receive some help and guidance from two local brewers. John Pilling, the brewer at B&T in Shefford and John d'este-Hoare from Leighton Buzzard Brewery. No doubt they could provide assistance in the installing and operation of the brewing equipment and contribute towards choosing the beer styles for the first few ales.





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The Smallest Bar in Europe?

Earlier in the year I had the good fortune to visit Manchester to attend the Retired Members Conference of my Union. It was good fortune because, in the overnight visit I had I found a couple of interesting pubs and enjoyed a bit of banter with the locals.

I stayed at the **Britannia Hotel** in Portland Street, along with the rest of the delegates, as this was where the conference was to be held. The building that the hotel now occupies was once Watts Warehouse which was by far the largest building in Manchester when it was built between 1851 and 1856 and it was a massive emporium for all kinds of textiles and drapery "...from corsets to umbrellas...". Contemporary accounts note that the building was designed in such a way to keep the circulation of staff, customers and porters separate from one another – after all one couldn't countenance the well heeled customers mixing with the *hoi polloi*.

The warehouse takes up one hundred yards of Portland Street and is Grade 2 listed. At the top of the stairs of the entrance there is, on one side, a roll-call of employees killed during the First World War and on the opposite side a bronze statue, "The Sentry", of a caped soldier with rifle and fixed bayonet who appears to be guarding the memorial to his fellow soldiers. Inside there is a magnificent staircase which goes up five floors but, unfortunately, that's about the extent of the good points apart from the comparative refinement of the public areas.



"Was there any Real Ale?" you may ask. One hand-pull of Theakstons XB which I didn't have the opportunity to sample as, on returning to the hotel on the evening of my arrival, several of the hotel "Security" staff were trying to eject a couple of particularly rumbustious customers which rather precluded the opportunity to partake of the hotel's miserable ale offering. One hand pump for the occupants of 363 bedrooms seems to be a bit of a missed opportunity to me. My Trade Union had, that evening, organised a bit of a get-together at the **Mechanics Institute** located in Princess Street, which is only a few hundred yards away from the hotel.



The Mechanics Institute is in a listed building, which was the birthplace of three significant institutions, the Trades Union Congress (TUC), the Co-operative Insurance Society (CIS) and the University of Manchester Institute of Science and Technology (UMIST). The building is a useful repository for those interested in social history and there is a certain amount of irony that the reason for the establishment of the TUC and CIS in particular are as relevant today as they were when they were founded in the 19th century. It was great to meet many old friends but very disappointing that the bar had no real ales – so I left early with one of my mates in search of a pint.

Our first stop was Wetherspoons **Paramount** as we needed to eat as well as drink. The Chicken Peri Peri was acceptable and the ten or so ales were enough to quench a thirst but we only had a couple of pints then went around the corner to Joseph Holt's **Old Monkey**.

This is a very pleasant pub which sits on a busy road junction and had half a dozen hand-pulled ales – three from Holts and three guests which also were Locale offerings. The girl behind the bar was friendly and we were lucky enough to go on a day of the week and at a time of the evening when it wasn't jam-packed which, apparently it can be. The beers we tried were fine and all were very reasonable priced. For those who prefer distilled barley from across the border there is a fairly good range of malt whiskies at £3 a nip.



A couple of doors away is the **Circus Tavern** which claims to be the “Smallest Bar in Europe”. I started to debate this with other customers even before I'd ordered the beers and one of them kindly took me outside to show me that the claim had even been painted on the wall which, of course, means nothing to a cynic like myself. The pub was slightly reminiscent of the Blue Bell in York as there are two entirely separate rooms, front and back, with an adjoining corridor. The front room had four or five drinkers and a roaring fire, which was a welcome sight on a January evening and the back room was very lively.



It was only when I ordered and saw the “bar” that I realised I had entirely misunderstood the claim. The bar itself was probably less than four feet – but had a keg fount and two hand-pulls upon it. It was certainly the shortest bar I have seen lately with the exception of that at the Cock in Broom which, of course, is so small that it is non-existent! Five or six of us huddled in the space between the front door and the bar and a lively conversation took place between ourselves and those passing between the two rooms and the entrance.

The clientèle included a young “entrepreneur” who was lamenting the fact that he couldn't get fibre optic cable connected to his static caravan park. He became very excited when he heard we were ex-BT, but disappointed when we told him we might not be able to help. Even so his drinking partner and himself were a good laugh except that they thought I was a Cockney but they realised the folly of their jape when I said I thought they sounded like Scousers, which amused the old fellers we were drinking with. One of the old guard was an ex-boxer and another had done time in Strangeways when he was younger for putting a bloke through a plate-glass window but they were lovely characters and good company.

Even though it may or may not be the smallest bar in Europe it was certainly the Best. I'm not talking about the superb quality of the Robinson's Dizzy Blonde but the entrance way which had two walls full of photographs of George, the Belfast Boy with that surname, from the time he was playing football as a schoolboy and through the rest of his career - although I don't recall seeing one of him when he played for Dunstable!

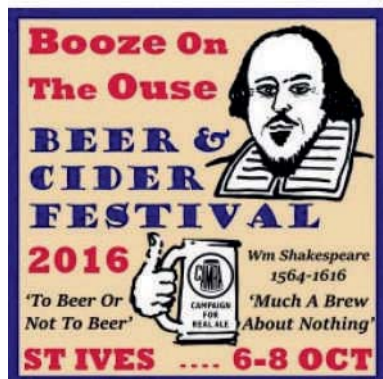
Barry Price

DIARY DATES

- SEP.** 13th, Branch Meeting, George & Dragon, Potton, 8 pm
 17th, Branch bus trip to Rushden Historical Transport Museum (TBC)
 25th, Cider stall @ Potton Apple Day, St Mary's Hall, Potton 12-4pm
- OCT.** 1st, Cider stall @ Fairfield Apple Day, Community Hall, Kipling Crescent, Fairfield 12-6 pm
 29th, All Beds London Social, meet Noon - 12.30pm Location (TBA)
- NOV.** 8th, Branch Meeting, Stag Tavern, Stotfold, 8 pm (GBG shortlist)

BEER FESTIVALS

- Sep.** 28th-1st. St Albans Beer & Cider Festival, Alban Arena, St Albans **CAMRA**
 30th-2nd. Beer Festival, Stag Tavern, 35 Brook Street, Stotfold
- Oct.** 5th-8th. The Bedford Beer & Cider Festival, Corn Exchange, St. Paul's Square, Bedford **CAMRA**
 14th-15th. Cambridge Octoberfest, University Social Club, Mill Lane **CAMRA**
 20th-23rd. Engineers Arms Beer Festival, High St, Henlow
 20th-23rd. Trafalgar Beer Festival, Half Moon, Queen Street, Hitchin
 24th-29th. Norwich Beer Festival, St. Andrew's & Blackfriars Halls **CAMRA**
- Nov.** 29th-3rd. Pigs Ear Beer Festival, Round Chapel, Powerscroft Road, Hackney **CAMRA**



**St Ives 'Booze on the Ouse'
 Beer & Cider Festival
 Burgess Hall, Westwood Road,
 St Ives PE27 6WU**

2016 Festival Opening Times

Thu 6 Oct ... Noon to 10:30 pm
 Fri 7 Oct Noon to 10:30 pm
 Sat 8 Oct Noon to 10:00 pm

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Local Pub & Festival Reports

Beer Festival @ Chequers, Wrestlingworth



Steve Nakoneczny reported:-

I was lucky enough to visit the Beer & Cider Festival @ the Chequers twice during the bank holiday weekend 27th-30th May 2016. The first visit was en-route back from Duxford Airfield where a practice session preceded the next day's Airshow.

The Chequers, Wrestlingworth is an up and coming pub and this beer festival offered 25 Beers and 6 Ciders mostly on an outside bar. There was live music on all the days and I sampled some good bands on the Saturday including the excellent 'Alchemy' who do some good cover songs.

As for the beers, I tried Roosters, Humble Pie 3.7%, with a lemon and citrus flavour, followed by Woodfordes Nelson Revenge 4.5%, a malty beer with a hoppy aftertaste. I finished with Adnams Ghostship 4.5%, which offers a mixture of hoppiness and citrus taste. So, a good beer festival based around National Brewery Beers. This pub deserves to succeed in an area with little, or any decent pubs.



Summer Pub Walk

On Saturday 13th August five branch members met up at the **Vicars Inn**, Arlesey to enjoy a few beers and a stroll through the countryside to Lower Stondon and Henlow. We tried the guest beer a copper ale from Box Steam Brewery before starting on our trek. The group opted to try two other pubs before heading out of the village, so we went to the **White Horse**. Here we tried Skinners Betty Stogs and a GK seasonal pale ale Golden Breeze as we sat in the garden. Onwards to the **True Briton**, where a new barrel of St Austell Tribute had just come on, so we all tried it whilst having a chat with some local chaps about some old pubs that used to be located nearby but have all disappeared now.

We moved on, crossing the railway line and wandered across the fields to emerge half an hour later near RAF Henlow and turned east to the **Old Transporter Ale House**. We tried several ales here, including a hoppy beer especially available for a charity event later that evening. At this point, I retired with a sore foot and left the others to head for the final stop at the **Engineers Arms**. Apologies to Tony M who was waiting for us in the Old Transporter, but we were arrived much later than planned and missed him.

Stotfold Summer Beer Festivals

There were two festivals in Stotfold during the summer, the first was in late June at the **Fox and Duck**. This is a new festival and a bold move by landlady Maria Castleton to attract local customers to sample some ales and enjoy the marquee facilities behind the pub. A stillage was set up and sponsored by Tring brewery, offering six ales direct from the barrel, plus a further two on handpump at the bar. There were a few boxes of cider too and Tim Naisbitt, our branch cider rep, who volunteered to serve on the busy Friday evening said that the fruit cider sold extremely well.

There was some live music and barbecue food provided, alongside the pub's regular menu. I was away on holiday and missed the festival, however Maria was kind enough to thank me for the help I had given her in planning the event, with some general advice on stillage, choice and price of ales and use of the branch festival glasses for service. Maria said she had learned a lot from running this first beer festival, so hopefully this will stand her in good stead for any future events.

In late July the **Coach & Horses** ran their latest beer festival. I was on hand to pop in on the Sunday afternoon to see how things went. Bar manager Karen Ward was pleased with the turnout from the local community and noted that quite a few CAMRA members had been attending too. Karen ordered more beer this year, with some of it being held over for another event the following weekend, when a car rally comes to the nearby village green and the pub does a lot of extra business. The festival offered barbecue on Sat & Sun afternoons, live music on Saturday night was the Cardinal Kings and Sunday afternoon there was a solo acoustic performance by Steph Scott.

At the bar, was a list of about 12 ales with five on at any one time, plus 2 ciders. Oakham's Heavenly Dark and Colchester's Red Diesel had sold, but I was lucky to try Oakhams JHB, St. Austell Tribute and an excellent Whitstable Pale Ale by Kent brewer Shepherd Name. I sat out in the back garden enjoying the new look of the pub.

In the previous three months a large extension had mostly been completed, offering a new kitchen and an enlarged rear room suitable for games and live music with multiple panels of sliding patio doors allowing more light into the pub. Upstairs four new flats have been built and tenants were already lined up to move in. I revisited the pub a few weeks later to see the final decorated rear section and took some new pictures for the Whatpub website.



John Goodlet

Knocking Around in Norwich

The summer beer festival season kicked at the end of May with some branch members heading to Norwich for the 6th City of Ale festival. A record number of pubs (46) took part in this 10 day long event. There are seven different walking trails around the city, usually with six or seven pubs to sample.

I got there on the Friday afternoon, checked into my hotel and then nipped out for a quick libation after the hot drive, I walked a few minutes east along Riverside Road to the **Lollards Pit**. The pub is built on the site of an execution place for heretics and other offenders in the 16th Century and the pub name now reflects this grisly history, although in years gone by this pub was named the Bridge House.



A good start here with samples of Humpty Dumpty's City Hoppers and Cliff Quay Bitter to wash down a locally made pork pie, plus there was a CAMRA discount. After a rather stiff walk up Gas Hill Road, I arrived at the **Jubilee**, 26 St Leonards Road. As the name suggested, this pub was decorated with all things Royal. It was first licensed in 1886 in preparation for Queen Victoria's Golden Jubilee the following year. I had a pint of Golden Jubilee Ale, brewed specially for the pub by Woodfordes, who also supplied 4 other there, plus there was GK IPA (not having that) and an old favourite Summer Lightening, but it was too early in the day for that wonderful beer. I also spotted some craft beers from the Redwell Brewery, but left them for another time.

I went back to the hotel for a quick change and a rest then went out for a leisurely evening ramble around some pubs in the central area. I met Tony and his brother Colin in the **Murderers Arms** on Timber Hill. This pub is a great meeting point with plenty of space and a mini-beer festival had a large range on offer, but I just had halves of Buffys IPA and S&P Afterglow. Colin collects some pub and brewery items and spotted an old Toby tray, which with some smooth talking, he managed to acquire free of charge, but it meant he had to carry it around all evening—I suspected it would get lost before the evening was over.

We wandered off to the **Sir Garnet** in the Market Place for a half of Wolf's Edith Cavell, then a visit to the **Coach & Horses**, Bethel Street to try Jo C's Knot Just Another IPA and Shorts Farm Two Tone. Hunger was setting in, so we went to the **Vine** on Dove Street, well known for good Thai style food and ordered some noodle and Pad Thai dishes, washed down with Oakham's JHB and Fat Cat's Wild Cat, we passed on the third ale which was Green Jack's Baltic Trader at a stonking 10%.



Our next port of call was the **St. Andrews Brewhouse**, a new outlet just opened the previous year. Complete with an onsite micro-brewery I sampled the Cherry Porter and made note to revisit this pub in the future when I have more time to try the large range of their home brews, plus some craft ales. Next up we deviated off the festival list to try the **Mash Tun** at 16 Charing Cross and we were very pleased to find two ales from St. Peter's Brewery and one from Bullards, all in excellent condition. The pub was very busy mostly with students, providing some good eye candy for us three middle aged real ale buffs. I was reluctant to leave but we had supped enough ale, then a suggestion of a "one for the road" appealed to me as Tony led us to the **Ten Bells** on St. Benedict Street.

Here the late night revellers were knocking back cocktails, but an extensive range of malt whiskies caught our eye and provided a satisfying nightcap, but don't ask me which whisky I had, it was all getting a bit of a blur—a 15 year old something. Tony headed off for a late night bus, whilst Colin showed me a shortcut back to my hotel, before he too disappeared into the night still clutching a beer tray in his hand—well done for not losing it.



On Saturday morning I arose surprisingly without a hangover, but none the less rather tired. I declined the cooked breakfast and opted for the Continental offering before going for a stroll along the riverside to clear my head. Then it was back on the beer hunt, and a walk across the city centre admiring the architecture of main fine buildings, some of which I guessed may well have been inns in olden days. I crossed the ring road, headed north and after fortifying myself with a large mug of coffee in an nearby café, got to the rendezvous at the **Fat Cat Brewery Tap** on Lawson Road. I joined Tony, who was already basking in the sunshine offered by the beer garden and we chatted as we waited for some pals to join us after arriving in the city by train from Sandy. Well 45 minutes passed by and no sign of them and we were already on our third half, when finally Barry, Chris, Ian and Al turned up in a minibus. What a palaver, they had fallen foul of a rather all too common mistake in Norwich and ended up at the wrong pub.

The Fat Cat Brewery has three outlets in the city and whether the taxi driver was not listening or someone didn't specify the exact street—who knows, but they were dropped off at the outlet in Thorpe Road. Luckily, good beer was had there, then the group took advantage of the brewery's mini-bus which patrols all three pubs during the daytime on weekends and got a lift over to join us.



Continued on next page

After a couple of swift halves, the group moved on the **Duke of Wellington**, on Waterloo Road which turned out to be quite a large pub hosting a beer festival. We sampled a variety of ales and I particularly liked Wolf's Grandma's Rich Porter. We were joined by Colin and his parents here, before moving to the **Leopard** on Bull Close Road (photo on left). I tried the house Leopard Ale brewed by Tombstone and also St. Peter's Black IPA.



Again, we moved on to the **Cottage** on Silver Road (photo above), here we expected to get some food, as the festival brochure had suggested it would have a South African style barbecue, but alas no sign of this when we arrived. We took solace in the beers instead, I tried the Boudicca Prasto's Porter which was lovely, just as well really, as someone in the Sandy group made an error in the next round of drinks and ordered an extra pint by mistake. It fell into my hands, as I am known to have a particular liking for stouts and porters.

Luckily this stretch of the walk was mostly downhill and we arrived on the flat at the **Plasterers Arms** on Cowgate (photo on right). Here, I sampled Golden Triangle City Gold and yet another half of Prasto's Porter—I was getting quite a liking for that one. Back across the ring road, we emerged at the **King's Head** on Magdalen Street and a half of Winter's Genius, a stout. At this point, the Sandy boys booked a taxi and bade farewell as they headed for the 7pm train home.



Tony and I were both pretty hungry having missed the opportunity at the Cottage and neither the Plasterer's nor King's Head offered food. We continued on to the **Ribs of Beef** on Wensum Street, which usually serves food, except on Saturday evenings. Disappointed, we had a final half and headed towards the city centre. It was almost 8pm and Tony could either get a bus then or have to wait for a late bus about 11pm. I said I had reached my capacity and could not drink any more—I needed food. Tony went off on the bus and I grabbed a pizza on the way back to the hotel. A couple of hours later I drifted off to sleep with the telly still on in my hotel room.

An excellent weekend of Real Ale and good company in an historic city. I enjoy going out on a pub walk and although I am not as young as I used to be, I can still put it away on occasion. But the vital lesson to learn as always is—make sure you eat a decent meal along the way, lest the alcohol will catch you up eventually.

John Goodlet



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2014 CAMRA Award Winner

Great British Beer Festival - Winners

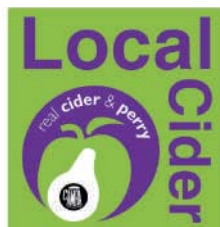
At the recent 2016 Great British Beer Festival in August the overall Supreme Champion Beer of Britain was won by a speciality beer for the first time. Bingham's **Vanilla Stout** from Berkshire, a 5% stout infused with vanilla and dark malts scooped the Gold Medal top prize. The overall silver medal was awarded to the Kent based brewery Old Dairy for their **Snow Top**, a 6% Old Ale described as a "perfect winter warmer" with fruitcake and marmalade flavours. The overall bronze award was given to Hertfordshire's Tring brewery for their 7.2% barley wine **Death or Glory**. The judges this year appear to have favoured the strong ales, unusual for a summer beer festival.

A full list of all the winners, by category is detailed below:-

	Mild category	Bitter category
Gold	Williams Bros, Williams Black	Timothy Taylor's, Boltmaker
Silver	Mighty Oak, Oscar Wilde	Tiny Rebel, Hank
Bronze	Acorn, Darkness	Hawkshead, Bitter & Salopian, Shropshire Gold
	Best Bitter category	Strong Bitter category
Gold	Surrey Hills, Shere Drop	Heavy Industry, 77
Silver	Salopian, Darwin's Origin	Hawkshead, NZPA
Bronze	Colchester, Colchester No 1 & Tiny Rebel, Cwtch	Adnams Ghost Ship
	Golden Ales category	Speciality Ales category
Gold	Golden Triangle, Mosaic City	Binghams, Vanilla Stout
Silver	Grey Trees, Diggers Gold	Saltaire, Triple Chocoholic
Bronze	Marble, Lagonda IPA	Titanic, Plum Porter

For the local Bedfordshire CAMRA members who visited the Peterborough Beer Festival at the end of August, the overall 2016 Champion ales were:-

Gold	Fyne Ales, Jarl
Silver	Drygate, 7 Peaks
Bronze	Nene Valley, Release the Chimps



East Beds have selected breweries within 30 miles of Biggleswade. The pubs listed sell at least one local ale of good quality on a regular basis. 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 & an increase in local identity and pride.

Breweries in the scheme

B&T, Shefford, Beds.	White Park, Cranfield, Beds.	
Red, Gt. Staughton, Hunt'don	Buntingford, Royston, Herts.	Red Squirrel, Potten End, Herts.
Charles Wells, Bedford.	Alehouse, St Albans, Herts.	L. Buzzard, L. Buzzard, Beds
McMullen, Hertford, Herts.	Concrete Cow, Milton Keynes.	Amphill, Amphill, Beds
Milton, Cambridge, Cambs.	Cambridge Moonshine, Cambs.	Tring, Tring, Herts
Potbelly, Kettering, Northants.	Copper Kettle, Rushden, Nhants	

Pubs in the scheme

Vicars Inn, Arlesey	Golden Pheasant & New inn, Biggleswade	March Hare, Dunton
Chequers, Wrestlingworth	Thornton Arms, Everton	Engineers Arms & Old Transporter, Henlow
Sir William Peel, Sandy	Coach & Horses, Stotfold	Coach House & Rising Sun, Potton

Please visit these pubs and enjoy locally produced ales.

Real Cider & Perry in Bedfordshire

Pubs in East Beds branch permanently selling at least one 'Real Cider or Perry'.

Golden Pheasant, Biggleswade
 New Inn, Biggleswade
 Cock, Broom
 March Hare, Dunton
 Thornton Arms, Everton
 Engineers Arms, Henlow
 Old Transporter, Henlow
 Rising Sun, Potton
 Sir William Peel, Sandy
 Coach & Horses, Stotfold
 Crown, Stotfold
 John O'Gaunt, Sutton
 Admiral, Clifton [spring/summer only]



Locally produced cider can be ordered from the following outlets:-

Apple Cottage, Baldock, Herts
 Millwhites, Boxmoor, Herts
 Cassels Cider, Cambridge
 Franklins Cider, Dunton, Beds
 Hereward Cider, Ely, Cambs
 Harrold Calvados Society, Harrold, Beds
 Eversheds Cider, near Odell, Beds
 Pickled Pig, Stretham, near Ely, Cambs
 Potton Press, Potton, Beds
 Virtual Orchard, Wolverton Mill, Bucks

ASK YOUR LOCAL PUB TO STOCK A REAL CIDER OR PERRY

Yorkshire Steam and Ale Trail

A Steam and Ale Extravaganza in the Yorkshire Dales

Well, as I could not make the CAMRA trip to Norwich in May, I made up for it by visiting the Keighley and Worth Valley Railway for their Steam and Ale Trail weekend on the 30th May 2016.

This preserved Railway was made famous in the wonderful 1960's film, 'The Railway Children' featuring Jenny Agutter and Bernard Cribbins. This innovative weekend offered Ale bars at each of the 5 stations en-route plus a bar on the train! They ran an intensive timetable which enabled the passenger to sample a beer at each Station. With your train ticket you could purchase a beer voucher sheet which offered you potentially 7 pints for £12 (see photo).



We easily made the first train there by travelling via Sandy, Peterborough & Leeds that morning. So, we set off, in glorious sunshine quaffing beer whilst viewing the beautiful countryside made famous by the Bronte Sisters. We travelled to the end of the line at Oxenhope where a large bar had been set up in the carriage shed.

At least 15 hand pumps invited us in! After a pint, or two we returned back to Keighley stopping en route to try the ales. I should say that each Station featured a different Brewery, listed below;

Keighley Station; Old Spot Brewery
Ingrow Station; Timothy Taylors
Oakworth Station; Bridge House Brewery
Haworth Station; Goose Eye Brewery
Oxenhope; Mixed Brewery Bar
All Stations; The Real Cider Company.



Unfortunately we very quickly using the vouchers up and had to resort to old fashioned cash! Easy to do with 41 Beers and 17 Ciders to choose from. Apart from the above mentioned, the other breweries offered were as follows;

**Bradfield Brewery, Copper Dragon, Greyhawk Brewery,
Little Valley Brewery, Magic Rock Brewery, Naylors Brewery, Oldershaws,
Settle Brewery, Wishbone Brewery, Saltaire Brewery, York Brewery**

As a keen Railway Enthusiast I managed to travel behind four different Steam Locomotives by careful use of the timetable and avoided the one infernal combustion engine running!



So, we finally arrived back at Keighley for our mainline connection back to Sandy via Leeds again. An excellent day out, in the company of my mate Ian Bowskill, from Stotfold, no stranger to a good pint! The Guard told me, given the success of this event it will be repeated next year. It's definitely worth a visit to taste Northern based beers.

Steve Nakoneczny

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Tour de Bedfordshire Est 2016

On 19th June a small band of cyclists from the East Beds Branch of CAMRA assembled at the **New Inn Alehouse & Kitchen** in Biggleswade supplemented by Mike Coombes, the Secretary of South Beds Branch. Mike had cycled over from Maulden and the bulk of the local Branch members were from Sandy plus one from Eaton Ford and the route planner, Chris, from Langford. This was the sixth year in succession that the Branch had organised a cycle trip to a few pubs in our Branch Area and across our border to watering holes in neighbouring branches – in this case North Herts.



The journey didn't start too well for Ian, as he ran into the back of me as we left Biggleswade Station for the New Inn. I felt a very slight bump and looked around to see Ian lolling in the road with his bike on top of him. He had been looking the wrong way down Saffron Road while I had stopped for a car coming up Station Road. Luckily he was less injured than he usually is on a Friday evening when he cycles home from the pub via the St Neots station.

After a pint or two in Biggleswade we had a pleasant ride, with the wind behind us, over to the **March Hare** at Dunton where we sat in the pub garden and enjoyed the sunshine, the chat and the twitter of swallows busying themselves about the place. Quite a lot of other cyclists were using the route past the pub but seemed to be on a far more serious venture than our particularly sociable jaunt. John's beer was its usual high standard but one wouldn't expect anything less.

Our next stop was the **Three Horseshoes** at Hinxworth, a pleasant enough ride, where some tried the Timothy Taylor Landlord which was, to me, surprisingly enjoyable. It may be my taste-buds but since I first tried it in the John Bull (now demolished) in York, August Bank Hols 1981, I've felt the quality to have slightly declined and my favourite Timothy Taylor Beer is now Golden Best, an eminently quaffable ale in my opinion, although I realise that Ram Tam, Boltmaker and Dark Mild also have their advocates.

I'm sure that Landlord production must have been ramped up after winning CAMRA Supreme Championship in 1994 and 1999 as well as following the many other awards it has had from CAMRA - and possibly further increased with the celebrity endorsement of Madonna. I'm sure the brewery hasn't compromised its heritage of brewing the beer but, to me, sometimes it just isn't "quite right". Anyway my faith in the product was slightly restored at the Three Horseshoes making me suspect that it may be the care of the beer in the cellar rather than the beer itself which tends to be at fault.



The pub was fairly busy with both drinkers and diners but two of our number, Steve M and Alan B, had decided that the route we were taking wasn't sufficiently taxing so had left the March Hare and headed to the **Pig and Abbott** at Abington Piggotts by way of diversion.

After an enjoyable spot of relaxation in the garden of the Three Horseshoes it was time to remount and head for our next destination – the **Bushel and Strike** in Ashwell which stands opposite St Mary's Church.

The church was highly regarded by John Betjeman and is quite a landmark due to its wood and leaden spike which rises to 176 feet and is visible for many miles around even though the village has quite a low situation within the surrounding countryside. It is also famous for its graffiti which, amongst other fragments, describes the coming of the plague and other gems such as, '*Archi(di)aconus Asemnes*' - "The Archdeacon is an Ass" and '*Barbara filia Barbara est*' - "Barbara is a regular young vixen".

The ride to the Bushel and Strike was not too strenuous and the pub was quite busy. We again encamped in the garden where many families were enjoying themselves and some were admiring the eclectic range of pedal powered machines ranged in a row against the fence – not only ours but other cyclists as well. The beer was fine but neither myself or anybody else on the spin, as far as I know, took any note of what was being imbibed.



The next section, to the **Orange Tree** in Baldock, was one which I was slightly worried about as I was undoubtedly the least fit of those in the group. Chris had kindly supplied a map of the route beforehand which included the elevation profile. It wouldn't have surprised me had it been an X-ray of the mouth of a Great White Shark in need of dental attention.

The first sign that things weren't going to go well was when we were admonished, quite rightly, by an elderly lady for cycling up Bear Lane in the wrong direction. Some of us got off and walked while others seemed to be struck by a form of selective deafness and whose conversation was reduced to a few barely audible mutters. As always I was at the rear of the *peloton* as we reached the first steepish part of Claybush Road and then my chain came off. The backup vehicle was, by now, up the road with its skilled occupant, Steve N, covering photography, first aid, refreshments and mechanical assistance but now awaiting another photo opportunity at the top of Claybush Hill.

Continued on next page....

I've since discovered that another scratching in Ashwell Church reads, '*Ebrietas frangit quicquid sapientia tangit*' which translates as 'Drunkenness breaks whatever wisdom touches' but I felt that Ian had somehow put a curse on me after I'd gleefully explained his braking deficiency to all and sundry in Biggleswade. Even so he had the decency, with Chris, to wait until I was back in service and we topped Claybush Hill together.



Arrival at the Orange Tree meant the coming together of both sections of riders since we had split at Dunton. It was a relief to have another pint which was supplemented by three "pints" of particularly well received chips after hands had been cleaned of chain oil, sweat and general detritus. The landlord of the Orange Tree was so taken by the sit-up-and-beg design of my Edinburgh Cycles Trailfinder that not only did he photograph it but offered to buy it as well...and I thought I'd had a reasonable drink! I don't think he'd be so keen if he'd ever pedalled a 12 kg bike up a hill.

Unfortunately Steve N received a text message advising that the Beer Festival at our next scheduled destination, the **Fox and Duck** at Stotfold, had sold out of beer which was greeted with a certain amount of joy as they'd obviously had a brilliant two or three days but disappointment that we wouldn't be able to participate in their first ever beer festival. So we had another pint before heading off for the Engineers Arms in Henlow. Unfortunately the information we'd received about the Fox and Duck was incorrect. It subsequently transpired that the source of the news was actually at the Fox at Willian and I've written on behalf of the Branch to apologise to all at the Fox and Duck.

We said goodbye to Mike as we neared Henlow as he had the unenviable task of cycling back to Maulden while the rest of us travelled to the **Engineers Arms** for another couple of pints from the usual well kept and comprehensive choice before making our separate ways home. It was the end of another very enjoyable leg of the Tour de Bedfordshire Est where everything combined to make it pleasurable.



My thanks to the pubs we visited for making us welcome; the repartee from licensees and their staff and customers; the fine ales we consumed, none of which were in anything less than very good condition; and my cycling companions – Archie, two Alan Bs, Barry, Chris, Ian, Mike and Steve M and of course Steve N for providing the support vehicle – fortunately not required – and taking the photos.

Barry Price

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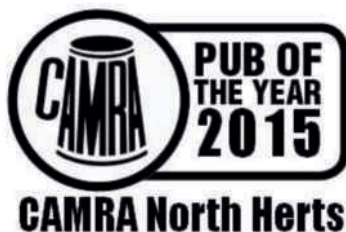
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