Campaign for Real Ale

the Casket

FREE

January 2017

EAST BEDFORDSHIRE

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

Biggleswade Brewhouse - a new range of ales, page 5

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Issue number 1 Volume 13 2017

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A word from the Editor

The branch campaign to the protect our local pubs is gathering pace. The branch listed five pubs as **Assets of Community Value** and two more were done by local Community Groups. The latter two ACVS are being challenged by the pub's owners and now CAMRA is adding its direct support to the **Sugar Loaf**, Meppershall and **Wrestlers**, Langford campaigns. The branch are currently working on ACV forms for two more local pubs, but they may not be completed until the end of January 2017.

The **Real Cider** campaign stands at 13 pubs and recent cider stalls at Potton and Fairfields had mixed results. The Potton Apple Day was again a great success with good weather, but Fairfield was badly hit by rain early on, so the takings were less than expected (see page 6). The Bedford Beer & Cider Festival was enjoyed by all volunteers in a team led by Alan Binnington, they ran the Products & Tombola stand. Profits for the festival plus the two cider stalls have raised over £1,150 for branch funds.

The project to get more Clubs included into **Whatpub** is well under way. A further six social clubs have been added with basic details. The branch will arrange to survey each club and get further data and photos during the winter months. Next spring we may also look at local sporting clubs, provided they are open at times other than just "match days".

John Goodlet

Thursday 16th to Saturday 18th February 2017

100+ Real Ales • 20+ Real Ciders & Perries • Bottled Beers Galore

Free entry for CAMRA members to all sessions.

Non-members: £3 Thu & Fri; £2 Sat

Open midday to 11pm all days

34th Luton Beer & Cider Festival

3 separate halls with at least 5 bars including one featuring local breweries including London

Live music (Theatre Hall only) Friday and Saturday

South Bedfordshire Branch CAMRA Campaign for Real Ale

Hightown Community, Sports & Arts Centre

York Street, Luton LU2 0JD

(7 minutes stroll from Luton Rail Station & Bus Interchange)

See ***http://southbeds.camra.org.uk/lbcf***

active Luton

LOCAL PUB NEWS

Asset of Community Value update

The Wrestlers, Langford remains closed but it is still under the protection of an "**Asset of Community Value**" listing. We know that the pub owner has opted to go to a "tribunal" in an effort to challenge Central Bedfordshire Council in this matter. So until that case is resolved, there is no further news on the future of the pub.

It is the same story at the **Sugar Loaf**, Meppershall. We have been told that the pub owner Hawthorn Leisure have also opted for the "tribunal" path in an attempt to overturn the ACV. This case would need to be cleared before the Council's review of the planning application to turn the pub into a convenience store can be completed.

Kings Arms, Sandy

Just before Christmas the branch were informed by Central Beds Council that the Hawthorn Leisure wished to dispose of this "Asset" and the Community Right to Bid phase has been triggered with a deadline to respond on 20th January. The Pubs Preservation Officer is in discussions with the pub's customers and tenants in order to determine the best approach to safeguard the future of this classic old coaching inn.

However, a planning application has now been submitted by Hawthorn Leisure, which appears to support the theory that they just want to detach part of the car park land from the property. This will be sold and two new houses will be built. The pub's car park will be retained further back and the petanque court relocated. So the future of this pub may still be secure.

Engineers Arms, Henlow

October proved to be a very busy time again at the pub as they held their regular Oktoberfest beer festival. A wonderful array of real ales, cider and perry was enjoyed by an enthusiast crowd at what is now the branch's longest running festival.

Local branch members arrived on the Saturday afternoon to witness the presentation of a more unusual CAMRA award. A few weeks before the festival CAMRA launched the latest version of their flagship book "The Good Beer Guide 2017". In it the Engineers Arms was featured for an impressive 21st consecutive year.

To mark to "coming of age" of the pub, branch chairman John Goodlet presented a special framed certificate to landlord Kevin Machin honouring this achievement. The award included a snapshot of the front covers of all 21 GBGs. John went on congratulate Kevin for consistently keeping such high standards of service, training and of course the great quality of real ales. Lets hope there are many more appearances in the Good Beer Guide to come in the future.

Biggleswade Brewhouse

After a few months delay the problems with the Brewhouse floor have been rectified and the equipment reinstalled. The 2.5 bbl unit plant and the brewing is being supervised by Jon Pilling. Brewing will be weekly and increased as required, the official re-launch is planned for Mid-January with press in attendance. CAMRA's own esteemed beer writer Roger Protz is scheduled to visit the Brewhouse soon and will write a review for What's Brewing and his own beer website. An exciting range of festive beers were already in production ready for the Christmas holiday period—see below.

Beer Name	Strength	Colour	Style	Tasting notes
Wicked Lady	4.0%	Light	Pale Bitter	Hoppy palate
Turpin Ale	3.9%	Copper	Session Bitter	Traditional bitter
Christmas Light	3.5%	Light	Session Ale	Christmasy flavours
Winter Warmer	4.5%	Dark Chestnut	English hops Belgian Yeast	Warm on the palate
Cappuccino Stout	4.5%	Dark	Flavoured Stout	Coffee tones
Christmas Pudding Porter	6.0%	Black	Stronger Stout	Christmas flavours – treacle, spices etc.

Beers are available in the New Inn, Biggleswade and the Chequers, Stevenage and also The Greyhound at Haynes. [photos on front cover supplied by Jon Pilling]

David Young

In-Cider Dealings

The autumn season kicked off with a cider stall at the Potton Apple Day event on Sunday 25th September. Local members Jo, Chris and Mel began setting up a stall, whilst our cider rep Tim Naisbett joined me on a quick visit to the Chequers, Wrestlingworth to collect boxes of cider that had been chilling down in the pub's cellar in case we had a 'hot day'. Back in Potton, we set up a fine range of local ciders to tempt the visitors.

Whilst the dedicated lovers of all things "apple" were busy pressing apples for the watching public, visitors could choose from;
Franklins Fuddle, Gasper and Dunton Cider,
Cromwell's Oliver's Choice and Oliver's Session
Hardings 3 Peace Sweet.
Andy Gibb's Apple Daze
Potton Press Bittersweet Symphony, Elderflower and Pyder.

To help promote Franklins Cider's other products, we were given some bottles of Apple Brandy and Pommeau (liquer). Free tasters were passed out to customers and a few bottles were sold. Once again, Jo Freeman was on hand to select samples of a cider from each supplier and conduct a blind tasting with some local dignitaries including Potton town councillor Adam Zerny. For the second year running, a cider from local amateur cider producer Andy Gibb was chosen as the winner. He is pictured on the left with the trophy a wonderful jug commemorating the award.

A week later, we ran a second stall on Saturday 1st October in the Community Hall at the Fairfield Apple Day near Stotfold. This was new event and we continued to sell many of the same ciders that were at the Potton event, plus some free tasters of Franklins products. Thankfully we were indoors along with other stands offering food and snacks, whilst the apple pressing and entertainment were held outdoors under marquees.

The first half of the event was rain affected and very quiet, but later local residents came out as the sunshine appeared and sampled some of the ciders and other offerings at the event. Hopefully this event will grow in the coming years.

John Goodlet

Casket Cryptic Crossword

As before, all answers have been used as names of beers and/or breweries at some time somewhere in the world or have some other connection (however tenuous) with the wonderful world of beer and drink.

Across

5 Vlad, it's said, is a beast. (6)

7 Homely tipple is healthy taken over the river (5,3)

9 Former Highgate brew powers vehicle (Austin not GM) that may be found among the great it's said. (3,5)

10 Brewsters seasonal brew once led you astray. (4,2)

11 Great Yorkshire brew for the host of pop mix (3,2,3,4)

13/8 Local brew could leak out if a dicky weld fails. (6,4)

15 Say hello to a ton of beer on your doorstep. (6)

18 Bet on Earnest to get tipsy but come out on top at the festival (6,6)

21 Hero in disarray about a scan? Could be in the doghouse? (6)

22 George in his house but maybe not at home to visitors with it? (8)

23 Once barefoot, footballer's wife leaving, elbow grease freely gets one drink. (4,4)

24 Do baby changes work for 13's male counterpart? (3,3)

Down

1 With no initial reason, badger after a bucket say of German beer. (4,4)

2 Alpine hound? (6)

3 Losing the plot, buy lots of ale in confusion, once from Davenports. (4,4)

4 A couple of novices in the openers give a stout performance for Bedfordshire. (6)

6 Killjoy steward alternately found somewhere in bohemian lavs, oil rig or the theatre. (8)

7 Maybe a chopper will restyle hairstyle - it's dropped. (6)

8 See 13 Across

12 Eager lot partying in Hyde, perhaps or Kent (5,3)

14 He either leaves when he shouldn't or reportedly stays for afters? (8)

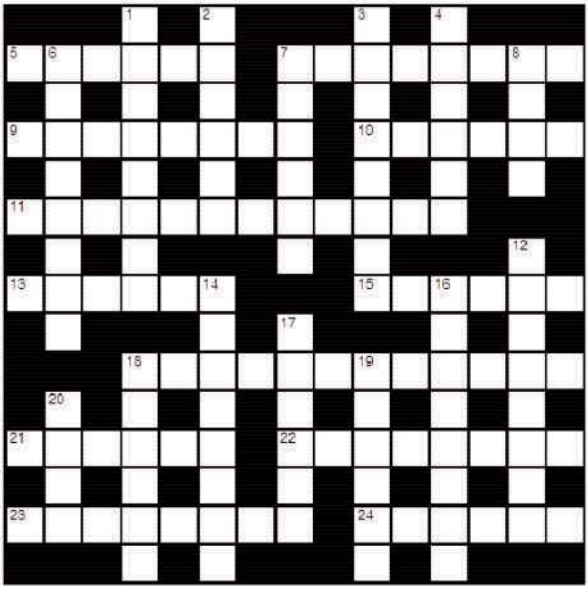
16 Reportedly plain former Cottage brew with a sharp nose to it? (8)

17 Dregs of the booze, maybe a measure of vinegar, why are we hearing this? A bit of a blow. (6)

18 As one meets everyone coming the other way one finds the value within. (6)

19 Does primate smell or not? (6)

20 One Roman hides another. (4)



Compiled by Chris Freeman

The solution is on Page 25

Stevenage Arts & Leisure Centre
Opening Times
Thu 4th Feb 5pm to 11pm
Fri 5th Feb Noon to 11pm
Sat 6th Feb Noon to 11pm

DIARY DATES

JAN. 24th, Special GBG & POTY Selection Meeting, Cock, Broom, 8 pm

FEB. 11th. Branch Social, March Hare, Dunton from 1 pm onwards
24th, Branch Meeting, Kings Arms, Sandy, 8 pm

MAR. 11th. East Anglian Regional Meeting, The Bell, Sandy 12 noon
17th. Branch Social, St Neots Beer Festival, from 3 pm onwards

APR. 11th, Branch Meeting, Vicars Inn, Arlesey, 8 pm
22nd. Branch Visit to Stamford by train (TBA)

MAY. 9th. Branch AGM, New Inn, Biggleswade, 8 pm (TBC)

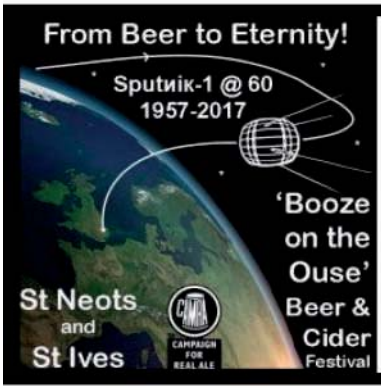
BEER FESTIVALS

Jan. 19th-21st. Cambridge Winter Ale Festival, University Social Club **CAMRA**

Feb. 2nd-4th. Stevenage Beer & Cider Festival, Arts & Leisure Centre **CAMRA**
10th-12th. 5th Winter Beer Festival, March Hare, Dunton
16th-18th. 34th Luton Beer & Cider Festival, Hightown Sports & Arts Centre, Concorde Road, Luton **CAMRA**
21st-25th. National Winter Ale Festival 2017, St. Andrew's & Blackfriars Halls, Norwich **CAMRA**
TBA. Henlow Sausage & Cider Festival, Engineers Arms, High St

Mar. 16th-18th. The 42nd Booze on the Ouse Beer & Cider Festival, Priory Centre, Priory Lane, St. Neots **CAMRA**

Apr. TBA. The 9th Sir William Peel Beer Festival, High Street, Sandy
20th-23rd. The Half Moon Beer Festival, Queen Street, Hitchin



Booze on the Ouse Beer & Cider Festival
Priory Centre, Priory Lane, St Neots.
16th-18th March 2017

Opening times
Thu 16th March from Noon to 10.30pm
Fri 17th March from Noon to 10.30pm
Sat 18th March from Noon to 10.pm

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Local Beer Festival Reports

The 5th Upper Caldecote Beer Festival

Every September the village of Upper Caldecote holds a beer & cider festival in the clubhouse on the playing field in aid of the Playing Field Association. The essential difference between this and other festivals is that you don't buy beer, you pay an entrance fee and then drink as much or as little as you like. Ha....

This year 11 beers (4T's Pale Ale 3.7% IPA, Tring Mansion Mild 3.7%, Potbelly Lager Brau 3.9%, Springhead Left Lion 4.0%, Green Jack Orange Wheat 4.2%, Greene King Doosra 4.2%, Gundog Booze Hound 4.2%, Hopback Hellertau Blanc 4.2%, Springhead Surrender 4.8%, Milton Cyclops 5.3% and Blue Monkey Ape Ale 5.4% IPA) were up for the tonsil test. All were in excellent condition and at perfect temperature, providing a different favourite voted by each of the four of us, which illustrates the range on offer.

I personally favoured the Orange Wheat, just a hint of orange in the aftertaste - a super beer for a warm (if damp) evening and not as wheaty cloudy as you'd expect. (It is often found in *The Triangle, Lowestoft*—the Green Jack Brewery Tap). Potbelly Lager Brau purported to be a real Lager, so you could get the actual taste of lager without the fizz.

Not wishing to upset my *Delicate Constitution*, I didn't sample the ciders, ranging from Cockeyed's Hedge Rose (medium 4%) which had a pink blush and according to Baz the Bloodhound, smelt of berries not apples, to Original Cider's Bootleg Moonshine (Dry 7.5%). But I did note that they all got a theoretical hiding and no complaints. A barbecue and Ukulele Band completed the ambience for another good evening, greatly enjoyed by all attendees, albeit they were much reduced in number due to late advertising. An excellent evening, super beer, good band and great 'Barbie' - go next year!

The 6th Broom Oktoberfest

Held in the village hall on 14th October in aid of local charities CHUMS and Community Heartbeat via BRAS (the Broom Real Ale Society) which has raised £1,700 to date. The festival is similar to Upper Caldecote with a £15 entrance fee so you free to drink to your heart's (or bowel's) content. 10 beers on offer, including a Festival Beer brewed by Son of Sid. Beers are chosen by the scientific process of "sticking a pin in The Good Beer Guide and praying" and it seems to work. Dark mild, red, blonde and brown beers were all in great condition and a good temperature, plus the bonus of filled rolls. Over the six years of the festival, 4,320 pints have been drunk. Nice to see more ladies present this year, albeit 90+% of attendees were male, probably because there are no non-beer drinks. Definitely worth a visit, a beer festival at its most basic and debatably its best.

The Ickwell Beer Festival

Held in aid of the Ickwell Cricket Club in the clubhouse on the epitome of an English Village Green (play "The Archers" Theme here). This is the third pay-once-and-drink-what -you-like festival that I've attended this year. Full marks yet again for the quality of the beer (not a bum pint served), the beer choice - excellent for a very small venue – offered some standards as well as local rarities. Crisps, Doritos and rolls were offered in abundance and all included within the price, and a good-humoured atmosphere prevailed.

I spotted GK XX Mild, which seems to be undergoing a local renaissance lately, Que sera! I tried all the beers except Hobgoblin (I ran out of time) and you'd have been pushed to choose a favourite on quality alone, it was a delightful agony for me to select Wadworth IPA as my favourite and Adnam's Ghost Ship was the choice of my Drinking Companion. Add ultra-clean toilets and comfortable surroundings, what's not to like? The one *Fly in the Ointment* is that there is no Public Transport to Ickwell of an evening, so it's a long walk, lift or minicab job; I've got accustomed to suffering for my art...

Half Moon, Hitchin "Best of British" Beer Festival

Although not in The Casket's area being in Hitchin (Herts Pub of the Year), it's a popular venue and so it was that Your Correspondent nipped in to sample the strong waters and a Ruby with Her Maj and neither were found wanting. Four curries on offer (every Thursday) plus the usual Pub grub menu, and, to wash them down, 10 of the stronger and darker ales were on at the bar, plus 10 ciders.

A further 50 ales and 10 ciders were in a marquee set up in the car park. The festival featured beers of Greater Manchester, with some excellent examples of both well known (J. W. Lees) and lesser known breweries such as Cloudwater, Blackjack and First Chop Brewing Arm, a very talented arm indeed.

The complete gamut of beer styles were present, Mild, IPA, Golden, Porter, Rye, Bitter and Stout, Gluten and wheat-free plus, whatever your view, 7 keg craft beers including 6 Degrees North's *ATC* (Advancement Through Collaboration – no, I don't know either), an 11% Imperial Stout and Tiny Rebel's *Peaches and Cream* which does indeed taste of (fizzy) peaches and cream. I indulged in an Adnams Southwold with my Ruby (one of the best I've ever had) before taking my tonsils for a walk. Electric Bear *Spilt Milk Stout* (5%) was declared top notch by Her Maj and one of the best stouts she'd ever tasted, while I tried Mordue's *Americana* (5%), Pin Up's *Gold Rush* (4.2%) and to finish, Three Blind Mice's *Beyond Wonderland* (7.4%) which didn't taste at all medicinal but still needed to be drunk with care. Very well attended for a Thursday night, I suspect Friday would have them 4-deep at the bar. An excellent evening, roll on next year.

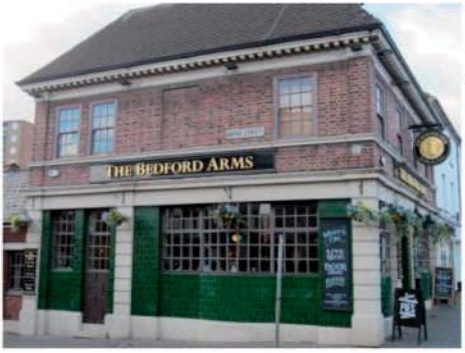
Chris Bunyan

Bedford Pub Walk

On Saturday 19th November, some East Beds CAMRA members used the local buses to visit our county town of Bedford. The meeting point was the nearest pub to the bus station, the **Pilgrim's Progress**.

This Wetherspoons pub had changed a lot since my last visit. A large refurbishment has turned this outlet into a hotel/pub and the bar had moved to the far end. We were pleasantly surprised to see a full list of ten ales and none bore the dreaded name of "coming soon". First up for me was Butcombe Chris Moose, a great start, whilst others tried Milestone Boston Bitter and Adnams Mosaic. We opted for a second pint, I had Wharfe Angel Delight.

One of the handpumps confused me, the ale was called Todd the Axeman and seemed to be Danish, but the small print confirmed it was brewed by Shepherd Neame. I googled the beer later and found that it was an American style strong IPA 5.5%, a collaboration with Amager Bryghus, whose brewer Rene Hulgreen had travelled to Kent to recreate the brew.



We moved on to the **Bedford Arms**, which felt pretty cosy due to a roaring fireplace on that autumnal day. The pub had a good range of four ales from local brewery Charles Wells, but my eyes were drawn to the guest ales. I tried a half each of two Haresfoot ales, Lock Keepers & Conquerors. I also spotted two ciders from Franklins on handpump—good to see. The staff were friendly and knowledgeable about their products.

Onwards we headed for the **Wellington Arms**, an old favourite which I realised I had not visited for quite some time. As always, there was a large range of ales and ciders, at least ten—too many to note down. I was just about to choose B&T Plum Mild, when I spotted a classic ale Edwin Taylors Stout. I could not resist it and enjoyed that smoky roast flavour of a full bodied stout. Here we bumped into a North Beds member Glyn and had a chat.

We left and headed towards the High Street and into the **Brewhouse & Kitchen**. Here was a modern pub with a working brewery in the centre, judging by the member of bar staff who was occupied filling some barrels from one of the vats. We sampled some of the house ales such as Intrepid, Night Fever and Sprinter, plus there was a guest ale and some cider. This is a welcome addition to the High Street and although it was a bit expensive by comparison, it should be successful.

We doubled back up to the **Saint Peter's Ale House**, here we caught up with North Beds branch secretary Peter Argyle. We found some ales from the Red Brewery plus a few from one of my favourite breweries Milton from Cambridge. I opted for the Minataur, a coffee flavoured dark mild, also there was Justinian and Dionysus. Others tried Red's Wheat Ya Drinkin' a cloudy lemon flavoured wheat beer or Winter's Solstice a fruity strong bronze ale.

From there it was a short walk down St. Cuthberts Street for my first visit to the **Ship**, a Greene King pub. Alongside IPA and Abbot were three guest ales such as Rocking Rudolph, All Aboard and something called Throat Blood, presumably a Halloween themed ale, although my note taking was struggling at this point, so the beer may have been called something entirely different.

It was getting late in the afternoon and we all had buses to catch, so there was just time for one last pub. We flipped a coin and opted to skip the Castle and try the **Three Cups**. Again a good range of ales including White Park GB, but I was in the mood for a strong finish and chose No. 3 a premium bitter/ESB from Wellingborough brewery Hart. It was a warming pint and just what I needed to fortify me for the journey home.

This proved to be a good day out and the quality of beers in all the pubs was particularly good. I look forward to coming back to our county town.

John Goodlet

Halloween Walk: Bow to Bethnal Green

On Saturday 29th October 2016, Bedfordshire CAMRA had its annual London social, where members from all three branches get together to explore an area of London looking for good quality 'Ale' and perhaps some interesting architecture. I organised this trip, but plagued with a foot injury during the summer, I could not research all the pubs in time and gambled on a few untried pubs. I was concerned that it would be a low turnout, but was very relieved to find about a dozen members arriving at the first pub, the **Morgan Arms**, 43 Morgan Street.

It is located a short walk from Mile End and Bow Road tube stations. Here we had a chance to try three ales Vale – Brill Gold 3.5%, Triple F – Smells Like Team Spirit 4.8% and Southwark – Harvard American Pale Ale 5.5%. I also noticed that another customer took back a pint from the fourth handpump and complained that it was cloudy, only to find that he had ordered a Kentish Pip cider by mistake – oops, well it was early in the day.

It was a pleasant walk on a mild day to the second pub, the **Eleanor Arms**, 460 Old Ford Road. This Shepherd Neame pub had some great interior architecture and we found the ales in superb condition. Our amiable landlord was originally from Luton and soon the chatter turned to the ups and downs of supporting Luton Town FC. At the bar, we focused on the guest ales. I was particularly impressed with Whitstable Pale Ale 3.9%, whilst others tried Hogs Back – TEA fresh on during our visit and also Hackney – Pumpkin Ale 4%.

We headed west to the **Crown**, 233 Grove Road which according to one member used to a fine pub with a reputation for good food, including veggie options. Upon arrival, we could see that the pub had been altered recently and opened up into a single large room with a more modern décor. Doom Bar and Youngs Bitter were common enough so I opted for a Trumans ale, Hoptoberfest 4.2%, which was a pleasant light session ale.

Onwards we headed south to a pub isolated in the northern section of Mile End Park, the **Palm Tree**. We entered the main bar and found it was stuck in a time warp, maybe the 1940s or 1950s with lots of photos and memorabilia of long passed stars of stage and screen. We tried Sharps - Cornish Coaster 3.6% and Weltons – English Pride 3.8%. It was quirky pub full of character and just before we left, I noticed a darkened area behind the bar and ask the landlord about it.

He said there was another room not used much these days. He unlocked a separate entrance and put on the lights, in we went to find a treasure chest of local history. One wall had many photos and caricatures of sporting heroes from the world of boxing, golf, football and cricket. Another wall had an array of old photos of local streets taken before and after World War Two 'blitz' - absolutely fabulous.

Heartened by a trip down memory lane, we walked towards Bethnal Green. We meant to visit the Florist Arms but they had run out of 'Real Ale', so we continued a short way to the next pub, the **Camel**, 277 Globe Road. Here many members took advantage of the excellent pie & mash menu to have a longer stop. As the pub was very busy and rather narrow inside, we opted to eat "al fresco" for the last time this season.

The food was washed down by Oakhams – Citra, Adnams – Ghostship, Sambrook – Wandle and an excellent Halloween St Austell ale – Bucket of Blood. We departed, still puzzled about the Camel pub name. None of the staff knew about its history, although a nearby street was named after an old hanging spot.

Onwards to the **Dundee Arms**, 338 Cambridge Heath Road. Here the bar area looked good, but the rest of the pub had a rustic look, suggesting a refurb that had never been finished. There was an in-house "barber shop" on the upper floor and for those train spotters amongst you, you could wave at passengers on the overground trains whilst sitting on the throne of the Gents loo. However, on this day, as evening approached the pub was filling up with revellers waiting for a Halloween party. We had a swift half of Trumans – Runner 4% or Dark Star – Hophead 3.8% and then turned the corner and up an alleyway to Poyser Street.

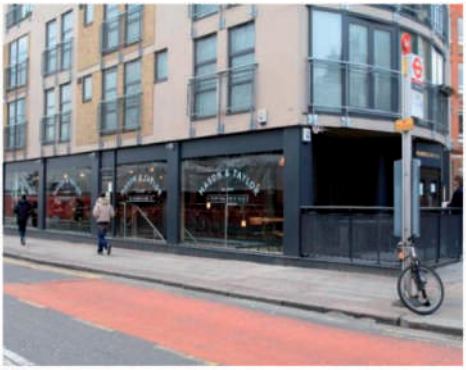
Continued on next page.....

Here we found the brewery Tap of the **Redchurch Brewery**, on a mezzanine section above the brewery equipment. This bar gives customers a chance to experience an extensive list of ales. We tried Hoxton Dry Stout 6% and Paradise Pale 3.7% and then one of the South Beds members caught my eye and waved me over. Here he offered me a taste of a malt whisky he had found. I surprised myself by correctly identifying the whisky as the wonderful cask strength 60% Glenfarclas 105, which was only £4 a shot – great value. I made a mental note to revisit this brewery tap and try more ales and also the whisky list.

At this point, the last group broke up and I headed back to Bethnal Green tube station and started for home. I did not want a late evening as I was off to Luton airport the next morning for a flight to sunny Alicante for a much needed holiday.

A few other members continued on ahead to visit the two bonus pubs. The first stop was the **Sebright Arms**, 31-35 Coate Street, accessed by a narrow alleyway off Hackney Road. This pub was large and full of wood panelling making it appear a bit dark at times. I don't know what beers they tried that day, but I recall from a previous visit there were ales from Whitstable Bay and Redemption breweries, plus craft ales and some real ciders, so I feel sure they would have had a good choice.

The final stop 51-55 Bethnal Green Road was the **Brewdog Bar**. It flourishes from behind a glass-backdrop bar overlooking the street, and part custodian of antiquity, clad in graceful antique tiles. I added this as a finishing point for some of the South Beds members who I know like to experiment with craft ales. They must have deeper pockets than myself and I am sure they would have had a large list of unusual craft ales to try. On any given day, Brewdog usually has about a dozen of its own brews, plus 6 or 7 guest craft ales.



So the day ended and although I had not visited all the pubs on the list in advance, the gamble paid off. I could not recall any complaints about beer quality, I thought most of the ales were good or better. My thanks to Herts based CAMRA member Norm, who helped with the research and photos. Which part of London will we visit next year? Who knows.

John Goodlet

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Breweries in the scheme

B&T, Shefford, Beds.
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Charles Wells, Bedford.
McMullen, Hertford, Herts.
Milton, Cambridge, Cambs.
Potbelly, Kettering, Northants.
White Park, Cranfield, Beds.
Buntingford, Royston, Herts.
Alehouse, St Albans, Herts.
Concrete Cow, Milton Keynes.
Cambridge Moonshine, Cambs.
Copper Kettle, Rushden, Nhants
Red Squirrel, Potten End, Herts.
L. Buzzard, L. Buzzard, Beds
Ampthill, Ampthill, Beds
Tring, Tring, Herts

Pubs in the scheme

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

Please visit these pubs and enjoy locally produced ales.

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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
Stag, Stotfold
John O'Gaunt, Sutton
Admiral, Clifton [spring/summer only]

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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

York's Vulpes Vulpes

On a recent visit to York to deliver a couple of crates of Belgium's finest to an old comrade, Carol and I happened to pass the **Fox** in Holgate Road. Although I hadn't been in there for many years – it is a little bit away from the city centre - I recalled the quirky layout with multiple rooms and a serving hatch in the corridor which runs from the front to the back of the pub. I think it was a Tetley pub when I last visited it in the late Eighties.

My attention was caught by the banner hanging outside advertising the "Fox Beer Festival 2016" and my Friday night drinking plans took a slight wobble as I thought it would be a pleasant change to support their Festival. I contacted my mate Mick and we agreed to meet in the Fox later.

Coincidentally, before we'd left home, I had checked on WhatPub to see which pubs in York offered a CAMRA discount and were worth visiting and the Fox was listed. Sadly those of us without "apps" (whatever they are) or a portable computer are at a bit of a disadvantage as the Good Beer Guide is about as useful as a chocolate fire-guard because pubs giving CAMRA discounts aren't listed. Those of us who pay for the GBG in paper form are, effectively, second-class citizens as far as this aspect is concerned.

Anyway a couple of bus rides from the city centre deposited me a few yards from the pub at about 5.30pm and I wandered in. A blackboard with a list of the regular beers on it was the first thing to greet me as I walked in off the street – all very reasonably priced particularly when you take into account the 10% discount. On the bar in the passageway was a booklet with a list of the Festival ales which were all priced a £3 per pint but for which no discount, unsurprisingly, was available.

I ordered a pint and awaited Mick who turned up a few minutes later. He hadn't been in the Fox for some time even though he lived about fifteen minutes walk away. Quite frankly the pub had a bit of a chequered history with the strong suspicion that at least one of the previous pub-chain owners allowed it to be run down and closed for a time.

It is now in **Ossett Brewery's** estate and the company has spent a considerable amount improving the pub after it had been neglected. The pub has become a community hub with different events nearly every evening and weekend and the whole interior is a credit to the brewery and the landlady, Mandy Pegg. She chose four LocAle winners and 8 SIBA medallists from the various awards categories at the York Beer Festival in Knavesmire.

The festival beers were a reasonably diverse range of strengths and styles, supplemented by four from the **Ainsty Ales Brewery** just south of York at Acaster Malbis. They were: Ainsty Angel (3.7%); Flummoxed Farmer (4%); Wankled Waggoner (4.5%); Kolkata Karma (5%). I tried the last three and they were all quite excellent but, whether or not it was because people liked the name or the taste, the Wankled Waggoner had run out when I went back for a second pint later in the evening.

Those on the stillage in the garden at the side of the pub together with the Ainstys were: Tonkoko from Brew York; Ruby Mild from Rudgate; Monkey Wrench from Daleside; Blonde from York Brewery; Special Ale from Black Sheep; Big Horn IPA from Black Sheep; #19 Pilot from Cullercoats; Liquorice Lads Stout from Great Newsome Brewery; Myricale from Treboom; Baby-Faced Assassin from Roosters; Tropical Pale Ale from North Brewing; Pinewood Pale Ale from Harrogate.

Tonkoko was quite unusual inasmuch that it was a coconut-infused milk stout also containing cacao nibs, Tonka beans and vanilla but, despite this heady mix, it was still quite palatable. I tried Monkey Wrench, Blonde, Big Horn IPA, #19 Pilot, Myricale (with added Bog Myrtle from the North York Moors) and ended the evening with an half of Baby-Faced Assassin (6.1%), the barrel of which my mate Mick seemed to have decided needed drinking dry before he left the pub. On top of the other beers I had tried it had a similar effect on me as Ovaltine seems to have on others when it's bedtime. To visit the Fox try the bus stops opposite York railway station and take any of the regular buses on routes - 1, 5, 5A, etc.

The following day, after a bit of a wander around the City, Carol and I visited the **Punch-bowl,** a Wetherspoons just outside Micklegate Bar for a spot of late lunch and we could see from our window seats that nearby streets and pubs were already filling up with Stag and Hen parties.

We went back into the centre of York and visited some other pubs which were new to me and all of them were very interesting architecturally. First up was the **Pivni Bar,** which has a Tudor looking exterior and inside there are timber frames and beams which apparently date from the 12th Century. It was serving Yorkshire Blackout, Elland Enigma, Okell Triskelion, Darkstar Hophead and one other plus a load of "Craft" beers.

Then the **Yorkshire Terrier** sitting at the rear of a beer shop in Stonegate, an ancient thoroughfare with a view of part of the Minster at its end. It offered four York Brewery beers: Terrier, Centurion's Ghost Ale, Guzzler & Otherside along with Upham Punter. Next stop was the **Walmgate Ale House & Bistro** (ex "Melton's Too" restaurant) in a 17th Century listed building with a pub downstairs decorated with many ropes around the very old walls (judging by the style of brickwork) & a bistro in the haunted upstairs room. It had a nice selection of Great Heck Dave, Treboom Tambourine Man, Brew York's Little Eagle, Walmgate Ale & Maris the Otter and Ilkley Mary Jane.

Finally the **Watergate Inn** (ex "Five Lions") on the opposite side of Walmgate which is haunted by the ghost of Green Jenny. It is rare for a York centre pub to have accommodation (converted from the old Coaching Inn stables) and a small open area right on the river bank for drinkers and diners whenever the weather is favourable. The ground floor rooms & bar have been refurbished and reopened in June 2016 after damage caused the River Foss flooding. Three handpulls had Taylor's Landlord, Leeds Pale and one from Saltaire.

We finished off our evening in York with a couple of nightcaps in the **Phoenix**, a lovely little pub noted in a previous issue of the Casket, before walking about a mile back to our hotel. The next day we went over to Blackpool via the Forest of Bowland & Lancaster where we visited the Museum of the Kings Own Regiment Lancaster in which my Dad's Dad served in the First World War. I knew he had been a POW and it turns out the Second Battalion were captured just to the East of Ypres on April 1915 and he may have spent the rest of the war as a prisoner in Switzerland which, although neutral, seems to have taken some Allied POWs on humanitarian grounds. Not a great fate but better than being wounded or blown up, in the three and a half year bloodbath which followed his capture.

On the way to Lancaster we stopped at the **Plough Inn,** Wigglesworth not for ale but for a bit of a break and a cuppa. It is in a beautiful location, which they describe as being positioned between the Yorkshire Dales National Park, the Forest of Bowland and the Southern Lakes. They had a couple of handpumps, a small room under the stairs with a fairly comprehensive history of the pub, its landlords as well as accommodation. I'd say it was well worth a visit if you are travelling in that area or just want a quiet break in a lovely area of countryside.

On the way home, we stopped at a little village called Holmes Chapel for something to eat and a pint in the **Old Red Lion** – an Ember Inns pub. On offer were Brakspear Bitter, Ember Pale Ale, Taylor's Landlord, Thwaites Wainwright and Moorhouse Stray Dog at prices ranging from £3.00 to £3.95....except this was a Monday and we were greeted by a barrel on the end of the bar stating "ALL CASK ALES £2.49 per pint every Monday". The landlord said this was the practice at all Ember pubs so, well worth a visit!

We had a very enjoyable weekend and some excellent beers with the highlights for me being the Fox and the Walmgate Ale House & Bistro so, if you're up in the North Country, there's plenty to see and do particularly if you like Real Ales - which you must do or else you wouldn't be in a pub reading this, would you?

Barry Price

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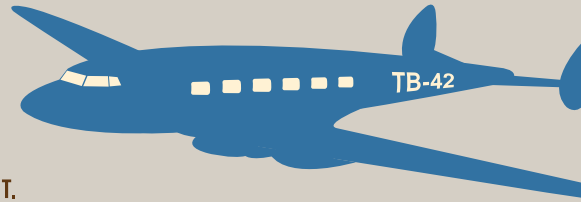

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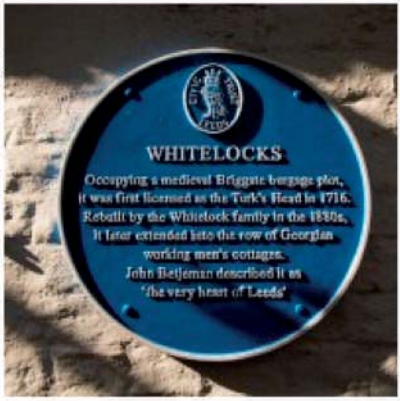
A Trip to Leeds

On 29th October, Nigel Coomber from The March Hare and I decided to visit Leeds as we had both heard how good Leeds is for Real Ale. We both knew of The Leeds Brewery Tap outside the railway station and the Hop (an Ossett Brewery pub) underneath the arches of the station. Both good pubs and regularly visited before, (normally when changing trains) so due to limited time we did not visit them this time. Instead our first call was **Whitelocks Ale House**, a 300 year old inn tucked away in Turks Head Yard, just off a very modern shopping street.



It has lovely stained glass, marble topped bar and etched windows. It served an excellent range of unusual cask ales plus a few familiar ones. We found the clientele very friendly, whilst tasting Hawkhead Black IPA and Ridgeside Affogato Coffee Porter. Our next intended call was The Ship, but as it was a Greene King pub with ales we can get locally, we opted to skip it. They were the last beers we wished for in Leeds.

Our next stop was **North Bar,** a more modern café style bar at 24 New Briggate, with beers from their nearby brewery. We opted for Hawkshead lti New Zealand IPA and North Brewery Bulkhead. Arriving at the next pub on Templar Street, we wondered what to expect, as one could be put off by the outside appearance.

This was the **Templar Hotel** and we entered to find a lovely traditional pub with 8 ales available, three were from the Scarborough Brewery. The lady serving us Scarborough's Transmission and Sealord, Goff's Camelot and York Terrier had worked there for 35 years. One downside was that it has been taken over by Greene King but we wouldn't have known. Let us hope they do not change it.

Foleys Tap House at 159 The Headrow is set opposite the town hall, it is a grade 2 listed building specialising in real ales and offering 10 beers mostly from Yorkshire. They appeared to be having a cider festival whilst we were there. We tried Tiny Rebels' Dirty Stop Out (a smoked Oat Stout) and York Brewery Otherside IPA. There was also a cider festival in progress during our visit.

I showed my bus pass to bouncers to enter the next pub, perhaps Leeds United were playing at home! This was **Tapped** a gem of a pub owned by the people who run Euston, Harrogate, York and Sheffield Taps. It is a modern bar with 13 ales and 13 craft beers mostly from lesser known breweries, plus they had an in-house brewery. We noted a very young clientele and it was extremely popular, whilst we tried Marble Brewery Stouter Stout and Hawkshead Dry Stone Stout cask ales before going on to their Tapped Brewery Companys' Hefeweizen and Mojo.

Finally the **The Scarborough Hotel** on Bishopgate Street was a disappointing end of our trip. It had 10 fairly standard beers, but the Titanic Plum Porter we had was not in good condition. We did not have any problems on this trip asking bar staff to remove sparklers when required (except craft beers) as sometimes experienced in this part of the world.

Another visit next year is a must as there are so many more pubs to try here and I hope they will be as excellent as the ones visited this time.

Clifford Luff and Nigel Coomber

Cryptic Crossword Solution

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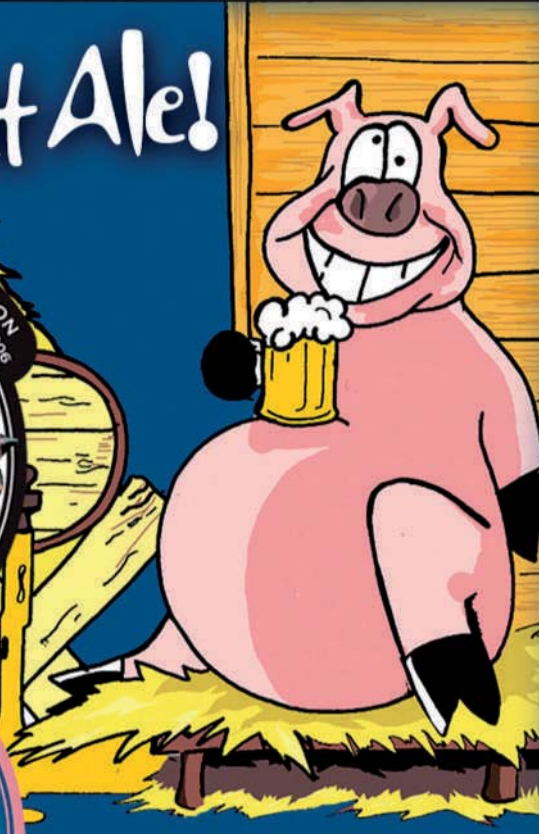

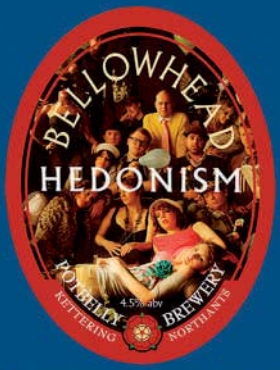

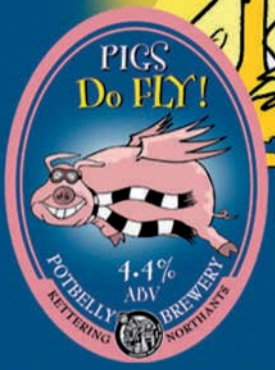

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