



the

Casket

Campaign for Real Ale

FREE

May 2017



EAST BEDFORDSHIRE

www.eastbedscamra.org.uk

casket@eastbedscamra.org.uk



Spooktacular Beer Festival at the Peel - see page 9

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The Casket

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A word from the Editor

The branch campaign to protect our local pubs progresses with 7 pubs now listed as **Assets of Community Value**. The **Bell**, Sandy and **Plough**, Langford were accepted on 3rd April 2017 by Central Beds Council. My thanks to John at the Bell and Tracey at the Plough for their help with key community data. We also missed news last year that the **Chequers**, Wrestlingworth was nominated by the local parish council and also accepted.

The pubs listed by local Community Groups in 2016 were the **Wrestlers**, Langford and **Sugar Loaf**, Meppershall. In both cases, the pub's owners took the Council to a tribunal in an attempt to overturn the ACV. The Wrestlers tribunal was rejected, thus the ACV is intact and we await the Sugar Loaf result. The planning application to convert the Sugar Loaf into a convenience store, was rejected on 26th April. So we just need two more ACVs in spring/summer, to reach the "dozen target" set by the committee two years ago.

The project to get multiple photos for each pub in the branch is complete and now we turn our attention to getting more Clubs included into **Whatpub**. A further nine social clubs have been added, four have been visited and surveyed with five more scheduled for springtime visits. Later in the year we will look at local sporting clubs, but we shall wait for the start of the next season's fixtures before visiting them.

John Goodlet



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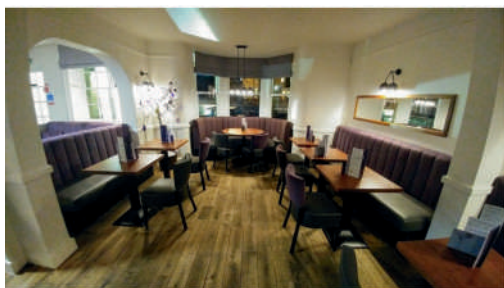
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LOCAL PUB NEWS

Stratton House Hotel, Biggleswade

Just before the Christmas period last year the Hotel closed for a refurbishment. It re-opened with bright new décor and new furniture. The main lounge areas now have comfortable booth style seating ideal for cosy conversation or intimate dining. We spoke with assistant manager Ben Perkins who kindly gave us photos of the new interior to use on our Whatpub website.



Ben confirmed that there would still be four real ales at the bar with St Austell Landlords Choice as the house beer, plus three guests ales often featuring East Anglian brewers such as Lacons, Adnams and Woodfordes. There is a fifth handpump now installed free of charge by Westons and it will regularly feature one of their ciders or a perry. Ben also confirmed that the hotel would be hosting a summer beer & cider festival on 21st-22nd July.

Kings Arms, Sandy

A public meeting was held on 16th January to discuss the "Community Right to Bid" option of the Asset of Community Value. A review was also conducted of the proposed planning application by Hawthorn Leisure to build two new houses on the car park.

The local customers agreed to form a "community support group" with Gareth Thomas as spokesperson. A petition of 21 signatures was launched and hopefully more customers have joined since the meeting. East Beds branch chairman John Goodlet then recommended that the group "Decline" the Community Right to Bid option and also asked them to support the planning application, as there appeared to be no adverse impact on community activities at the Kings Arms.



The community group unanimously voted to support both motions and the decision was reported back to Central Beds Council. We are still waiting on the final planning review, but this should safeguard the future of the Kings Arms and retain its status as an Asset of Community Value.

Fox and Duck, Stotfold

Maria Castleton has resigned her lease due to family commitments. We welcome Gary Connelly who arrived on 10th March to take on a seven year lease, his first venture into the pub trade. His first step was to ensure the pub was open all day every day. Opening hours are now Mon-Fri 11-11, Sat 11-late, Sun 11-6.



The main focus will be food and family events. A new set of *a la carte* menus covers lunches, evening meals, desserts, plus a Specials board and a Children's menu (£5.50). The food will all be home-made using fresh ingredients, prepared by new chef John. Meals will be served Mon-Fri 12-3, 6-9, Sat 12-9 and Sun 12-6.

At the bar will likely be Sharps Doom Bar, plus one rotating guest ale. The pub may consider running a beer festival later in the year. In terms of new events Gary welcomes any local community groups to visit the pub and make it their base.

He can arrange buffet style food & entertainment for weddings, christenings, birthdays etc. Gary is a dab hand with the tunes and can be the DJ for a disco or arrange live bands and open mic sessions. There will be some outdoor family events throughout the summer months. For more information on events and menus, check their website www.foxandduckstotfold.co.uk or Facebook @foxandduckstotfold

Status Quo

The Golden Lion, Clifton remains under temporary management as does the Red Lion, Biggleswade following the departure of manager, Tim Maddox in early January.

Staff at the Chequers in Stotfold confirmed that the tenancy is *up for sale*, so there may be changes there in the future.

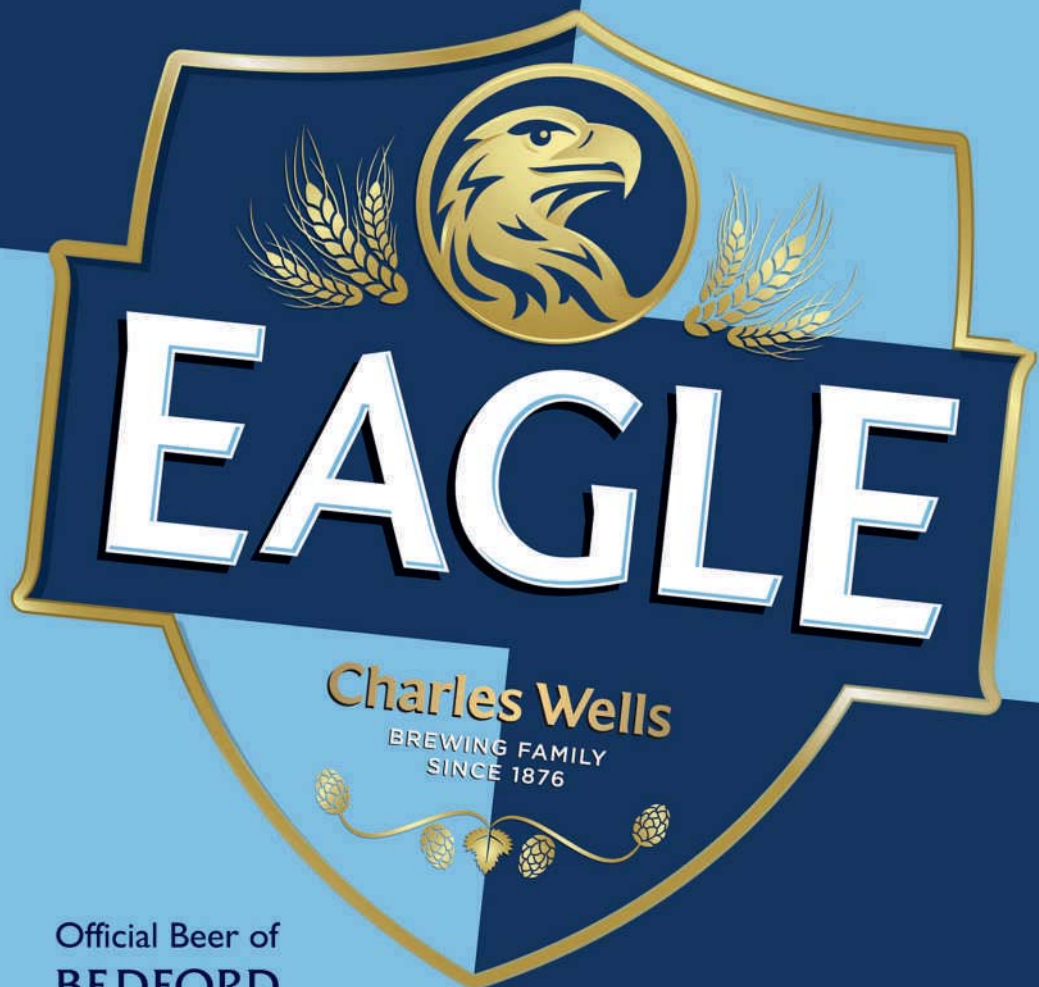
Brewery News

Buntingford Brewery ceased trading in December and the editor contacted Steve, one of the owners to get more details. Steve confirmed that the brewery was "for sale" following a disagreement with Her Majesty's Revenue & Customs. It appears that HMRC have introduced key changes to licensing and taxation. The new rules are aimed at reducing fraud in the industry, but some of the Revenue officers are taking a tough and inflexible stance when dealing with some small businesses. The brewery owners felt that the new regulations did not suit their style of operation and opted close down. Sadly all the beers in casks & vats had to be "poured away" as they did not have a new licence to sell them.

In early April, we heard that the 12 barrel plant, plus the recipes for Buntingford ales had been sold to two North Herts CAMRA members, who run several pubs between them. It should start brewing again soon on the same site at Therfield, so hopefully, we shall see the very popular Buntingford beers return to our branch pubs.

The Casket has learned that **Franklins Cider** in Dunton also ceased trading earlier in the year. It is thought that the HMRC regulations may also have played a contributory part in this decision. For more details on the HMRC changes - see page 10.

BORN AND BREWED IN BEDFORD



Official Beer of
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BLUES



In 1265, THE BARON OF BEDFORD PROUDLY RODE INTO BATTLE BRANDISHING AN EAGLE ON HIS SHIELD AS HE FOUGHT AND FELL FOR THE TOWN.

AS THE LAST HEIR TO THE BARONIAL FAMILY LINE, HIS EAGLE WAS ADOPTED AS A SYMBOL FOR BEDFORD, REPRESENTING DETERMINATION, PASSION AND PRIDE FOR ITS PEOPLE.

East Anglian Regional Meeting

On Saturday 11th March, 2017 it was the turn of East Beds CAMRA to host the East Anglian regional meeting. This year, the meeting was held in the function room behind the **Bell at Sandy**. It proved an ideal location close to bus and trains stations, resulting in 20+ members arriving from Beds, Herts, Cambs, Essex, Norfolk & Suffolk. Our host was landlord John Welbourne, who was most accommodating and with help from Barry Price, arranged the layout of the function room.

Members arrived to a great welcome and a choice of three guest ales plus GK IPA. There was Brains Bread of Heaven named in honour of the Welsh national rugby team, Redemption Pale Ale and Skinners Splendid Tackle golden ale. John kindly served us 4 pint jugs of the beer, served straight from the cellar during the beer breaks.



This reduced waiting time at the bar and helped to keep the meeting on schedule. When we broke for lunch, our host brought in a Beef Casserole and a Curry, which was enjoyed by everyone, again washed down by some great ale. The meeting resumed, with some in depth discussions on topics such as:-

Activation of Young Members, Regional Transport, Pub of the Year awards, plus the continued expansion of the Whatpub national website and the big push to get Clubs included and surveyed. A special vote of thanks was given to Andy Shaw, the main co-ordinator behind the development of Whatpub. Andy is now up for election to the National Executive of CAMRA, we wish him well and hope he gets elected.



[landlord John Welbourne on far left]



[joined by more local members]

The quick service allowed the meeting to finish early, just in time for the kick-off of the Calcutta Cup match between England & Scotland. Some stayed on to watch the match with more East Beds members and pub regulars creating a fabulous atmosphere. The branch extend a special "Thank You" to our host John Welbourne for a great day.

DIARY DATES

- MAY.** 9th. Branch AGM, New Inn, Biggleswade, 8 pm (brewery visit included)
- JUNE.** 3rd. Branch Social at Norwich City of Ale - contact B. Price for details
11th. Branch Social Bike Ride—Meet Vicars Inn, Arlesey 1 pm
- JULY.** 18th. Branch meeting, Chequers, Wrestlingworth 8 pm
21st. Branch Social - Biggleswade pub walk, meet Gardeners Arms 1pm, then Yorkshire Grey, White Hart - later meet at Stratton House 5 pm (beer festival)
- AUG.** 19th. Country Pub Walk, meet Engineers Arms 12.30 pm, then Plough, Admiral
SEP. 6th. Branch meeting, Wheatsheaf, Biggleswade 8 pm [Wednesday evening]

BEER FESTIVALS

- May.** 22nd-27th. 44th Cambridge Beer Festival, Jesus Green, Cambridge **CAMRA**
- June.** 8th-10th. The Hitchin Beer & Cider Festival, Hitchin Rugby Club **CAMRA**
- July.** 6th-9th. 6th Sir William Peel Cider Festival. High Street, Sandy
21st-22nd. Beer & Cider Festival, Stratton House Hotel, Biggleswade
- Aug.** 8th-12th. The Great British Beer Festival, Olympia, London **CAMRA**
12th-13th. Broomstock Beer & Music Festival, Cock, Broom.
22nd-26th. The 39th Peterborough Beer Festival, The Embankment, Bishops Road, Peterborough **CAMRA**



OPENING TIMES AND PRICES

Tuesday 23rd August:			5.30pm to 11pm	£5
Wednesday 24th August:	Noon to 3pm	£2	3pm to 11pm	£5
Thursday 25th August:	Noon to 3pm	£2	3pm to 11pm	£6
Friday 26th August:	Noon to 3pm	£2	3pm to 11pm	£6
Saturday 27th August	Noon to 3pm	£2	3pm to 11pm	£6

CAMRA & EBCU Members: Weds-Sat before 3pm - £1, After 3pm Tues-Sat - £3.

The 9th Sir William Peel Beer Festival

In keeping with prior festivals, the Peel's Beer Festival is themed, this year being **"Spooktacular"** and embracing all things spooky and spectral. The pub displayed film posters of hideous characters, cobwebs, spiders, gargoyles and a subtle air of decay; although rumour had it that may have been the Quorn faggots. Some clever wag even designed a giant illuminated spider out of old plastic bottles and hung it underneath the roof of the marquee.



The 34 beers had names associated with Ghoulies & Ghosties such as White Witch (3.9%), Jack the Devil (4.5%), Voodoo Mild (Do do that Voodoo that you do) (4.3%), Gravedigger's Ale (3.8%) and the mighty Skull Splitter (8.5%) for those whose bowels relish a challenge and which gave birth to The Comment Of The Festival – "Have a pint of Skull Splitter, give it an hour to kick in and then all the little people in your head will come to life".

A special mention for Bexar Brewery, Peterborough, who brewed Monster Mash (4.7%) especially for the festival, all proceeds going to the pub's charity, Clic Sargent; a dark beer with a vaguely fruity tang which Her Maj likened to dark chocolate and raspberries - I couldn't "get" it. As well as the beer, there were 9 ciders, the Pineapple & Passion fruit being exceptionally popular, especially with the Lady drinkers.



On the table in the "Dungeon" (the outdoor bar) was a cheese roll, a yoghurt and an apple. This turned out to be the Lunchpack of Notre Damme.(Ouch). The usual participation of dress in keeping with the theme included Witches, Evil Queens, (no, not Graham Norton), Beetlejuice and several others - although some may have been the result of the beer.

A barbecue which also featured two Chillies, one rumoured to give one's Aris a Johnny Cash effect (work it out) as well as burgers and dogs, karaoke, a disco and the ever popular Peel Jam providing entertainment for the non-comatose. As usual (9 years running), a great Festival that's not just populated by beer fiends (good eh?) but a lot of people having a lot of fun. What does 2018 hold?

Chris [scary at the best of times] Bunyan

Alcohol Wholesalers Registration Scheme

The Alcohol Wholesalers Registration scheme (AWRS) has now been operational since the 1st April 2017. The scheme has been introduced by HM Revenue and Customs to address the illegal sale of alcohol which it is estimated to cost the country about £16 billion a year in lost revenue. The scheme affects the sale of all types of alcohol whether wine, spirits, beer or cider. It is now a criminal offence not to comply with its requirements. Failure to comply can attract a fine of £10,000 or potentially a custodial sentence.

The requirement is for those conducting *business to business sales* to check that each other subscribes to the AWRS. It does not affect sales to the general public. A subscribing business will have been awarded a unique AWRS reference number by the HMRC. On the 1st April 2017, HMRC launched its long awaited website, which can be used to check and verify the AWRS unique reference number. Regardless that HMRC are the custodians of the website and some might wonder why it is necessary, it is imperative that a record of this check is held in archive. Similar to other legal documents a period of seven years has been suggested. Remember that it is not performing this check or not being able to demonstrate that the check has been undertaken that is the offence and not whether the duty has been paid or not. That would be separate action.

In order to acquire an AWRS unique reference number a business will be subjected to rigorous checks by HMRC. One small local cider producer reported that 6 HMRC inspectors descended on his hired barn. In this particular case the AWRS unique reference number was withheld. Ironically this was because the producer followed advice given by HMRC's own helpdesk regarding payment of duty that the inspectors disagreed with. It has been reported that finding someone in HMRC to resolve an issue like this is an impossibility. There is a tribunal style process that can be embarked upon. It is the latest government inspired bonanza for the legal profession. It has hit the small cider producers particularly hard. Many have left their careers to follow a passion of creating craft cider from local natural produce and have neither the funds nor the stomach for the fight. Across the country thousands of gallons of cider worth many thousands of pounds to these small businesses are being poured literally down the drain as they cannot legally sell it nor can anyone legally buy it without an AWRS unique reference number.

If you organise a bar for a CAMRA fundraising event at a beer festival or the increasingly popular Apple Days and then sell the remaining stock into the pub trade then you too are required to have an AWRS as the list of those covered by the scheme include;

- a charity, non-profit organisation or educational establishment that produces and/or supplies alcohol to other businesses for resale

CAMRA have their own AWRS unique reference number for this purpose. You can obtain it by contacting your local Cider Rep whose contract details you can find in your branch's copy of the Casket or from CAMRA HQ directly. But remember that it is incumbent upon you to check your suppliers and business buyers on the HMRC website to confirm that they are approved.

If you need an AWRS unique reference number to conduct your business then you had better visit the HMRC on <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/the-alcohol-wholesaler-registration-scheme-awrs>

Tim Naisbett

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A Trip to Adnams brewery

This isn't the standard "water-goes-in-here-beer-comes-out-here" style brewery trip, not least because Adnams (no, neither Adnams nor I know why it isn't Adnam's) brewery has both ancient and modern history, a live distillery and a non leg-up shop.

In the beginning, there was a Sole Bay Brewery in Southwold in the 16th century, The Great Fire of Southwold in April 1659 which left one building and the church only standing therefore knocking out the brewery established by Johanna de Corby, an "Alewife" - they were the brewers in them days of yore - in the Swan Hotel in 1345.



The brewery was re-established in its current location because it was on the site of a well, which unfortunately got polluted by seawater during some tide defence works, so now the brewery use mains water which is "Burtonised", i.e. the fluoride and other additives are removed so that the water is as close to that of Burton-upon-Trent, regarded as the best there is for brewing.

Usually at this juncture comes the brewing bit, but as Adnams don't do anything differently to any other brewer, let's move on. There are no copper vessels in the brewery; they'd reached the end of their natural life so all the works have been replaced with virtually maintenance free stainless steel which also helps with the Adnams edict of "zero where possible"- waste, maintenance, energy loss, water waste, etc. After installation, the recipes for each beer had to be tweaked to counteract the different taste using stainless steel instead of copper. It's this sort of attention to detail that makes Adnams such fine beers (no, I'm not getting any advertising revenue).

The existing brewery became Adnams in 1872 when brothers George and Ernest went into partnership and bought the Sole Bay Brewery, which it is still named today. The Adnams "mascot" is Southwold Jack; he has a bell to warn of approaching danger and a sword to smite said danger (send him to France, I say). George and Ern split up in 1874 and Ern went to South Africa where he died purportedly in a boating accident; legend has it he was eaten by a crocodile, his last words being "I hope I give you indigestion!"



The very knowledgeable lady guide, whose name I have unforgivably forgotten, revealed that the yeast used in today's brews was given to Adnams in 1942 after a lurgy of some kind killed off the yeast they were using. Morgans, a large brewery in the middle of Norwich provided the replacement yeast.

It was common practice for large breweries to supply smaller ones in their area with brewing yeast. The Morgans yeast was brought back originally in 1903 by Pierce Loftus, who joined Adnams as a Brewer/Director that year. For reasons best known to himself, he brought the Morgan's yeast with him and it's been used ever since. The replenishment in 1942 would have been routine. However, on 27 June 1942 Norwich suffered a second "Beidecker air-raid" that resulted in Morgans being destroyed, so the yeast arrived just in time. It is my considered opinion that the Luftwaffe deliberately bombed the brewery, jealous of the beer because of all that fizzy Pilsner that they had to drink.

As well as beer, Adnams distill award-winning Vodka - one in the eye for the Ruskies, Poles and Finns there and it's this vodka which is used to make Gin. Yes, gin. Gin is basically vodka with additives, one of which *must* be Juniper. See? Worth reading this isn't it?

In fact, Adnams produce for the fizz minded customers a dry hopped lager and also an Earl Grey lager for those who like to extend their pinkies. There is a Chrystal Rye IPA 5% and many more besides in a range of bottles, cans and mini-casks. Even the wine buffs can find a suitable range of tipples on offer.



As mentioned earlier, Adnams has a continuing "green" policy, which not only covers waste minimalism and energy conservation, but local resourcing (all their barley is locally sourced) and British hops are used in abundance. There was a short but comprehensive talk on malt and hops, explaining what flavours they impart on the beers; British hops are earthy/grassy, American are citrus fruit and the Australian/New Zealand hops are mangoes and peaches. Different malts can bring coffee, chocolate and caramel notes, among others, to beer.

Part of Adnams ongoing environmental policy meant that they built a new distribution centre a few miles out of town to avoid traffic problems among other things. Unfortunately, this means that the dray horses have had to be retired, but we were assured they are extremely well and enjoying the rest! There is a tasting session at the end of the tour and the price of a ticket includes a bottle of beer from the shop, where you can taste beers, wines and spirits prior to purchase if you wish and there's a cafe too – and NO pressure sales!

The only drawbacks are that Southwold is a beast to get to without motor transport and when you get there, parking too is at a premium, but these are minor points and should not put you off what is a very enjoyable hour and a half!

Chris Bunyan

Pub of the Year Awards

On Sunday evening 19th February, East Beds CAMRA presented their first award of 2017. A crowd of local customers and music lovers congregated at the **Chequers** in Wrestlingworth for a great night's entertainment. The music kicked off proceedings, then branch chairman John Goodlet took to the microphone between acts to present the "**Rural Pub of the Year 2017**" award to Dave Moore and his family. John reflected on the recent journey made by the Moore family in rescuing this wonderful country inn and continuing to develop the Chequers into a thriving business.



The pub has continued to strengthen their product range with six ales and one real cider available. There is enthusiastic support for East Anglian ales, particularly Woodfordes and Adnams. That evening, we had a great list to choose from:- Adnams Southwold Bitter and Ghostship, Sharps Doom Bar, Black Sheep Bitter, Woodfordes Wherry & Brains Reverend James Ale. Even if you are a lager drinker try the dry-hopped lager from Adnams, you will be pleasantly surprised at its taste.

Dave also mentioned that he would soon be phasing out Guinness, as most of the regular drinkers had switched to the 'real ales'. Watch out for the Chequers outdoor beer and cider festival later in the summertime. There should be up to 15 ales, plus some ciders and of course some live music under the marquee. Music plays an important role at the Chequers and there was plenty of talent on show on the presentation evening. Compere Mark Smith looks after the line-up and equipment (microphones, speakers and mixing desk) and hosts the open-mic event once a month on Sunday evenings.

In the line-up were Fin Rooney, Mike Capay, Lee Russell, Alchemy (Ali & Andy), Rocket Cottage, Kelvin Davies, Bruce McRae and Mike Betteridge. They played a wide range of music styles with some classic covers and some home grown songs. The set performed by Kelvin Davies (see photo) was particularly enjoyable, with some old style southern states blues.



There are many other activities at the Chequers with darts, quiz and petanque events. Community Groups in the village often meet at the pub e.g. Women's Institute, the Goodwill Fund, the Walking and Wildlife group, The Bowls Club and the Pre-School support group. If you get the chance please visit this beautiful 17th century public house and have a meal washed down with some great ales.

The next presentation was for the overall **"Branch Pub of the Year 2017"** award at the **New Inn**, Biggleswade on Saturday 22nd April. Congratulations to licensee Corri Burke on "back to back" wins and recognition was given to former manager Andy Medlock, now at the Abbotsley Golf Club.

Branch chairman John Goodlet, presented Corri with the certificate and paid tribute to the continuing development of the New Inn. After a short refurb at the end of March, the bar now sports 13 handpumps, providing a more balanced range of ales, following the re-launch of the on-site micro-brewery. There can be up to four house ales, with the other hand-pumps offering a mix of Greene King and guest ales, plus five real ciders. The brewhouse re-opened prior to Christmas and offered a fine range of seasonal ales throughout the festive period. Customers enjoyed the likes of Winter Warmer and Cappuccino Stout, with more new ales coming on stream in the spring months.



Brewer Jon Pilling is enjoying the freedom of designing his own recipes in the Brewhouse and recently brewed a beer called "Two Under", which was a tongue in cheek take on Charles Wells Eagle IPA, a popular beer in the area. On the day of the presentation, Jon was brewing a 5% Plum Porter and visitors took the opportunity to watch John as he brewed and ask some questions about the process. The new beer should be available in the pub in early May.

Also present was Steve Look, a Business Development Manager for Greene King based in the Royston area. Steve engaged in discussions about trends in the business and was on the lookout for potential market town locations which would benefit from a good ale-house. Interestingly, Steve hinted that as part of Greene King's more modern approach, they might consider setting up more micro-breweries in their pubs or even open up a Micropub.



[John, Steve, Corri & Jon]

The overall quality of beer drinking in Biggleswade is still improving and several branch members have made positive remarks about the wider guest ale range in the White Hart this year. Also work is now in progress on the Crown Hotel. It should re-open in July as a Wetherspoons Hotel outlet and will hopefully bring in more customers to the High Street area.

County News and Awards

Our neighbours in South Beds chose the **Black Lion**, Leighton Buzzard as its branch Pub of the Year 2017 for the third year in a row. Part of Burlison Inns, this town centre pub continues to develop its role within the community and provides an excellent range of real ales and real ciders. Outside there has been further work done on the decking and garden area, making a fantastic suntrap on those warm spring days. The barns at the rear have all been refurbished now and play a key part in festivals. On a recent visit the editor tried a mild and a porter, so a good commitment to dark ales. The list of ciders is varied, a mix of lower and stronger gravities and hugely popular themed cider festivals. It is no wonder that South Beds named the Black Lion as the Cider Pub of the Year award too.

Watch out for the **Bald Buzzard Alehouse**, this micropub opened in July 2015 and is fast gaining an excellent reputation. It is so popular with local CAMRA members that it ran the Black Lion "very close" for the branch Pub of the Year award. Is it only a matter of time before a micropub wins the Beds County Award? The editor can confirm the beer quality, having tasted Chiltern and Oakham ales recently, plus the fabulous the Rockhopper Saison Ale 6.4%. He was anticipating a sour Belgian style beer, but was delighted to find it had a soft peachy flavour and it is a dangerously drinkable strong ale.

Over in North Beds territory, there was a flurry of local awards. The overall branch Pub of the Year went to the **Three Cups**, Newnham Street, Bedford. It is a Greene King owned pub, but operated in conjunction White Park Brewery, offering a mix of GK ales, White Park and other guests from local micros. Bev Burridge is the manager with a high reputation for cellar skills. The branch also chose the **Polehill Arms**, Renhold as its Cider Pub of the Year and the **Fox**, Carlton was Country Pub of the Year. The **RAFA Club**, Bedford will represent Bedfordshire in the National Club competition, although all three Beds branches will have a lot more clubs to consider in the future. A special award was also presented to the **Wellington Arms**, Bedford for their support to "real ale".

Bedfordshire Titles

Within the last month or two, CAMRA members have been cogitating, sampling and discussing the branch contenders for Bedfordshire Pub of the Year Awards. By early April, white smoke soared over the chimney of the Stone Jug, Clophill, meeting place of the Beds Liaison Group.

In a very close competition the **Bedfordshire Pub of the Year Award 2017** was given to the **Black Lion**, Leighton Buzzard, completing a famous hat-trick of wins. Also, the meeting chose the **Engineers Arms**, Henlow as the **Bedfordshire Cider Pub of the Year 2017**, yet another hat-trick of wins. Congratulations to both licensees and all their staff.





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Campaign Corner Report

Village or Town, Pub	LocALe	Real Cider	ACV	Festival	Discount
Arlesey, True Briton				Apr	
Arlesey, Vicars Inn	Wells				
Arlesey, White Horse			Yes		
Biggleswade, Golden Pheasant	Wells +	Yes			
Biggleswade, New Inn	Wells, Brewhouse	Yes		Several	Yes 20p
Biggleswade, Stratton House		Yes		July	
Broom, Cock		Yes		July	
Clifton, Admiral		Yes (spr/sum)		Summer	
Dunton, March Hare	Wells, B&T	Yes		Sep & Feb	
Everton, Thornton Arms	Wells	Yes			
Henlow, Engineers Arms	L. Buzzard, Tring	Yes		Oct & Feb	
Henlow, Old Transporter	L. Buzzard, Tring, Potbelly	Yes		several	Yes 20p
Langford, Plough			Yes		
Langford, Wrestlers			Yes		
Meppershall, Sugar Loaf			Yes		
Potton, Coach House	Wells, Buntingford				
Potton, George & Dragon			Yes		
Potton, Rising Sun	Wells	Yes		May & Aug	
Potton, Royal Oak			Yes		
Sandy, Bell			Yes		
Sandy, Kings Arms			Yes		
Sandy, Queens Head			Yes		
Sandy, Sir William Peel	Several	Yes		Apr & July	
Stotfold, Coach & Horses	Wells	Yes		July & Aug	
Stotfold, Crown		Yes			
Stotfold, Stag		Yes		Sep	
Sutton, John O'Gaunt		Yes			
Wrestlingworth, Chequers	Wells		Yes	May	

A full list of LocALe Breweries and Cider Producers can be seen at www.eastbedscamra.org.uk/locale www.eastbedscamra.org.uk/cider

Aphrodite's Rock Brewery

Whilst sitting in the Three Cups, the North Bedfordshire Pub of the Year I found myself flicking through the Spring edition of The Firkin. I was drawn to an article by Fytton Rowland entitled Cyprus Brewery Woes. The reason for my interest was an impending visit to see a friend in Paphos.

So on arrival we sought out the "**wooden pub**" that Fytton had visited in the centre of Paphos on Poseidonos Avenue. It was a cool March evening and the bottles of West Coast IPA (6%) and Yorkshire Rose (3.8%) were very refreshing albeit a little too chilled for the ambient temperature. The pub itself was fairly quiet apart from a few regulars, but very welcoming.



The following day we set off to the hills in search of the source of the beer. The **Aphrodite's Rock Brewery** is located about 10 km to the North of Paphos, in the village of Tsada nestling on the side of a hill with great views across the Cypriote valley. We were welcomed and guided to seats outside on the terrace in the glorious afternoon sun. All of their regular beers were available on draft or in bottles to take away.

I opted for the two pint tasting slider complete with very descriptive tasting notes. Given the now strong afternoon sun I opted to swap out the London Porter (4.5%) for the West Coast IPA that wasn't on the standard list. So the complete line up for my slider was: Yorkshire Rose, a best bitter (3.8%), Lian Shee, an Irish red ale (4.5%), Rock Premium, a Bavarian lager (4.8%), West Coast IPA (6%) and to finish the ESB (5%).



The session Yorkshire Rose was the star of the show. Served at the perfect temperature it was a real gem, having said that not a bad beer amongst them all. A couple of bottles of the Yorkshire Rose were taken away and enjoyed with a barbecue that evening.

With thanks to North Beds for the inspiration and all I can say is it's worth seeking out the source of the beer if you find yourself in the area.

Simon Reynolds

Barcelona for Beer

When Clive Bushen from South Beds CAMRA told me members were going to Barcelona for beer, my thoughts were whether it was 1st April. But no this was genuine, so I thought I would look into this. Over the weekend 24th to 26th of March 2017, Barcelona held its sixth craft beer festival so I boarded an Easyjet flight from Luton for my first visit to Barcelona. The first day was mainly sight-seeing, although I also visited two breweries, which will be mentioned later.

My second day was the opening of the festival and after being on an endurance course, I eventually found the venue behind a large shopping complex at L'Hospitalet de Llobregat, 2 Calle Barcelona. I had to wait one hour to get in (could have got in earlier if I went to the correct queue, cash was quicker). Seven Euros was the entrance fee including a glass (non returnable), a programme and two tokens. The fee covered all three days of the event as long as you kept the festival wristband for re-entry. Beers were bought with 2, 3 or 4 tokens depending on ABV and 1 token was equal to 1 Euro. I met up with the South Beds CAMRA members started to study the beer selection.

There were 468 beers available from around the world, all well described in the programme. So having decided on my choice of beer, I went to the numbered pump as per the programme number. No - that was too simple. The Spanish clearly want to make it complicated, you have to look on a large blackboard with the numbered programme beers not in numerical order to find the beer, if it is on and obtain the pump number. Then off to the pumps, which were luckily in numerical order.



There were stouts and porters, smoked beers, fruit beers, lagers, bitters & golden beers from Canada, USA, Russia, Belgium, Czech Republic, Italy, Germany, Portugal, Spain and others although only one from England. There was a Scotch Ale brewed in Switzerland, which was very enjoyable. A lot of the beers were served from the new Key Keg method of dispense. All beers I tried were excellent.

The venue was quite large and well attended, but the service was quite quick and the people were pleasant, although no beer samples were available to customers. Besides the beer festival Barcelona has many real ale breweries, some formed by Brits, Germans and Americans who have settled there. The first microbrewery in Barcelona was opened in 1993. For more data on the beer scene here go to <https://www.timeout.com/barcelona/bars-and-pubs/best-craft-beer-bars-in-barcelona>

Returning to the first day, I visited **Black Lab Brewhouse & Kitchen** at Palau de Mar, Placa Pau Vila. It was set up by an American in 2014 and it had many stouts and porters available. We also tried the **Garage Beer Company** at 261 Carrer del Consell de Cent. Both breweries were very busy and I enjoyed all the beers tasted. Sadly we missed the **Edge Brewery**, which was closed that day. Many bars not associated with a brewery had beers from outside Spain, so a visit to Barcelona is always worth looking into for good beer.



[The Black Lab Brewhouse]

It definitely was not April Fools Day.

Clifford Luff

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North by North-West or Go West—Part I

...I suppose your choice depends on whether your penchant is for the sophistication of an Alfred Hitchcock late '50s thriller featuring the suave Bristol-born Cary Grant and the beauty of Eve Marie Saint or a bit of late '70s disco by Village People that was revived as '90s synth-pop by the Pet Shop Boys. In the last few months I've been to each of the above compass points, though not necessarily in that order.

Firstly to Manchester in January for another instalment of my Union's Retired Members Conference which, this year, took place at the wonderful tribute to Trade Unions, Co-operative Societies and education, the **Mechanics' Institute**. Although real ale isn't sold on the premises it is a testament to what a few people meeting in a pub – in this case the Bridgewater Arms in High Street in 1824 – can achieve and is the last such established Mechanics Institute which still survives today in its original form. I had previously had a look at WhatPub to see if there was anything worth visiting close to the hotel in which myself and a few colleagues were staying and concluded that I should visit the unusually named **"Peveril of the Peak"** and one or two nearby pubs.

I couldn't persuade any of my colleagues to join me for a preprandial pint so, after seeking directions from the young lady at reception, I set off in entirely the wrong direction. Obviously my study at home of the WhatPub map was about as fruitless as my years of education at school, but instinctively I felt that I was going the wrong way. Not wishing to spend too much time without a pint – nor wishing to look "a bit of a Charlie" back at the hotel reception – I went into the front door of a nearby office block where the commissionaire directed me, from memory, to my pub of choice. Unfortunately his memory turned out to be almost as wanting as my own – "Go right at the traffic lights; stay on that road until you get to the tramlines; turn left and its down there on the left". *It wasn't there.*

Near Oxford Road Station I approached a gentleman who was intently studying his Smart Phone and asked him if he was local and had he heard of the pub. He'd heard of it but wasn't quite sure where it was, but his 'phone turned out to be smarter than any of the humans I'd encountered and he set me off in the right direction.

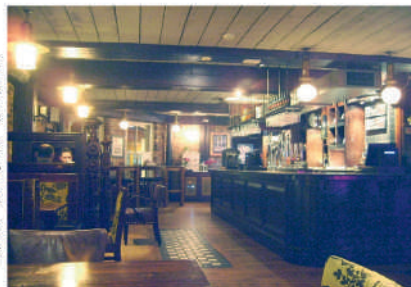
The unfinished book "The Good Soldier Svejk" by Czech author Jaroslav Hasek, describes the meanderings of said First World War military man – a drunkard who had been earlier invalidated out of the Austro-Hungarian army for imbecility – from Prague to Ceske Budejovice, the home of "real" Budweiser. A few hundred metres on I found my destination – something which Svejk deliberately never managed as, despite his earlier apparent mental incapacity, he was clever enough to realise that getting involved in a war wasn't really a good long term career move. The expression "native cunning" springs to mind.

Peveril of the Peak was a delight sitting in splendid isolation on a triangular island surrounded by tower blocks. The exterior has yellowish glazed tiles up to the first floor with olive green tiles above and an equally interesting interior. The bar, on the right from the front door, is an amalgam of dark wood and stained glass with benches around some of the walls and a few tables with chairs and a table football game. The serving bars of the pub are in roughly a V-shape with the curved right hand arm of the "V" forming the Bar and the other arm in what is part of the passageway from the street entrance which is at the bottom of the "V".



On the left hand side of the entrance is an area for games with a pool table, etc. and there is a “Snug” area on the left past the games area. The pub has a great atmosphere with very friendly drinkers and a reasonable range of well-kept beers, Seven Brothers Session; Titanic Plum Porter; Timothy Taylor Landlord & Brightside Odin. As I knew I’d be coming back later I had a couple of pints and crossed the road to the Rain Bar, one of JW Lees outlets which, of course served their complete range.

The **Rain Bar** is an entirely different concept to the “Pev” as the ground floor is almost a large single space – there is a separate seating area to the left of the entrance – dominated by a quite imposing bar with hand-pumps and the ubiquitous “founts” for the other stuff some people feel obliged to drink. Apparently it is a former canal-side warehouse which I didn’t realise as it was pitch black outside when I visited and only subsequently found this information on the internet.



The pub was very quiet in the late afternoon of my first visit, but more lively when I returned in the evening and the beers I tried on each occasion were perfectly palatable. The drinking area has tables and chairs and a few higher tables and stalls with the addition of some cosy booths for, presumably, more clandestine assignations. It seems that the canal-side drinking area is extremely popular at the appropriate time of year but one must temper one’s enthusiasm for outside drinking with the knowledge that the regular weather in Manchester is reflected, with a certain degree of irony, in the name of the pub. As a slight aside Manchester became “Cottonopolis” in the 19th Century partially because of the damp atmosphere which caused less breakages in the cotton being spun than a less humid climate would have created – proof that I did learn something at school which “stuck”! Although slightly apprehensive about my ability to return to the hotel for dinner without once more becoming geographically displaced, I asked a chap sitting in the quiet area of the Rain Bar in which direction I needed to go. It turned out it was a straight road past the “Pev” which came out at the traffic lights mentioned earlier – a journey of 6 or 7 minutes.

The final pub we visited, as by then we’d had something to eat and I’d persuaded a couple of my colleagues to venture out of the hotel, was the **Briton’s Protection** after revisiting the “Pev” and the Rain Bar. Located at 50 Great Bridgewater Street, it is a distinctive white-painted, three-storied building in which we didn’t venture any further than the front bar...in fact we didn’t realise that there was anything other than a front bar. Five beers were available but I cannot, unfortunately, remember what they were as I close to stick with an excellent Robinsons beer. Later on I consulted my good pal Mr Wikipedia who told me the pub was over 200 years old and gets its name from its former use as an army recruiting centre. It has in fact six public rooms, one has a set of murals commemorating the Peterloo Massacre.



All in all another fruitful visit to some of Manchester’s inns but I couldn’t help going home with the feeling that I’d hardly scratched the surface of the many pubs worth a visit.

Barry Price

Part II—The trip out West will be featured in the September edition of the Casket.

The Hostelries of Huntingdon

On Saturday 8th April, an unseasonably warm weekend brought me out of hibernation with the intention of a leisurely pub walk somewhere new. So having heard about a pub called the Falcon, I opted to visit **Huntingdon**. A mid morning walk across the fields to Arlesey railway station and I hopped on a northbound train. Tony joined me at Sandy and while we busy chatting he hesitated and remarked “Have we just passed Huntingdon?” No, I think that was St Neot’s” I replied. Wrong— we had just missed our stop, a poor start to the day, which I can only put down to a rather late evening, the night before.

We got off at Peterborough, had a coffee and alighted the train again as it headed south. We got off at Huntingdon and walked into town on a very sunny afternoon. Armed with a list of seven pubs from the Whatpub website, we headed to the High Street and made for the **Falcon**. The narrow frontage belied its size, it was a large tavern, going back a long way to the rear with a dozen tables on the patio running down the side of the building.



Inside we found an unbelievable 18 handpumps of real ales. I opted to start with the low gravity Black Dog Mild by Elgoods, whilst Tony started with Henry VIII, a porter from Olde England Ales. A quick chat with the barman confirmed that Old England Ales was a name used by the J(ulian) Church brewery of Kettering to supply some pubs with a house ale. On the bar, there were two ales under the Church name and two under Olde England Ales, one of which was Black Prince, at 6% it was too strong for early afternoon, but we made a mental note to return for a half before heading home. The Ringwood brewery also featured prominently with Boondoggle, Old Thumper & the classic Fortyniner. Returning for our second beer, I chose Boondoggle and Tony missed out on Fortyniner, which had run out and settled for Potbelly’s Hop Trotter.

We skipped the George Hotel [Greene King] and the Market Inn, which had two national ales. We also noted Cromwells and the Three Tuns in the High Street, but neither had ‘real ale’. Our next stop was the **Samuel Pepys**, a large and clearly recently modernised pub, but tastefully done. The six ales were mainly national, but I had Adnams Ghost Ship and Tony had Taylor Landlord. We moved out to the back courtyard to enjoy the sun and agreed that the beer quality was very good.



At the foot of the High Street, just before the river, lay the **Old Bridge Hotel**. An imposing building covered in ivy, but with no obvious sign of an entrance from the street, we walked round and approached from the car park and up through a large raised patio garden. The hotel was very busy with many waitresses on the move covering several sections which all seemed to be serving food.



The bar was downstairs at the front of the hotel and had three ales. Tony selected Jim's Little Brother from Nene Valley and I chose a house ale by Hart brewery. We retired to the patio and admired the rest of the building, ivy covered on all sides. This gave me time to recover from the shock of paying £4.40 per pint, at least the quality of the ale was good. Still, if you balance things out, the costs of the day had been reasonable, the train fare was only £7.10 and the prices in the Falcon had been pretty cheap ranging from £2-£2.90.

We moved back up the High Street and cut through to a surrounded green, overlooked by the **Victoria** on Ouse Walk. I was expecting a Greene King pub, but the barman said it had been bought out some years ago. I had Theakston John Bull Bitter which was pretty decent and Tony opted for Ghost Ship, which was undrinkable, probably just the end of the barrel, it was changed with no complaints.



We walked back to the High Street and up to the Falcon again to try a quick half of that 6% stout, which was excellent. With an hour left before our train was due, we tried the new Wetherspoons pub, **Sandford House**. It was the former Post Office and an old chapel linked by a modern one storey walkway. At the rear was a 22 room hotel and a good sized patio.

Inside was a good range of ales and as we had just had a stout, we opted to stick with a dark ale. Tony had Arundel Black Stallion and I chose Oakham Black Hole Porter. We retired to the patio area to catch some more rays before heading off for the southbound train. A most enjoyable stroll for my first visit to Huntingdon—I shall return.



John Goodlet

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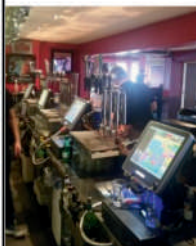
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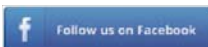


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