

# LOOK

# YEAST!

ISSUE 2

WINTER 2025



Campaign  
For Real Ale

The Official East Beds CAMRA Magazine



## WHAT'S IN THIS ISSUE

CAMRA East Bedfordshire ALE TRAIL

Visiting the pubs of the South Coast...

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wetherspoon

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**wetherspoon**

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The branch Christmas gathering at the Engineers Arms featured festive ales, hearty food, and good company.

**Branch Diary (all dates and venues subject to confirmation)**

When	What	Where
1st-28th February	East Beds Real Ale Trail	Various Local Pubs
Monday 24th February	Assessment of GBG / POTY survey	N/A
Monday 7th April	Branch Meeting	TBC
Saturday 19th or 26th April	Proposed Tring Brewery Trip	Tring Brewery
8th May – 10th May	Biggleswade Beer Festival	Biggleswade Conservative Club
Saturday 17th May	AGM	Engineers Arms, Henlow
5th - 7th June	Hitchin Beer & Cider Festival	Rugby Club, Hitchin
22nd June	Branch Pub Cycle Tour	N/A
5th - 9th August	Great British Beer Festival	NEC Birmingham

**East Bedfordshire CAMRA Committee**

Chairman	Barry Price
Vice-Chairman	Chris Overman
Secretary/Contact	Peter Josling
Treasurer	Rob Pullinger
Membership Secretary	Barry Price
Public Affairs Contact	Dave Strong
Pubs Data Coordinator	Barry Price
Look Yeast Editor	Peter Josling
Brewery Liaison Officer	Dave Strong
Cider Representative	Tim Naisbitt
Pub Protection Officer	Andrew McWhir
Social Secretary	Peter Josling

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# FROM THE CHAIRMAN

East Bedfordshire CAMRA Branch

I'm pleased to report that the first issue of 'Look Yeast!' received complimentary feedback, much appreciated by those who contributed and assisted in its publication. We hope this issue is equally well received.

Within days of release, it was distributed to nearly all licensed premises and local information centres in the East Beds Branch area, with copies sent to other CAMRA branches. It was also published on the branch's website (<https://eastbeds.camra.org.uk/dl.php?id=230248>) for those who missed a physical copy. If you enjoyed reading it, please consider donating to the local charity box where you found it.

Late 2024 saw the closure – hopefully temporary – of one of the branch's best-loved pubs, the 'March Hare' in Dunton, as John and Janice decided to slow down. Similarly, Dave and Caryn called 'Last Orders' at the Chequers in Wrestlingworth. We wish both couples the very best while lamenting the loss of John's excellent brews.

In December, I spoke with a partner of another respected pub who shared the steep cost of electricity – just to keep the pub comfortable, excluding heating or kitchen costs. It's clear that unless we act, we risk losing pubs – a uniquely British institution of sociability and conviviality. Supporting them and encouraging others to do the same is vital.

While finances are tight for many, it may be worth cutting back on cans of mediocre beer to visit your local for quality ales or ciders and some lively chat. The social and mental benefits surely justify the cost of a couple of pints.

Finally, branch members joined enjoyable 2024 events organised by Peter, including brewery visits, the Cambridge Beer Quarter, and the Christmas get-together. He's planning more outings, so please support those you can. If your local organises similar activities, support them and let us know so we can help promote them.

Cheers for now!

**Barry**



## THE BIG BUS TRIP - OCT 24 by Barry Price

Biggleswade Town Council and the United Counties Preservation Group, together with several enthusiastic bus owners, organised a number of tours of East Bedfordshire on 20th October and gave the opportunity to visit some of our more rural pubs without having to drive or of finding somebody willing to do so. As this was an offer which was difficult to refuse – particularly as it was all free – several CAMRA members jumped at the chance to participate.

I can only report on the route which took in the John o' Gaunt at Sutton, the Chequers at Wrestlingworth and the March Hare at Dunton, although some of us didn't alight at Sutton.

The Chequers was in a bit of a state of flux as there was no sign of Dave or Caryn at the bar but John from the Admiral at Clifton and his colleague from the Cock in Baldock were in the pub presumably contemplating the takeover at the end of the year when Dave and Caryn move to Gamlingay.

Four beers were available but I don't think that they were the cause of the slight communication breakdown which manifested itself after a couple of pints. The buses were arriving at hourly intervals and one of our group may have innocently asked when we were moving on and was possibly given the response, 'After this one!' When the next bus arrived it was fairly obvious that the reply was interpreted as 'After the next bus' rather than 'when we've finished this drink' as several CAMRA members hadn't finished their beers while others hopped on the bus to head toward Dunton.

Fortunately, just as confusion took the upper hand at the Chequers and there was a likelihood that some were going to have to wait an hour for the next charabanc, two Samaritans arrived in the guise of Dave and Sue Young who had just blown in from Norfolk to see how the 'bus' day was going. Within minutes of the first group arriving at the March Hare the rest arrived transported in two trips by Dave and Sue.

Attached are two photos of the types of vehicles used – one opposite the Chequers and the other outside the March Hare, together with a partial group photo from the March Hare – incomplete as some had already made tracks on the next bus..

It was an interesting day but the biggest surprise to me was the fact that neither buses I travelled on discharged their full load of passengers at the first or second pub at which they arrived. Like a fool I had overlooked the fact that it wasn't a pub crawl just a nice Sunday outing for some on a variety of historical transports



### DISCLAIMER

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### ARTICLES & CONTRIBUTIONS

We welcome contributions that will benefit our readers, to submit an article, please email [secretary@eastbeds.camra.org.uk](mailto:secretary@eastbeds.camra.org.uk)

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Advertise your Pub/Venue/Special Event or local business. Look Yeast is issued 3 times a year and distributed to pubs, clubs and other outlets in the region.

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EAST BEDFORDSHIRE CAMRA

# REAL ALE TRAIL by Peter Josling

The branch will be running its first Real Ale Trail in February, Starting on **Saturday 1st February and ending on Friday 28th February**

12 pubs will be taking part. These being: **The Engineers Arms, Henlow, The Admiral, Clifton. The Cock, Broom, The Plough, Langford, The Crown, Biggleswade, The Golden Pheasant, Biggleswade, The Sir William Peel, Sandy, The Thornton Arms, Everton, The Rising Sun, Pottton, The Stag, Stotfold, The Crown, Stotfold, & The Chequers, Wrestlingworth.**

You can pick up a Real Ale Trail card listing all 12 pubs at any of those participating. Each pub will have a unique stamp, the idea being that you get your card stamped by all the pubs. On completion the card is passed into the last pub visited don't forget to put you Name and Contact detail in the space provided.

You will then be entered into the draw, the prizes being supplied by 2 local Breweries,

**Buntingford Brewery**  
A Pair of Brewery Trip Vouchers

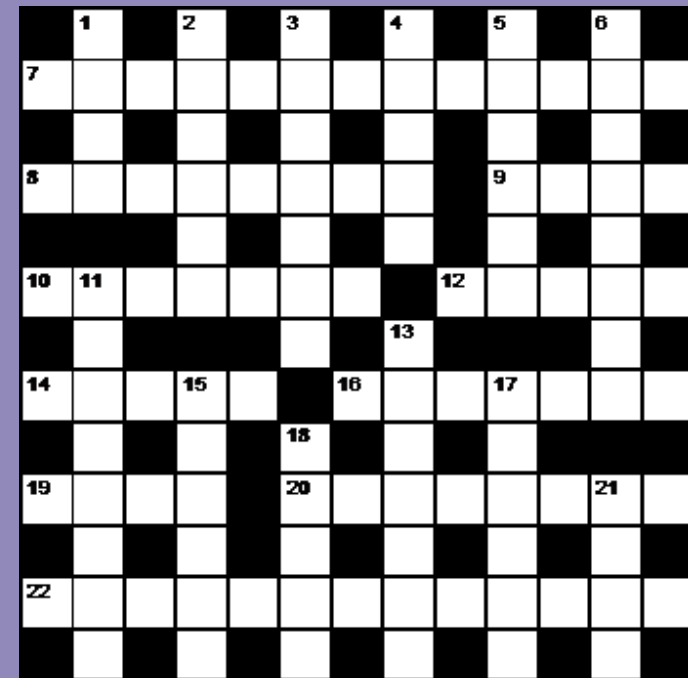
**Pottton Brewery**  
A Brewery Experience Day Voucher & A Gift Pack of 3 bottles

I hope you enjoy the trail and good luck with the draw.



# THE YEAST CROSSWORD

Can you complete our tricky crossword? Answers on P14



- ACROSS**
- 7 Faintness bred in confusion will often be drunk to (6,7)
  - 8 Closing times affected after Matlock or Campbell maybe leaving but putting up with it philosophically (8)
  - 9 Heard you pulled a contemptible type (4)
  - 10 Reported sick raptor is banned (7)
  - 12 Live spirit to start (5)
  - 14 Can stand to live here (5)
  - 16 To be frugal about reduced jus could be a slip up (3,4)
  - 19 Crazy about knockout (4)
  - 20 I'm back to 50-50 contest in fast water (8)
  - 22 Ballots pool of confusion for a bet (8,5)
- DOWN**
- 1 Brass winds up to join up (4)
  - 2 Tiny bird in foul water (6)
  - 3 With the bit between my teeth I calculate to be correct (7)
  - 4 A few drinks for Derby after their first (5)
  - 5 It will irritate the French and be a bit of a grind (6)
  - 6 I mislead about impractical philosophy (8)
  - 11 Sailing boat about out of gas - have a drink! (8)
  - 13 Beast of burden is a nonstarter, putting country first, student gets the point. Could be highly strung? (7)
  - 15 Point out ton up in a river (6)
  - 17 Out of drink speaking colloquially? (6)
  - 18 Reams out blemish (5)
  - 21 Twenty percent off local cocktail mixer (4)

## WETHERSPOON PRE-FESTIVAL DRINK *by Dave Strong*

On Tue 8th Oct a small but determined coterie of East Beds CAMRA Branch members descended, at the invitation of the manager David, on the Crown Hotel, Biggleswade on the eve of the Autumn Wetherspoon Beer Festival. Assembled in the bar of the hotel, before crossing the courtyard to the ground level 'cellar' for our tasting session, I commented on the fact that I had again forgotten to take along any discount vouchers before David indicated that all real ales were ninety-nine pence a pint. This, what must have been a massive loss leader, was prompted by the need to clear all of the 'old' ales away before connecting up the barrels for the Beer Festival.

With his usual generosity David led us to the cellar, provided the glasses and advised us to help ourselves which some did with a great deal more gusto than others. I would imagine that, at this late juncture, none of the participants will have a recollection of what they sampled but there were certainly no beers which caused any criticism.

All in all the seven of us who attended had a good time although the temperature in the cellar was a bit cool for some of us – although others were in their shirt sleeves and some of the taps on the barrels were a little reluctant to give up their prize.



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# PLOUGH BEER FESTIVAL by Chris Freeman

Whilst I can recall attending other Langford beer festivals at places such as the Boot and the Ivy Leaf during my 35 odd years in the village and suspect that there may well have been others in previous years, the Plough Beer Festival, celebrating its 3rd year of operation in 2024 can now be arguably considered to be "The" Langford Beer Festival.

The festival typically runs for 4 days in mid-September and the program of events reflects the strong community focus within the pub. This time live music in various formats, largely supplied by pub regulars, was bookended by quiz and comedy evenings.

As to the main point of the festival, the beer itself, 15 ales and 18 ciders were listed on the festival menu. Understandably, with the Plough being a Greene King house, a core of these have to come from GK's standard range and guest list. However, I do not necessarily have a problem with this when they are well kept and supplemented by a well-chosen and imaginative additional selection such as in this case. Beers ranged between the likes of the pale 3.6% Simple Pleasures from Nene Valley to the 5% Captain Pigwash porter from Potbelly. Interesting to note that the Nene Valley beers were gluten free.

On the first of several visits over the weekend I kicked off with a nice entry level amber ale, Captain Bob from Mighty Oak in Maldon at 3.6%, followed by a 3.7% Nethergate Venture before succumbing to the lure of the 4.5% chestnut bitter Old Barsteward from Potbelly.

As mentioned, I paid a number of visits to the festival, sampling further ales and food offerings from the various vendors taking turns to provide what my father and uncle used to refer to as "a bit of blotting paper" although in these cases I would add that was indeed of a most superior nature. My overall impression was of a well curated festival supported both by locals and customers from outside the village. I look forward to the next one, 11th - 14th September 2025.



## VISITING THE PUBS OF THE SOUTH COAST... WITHOUT A GOOD BEER GUIDE? by Dave Strong

I've always enjoyed holidaying in the UK. While different parts of the British Isles can feel distinct in culture and character, there's something comforting about staying close to home. The mix of historic towns, stunning landscapes, and excellent pubs makes exploring the UK a rewarding experience.

In the past, my wife and I would always seek out local pubs wherever we stayed. The Good Beer Guide was invaluable for its detailed listings, including food options, public transport links, and other pub features. It also guaranteed a decent pint. Since having two young children, trips to the pub have naturally become less frequent. However, I still make an effort to visit when I can, as it's an enjoyable experience and supports local businesses. We've also tried to familiarise our children with pubs as welcoming and family-friendly places, especially in summer when outdoor seating and good food are on offer.

On a recent holiday to the south coast, we decided to visit at least one pub in each town we explored. Being the planner I am, I scouted some options from The Good Beer Guide and jotted a list. Unfortunately, I realised on arrival that I'd left the guide at home! Improvising, we relied on Google and WhatPub to find places with a decent pint. Here's how they measured up.

We started in Romney Marsh, Kent, a fascinating area with highlights like the RSPB reserve and the Romney, Hythe and Dymchurch Railway. At the Dungeness Terminus, we had lunch at the Britannia Inn, a Shepherd Neame pub right on the beachfront. I had jumbo battered haddock and chips, which, while not 'jumbo' in size, was delicious, paired with Shepherd Neame's Go for Gold, a light pale ale brewed to mark a 1924 Olympic gold medal. After lunch, we sampled Solley's

ice cream and walked the boardwalk, taking in views of the iconic lighthouses. Although we'd hoped for a paddle, the windy weather and rough waves kept us ashore.

In Hastings, our children loved the aquarium, and I stumbled upon a gem in the Imperial brewpub. Their Brewing Brothers beers were brewed on-site, and the pizzas were fantastic. I enjoyed a Pig and Porter Jumping Frog golden ale before sampling the brewery's MVP IPA and Re-forestation pale ale. My wife appreciated a



real cider, Wild Juice by Iford Cider Company, a refreshing medium-sweet option.

Next, we visited Pevensey, starting with the beach, where my daughter had her first paddle and promptly ate some sand! We built sandcastles, explored a lagoon for hermit crabs, and visited the ruined Norman castle. Dinner at the Royal Oak and Castle was a highlight, with its large garden and tasty offerings. I had sausages with cheesy leek mash - so good my daughter couldn't get enough. Her meltdown when it ran out was proof of its appeal!

In Eastbourne, we enjoyed the miniature railway, played on the pier's penny falls, and listened to live music by the bandstand. We sought refuge from the

afternoon heat in The Marine pub. The kids enjoyed fish fingers and chips, my wife had lasagne, and I tucked into ribs and chips. Harvey's Sussex Best Bitter was on offer - not my favourite, but a trip to East Sussex wouldn't be complete without it.

Our final stop was Hayling Island near Portsmouth. After enjoying the beach and another railway, we tried the Olive Leaf. The food was excellent - my moules-frites were a delight - but the beer was disappointing. My first pint of Fuller's HSB smelt of vinegar, and even the replacement Doom Bar was subpar. I settled for a Beavertown Neck Oil, which, though not a real ale, was drinkable.

The south coast offered fantastic weather, stunning sights, and mostly good pubs. Although we didn't visit many Good Beer Guide entries, most places we found were excellent. There's still much to explore in the region, including Arundel, Brighton, Lewes, and Portsmouth - all with their fair share of great pubs. We'll definitely be back!



# CHRISTMAS GET TOGETHER by Peter Josling

The branch had its Christmas Get together at the Engineers Arms Henlow on December 7th December 2024.

The attendance was excellent with 23 members turning up, Peter Josling welcomed everyone and proposed a Merry Christmas, all responded and raised their glasses filled with a variety of beers from Kevin's extensive range of Xmas ales.

As per: *"The Thoughts of Chairman"* in the last Newsletter, Kevin supplied "traditional wholesome British dishes such as Chilli con Carne (however it got a Spanish name is beyond me), Frango Caril (how did Chicken Curry get rechristened by the Portuguese?) and a spicy vegetarian concoction all of which are designed to make your tongue tingle. The preceding were accompanied with rice and chips to help soak up the inevitably delightful range of beers and ciders".



Several Pints later and all food wiped clean from the serving dishes Chairman of the branch Barry thanked everyone for attending and Kevin, Sharon & Staff for their hospitality.

A small footnote Kevin has promised next year to remember to put out the Mince Pies.



## CROSSWORD ANSWERS FOR THIS EDITION



**SATURDAY 1ST MARCH - SATURDAY 8TH MARCH**  
**GRAINSTORE BREWERY**  
**TAP TAKEOVER**

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**THURSDAY 17TH APRIL - THURSDAY 24TH APRIL**  
**MIGHTY OAK BREWERY**  
**TAP TAKEOVER**

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**FRIDAY 4TH JULY - FRIDAY 11TH JULY**  
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