

The 'From the Chairman' article has, unfortunately, been abridged by the use of Artificial Intelligence and now doesn't make a lot of sense. The Chairman's original contribution and one shortened and modified with the Secretary's assistance are reproduced below.

### **“From the Chairman” Original**

It is with considerable pleasure that I am given the opportunity to communicate with East Bedfordshire's pub-goers through the second issue of 'Look Yeast!' and - as the Branch gives copies for circulation to adjacent Branches - our articles and views spread further afield.

Since the first copy, which came out toward the back end of last year, there have been many activities and interesting occurrences, mostly good but some less so. Fortunately the former outweighed the latter.

There have been a number of pub beer festivals for which I thank the licensees for making the effort to get in some rarer beers for this area; there have been trips organised by publicans themselves to more far-flung parts of the country – but not so far that it was not possible to return on the same day - although some may not have remembered much of being 'Homeward Bound' (a song written on Widnes Railway Station by a young Paul Simon for those who can't recall the Sixties or, more likely, hadn't been born); CAMRA Beer festivals; lively and occasionally, poorly controlled Branch Meetings for which I only have myself to blame; a very enjoyable Winter get-together for those who could attend; and the heart-, soul- and palate-searching to select our Branch's entries for the 2026 Good Beer Guide and choosing our Pubs of the Year in several categories. Peter planned and organised the Branch's first ever 'Ale Trail' which was another interesting diversion – particularly for those who managed to get to each of the twelve pubs selected for the inaugural 'Trail'.

As far as disappointment is concerned, the closure of the March Hare BrewPub in Dunton was a sad occasion – particularly as the last night was marred by the difficulty John and Janice experienced on the journey from Stevenage back to Dunton. Dave and Caryn said their final farewells to their customers and friends at the Chequers in Wrestlingworth but at least the pub is now under the umbrella of the owner of the Admiral, Clifton and Cock in Baldock both of which serve well kept ales. The biggest shock though is the very recent news that Kevin Machin is giving up the Engineers Arms in Henlow and Punch Taverns will be the new owners. Hopefully little will change although Kevin will be a difficult individual to match for his 'front of the house' duties. He'll be working there until September so you'll have plenty of chances to have a drink with him before his final appearance - or 'disappearance' which may seem a little more appropriate if he and Sharon decide to leave Henlow.

There was an exposé in the Guardian by Katie Mather about the fact that some of the UK's craft breweries were no longer independent as they were now under the umbrella of multinationals although, of course, that isn't widely publicised. If you want craft beers/real ales from a local supplier then look no further than Potton Brewing Company. If you wish to source your beers from other genuinely independent breweries then may I recommend that you look here:

<https://indiebeer.uk/index.php>

Finally I hope that you take the opportunity to visit the Biggleswade Beer Festival in May, jointly run by East Beds CAMRA and Biggleswade Conservative Club - and if you feel that you could volunteer to help in any capacity then please do so. If you can give even a few hours then have a look at <https://biggbeerfest.org/volunteer/> and don't forget the Annual General Meeting at the Engineers on 17th May from 1.00pm

Cheers for now,

Barry

### **“From the Chairman” final**

Since the previous issue there have been many activities and interesting occurrences in the Branch area, mostly good but some less so. Fortunately the former outweighed the latter.

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