

# LOOK



## YEAST!

ISSUE 6

SPRING/SUMMER 2026

### Bigglewade Beer Festival Returns

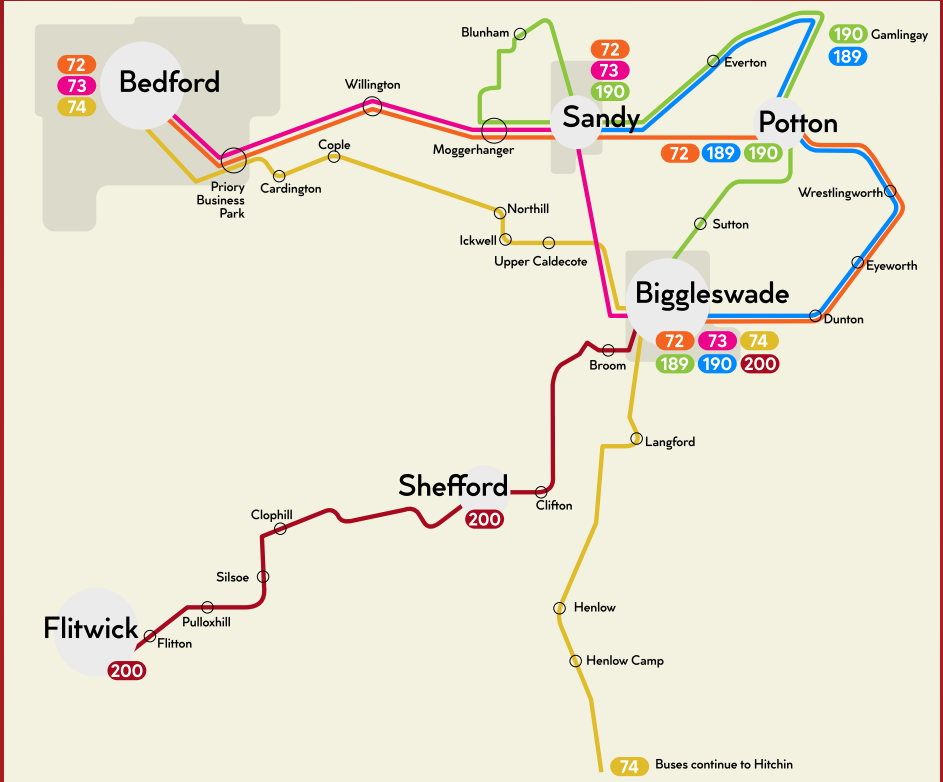


### WHAT'S IN THIS ISSUE

Overnight To Brighton

Pub & Cider Pub of the Year Announced

# Buses across East Bedfordshire with Grant Palmer



live bus tracking on our app  
concessionary passes welcome  
single fares £3 or less

Plan your journey  
[grantpalmer.com](http://grantpalmer.com)

# TABLE OF CONTENTS



- 6 OVERNIGHT TO BRIGHTON**  
Brighton trip in heavy rain, visiting varied pubs, beers, music and good company
- 8 BIGGLESWADE BEER FESTIVAL**  
Biggleswade Beer and Cider Festival returns, championing local breweries
- 10 WALKING THE ALE TRAIL**  
East Beds Ale Trail completed on foot across three walks, enjoying pubs and great beer
- 12 A TASTE OF SPRING**  
Wetherspoon's Spring Beer Festival preview showcasing diverse ales, standout flavours
- 14 PUB OF THE YEAR**  
Sir William Peel wins Pub and Cider Pub of the Year

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

When	What	Where
11th April	Away Day Tour (by John Butterworth)	Huntingdon & Hartford
13th April - 19.00	Branch Meeting	The Queens Head, Sandy
16th April	Away Day Tour (by John Butterworth)	Hidden Barrel & Wellington
17-19th April	Members' Weekend 2026	The Alban Arena, AL1 3LD
18th April -20.00	Rural 'Pub Of The Year' Presentation	Cock, Broom
7-9th May	Biggleswade Beer Festival	Biggleswade Conservative Club
16th May - 13.00	AGM	The Engineers Arms, Henlow
4-6th June	Hitchin Beer & Cider Festival	Hitchin Rugby Club

## East Bedfordshire CAMRA Committee

Chairman	Barry Price
Vice-Chairman	Simon Reynolds
Secretary/Contact	Peter Josling
Treasurer	Rob Pullinger
Membership Secretary	Barry Price
Public Affairs Contact	Dave Strong
Pubs Data Co-ordinator	Barry Price
Brewery Liaison Officer	Dave Stong
Cider Representative	Tim Naisbitt
Pub Protection Officer	Mark Knight
Social Secretary	Peter Josling
Editor of Look Yeast	Peter Josling
Young Members' Officer	George Welsted
GBG Submissions Co-ordinator	Barry Price
Pub Promotions & Awards	Barry Price
Social Media Co-ordinator	Mark Knight
Website Co-ordinator	Chris Freeman
Minutes Secretary	Mel Draper



Recognise the best, with the CAMRA Good Beer Guide 2026. The definitive beer drinker's guide for those seeking the best pints in the nation's pubs.

Order your copy now at [shop1.camra.org.uk](http://shop1.camra.org.uk)



# A NOTE FROM THE CHAIRMAN

East Bedfordshire CAMRA Branch

Since the last issue of 'Look Yeast!' the East Beds Branch of CAMRA has been engaged in a number of different activities probably the most important of which was selecting our entries for the 2027 Good Beer Guide. We are allowed ten entries as our allocation, but chose an extra two substitutes in case there are reasons to deselect any of the chosen ten – an unlikely occurrence and only liable to happen if, for instance there is a change to an unknown licensee; beer quality deteriorates; the pub gets a reputation for illegal behaviour (e.g. drug dealing); etc.



Additionally we selected four of our pubs for special awards from the Branch – Pub on the Year (POTY) – The Sir William Peel, Sandy; Community POTY – Plough, Langford; Rural POTY – Cock, Broom; Most Improved POTY – Queens Head, Sandy so pay them a visit if you can and enjoy the atmosphere, the friendly clientele and especially the beers. The Sir William Peel has also been selected as our Cider POTY and I understand will soon be adopted as Bedfordshire Cider POTY.

This year saw the second East Bedfordshire Branch's 'Ale Trail' – an initiative started last year by Peter, the Branch Secretary, for whom congratulations should be given. This year, from the beginning of February until the end of March, anybody collecting a stamp from each of the twelve pubs on their 'Ale Trail' card are entered into a draw the prizes being supplied by two local Breweries - Buntingford Brewery for a Pair of Brewery Trip Vouchers & Tring Brewery for the same prize a Pair of Brewery Trip Vouchers but obviously at Tring Brewery, not Buntingford!

In May we expect another record attendance at the Biggleswade Beer Festival, with the added attraction this year of a fair few beers from some of Lancashire's smaller breweries. Make it a date in your diary.

## Barry

### DISCLAIMER

Look Yeast! © All rights reserved. East Beds CAMRA, CAMRA Ltd & LivingLife Publications Ltd accept no responsibility for any errors or omissions within this publication. The views expressed are those of the individual authors and are not necessarily those of the editor or committee. All images remain the copyright of their respective owners and may not be reproduced, copied or distributed without prior consent.

### 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)

### ADVERTISING

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.

Please contact LivingLife Publications for more information and to request a Media Guide.

**01462 41 42 65**

[admin@livinglifemagazine.co.uk](mailto:admin@livinglifemagazine.co.uk)

Pubs, Pints, People.



# Ever seen a Ginger Panther? No, but we've tried one!

CAMRA membership expands your choice of beer, pubs and festivals. Find the best pints, and the places you want to drink them.

Get £30 of beer vouchers, discounts on real ale, save on entry to 160+ beer festivals around the UK and more with membership.



Join and save on beer.  
[camra.org.uk/join](http://camra.org.uk/join)



## OVERNIGHT TO BRIGHTON – JANUARY 2026 by Sue Young

We picked the wettest day of the year for an overnight trip to Brighton organised by John Butterworth, a step up from an awayday. I believe some started with an early beer and breakfast in The Crown, the Wetherspoons in Biggleswade, before getting the train. We joined them on the train at Hitchin, this was when the rain started!



On leaving the station we made a dash for the Evening Star pub where there were

7 real ales and 3 draught ciders on tap. There were also a number of other keg beers on very ergonomically designed upright dispensers. Between us we tried Lamanva bitter 4.0%, Letters to Satan 5.5% and a milk stout. The beer was £5.40 a pint but a half was £3.00. It was a nice atmospheric pub with standing room only.

Having been told the Hole in the Wall was closed we braved the rain to go to the Prince Albert near the station. It was a very brightly painted pub with a large mural on the outside. We were followed in by a large crowd and nearly got our beer added to their tab. We all had Longman best bitter but there were 5 other draft beers on tap ranging from light to dark. The pub was busy, very bohemian with lots of small rooms and fireplaces.

Next was the Lord Nelson which had a full range of Harvey's beer. It was a spacious pub with a garden which, as it was out of season and a horrible day, was closed. It wasn't as busy as the other pubs. All the pubs had music, but this one was a bit too loud.

We had another Longman beer at the Great Eastern which was a long dark pub with lots of bookcases. There were 5 draught beers on tap. The music was a bit more jazzy. The toilets were up a narrow flight of stairs. There was also a very dodgy deep step down into the pub.

It was still too early to book into our hotel, so we risked the rain again to go to the Basketmakers where they served the usual range of beers; London Pride, ESB, HSB etc. Some of us nearly didn't find the pub as we followed the wrong mustard coloured coat when we left the Great Eastern. It was very busy with low ceilings and slightly too loud music.

As it was still raining 4 of us decided to get an Uber. The taxi came quickly but because of the one-way streets it went round in circles before getting us to the hotel so those who'd walked beat us to it but at least we were dry. We stayed at the Travelodge on the seafront.

Having booked in, we made our way in the rain to a Wetherspoons, the Bright Helm, just up the road. Unfortunately, the choice of beer was poor, so we walked on to the Post and Telegraph, another Wetherspoons, where we had a meal. It was on the site of an old bank/the Brighton

Gazette/cinema and was very like other Wetherspoons.

The Brighton Bierhaus was a big disappointment. We'd walked past the Pavilion and climbed a hill in the pouring rain to get there but it was very crowded, stuffy and noisy. A couple of us had a Paulaner but gradually everyone ended up outside ready to leave.

It was not raining as much by now and we wandered around looking for a nice bar. We passed two; the Actors looked very bohemian and only had one cask ale on, and the Sussex, a Green King pub, only had IPA/Abbott. So, we ended up at the Pump House which had Landlord and Harvey's. It was a large pub, very quiet with only one other couple in there. It was warm and comfortable if not very special.

On leaving there we passed the Walrus and went into the Cricketers, the oldest pub in Brighton. The beer being served here was London Pride. It was quite old fashioned, dark inside with red lighting and red furnishings. There was a lighter courtyard on the side.

Finally, on walking back to the hotel we passed the Mesmerist where we could hear loud music. Those of us that were left went in and worked our way to seats furthest from the music. Guinness was drunk and Red Stripe. The band, Legend Has It, was great with songs such as Twist and Shout and Stand by Me.

Next day

I think we were all feeling a bit jaded, but we carried on. Some of us walked along the seafront. What a difference a day makes, it was a lovely bright, dry day.

We met the others in the Post and Telegraph for a hair of the dog. Sadly, the beer choice was poor because they were cleaning the pipes.

Barry, our Chairman at CAMRA, had recommended that we visit the Hand in Hand Brew Pub which we found out of town in the 'free state of Kemptown'. It was a small bar that would seat about 30 people but had jazz on a Sunday. I think there were about 4 beers on. We had their own Bird which was nice. It was very much a local's pub with ties hanging from the ceiling and newspaper articles about local people plastered on the walls.

After a couple of beers here we walked down an alley to the seafront to get a bus back to the station.



# BIGGLESWADE'S BEER FESTIVAL IS PULLING IN SURPRISE GUESTS

by Gavin Day

Anticipation is building in the Bedfordshire town of Biggleswade as preparations gather pace for this year's Biggleswade Beer and Cider Festival taking place for 3 days from Thursday 7th to Saturday 9th May at the Biggleswade Conservative Club. Though still a relatively new addition to the real ale calendar, the festival has quickly established a strong reputation since its launch in 2023. As an event run by the Campaign for Real Ale, it proudly reflects CAMRA's core mission: to promote real ale, real cider, and community-focused beer festivals.



From the very beginning, the festival has placed a strong emphasis on supporting local breweries, with each year's event showcasing a wide range of beers from Bedfordshire and the surrounding counties. This commitment remains at the heart of the festival in 2026, ensuring that local producers continue to enjoy a prominent platform and that visitors can sample the very best of the area's brewing talent.

This year, however, sees the introduction of an exciting new development. For the first time, the festival will adopt a regional theme, with Lancashire taking centre stage alongside LocAle regulars.

This marks a new direction for the event and is very much being introduced as a trial. Should the Lancashire theme prove popular with festival-goers, organisers will look to explore other regions in future years, adding variety and fresh interest to an already successful formula.

Lancashire is a natural choice for this inaugural themed year. The county boasts a rich brewing heritage and is known for producing characterful, flavour-driven ales that aren't usually available in Biggleswade. Visitors to the festival will be able to enjoy a selection of real ales from several well-regarded Lancashire breweries, including Fuzzy Duck, Bowland, Moorhouses, and Farm Yard Brewery. These breweries bring with them a diverse mix of styles, from traditional bitters to more modern interpretations, offering something to suit a wide range of tastes.

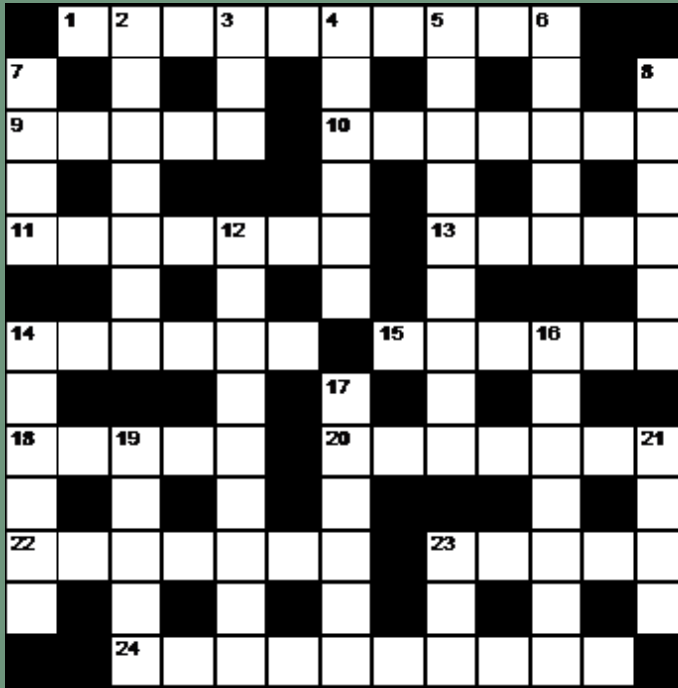
Cider continues to play an important role in the festival, with a carefully curated range of local ciders available. These offer an alternative to beer while maintaining the same emphasis on quality and traditional production methods that CAMRA champions. From light, refreshing ciders to more complex and robust varieties, there will be plenty for cider enthusiasts to enjoy.

This year, the festival is also proud to support the United Counties Bus Preservation Group, a volunteer-led charity dedicated to preserving and restoring historic buses from the former United Counties network, keeping an important part of the region's transport heritage alive for future generations. The charity will be bringing a vintage bus to display at the festival as well as a display showcasing their projects.

As with all CAMRA festivals, volunteers are at the heart of making the event a success. To find out more, or if you're interested in getting involved, **visit the festival's website at: [www.bigbeerfest.org](http://www.bigbeerfest.org)**

# THE YEAST CROSSWORD

Can you complete our tricky crossword? Answers on P13



## ACROSS

- 1 Duke has been given the boot (10)  
 9 Bad librarian wraps up spontaneous action (2-3)  
 10 Scalene construction is a wash up (7)  
 11 After endless publicity no team has a lack of air (7)  
 13 Comic performance not starting boat (5)  
 14 See Emily Play (i.e. truanting) to be proper (6)  
 15 Flasher puts clothing on at the end of the road (6)  
 18 Confess to have what Rick will never give you (3,2)  
 20 Meat cooked in ovens (7)  
 22 Settled in I imbibed for days in town (7)  
 23 15 from 22, subtle change, not the first (5)  
 24 Curiously a merry peep could rub up roughly or smooth things over (5,5)

## DOWN

- 2 See clip by mistake, block it out (7)  
 3 Balls up, only 60% in test environment (3)  
 4 Dizzy trance caused by sweet drink (6)  
 5 Yorkshire brewer hates knot in a tangle (9)  
 6 Group of musicians to perform without safety equipment apparently? (5)  
 7 Am leaving 5's home as first step to brewing (4)  
 8 Computer geek melted the ice (6)  
 12 Two unknowns cut and sharpen percussion skills needed for tunes on this, though a bit wooden (9)  
 14 Southern style's said to be putting on airs (6)  
 16 2 former pupils get better (7)  
 17 Enthusiastically brewed five daily (6)  
 19 Move bishop to knight with a prod (5)  
 21 Investigate feature of negatives in conversation (4)  
 23 Snake may be wrapped around one's neck (3)

# ONE DOES NOT SIMPLY WALK TO ONE PUB by Ieuan Smiton

From 1st February through to 28th March 2026, the East Beds CAMRA Ale Trail returned for its second year. Readers might remember my 'Hadrian's Wall Ale Trail' article in Look Yeast Issue 5, and so it probably won't surprise you that I was itching to complete the trail on foot. Spotting a social opportunity I organised three group walks, each one clocking between 8 to 10 miles (13 to 16 km) and ticking off four trail pubs.

## ***The Biggleswade Loop (7th February)***

Due to rail engineering works, our first walk started and finished in Biggleswade (somewhere more easy to visit without the train). This loop encompassed the Biggleswade pubs plus Broom and Langford.

The weather at breakfast was not the most inviting, with heavy drizzle. But four of us weren't deterred and by the time we set off for our first stop, The Cock (Broom), the rain had backed off to a drizzle, and by the time we arrived it had stopped entirely. A good omen! We bagged our first stamps while enjoying a couple of pints in top-notch condition: New River's 'London Tap' and Otter's 'Otter Bitter' for me.

From there, the weather treated us to blue skies as we squelched through muddy fields toward my own local, The Plough (Langford). The Plough was buzzing, packed with families and fans catching the Six Nations. We even bumped into some other CAMRA branch members. I enjoyed the halfway point of the walk with a pint of Nethergate's 'Rugby Ruck'.

Our final leg took us across the fields back to Biggleswade where we dropped into The Golden Pheasant (equally as busy). It was brilliant to hear from the staff that they'd already beaten their total stamp count from the entire 2025 trail in just the first week! A pint of Eagle's 'Young's Special' toasted the end of the walk. We wrapped up the day at The Crown, where I treated myself to a gorgeous pint of Swannay's 'Birsay Bitter'. A damp start but cracking first day.

## ***The Arlesey Loop (28th February)***

Fast forward three weeks, and we were back at it. Three of us kicked things off at Arlesey station and set off towards Stotfold. We timed our arrival at The Stag (Stotfold) perfectly - stepping inside just as a shower started to come down. A relaxing pint of Exmoor 'Gold' (and a breakfast for one companion) was the perfect way to start the day.

Once the clouds cleared, it was a short hop through the town to The Crown - busy with socialising activities. We got lucky again, snagging the very last drops of Buntingford's 'Royston Red'. We



were also joined here by a fourth member of our walk. The next leg was the most challenging of the day - a long stretch over open fields (and the railway) towards Henlow.

The Engineers Arms was the cosy atmosphere our tired legs needed. With the usual large selection, I went for a pint of Otter's 'Over the Bar' and a half of Buntingford's 'Tis But a Scratch' (which was strong in flavour as well as ABV). We finished the afternoon with a comparatively short stroll over to The Admiral (Clifton) - full of locals of all ages. I toasted the day with Robinsons' 'Hop & Under', another four stamps happily secured.



### **Wrestlingworth to Sandy Loop (14th March)**

The final walk was, for me, the one I was looking forward to the most. The weather finally delivered for us - with perfect walking weather of mild temperatures and plenty of sunshine (though sadly a strong headwind). I was feeling ambitious, so I did a 9-mile (14.5 km) "warm-up" walk from Langford to the meeting point!

The group met at The Chequers (Wrestlingworth) for a pre-walk brunch, which was a new pub offering. They even gave a special "walkers discount" for the five of us doing that day's Ale Trail walk, which was a lovely touch. Fueled by eggs royale and a pint of my favourite Tring's 'Side Pocket for A Toad', we pointed ourselves toward Potton.



In high spirits, we even took a detour to the John O'Gaunt (Sutton) - where I enjoyed my first beer garden pint of the year! (Woodforde's 'Wherry!') Suitably tanned, we continued to Potton and took another cheeky detour to the George & Dragon (Potton), where I had a lovely pint of Timothy Taylor's 'Landlord'. We eventually reached a rather busy Rising Sun, which as usual had a stunning selection. I went for Brehon Brewhouse's 'Ulster Black' oatmeal stout, but could have stayed all day.

Westwards towards Everton, we reached an also lively Thornton Arms, where a pint of St Austell's 'Tribute' was enjoyed. Now in the 'golden hour', we commenced our final trek into Sandy with stunning views over the valley - making all the miles feel worth it. We wearily rolled into our final stop, the Sir William Peel, just as dusk settled. Getting that final stamp, all on foot, was an amazing feeling. I toasted the achievement with a pint of Trig's 'Scarth' - a suitable end.

### **Final Thoughts**

The East Beds Ale Trail is a simple idea, but its impact is large. A brilliant way to support our local pubs and enjoy our often-overlooked countryside (by those outside our area). It did reinforce how great our branch pubs are - I had a good pint in every one - and every pub we visited was lively and welcoming. It just goes to show how much these places mean to our communities.

I'm already looking forward to 2027. If you fancy a bit of a walk next year, please join us. After all, one does not simply walk to ONE pub!

# A FIRST TASTE OF SPRING: PREVIEWING THE WETHERSPOON'S SPRING FESTIVAL 2026

by Dave Strong

Spring has arrived, and with it the return of the Wetherspoon's Spring Beer Festival, running from 4–15 March 2026. This year's festival features 30 real ales from both national and international brewers, including several brewed exclusively for the event.

On 3 March, the evening before the official launch at the Crown Hotel in Biggleswade, manager David invited members of East Beds CAMRA for a preview. From the cellar, visible from the High Street, we sampled thirteen beers already conditioned and ready for opening night. Most opted for small samples, a sensible choice given the range ahead. We began with Lord Marples, a 4.0% session bitter from Thornbridge Brewery. A classic amber ale with a well-balanced hop and malt profile, it was as well kept here in Bedfordshire as when I first tried it at The Fargate in Sheffield.



Next came Lucky Lips, a limited-edition 4.5% blonde ale brewed by Shepherd Neame for the festival, followed by Brewed Awakening, Hook Norton's 4.0% American Red Ale with a lively, zesty aroma. The standout was Exam Room Tears, a 5.5% stout from Stu Brew. Brewed with maple syrup and pecans, it delivered a rich body without losing drinkability. It was a tough act to follow, and while Pitch Perfect, Vale Brewery's 5% IPA, was pleasant, it felt more subdued after such a bold predecessor.

We then moved into two American-style IPAs: Coastal Confusion by Salem Brew and West Coast IPA from Kirkstall Brewery. Both were bold, citrusy and assertive. Nautical themes appeared throughout, including Driftwood from Fyne Ales, a hazy brown ale with toasted malt and soft caramel notes. The theme continued with Voyager, Woodforde's 3.4% dark mild, and Navigator, Castle Rock's well-balanced pale ale.

Next came one of the festival's exclusives: Read the Room, a collaboration between Adnams and Good Word. This 4.0% English Brown Ale was highly drinkable and a highlight of the evening.

Our penultimate beer was Nectar, an IPA from Oakham Ales brewed with New Zealand hops. We finished with Juliet, a 3.8% pale ale brewed by Hogs Back Brewery and Mondo Brewery for International Women's Day 2026, offering a fresh, tropical finish.

As ever, the beers were kept in excellent condition by David and his team. Many left planning return visits to sample more of the festival's range. If this preview is anything to go by, the 2026 Spring Beer Festival promises to be a memorable one.



# PUB OF THE YEAR & CIDER PUB OF THE YEAR by Barry Price

Saturday 21st March saw the presentation of both the East Bedfordshire Branch's Pub of the Year award and Cider Pub of the Year award to the Sir William Peel in Sandy - some photos of the event are included courtesy and copyright of Rob Pullinger. Hopefully they're self-explanatory although there may be some individuals in the external photo who may not be familiar to East Bedfordshire pub-goers as Roger, the Bedfordshire County Coordinator from the North Bedfordshire Branch, graced us with his presence and members from South Bedfordshire Branch and South Hertfordshire Branch also made the trek to Sandy which was most welcome.

Apart from the excellent beers - which have become the trademark of the 'Peel' - a free buffet was provided which was enjoyed by both CAMRA members and visitors to the pub. Thanks to Steve, Stuart and their staff/helpers/crew/assistants/team for making us all feel welcome and for providing the comestibles.

Steve also revealed that, from 30th March, the Old Stables Bar and Bottle Shop will be open six days per week only closing on Tuesdays. Opening times will be Monday and Wednesday 4pm-7pm; Thursday-Saturday 3pm-9pm; Sunday 2pm-7pm. That news was one of the highlights of the day but, as you can see from the photo of Steve receiving the certificate for Cider Pub of the Year, there would have been a bit of an embarrassment had it been an emotion which I've not experienced for many years.

The eagle-eyed amongst you will have noticed that there is something lacking in the picture - a frame for the certificate. As I tend to leave things until the last minute I unpacked the frame for the certificate and one of the corner joints came apart. 'Ha ha!' I thought 'luckily I have a spare,' which was being kept for our last presentation for Rural Pub of the Year. Unfortunately it had an identical fault so I had two to replace and - judging by the inability of both the staff and the manager at the retailer where I last tried to explain the intricacies of the meaning of 'Merchantable Quality' - getting them changed, I thought, could take some time.

Fortunately, on returning to the store, common sense (a fairly rare commodity these days) prevailed and new frames were provided with the one for the 'Peel' being delivered by myself on Monday 23rd March to the satisfaction of all concerned.



4TH ANNUAL



7-9  
MAY

FREE  
ENTRY

2026

**BEER & CIDER FESTIVAL**  
**45+ ALES, CIDERS & PERRIES**  
**FOOD – SPACIOUS GARDENS**

CO-HOSTED WITH EAST BEDS CAMRA AT  
BIGGLESWADE CONSERVATIVE CLUB,  
SG18 8BA

OPENS AT 3PM ON THURSDAY  
NOON ON FRIDAY & SATURDAY



[WWW.BIGGBEERFEST.ORG](http://WWW.BIGGBEERFEST.ORG)



# GL<sup>®</sup>BE

HOME IMPROVEMENTS



- ✓ WINDOWS
- ✓ DOORS
- ✓ ROOFLINE
- ✓ CONSERVATORIES & WARMROOFS

YOUR LOCAL EXPERTS FOR UPVC,  
COMPOSITE AND ALUMINIUM INSTALLATIONS



SHOWROOM NOW OPEN IN CLOPHILL

✉ [admin@globehomeimprovements.co.uk](mailto:admin@globehomeimprovements.co.uk)

🌐 [www.globehomeimprovements.co.uk](http://www.globehomeimprovements.co.uk)

☎ **01525 304060**