



FREE THE CASKET FREE

NEWSLETTER OF THE
EAST BEDFORDSHIRE BRANCH OF
THE CAMPAIGN FOR REAL ALE



GREENE KING ARE AT IT AGAIN!

Villagers were left shocked in Clifton recently when Greene King announced the closure of the Admiral, and for no other apparent reason than they wanted to concentrate business on their other Pub in the village the Golden Lion.

Not as shocked however as the manageress of the Admiral. The first she knew about it was when the local press contacted her for a comment!

This unfortunately seems typical of how Greene King seem to go about their business these days, with not a thought for the people involved and certainly with no thought for their customers.

The Admiral is not doing a bad trade at present, and customers from here are not likely to be using the Golden Lion. Nothing wrong with the Golden Lion, it is a nice Village pub, but completely different to the Admiral.

All that may happen is that Greene King will lose out altogether as the Admiral customers migrate to Shefford, just down the road.

The Golden Lion may also suffer as a result of the breweries heavy handedness as people may boycott this Pub as well in retaliation.

The Admiral is still trading as we go to press. But Greene King will give no indication as to how much longer. Write to Greene King at Bury St Edmunds to show your disapproval, address on page 3.

**YOUR LOCAL CAMRA MAGAZINE, PACKED
WITH LOCAL NEWS**

A Few Hints and Tips on Home brewing

The following are purely a few personal observations made over many years of home brewing and is in no way intended to be a definitive guide. Several good books, published by CAMRA, are available for the Home brewer. The 3 normal ways in which homebrew can be made are as follows:

1) *From a kit.*

Yes well, you are obviously connoisseurs of fine ales then; we don't need to dwell any further on that. Only to say that if you do want to make some quick and easy "beer" then it is always best to get a well known brand with 3Kg. of malt extract. But I have found that what ever kit is used there is always that taint of extract and you know it's not the real thing. Better off getting some bottle conditioned beer.

2) *Using malt extract syrup.*

This makes a much better brew than the kit as you have more control over the finished product, there are numerous recipes available, and you have the opportunity to try some of your own. It is possible to almost eliminate that taint of extract. Crystal malt, black malt, roast

barley, sugars, syrups and your own choice of hops can all be used in recipe formulation. By also following the water, an acceptable beverage is produced. However, the quality of beer and taste of the beer is still not up to the standard of brewing by the full mash system.

3) *The Full Mash.*

This is the only way to brew beer at home. You have total control over everything and the quality and taste of the beer produced is second to none.

I don't want to go into the full procedure here, I would just like to share a few tips that I have found give me just that extra quality.

My water treatment consists of putting 12 grams of gypsum into 25 Ltrs of water, boil the water for 15 minutes the night before you intend to brew. After it has cooled, transfer 15 Ltrs to the mash Tun, to this add 2 grams of Epsom salts, this will bring the mash to about 5ph, it is worth the trouble!

The strike heat of the mash liquor is 76 °C, the mash will then settle out to 66 / 67°C once the grist has been added, keep this temperature for 1½ hrs as the wort will ferment out a bit further and produce a slightly dryer taste.

Sparge until a pH of 6.3/6.5 is reached or O.G. of 10.05, any more and unwanted residues are taken into the boiler. I top the boiler up to about 33 Ltrs then boil for 1½ hrs, adding late hops and Irish moss 15 minutes from the end.

Always boil with the lid off the boiler as this will let the volatile hop oils evaporate and stop any off flavours developing in the finished beer.

Enjoy your brewing

Malcolm Lloyd.

Admiral, Clifton

To register your disapproval of the closure of the Admiral, and the way in which it was brought to the attention of the public, and most of all, Lynda, the manageress, please write to:

***The Managing Director
Greene King plc
Westgate Brewery
Bury St. Edmunds
Suffolk
IP33 1QT***

PUB QUIZ

It's all about animals this time:

- 1.** What was the name of Dorothy's dog in the "Wizard of Oz"?
- 2.** What was Dumbo's name before he sneezed and was dubbed "Dumbo"?
- 3.** What was the lion called in the "Lion the witch and the wardrobe"?
- 4.** In the Jungle Book, Baloo was the bear—who was the panther?
- 5.** What Scandinavian city was the Duke of Wellington's favourite horse named after?
- 6.** What is Tin Tin's dog called?
- 7.** What is the name of John Arbuckle's lazy fat cat?
- 8.** What was the original name of Mickey Mouse?
- 9.** What is the name of the legendary flying horse?
- 10.** The Lone Ranger's horse was called Silver. What was Tonto's called?

Answers on page 15

PUB NEWS

Wheatsheaf:

Robbie and Jane Stimson have won the Greene King National Quality in glass award, beating over 1300 other Pubs!

The Wheatsheaf has long been a favourite of East Beds CAMRA, winning our 2005 community Pub of the year award.

The Greene King award is for Excellence in beer quality, overall service and for the “perfect pint”. Both Robbie and Jane well deserve this award, we are constantly telling people this is the best pint of



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**BREWERS OF BEDFORDSHIRE
BEER OF THE YEAR 2003
THE VILLAGE BIKE**

Greene King mild anywhere bar non, and the IPA is pretty damn good too!

With the award, presented at the Crowne plaza hotel, goes holiday vouchers, champagne and a plaque to commemorate the achievement.

It was no great surprise to us that the couple achieved MAXIMUM score in all categories. To win the award, the pub had to maintain quality over a period of time with mystery visits to confirm what we already knew, that the beer in the Wheatsheaf is to quote a phrase “simply the best”. Our heartfelt congratulations to both Robbie and Jane for a very well deserved accolade!

New Inn, Sandy.

Owners Pubmaster are displaying a for sale board.

Cross, Beeston.

Present owners have again applied for planning permission to convert this roadside Pub into a private house.

They are however still advertising the property for sale as a Free House, and a “going concern”, so there is still hope for it.

PLEASE MENTION THE “CASKET” WHEN REPLYING TO ADVERTISERS

Social Secretary's Report 2004/2005

In this my first year as branch social secretary, East Beds CAMRA have enjoyed a successful and generally well supported programme of social and campaigning events.

Unfortunately an early attempt at a joint social with the North Herts. branch had to be cancelled due to the lack of a mini bus driver. Last year's mild crawl was also poorly attended and we need to consider the format of this year's events perhaps focusing on those few establishments which regularly provide the product.

However all other events have been very successful. We were able to take nearly 40 people on a coach to Peterborough beer festival. The branch's 10th anniversary was celebrated in style, with 80 people present at the Engineers for beer and a buffet.

Other smaller but well supported outings were made to Bedford beer festival, the Sow and Pigs, Toddington (with other CAMRA branches), B&T, Charles Wells tasting sessions (twice), an Xmas meal at the Tudor Oaks, National Pubs week bus crawl and a recent pub crawl and river trip to Greenwich. Numerous small groups have visited other local beer festivals at Hitchin and Cambridge. Personally I have found all the events to be very enjoyable. I hope others have a similar opinion. If you haven't been on one yet, we would be happy to welcome you this year.

Forthcoming events planned this year are a return to Peterborough beer festival in August, and a summer Brewery visit and barbecue at the new home of Buntingford Brewery. See our website for details of other trips.

Tony Morris

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BEER/WINE MATHEMATICS

This is pretty neat how it works out.
This is cool beer/winemaths!!!!!!
DON'T CHEAT BY SCROLLING DOWN FIRST!
It takes less than a minute.....
Work this out as you read.

Be sure you don't read the bottom until you've worked it out! This is not one of those waste of time things, it's fun.

1. First of all, pick the number of times a week that you would like to have a pint or a glass or two of wine. (try for more than once)
2. Multiply this number by 2 (Just to be honest)
- 3 Add 5. (for Sunday)
4. Multiply it by 50 I'll wait while you get the calculator.....
5. If you have already had your birthday this year add 1755. If you haven't, add 1754
6. Now subtract the four-digit year that you were born.

You should have a three-digit number

The first digit of this was your original number
(i.e., how many times you want to have a pint week).

The next two numbers are



YOUR AGE! - (Oh YES, it IS!!!!)

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History of British Ale and Alehouses

Native Ale was brewed without hops in villages and settlements about 5000 years ago but not in alehouses until the introduction of taverns by the Romans when ale was brewed with hops to improve their flavour and quality. From the 14th century, ale became known as beer and sold in beer houses. No earliest taverns and alehouses survive but archaeological evidence including drinking vessels have been found in London dating from about AD300. Many early inns were built by the church.

Early Anglo Saxon period alehouses were so numerous that King Edgar in about AD970 tried to limit their number and introduced graded measures. The pegs on the insides of wooden drinking vessels marked the limit for each drinker before passing the vessel on to his companions and this gave rise to the expression 'to take someone down a peg or two'.

Eventually taverns, alehouses and inns became known collectively as public houses or pubs and a move to control them was made by Henry V11 in 1495 which gave magistrates the power to close them. In 1552 an act came into force which required alehouse keepers to obtain a special license to operate. In 1577 there were 17367 alehouses, 1991 inns and 401 taverns in England and Wales.

Clifford Luff

Pub News

Brown Bear, Biggleswade.

Since our article in the last edition of the "Casket" the Brown Bear has a new Landlord and Landlady.

The new managers Alan and Kathy moved in on 10th May.

Alan likes his Real Ale's and the couple are already planning their first beer festival for August. The four hand pumps will be featuring an ever Changing selection of beers.

Alan and Kathy would like to see some of the old faces back in the Brown Bear, and first impressions look very promising.

The Crown, Henlow.

Closed until early June for a major refurbishment.

Rose, Biggleswade.

An interesting selection of guest beers are appearing at the Rose regularly these days. Six hand pumps serving a wide variety of Ales from £1.90 to £2.20 per pint!

Chequers, Stotfold.

Gary and Mike Payton, Landlords at the Chequers have now made the lounge bar completely non-smoking. Trade has actually increased since they took this bold step, a natural progression from the non-smoking restaurant.

On the Buses for National Pubs Week

To mark the culmination of this year's National Pubs week, members of East Beds branch embarked upon a brave (some would say foolhardy) attempt to visit all of the branch's eight entries in the current edition of the CAMRA Good Beer guide. No problem there you might think, but try doing it on a single day using only Public transport.

Four members from the west side of the A1 assembled as planned at Biggleswade bus station at 11.00 am for the first short leg to Broom. But where were I and a fellow member from Potton? Err, stuck on the late

running bus between the two towns actually! Failure at the first hurdle for the two of us, as badly co-ordinated bus times and pub opening hours meant we had missed our only opportunity of getting to and from the pubs in Broom by Public transport. However, not so the others, who were making up for our absence in the Cock when we finally joined them by means of a taxi from Biggleswade. "Never have pints of Greene King been so welcome!"

While we finished our pints in the Cock, the others paid a short and sweet visit across the green to the White Horse, where



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Benches can be viewed at the Pig and Whistle Public House, Stotfold.

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excellent Batemans was had, courtesy of Greene King's guest Ale list. In under an hour it was time to head back to Biggleswade for our next connection to the southern extremities of the branch. We had a little time to kill, so we popped into the Rose. Not currently a GBG Pub, but with a welcome refurbishment and pints of Potton Shannon, possibly one for the future.

As it transpired we had more than a little time to kill, as once again Stagecoach let us down. The bus to Henlow was so late that we had no chance of making the first connection to Stotfold as originally planned. By way of (considerable) consolation, we enjoyed a swift pint in the Engineers Arms before boarding the taxibus 90 service, to the consternation of the driver and other passengers, who had rarely witnessed so many people on this tiny shuttle bus.

A pleasant surprise awaited us in Stotfold, in the shape of a recently refurbished Stag, offering Adnams bitter, Nottingham Supreme and Hanby Rainbow Chaser: the latter was certainly in fine form.

The delay in getting to Stotfold meant that our original plan of walking to and from the Tudor

Oaks at Astwick (The only one of our GBG Pubs not directly on a bus route) was scuppered, but thanks to Jaquie Binnington and Pete Josling, who had joined us temporarily, we were still able to do justice to the range in the Oaks, which included beers from Archers and Potton.



Picking up the taxibus in Stotfold again, it was back to the Engineers for a

more leisurely session. As usual the range and quality were excellent, I particularly enjoyed the beers from Tower Brewery. 17.30 and it was back on the road to Biggleswade once again. This time Stagecoach got it bang on, and we arrived in plenty of time for pints of excellent XX mild in the town's only GBG entry, The Wheatsheaf. Substitutions were made to our team at this point, as we temporarily gained Bob Trenholme from Old Stables brewery, while others retired hurt. Chairman Chris Bunyan blaming his lack of staying power on an earlier bag of chips! Boarding the Arriva link bus (also on time, as were the rest of the services that evening), we arrived at the John O' Gaunt shortly after opening time.

We had an hour to enjoy the hospitality and fine beers in a superbly run village local



before it was on to the Old Coach House at Potton. Potton brewery greeted us and kindly bought the three surviving



members pints of Shambles (highly appropriate at this stage).

We were not quite finished yet. A late bus brought the three survivors to the Sir William Peel in Sandy for final pints of Old Stables Black Beauty.



So with a fair wind and perseverance we proved that in a day it is just about possible to safely visit the finest pubs in our mainly rural branch without resorting to a car.

Thanks to Stagecoach for providing free transport for the day, Arriva for getting Simon and I back to Potton after closing time and an unknown operator (believed to be WAGN) for returning Alan Binnington home.

Tony Morris

Membership Report.

Branch membership during 2004/2005 showed a positive of 6 with the 34 members who joined, renewed or moved into the branch countered by 28 members not renewing or moving out of the area. Another positive is the total of 168 includes the landlords of 6 of our Pubs, 3 of which are GBG Pubs. For a small, well spread out branch such as ours, this is quite a good effort.

The main centres in Biggleswade, Sandy & Potton are where the largest numbers are situated, though Stotfold, where the push for the sub-branch originated has 22 and Henlow where our premier pub is situated supplies 15 members.

The message is we have done well over the last couple of years but it would be nice to do much better with more members and more active members.

Alan Binnington

Remember:

We wish to make our membership up to 200 this year. With just a little help from existing members to recruit just one of your friends, and for those who are not yet members, just read this issue of the "Casket" and you will see the benefits of joining, so come on, an extra 30 members is not that difficult!

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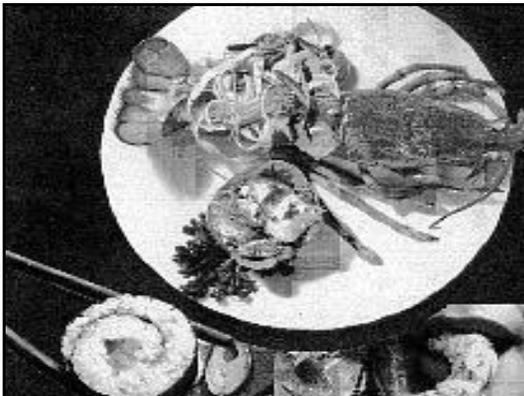
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Greene king accused of overcharging!

It was reported on BBC Look East recently that some Greene King tenants are accusing the company of overcharging them for their beer. Apparently tenants can pay up to £40 more for 22 gallons than a managed house is charged for the same product.

Tenants argue that this puts them at an unfair advantage and makes it difficult to compete with managed houses. We all know how expensive guest beers can be in a Greene king Pub, now we know why!

One tenant in Bury St. Edmunds has resigned and is so disillusioned that he is leaving the trade altogether

New book on local Brewery

Charles Wells have published a book about the history of the Brewery, it's Pub estate and the Wells brewing family.

Wells was founded in 1876 by Charles Wells but did not move to it's current site until 1976, one hundred years after it was founded.

Water is still drawn from their own well to make the beer, as it always has been.

The book is edited by Roger Protz, who also edits the CAMRA good beer guide, and is a well known writer on all things related to the trade.

The book is priced at £10 and available from Bedford museum, the tourist information centre and the Cecil Higgins gallery

Please mention the "Casket" when replying to advertisements

Chairman's report: It is my privilege and pleasure to report to you for the 4th year, the progress of the East Beds branch, which, its size and rural location; I consider to be a true jewel in the CAMRA crown.

It cannot, in my opinion, be stressed strongly enough that our contribution of £1000 to CAMRA in the last year, is a phenomenal achievement when it's noted that we do not hold a beer festival, and are limited, not least by our rural spread, for opportunities to raise funds.

I'd like, therefore, to take this opportunity to express my thanks to all who helped with the apple day, which was our main source of income, especially the unsung "back room boy" who carries out so much behind the scenes organisation to enable the event to take place, John Walsh.

We are once again proud to proclaim that the Bedfordshire Pub of the year for 2004 was the Engineers Arms, Henlow, up against some stiff opposition from the other two Bedfordshire branches, and congratulations to Kevin and Claire for all the hard work that goes into winning such an award.

This year (2004-2005) has seen the best social attendance ever, due in no small part to the hard work and thought put into what is usually a thankless job, by Tony Morris, our social secretary, and I'd like to thank him for all his efforts and confirm that he is willing to stand for another year.

Could I re-iterate that attending these trips does not require "woolly jumper and beards", they are good fun and it would be nice to see a few new faces: look in the "Casket" or the website for details.

Finally, I would like to also formally thank some other unsung heroes: - Sue Bunyan for sorting out a tangled web of accounts that she inherited, and Mark Richards for his input in bringing us into the 21st Century with our website.

Chris Bunyan

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8. MORTIMER
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HELP CHARITY

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Contributions to the *Casket* are always welcome.

Please www.eastbedscamra.org.uk

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1/6 Page:	£10
1/3 Page	£20
1/2 Page	£30
Full Page	£50

Payment to East Beds CAMRA

East Bedfordshire CAMRA – Social Events & Branch Meetings 2005

May:

Tues 24th – Sat 28th, Cambridge Beer Festival. Branch trip (incl Branch Meeting) by minibus or coach, depending on demand, on Wed 25th.

June:

Sat 11th, CAMRA regional meeting, Engineers Arms, Henlow. Start 12 noon.

Wed 29th Branch Meeting, 8pm, Old Coach House, Potton.

July:

Wed 6th Joint Engineers Arms/CAMRA trip to Black Country. Full details from Kevin at the Engineers. Please book early.

Wed 27th Branch Meeting, John O'Gaunt, Sutton

August:

Tues 23rd – Sat 27th
Peterborough Beer Festival.

Branch trip by minibus or coach, depending on demand, on Wed 24th. See What's Brewing or CAMRA website for details.

Wed 31st Branch Meeting, 8pm, Tudor Oaks, Astwick.