

THE HERTFORDSHIRE NEWSLETTER

FREE

The Campaign for Real Ale

DEC 1988/JAN 1989

CIRCULATION 5000

NUMBER 112

TARTAN DOWN THE TUBE

One can not help but raise a rye smile when one hears of a big brewery getting a dose of their own medicine. I refer of course to the Australians' Elders IXL bid to take over Scottish & Newcastle.

Camra, however, are taking a firm stand and backing S & N in their opposition to the bid, despite having crossed swords with the company in the last few years as they have taken over Matthew Brown, Theakston and Home breweries, rationalized the product range and hiked up prices. Camra firmly believe that a merger with Courage which Elders already own, will only result in loss of beers, breweries and pubs, and will be another step towards the "Fosterization" of the British pub.

A merger of the two companies would give Elders about a 20% share of the market, second only to Bass with 21%. It would also give them six breweries in the north of England as well as in Reading, Bristol and Edinburgh. Something would have to go and it would probably be those plants not geared up to mass lager production. The bid should be referred to the Monopolies

and Mergers Commission but if anything is certain in this life, their usual ostrich-like posture to the brewing industry will continue. S & N director, Henry Fairweather, says the £1.6 billion bid clearly undervalues the company. But already the last of the Younger family on the board, David Younger, has defected to the Elders camp and has lost his place on the board; according to some reports his biggest crime was being a Guardian reader.

Lindisfarne, the Geordie rock group, have shown their support by releasing a single called 'Save Our Ales'. The Newcastle brewery has produced a new beer, Scots Ale 1054og, to let Newcastle know that "the traditions and skills of the company's brewers are still alive" (presumably their current beers don't).

Company employees were not slow in coming up with some good campaigning slogans. You could try them out on the next Aus you meet: 'British Brew Not Kangaroo', 'We Don't Need Firkin Fosters', 'Respect Your Youngers Not Your Elders', 'Australia: No Taste, No Tradition, No Chance', 'G'day...Goodbye'.

THE WHITE HORSE



castle street ... old hertford

NOW UNDER NEW MANAGEMENT

*Widest selection of real ales
in Hertford with many guest beers
served on gravity and hand pump*

Reduced prices on cask ale
5.30 to 6.30 pm Mon — Fri

*"Order your beer in Firkins from our wide
selection. We will loan you taps & coolers."*

The Crooked Billet

Colney Heath

Tel: Bowmansgreen 22128



*One of
Hertfordshires
Old Village Pubs
Traditional
Old Beer
In Draughty
Surroundings*

Hot food *always* available
Large selection of collectors Ales for sale.
Live music (Folk) nearly every Tuesday.

FARMERS BOY COMES OF AGE

When you see what some brewers do to their public houses I can't help thinking they are not fit custodians of the nation's pubs. If parents treated their children in the same way steps would be taken to separate the two. Such thoughts were provoked when I saw what they had done to the Farmers Boy, London Road, St. Albans. Benskins had a perfectly good locals' pub that was probably only in need of a coat of paint; they handed it over to Top Taverns, whoever they are, who have done a real hatchet job on the place. Firstly the name has gone, it is now called "The Wine and Ale Cafe". There is no maroon and gold Benskins livery; it's gone green which blends in so well with the shop next door one could easily pass it by unnoticed. Inside, the toilets have moved to give a bit more space, the bar has been lowered which makes it impossible to stand and drink at, unless you are under five feet tall. The off white decor and odd wall displays have all been done before in other pubs but the person who thought of putting a shirt and tie in a glass case forgot the sign underneath "Break the glass and use if found improperly dressed in this establishment". The only real novelty, is the swivel-top bar stools, though the use of this innovation is beyond me. It is obvious that the old clientele would not be welcome or feel comfortable here, in something that does not replace the old Farmers Boy or the Crystal Palace opposite that was knocked down earlier this year.

Top Taverns apparently have done conversions for several brewers, including Courage, Scottish & Newcastle as well as several Free Houses. If any readers have come across any of the fruits of their labours elsewhere we would be interested to hear about them.

By the way Benskins and Tetleys Bitter is on handpump in the Wine and Ale Cafe and it is open 11 to 11.

Steve Bury



NEWS OF THE BREWS

McMullens are changing the recipe of their **Country Bitter** — a slightly sweeter less hoppy brew "something like Pedigree" is being aimed for. We wonder how many dedicated country drinkers were asked if they wanted their tippie tampered with.

Greene King are ceasing brewing real beers at their Biggleswade plant. As from next year all **KK, XX, IPA** and **Abbot** will come from Bury St. Edmunds. Greene King connoisseurs have long maintained that the Bury products were superior.

Biggleswade will be dedicated to bottle, can and keg beers and lagers. **Greene King's Christmas Ale** has been renamed **Winter Ale** to give it a longer shelf life. With an OG of 1060 it is definitely not one for the drivers.

Allied Breweries are reviewing their range of 30 cask beers with an eye to 'rationalising' the brews (you can bet your life they are not going to increase the range); while **Benskins Bitter** is safe, **Ind Coope Bitter** looks destined for the chop as does **Halls Harvest Bitter** and **Tetley Imperial**.

PUBS OF THE MONTHS

The Herts South choice for October was the **Hope & Anchor**, Welham Green. The pub dates back to 1730 and was on the village green but this has now been built on. The pub is now in Vincenzo Close, named after the balloonist who touched down nearby on the first flight in Britain.

It is a classic two-bar beams and brass pub with a display of bric-a-brac and Courage plan that it will be one of their 14 "model pubs". Directors, Best Bitter and real John Smiths are on offer; it is the only known outlet for the latter in the County.

The landlord has won two Cellerman awards, seven entries in the Good Beer Guide and a pub garden award. During the celebrations on the 19th my Camra tie was ceremoniously sniped off and added to the pub's collection. Many thanks to Gerry and Penny Tuck and keep up the good work.

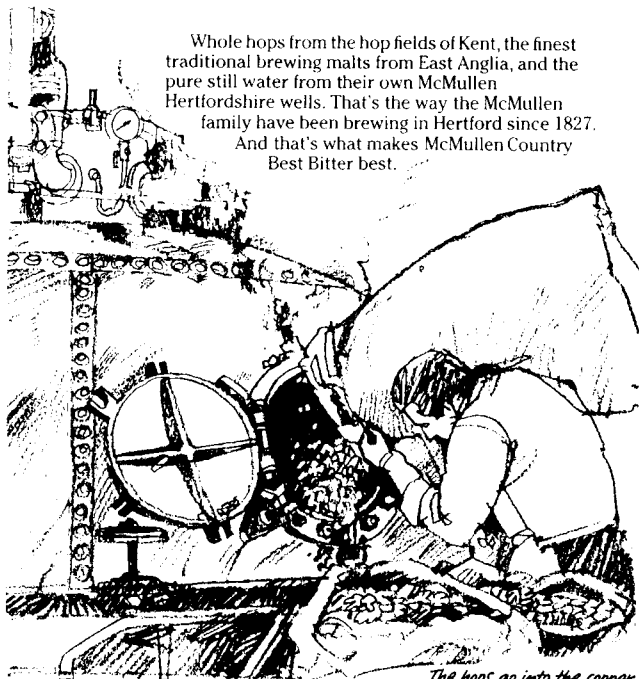
Steve Bury

By the time you read this the first pub converted back to real ale in the County, due to the campaigning activities by the Hertfordshire Branch of Camra way back in '73, will have received a long overdue PoM award, on 22nd November.

Cont.

McMullen Country — that's Best

Whole hops from the hop fields of Kent, the finest traditional brewing malts from East Anglia, and the pure still water from their own McMullen Hertfordshire wells. That's the way the McMullen family have been brewing in Hertford since 1827. And that's what makes McMullen Country Best Bitter best.



Brewers in Hertfordshire since 1827

maidaid bucks and shires



Unit 2, Wycombe Industrial Mall, West End Street
High Wycombe, Buckinghamshire HP11 2QF
Telephone (0494) 40225

Commercial glasswashing and dishwashing equipment.
Detergents and after sales service.
Also trading as mbs services and mbs chemicals.

Many members will recall those heady/gassy days when the Young's at the **Lower Red Lion**, Fishpool St., St.Albans used to be served on top pressure. Many's the campaigner who would nonchalantly order a bevvy and on being presented a fizzy pint would say "no thanks" and walk out. (Would that we could afford to do such today, if the need arose!)

Nowadays the only true Free House in St.Albans, and still the only outlet for Youngs, the Lower Red is one of the finest ports of call in the city for the ale and pub-lover.

G.A.C.

The **Queen Adelaide**, Shenley has won the award for December in the zone that covers Radlett, Borehamwood and Elstree.

The **Queen Adelaide** is situated by the village pond with the famous Shenley Lock-up at the entrance to the car park. The pub was extended last year without losing any of the atmosphere, keeping it the village local it has always been.

There are four pubs locally so there is a lot of competition for trade; Ann and David our hosts have therefore taken full advantage of the extended hours and open 11-11 except Tuesday and 5-7 Saturday.

The presentation is on the 13th December so come and sample the handpumped Wethereds and Flowers.

Steve Bury.

SONG ABOUT BREWERS

According to the 'Good Beer Guide' and the Campaign for Real Ale, breweries that project a macho image in their advertising campaigns are promoting 'lager lout' violence.

God made the wicked Brewer
For a mystery and a sign,
That rowdy youth in search of truth
Might turn instead to wine,
As served to well-bred gentlemen
In restaurants and clubs;
But youth keeps drinking lager
And sinking pints in pubs.

The anti-lager lobby
Continues to complain:
'The lives it wrecks through drunken sex
Are more than from champagne.'
They blame the macho image
On which each each advert dwells:
'The figures climb — it fosters crime!'
The Brewer says, 'It sells.'

If we could ban the Brewer
Who flogs a billion cans,
All those who came to watch a game
Would be angelic fans.
There'd be no city riots
Or mayhem in the shires,
If every male drank Adam's ale
And joined their local choirs.

Roger Woddis — *First seen in the Listener 3 November 1988*

EARWIGGING

Overheard in a well known yacht club in Cowes: "Six pints of Burts please." "£5.10 please". Lager drinker at bar to barman "Here, you've undercharged him!" "No that's right, 85 pence a pint." "Blow me, (or words to that effect, as he stared into his yellow liquid) I paid £1.20 for this: — I'm changing my drink." — Another convert.

TOWN AND AROUND

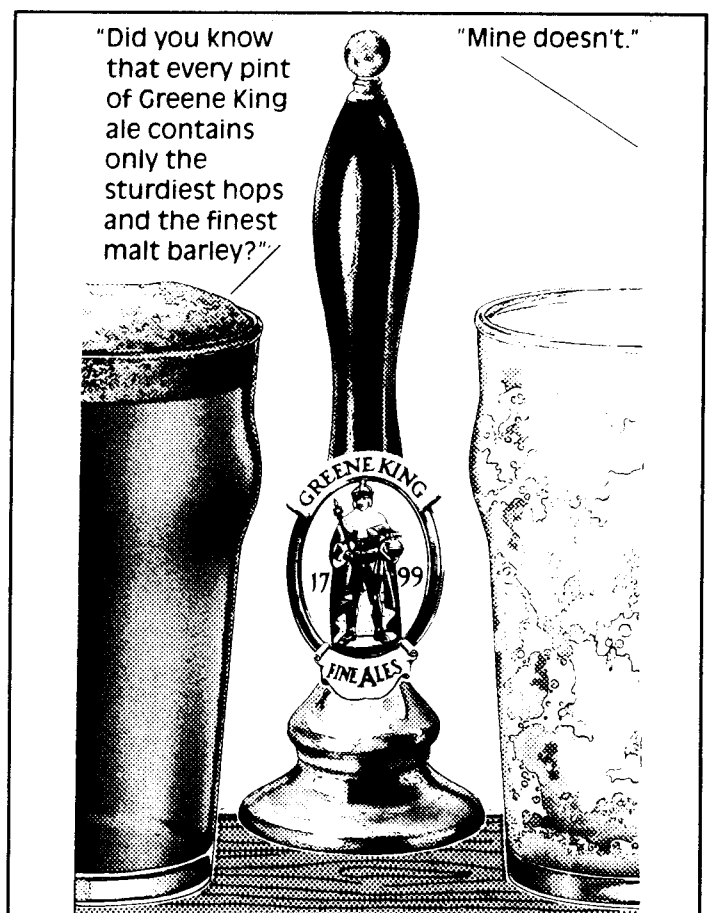
The Plough, Wallington was boarded up at the beginning of October. Greene King consider the pub unviable and are considering ways of disposing of it. The villagers are angered and said that with a little money spent on it and with the right management the **Plough** could be successful. A petition has been drawn up and sent to the brewery.

Bob Harrington of the sparkling horse brasses, **Wrestlers Arms, Hatfield** has retired. He was the 1987 winner of Allied's Guild of Master Cellarmen. He has presented his plaque to Benskins where it will now hang in the boardroom. We wish Bob a long and happy retirement. The shocking pink paint on the outside of the **Rose & Crown, St.Albans** has been removed as it was put on without planning permission in a conservation area. The **Kings Head, Bushey** fell down (did it fall or was it pushed?) while undergoing repairs. Benskins have plans to replace it, possibly with something Prince Charles would approve of. He definitely wouldn't like the aircraft hanger that is going up to replace the **Railway Arms, Hemel Hempstead**.

As we go to press the finishing touches are going on at the **Boat, Berkhamsted**, this ex-Ind Coope pub has virtually been rebuilt by Fullers. **The Robin Hood, St.Albans** is re-opening late November after major alterations. The **Halfway House, Bovingdon** re-opened in August after being knocked through into one bar. The **Alcock & Brown**, formerly the **Crown, Berkhamsted** has now re-opened under the name of The Galleria Bar Brasserie; enough said!

The asking price for the **Nelson, Wheathampstead** is thought to be around £175,000. The **Squirrel, Stevenage** has had an £80,000 refit and £120,000 has been lavished on the **George, Hitchin**. The **Rose & Crown, Kings Langley** is closed until next year for a £360,000 facelift; that's an awful lot of beer!

Benskins/Allied/Cavalier Steak Houses are changing their name again this time to Porterhouse — same food — different name.



DIARY DATES

Mid Chilterns Branch

Wednesday 7 December: Social, **Eagle, Nash Mills** 8.30pm
 Monday 12 December: Social, **Eagle, Amersham** 8.30pm
 Wednesday 21 December: Christmas meal, **Old Crown, Skirmett**
 Wednesday 4 January: Chesham pub crawl, meet at **Jolly Sportsman** 8.30pm
 Contact: Roy Humprey Hemel Hempstead 833451

Watford & District Branch

Wednesday 7 December: Branch meeting, **Wheatsheaf, Watford**, 8.30pm followed by social at **Victoria, Oxhey** 9.45pm
 Friday 16 December: Christmas pub crawl in London. Start **Bishops Finger, Smithfield**, 5pm, then **Sekford Arms, City Pride, Eagle, Surprise, Pakenham Arms, Calthorpe Arms**.
 Tuesday 27 December: Post Xmas Ramble, meet Tring Station 10.30am
 Contact: Martin Few 0923 52412

Hertfordshire South Branch

Tuesday 13 December: Branch meeting and Pub of the Month, **Queen Adelaide, Shenley** 8pm
 Friday 6 January: New Year Party, Bramfield, contact Eric Sim for details.
 Tuesday 17 January: Branch meeting and **A.G.M.** at the **Garibaldi, St. Albans** 8.00pm prompt.
 of the year.
 Tuesday 24 January: Pub of the Month, **White Horse, Hertford**.
 Contact: Bob Norrish 05827 69923

Hertfordshire North Branch

Wednesday 14 December: Meal and Social, **Rose & Crown, Baldock** 8.30pm
 Wednesday 11 January: Social, **Chaise & Pair, Barkway** 8.30pm
 Wednesday 25 January: Social, **Lytton Arms, Knebworth** 8.30pm
 Wednesday 8 February: **A.G.M.** & social, **Red Lion, Stevenage** 8.30pm
 Contact: Jonathan Fynn, Royston 44043.



Peter & Lesley Reynolds welcome you to



THE STAR INN

FURNEUX PELHAM



Rayments BBA ★ Greene King IPA & Abbot

**GOOD HOME COOKED FOOD
MONDAY TO SATURDAY**

☐ Brent Pelham 227

CHRISTMAS QUIZ (If you can't find a pub open)

1. Where can you get Notters Stout and Maidens Mild?
2. Who brews: a) Topsy Turvy b) Guvnor's Special Brew c) Suffolk Punch d) Great British Heavy e) Butser Brew Bitter f) VPA?
3. Name the most Northerly, Easterly, Southerly and Westerly breweries in the U.K.
4. Where are the first and last?
5. Whose symbols are 1) A ram b) A pig c) An eagle d) A dolphin e) A bee f) Two bees g) A fox h) A hart?
6. Locals: a) Where is the mini-zoo? b) Where was the horse race? c) Whose arms are in the wrong County? d) Whose progress was delayed at OS189128? e) Where is Fagin's sidekick's shop? f) Whose address is Quickmoors Lane? g) Where is the 3-bar quadraped? h) What is the implement in earshot of paradise? i) Where is the free house furniture j) How many apples in the County?
7. Name all the real beers produced by Allied Breweries.
8. Where is the Five Crowns, Est. 1965?
9. Name all the Courage and Scottish and Newcastle breweries.
10. Where will you find the longest serving licensee?

The tie-breaker will be the best anagram of Andrea Gillies and Iain Dobson.
 All the answers can be found in the best stocking filler... a leg? No, the 1989 Good Beer Guide available from all good pubs, bookshops or Camra H.Q. 34 Alma Road, St. Albans. The editor reserves the right to disqualify anyone he believes to have had inside or unfair knowledge about the questions. The prize is you get to edit the 1990 edition or a copy of Neil Hanson's Classic Town Pubs.
 Answers to E. Sim address below.

APPLICATION FOR CAMRA MEMBERSHIP

I/We wish to join the Campaign for Real Ale Limited, and agree to abide by the Memorandum and Articles of Association of the Campaign.

NAME(S)..... DATE

ADDRESS.....

POSTCODE.....

SIGNATURE..... TELEPHONE NUMBERS(S)

I/We enclose remittance for individual/joint membership for one year: **U.K. £9** **Overseas £12**

I/We would like to receive further information about CAMRA

Please send your remittance (payable to CAMRA Limited) with this application form to:

**THE MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY, CAMRA LTD.,
34 ALMA ROAD, ST. ALBANS, HERTS. AL1 3BW**

The Hertfordshire Newsletter is produced by the Hertfordshire North, Hertfordshire South, Watford & District and Mid-Chilterns branches of the Campaign for Real Ale Ltd. The views expressed are not necessarily those of the Editor, CAMRA Ltd or its Branches. Any articles or letters for publication should preferably be typewritten and double-spaced; handwritten items should also be well spaced and as legible as possible please. Send to: Eric Sim, 10 Heron Way, Hatfield, Herts, AL10 8QL.
Subscriptions: £2.50 for 12 issues. Send to: 10 Heron Way, Hatfield, Herts. AL10 8QL. Cheques payable: CAMRA Herts Campaigning Fund.
 Advertising: £8 per 2.5 cm column. Artwork can be made up at extra cost. Contact **Eric Sim ☐ Hatfield 60647** for details. **COPY DATE FOR Dec/January EDITION: 1st January.**
Composed by D & S Graphics on Macintosh DTP Quark Xpress, Sucklings Yard, Church Street, Ware, Herts. ☐ (0920) 60228.