

THE HERTFORDSHIRE NEWSLETTER

FREE

CAMRA

The Campaign for Real Ale

DECEMBER/JANUARY

CIRCULATION 5000

NUMBER 118

NOBODDIES!

From being one of the most famous names on the Real Ale scene, it looks as though Boddingtons are set to become an anonymous bunch of nobodies. That is a definite possibility following the company's ridiculous decision to sell off their breweries at Strangeways, Manchester and Toxteth, Liverpool to Whitbreads for £50.7 million and to enter into an agreement to buy 'their' beer back from Whitbreads. Boddies themselves would then become just another pub-chain. From the drinkers point of view there are numerous dangers: brands will be lost; the brands that remain are liable to become blander as Whitbread push them as 'national' beer; a brewery is almost certain to close; prices will rise; and Whitbread will, at a stroke, have rid themselves of a competitor. However the biggest danger is that having achieved this coup, Whitbread will be sniffing round other breweries in which they have a shareholding - what price Marstons, Morlands or Brakspears going the same way? And Greene King are already rumoured to be considering the same sort of option. Having failed miserably in running their own breweries (look at the number they've had to close!) Whitbreads now look to have a policy of buying up famous names.

The sell-off was agreed at an acrimonious EGM, where despite the objections of the overwhelming majority of shareholders present, the city institutes, with their typically short-sighted approach, won the day with their large proxy

vote. The meeting highlighted the internal disagreements within the Boddingtons family themselves, with John, a former managing director accusing Ewart, the company president, of selling the company's birthright. Boddingtons major about turn with tradition accelerated when Ewart Boddington gave up the day to day running of the company last year and Denis Cassidy was appointed. Cassidy has a background in retailing having previously been with British Home Stores, and the expansion of Boddingtons Henry's Table restaurant (ie converted pub) chain and this latest sell-off is seen as his handy work.

Whitbreads support for Boddies Bitter is unlikely to spread to include Boddingtons mild nor the Oldham beers presently brewed at Strangeways and the future of these beers must be in great doubt. Even more at risk are Higsons beers and the Higsons brewery, the last in Liverpool. Boddingtons primarily took over Higsons to obtain their lager production capability. Whitbreads certainly don't need this, and with the brewery running under capacity, its closure would appear to be a case of 'when' rather than 'if'. Whitbreads are of course no strangers to closing breweries, and have already closed one brewery in Liverpool (Threfalls) during the 80s.

With the support of their loyal shareholders and customers Boddingtons fought many battles in the past to remain independent, it's a pity that their supporters' wishes should now be so callously ignored.

THE WHITE HORSE



castle street ... old hertford

*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

.....
Home cooked food weekday lunchtimes

The Crooked Billet

Colney Heath Tel: Bowmansgreen 22128



*One of
Hertfordshires
Old Village
Pubs
Traditional Old
World beer in
draughty
surroundings*

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

FULLER'S HERTS DOUBLE

Brent Walker have been busy in the pub market again, no sooner had they announced they were selling 11 pubs, 3 to Fuller's and 8 to Greene King, than they were snapping up 92 Grand Met pubs, mainly in East Anglia and the East Midlands. The good news about their sales is that it extends Fuller's estate in Herts as they get the Bull at Offley and the White Lion, Aspley. The Bull's long-serving landlord is expected to continue in residence and all three Fuller's beers are available. The White Lion is selling London Pride and ESB. Also included in the Fuller's deal is the Farmers Boy at Kensworth, Beds. The pubs Greene King obtained are all in East Anglia.

While on Brent Walker, they have announced that three of the beers transferred from Ipswich to Hartlepool with the closure of the Tolly Cobbold brewery will be dropped due to 'insufficient demand'. They are Paines XXX and EG, and Tolly XXXX. While 'rationalisation' of their range was always likely the decision does seem strange: EG was selected as one of the country's best 50 beers in the tastings done for the 1990 Good Beer Guide, (as incidentally was Higson's Bitter) and XXXX had only recently been relaunched to fill a niche in the Tolly range. Camerons' beers are liable to start being shipped as replacements.

BARLEY BREWING

Despite rumours to the contrary and staff changes, the Barley Brewery at the Fox & Hounds is brewing again after an interval. The previous brew, Nathaniel's Special (1036) has now been dropped and replaced with Old Dragon, at 1042 og a smooth, stronger bitter. To counter recent steep brewery price increases the new bitter is selling, at the time of writing, at 90p a pint. For the winter it is hoped that Old Dragon will be joined by a dark beer, as yet unnamed, with an og in the 1050s.

OTHER BREWERY NEWS

Pitfield the small London brewery have joined up with the West Midlands' Premier Ales to form Pitfield's Premier Brewing Company. All brewing will take place at Premier's Stourbridge Brewery, Pitfield having had to leave their Hoxton Square site due to redevelopment. However it is understood that they have not been brewing all their own beer for some months and that Premier were one of their suppliers.

Whitbread showed further contempt for their heritage by closing down their depots at the former Brickwoods Brewery at Portsmouth and the former Strongs brewery at Romsey. Redevelopment will no doubt follow.

XMAS QUIZ

Send the answers to the following 10 questions to Eric Sim (address on back page) by the 1st January 1990 and you could win 3 books: Brian Glover's New Beer Book, the CAMRA Directory of Beer and the Good Cider Guide.

Who used to brew at the following locations:

- Pelham Brewery, Furneux Pelham
- Victoria Maltings, Broadmeads, Ware
- Cannon Brewery, High Street, Watford
- St. Albans Brewery, Chequer Street, St. Albans
- Numbers Farm, Station Road, Kings Langley

Using the 1990 Good Beer Guide, identify a Hertfordshire pub which:

- serves Mauldon Squires Bitter
- has a mini-zoo in the garden
- has a Mild hand-pump in one bar only
- serves Nerthergate Bitter
- is near the National History Museum.

We'd like to take this opportunity to wish a Merry Christmas and a Happy and Successful New Year to all our readers and to then advertisers who have supported us over the last year.

AS BREWED IN HERTFORD

FOR OVER 100 YEARS

McMULLEN
ORIGINAL
AK

CASK CONDITIONED ALE

PUB NEWS

Plans for extending the Estcourt Arms, Watford, into an adjoining house in Woodford Road, were rejected by Watford Borough Council on the grounds that it would deplete the housing stock and the added trade would cause further parking problems. It is expected Benskins will appeal. The landlord, Pat Lynch, is hoping to add Tetleys alongside the Benskins and to be able to start redecorating now he knows which walls are staying.

No sooner had the Keens left the Bricklayers Arms, Flaunden, than a planning application appeared on behalf of the new owners Brian and Eileen Williams. This is to allow the erection of a single storey rear extension, the conversion of a store to a dining area, the formation of rooms in the roof and for 'internal alterations'. It is understood that some of this work has already been done, quite tastefully, and that the pub is open selling Brakspears Mild, Bitter and Special, Adnams Bitter and Fuller's London Pride.

On receiving his South Herts branch Pub of the Month award for October, Neil Munro of the Silver Cup, Harpenden, announced he was leaving the pub, and the trade, at the end of November. Owners Charles Wells refused to renew his mother-in-law's tenancy or grant it to himself and Lindsey. It all points to the brewery having some grandiose scheme in mind for the pub, which will be managed.

A planning application has been submitted to convert the Gibraltar Castle, Batford, to a private dwelling and to build six two-bedroomed flats on adjacent land.

Despite undergoing a revamp, the Rose & Crown, Chorleywood, has retained its two bars. The new licensee, Gillian Sherwood, formerly of the GBG-listed Six Bells at Ruislip, has Teleys in place of Benskins, and is doing light meals at all times.

The Stag at the Swillet, Chorleywood, is reported to now be doing evening meals.

The Midland Railway, St Albans has been reprieved for the time being by St Albans council who rejected Courage's plans for demolition.

Owner Mike Barrowman has submitted plans for an additional two-storey extension to the Plough at Tyttenhanger.

The Bell at London Colney (Benskins) has re-opened after a much-needed refurbishment.

The Jolly Sailor, St Albans, has added Adnams Broadside as a guest beer alongside its Charles Wells beers.

The Cricketers, St Albans, has replaced Wethereds Bitter by cask-conditioned Whitbread Best Bitter.

The Bell, St Albans, a Whitbread cafe-bar, is now fizz only. Gordon Henderson of the Three Hammers, Chiswell Green, has recently been accepted into the Burton Guild of Master Cellarmen.

Benskins have submitted plans to convert two warehouses on the fringe of the shopping centre in Letchworth Garden City into a pub. Their plan is to produce a traditional style pub with a range of real ale and, probably, jazz evenings, in much the same vein as the Rose & Crown at Kings Langley. However there is some opposition from locals who fear trouble from youngsters. If you feel that Letchworth needs this new amenity then write supporting the plans to the Chief Planning Officer, North Herts District Council, Council Offices, Gurnon Road, Letchworth, SG63JS.

Ted and Sheila Burroughs have moved from the Bell, Bovingdon to the Windmill, Chipperfield.

Wayne and Ann Couch have taken over the Bull at Berkhamsted while Alan and June Bentley (ex Bell at Bedmond) have moved to the Eagle at Nash Mills.

There are plans to turn the White Lion at Hemel Hempstead into offices, while the Brownlow Arms, Berkhamsted, has already closed.


Plans have been submitted for a single-storey front extension to the Royal Oak, Bovingdon, and for a three-storey side extension to the Langleys, Kings Langley.

BANNERS

BANNERS WITH A CHANGEABLE MESSAGE FROM
8' X 3' £65.00
18' x 3' £96.00
THE FLEXIBLE WAY TO BE NOTICED

HATFIELD SIGN CENTRE LTD
UNIT 2
FIDDLEBRIDGE IND. EST
LEMSFORD ROAD
HATFIELD HERTS
AL10 0DE

TEL: (07072) 71322
FAX: 07072 66439



£65 complete

DOUBLE-SIDED FOLDING LIGHTWEIGHT PAVEMENT BOARDS WRITTEN WITH YOUR MESSAGE

BANNERS


The Crown  **FREE HOUSE**

BASS MAULDONS SQUIRES
GREENE KING IPA
BANKS & TAYLOR SHEFFORD
PLUS WEEKLY GUEST BEERS
ALL AVAILABLE ON FIVE HANDPUMPS
WITH EXTRA ON GRAVITY
HOME COOKED FOOD

Market Hill,
Buntingford,
Herts.

Tel: 0763 71422

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

DIARY DATES

HERTFORDSHIRE SOUTH BRANCH

Thursday 14th December, Branch meeting and Pub of the Month at the **Rose & Crown**, St. Michael's St, St. Albans. 8.00pm.

Friday 5th January. New Year's Party at Bramfield. Ticket only, contact Roger Filler 0707 326427 (h)

Tuesday 16th January. AGM, 8.00pm, **Garibaldi**, Albert St, St. Albans.

Tuesday 30th January, Pub of the Month, to be decided. Contact: Bob Norrish 0582 769923 (h), 0582 763133 x2554 (w)

NORTH HERTS BRANCH

Wednesday 6th December, Branch meeting and social at the **Marquis of Lorne**, High St. Stevenage. 8.30pm.

Friday 15th December. 8.30pm. Pre-Xmas pub crawl around Biggleswade, starting at the **White Hart**, Market Place. Train leaves Stevenage 20.06 and Hitchin 20.11.

Monday 8th January. Morning visit to McMullens brewery.

Friday 12th January. After Christmas meal at the **Rose & Crown**, Ashwell, 8.00pm (to be confirmed).

Wednesday 24th January. Great Offley crawl, starting at the **Red Lion**, 8.30pm.

Wednesday 14th February. 8.30pm. Branch AGM at the **Rose & Crown**, Buntingford.

Wednesday 28th February. Puckeridge crawl, starting at the **Buffalo's Head**, 8.30pm.

Contact: Paul Coard: 0462 437249 (note changed number).

WATFORD & DISTRICT BRANCH

Wednesday 6th December. Breweriana auction at the **Wheatsheaf**, Watford. 8.30pm.

Wednesday 13th December. Branch meeting at the **Nascot Arms**, Watford, 8.30pm, followed by social at the **Bedford Arms**, 9.45pm.

Wednesday 20th December. Xmas Curry. Meet at the **Artichoke**, Watford 8.30pm.

Saturday 20th December. Xmas ramble in Gt. Missenden area. Further details from contact.

Friday 5th January. New Years Party at **Blakes Cellar bar**, 8.00pm.

Wednesday 10th January. Branch meeting at the **Wheatsheaf**, Watford, 8.30pm.

Monday 15th January. Post-Xmas London pub crawl in the Victoria area.

Contact: Martin Few 0923 52412.

MID-CHILTERNES BRANCH

Contact: Chris Pointin 0494 783198

HERTS-ESSEX BORDERS BRANCH

Contact: Steve Marlow 0279 30450

LIASON MEETING

Herts liason meeting: 22nd January, 8.30pm start at the **Old Bell**, Hemel Hempstead.

ODD BITS

Good News - Allied's dropping Hagar from their Skol adverts .

Bad News - they're reintroducing the illiterate Skolars campaign.

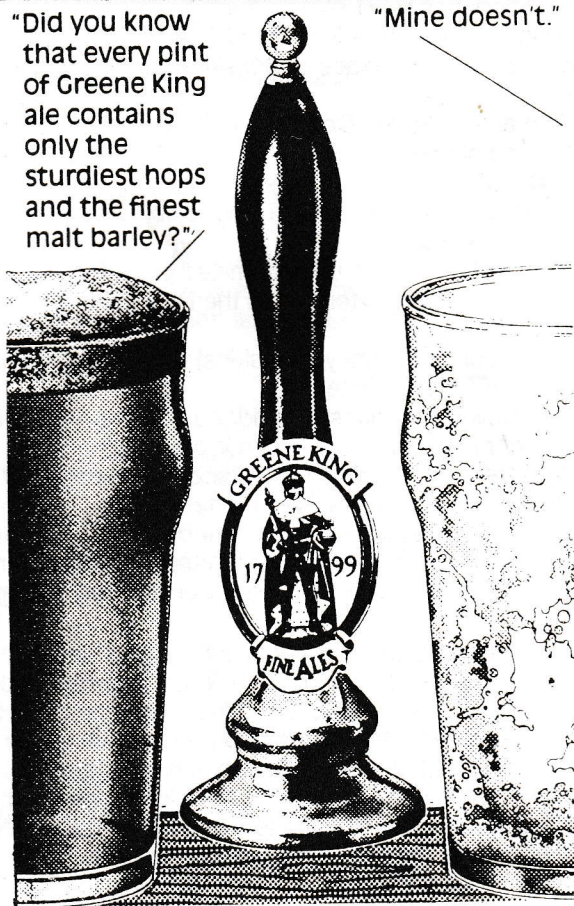
The adverts produced for the Brewers Society in their campaign against the MMC report earlier this year and which broke various advertising standards rules, have won a prize for the PR company which produced them. They were voted the best political campaign in the 1989 PR Week Public Relations Awards. An industry that's concerned with being honest, truthful and accurate?

If you were drinking Morrells beers during the summer and thought they were inconsistent - you weren't alone. Following complaints about quality, Morrells sacked their head brewer, and former head brewer Louis Gunter has been called in as a consultant.

And bad news from our agricultural correspondent: This year's exceptionally good drinking weather severely reduced yields of spring sown barleys for malting. This will no doubt increase prices to brewers who will, of course, find it necessary to pass the additional costs onto drinkers. The knock on effect has been that the high prices for malting barley has led to merchants selling most of the grain, leaving very little for next year's seed, so next year's prices could be even higher.

"Did you know that every pint of Greene King ale contains only the sturdiest hops and the finest malt barley?"

"Mine doesn't."



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 2.5cm column. Artwork can be made up at extra cost. Contact **Eric Sim** ■ Hatfield 60647 for details.

COPY DATE for Feb/March Edition: 1st January 1990.

Composed by D & S Bureau Services on Macintosh DTP Quark Xpress Telephone Welwyn 8653.