

# THE HERTFORDSHIRE NEWSLETTER

FREE



## The Campaign for Real Ale

JUNE/JULY 1990

CIRCULATION 4000

NUMBER 121

## WHITBREAD BOYCOTT

All right-thinking beer drinkers will be giving all Whitbread products a wide berth following an overwhelming vote for a boycott at the **Camra** National AGM in Norwich.

Whitbread have been responsible for the closure of over 240 breweries and the final straw came when they started announcing them two at time. The latest fatalities are Fremlins of Faversham, Kent, and Liverpool's last brewery; Higson's.

The only decent brewery they have left is Castle Eden in Hartlepool which only brews one beer while their Sheffield and Cheltenham plants churn out poor reproduction brews of once-noted ales as Wethereds, Strongs, Flowers and Chester's.

Whitbread, in their stupidity think that so long as they are still brewing 'real ales' they deserve **Camra's** support. Not so! **Camra** stands for choice, the right to drink good local brews that have been enjoyed by pub-goers for generations, not factory-produced brown liquids trying to cash in on once-renowned brand names. And where is the economy of scale that we hear so much about? Why is it that Whitbread beers cost at least 20 pence a pint more than any locally brewed beer of similar strength? Are their beers that much better? Are their pubs that much

nicer places to drink in?

While most companies are trying to claim their products are friendly to the environment, can a policy of centralizing production and trucking beer the length and breadth of the country in fume-belching lorries be considered environmentally friendly? One **Camra** member and idealist recently advocated a law that would prohibit brewers shipping beers more than 50 miles from their place of origin.

**Camra** is asking for your whole-hearted support in this campaign. Whitbread have been ignoring us for years and it has hurt everytime they have closed a brewery. Now it is time to ignore them and hit them where it hurts — in the till. We are sorry for all the good landlords who are going to suffer but every battle has its innocent victims.

Brews to avoid are: from Cheltenham — Wethereds, Flowers, Strongs; from Sheffield — Chesters and Trophy; from Fremlins — Fremlins, Pompey Royal; and Castle Eden, anything labelled Whitbread and the recently taken-over Boddingtons. Lager drinkers can help by avoiding Heineken and Stella Artois. Threshers' off licences are part of the Whitbread chain, as are Beefeater Steakhouses.

### The Crooked Billet

Colney Heath Tel: Bowmansgreen 22128



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draughty  
surroundings*

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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

# TOWN AND AROUND

It's nice to be able to report the reopening of a pub for a change, especially one that at one time looked as though it would never be a pub again. Bob Summers, ex the Horn of Plenty, St. Albans and the Plough, Tyttenhanger has bought the **Nelson**, Wheathampstead, an ex-Benskins house and with the help of a few friends has virtually rebuilt it from the inside out, exposing a lot of beams and bricks, and has doubled the size of the bar. He reopened at the end of April still with some building work to do but nine fully operational handpumps serving the full Fullers range; Brakspears Special and some of the big brewers make up the range. Lunchtime food will follow shortly.

Now for the bad news. Also in Wheathampstead; the **Abbot John**, a pub that was in the Good Beer Guide from 1979 to 1982, has closed and does not look as though it is going to open again. It is believed Benskins have sold it to a developer who also owns the neighbouring ex-Murphy Chemical site.

The **Tudor Tavern**, St. Albans, an historic landmark in the shadow of the Abbey, has suffered for many years under Watney's as a Berni Inn. Now Inn Leisure, an off shoot of Devenish Plc (who already own the Goat and the Crown in the city) are the new owners and one of the first alterations is the introduction of Marstons Pedigree, Greene King IPA and Abbot and their own Newquay Steam Bitter.

Also in St. Albans, the **Six Bells** St. Michaels has new tenants; Ron and Eve Clayton moved in at the end of April from the **Bell** London Colney. Adnams and Tetleys Bitter are on offer, but beware, the Addlestons cider is a keg product. They inherited a less than complete pub; a Ford Escort tried to demolish the gents toilet.

Grand Met has submitted plans for a three storey office block on the site of the **Kings Head**, London Colney. In Harpenden they hope to convert the **White Lion** (closed last year) into a 'Perfect Pizza'.

To set the record straight; the **Rats Castle** Hatfield Road, St. Albans reopened a little while ago after refurbishment with Benskins and Tetleys on offer.

Gordon and Sorrell Cunningham formerly of the Royal Oak, Isleworth are the new tenants in Fullers' recent acquisition, the **Gibraltar Castle** in Batford, Harpenden; some major tidying up and minor alterations are planned, a pergola has already been added to the front.

Over in Hertford we hear the **Warehouse** is to be converted to offices.

Whilst we are awaiting the full list of Allied pubs going to Greene King, (see Brewery News) one we do know is the **Bell** at Cotteder. Greene King already own the other pub in the village; the **Bull** and with their recent policy of closing small village pubs there is much cause for alarm.

Thanks to Andy and Hazel Muskett at the **Railway Arms**, Bushey, for letting the Watford branch invade them earlier this year after a double booking elsewhere. The Railway has added Burton alongside the Benskins and Abbot is expected to be available in the near future.

The range of beers on rotation at the **Wellington Arms**, Watford, is continuing to expand: Everards Tiger and Fullers London Pride have joined the guests.

Some late news from Wheathampstead; Ted and Paula Williams are leaving Benskins' **Swan** in the High Street after 10 years as tenants. They hope to be swanning it up for a few months before returning to the trade. It is expected that the 16th Century pub will go into management.

## GUEST BEER

May 1st 1990 was supposed to be the day of the revolution in the pub world. The day tenants of the big breweries were to be allowed to take a beer of their own choice without penalty from their owning brewery.

Some breweries seem to be getting round the rules by offering tenants alternative brews through their own distribution network thus ensuring a rake-off. Courage are taking on 13 beers from regional brewers; McMullen was conspicuous by its absence from the list. Benskins seem to be sticking with Adnams but have warned landlords that any independent moves may result in rent reviews and brewery-owned equipment should not be used to dispense such brews. Grand Metropolitan (Watney) are just giving up brewing, but we always told them they couldn't brew beer to save their lives anyway.


There still seems little scope for new brewers to try and break into the market as it is still neatly sown up.

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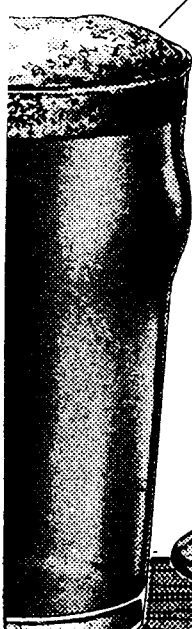

**BANNERS**

Gordon and Sorrell  
invite you to try their award-winning  
**Fuller's London Pride & E.S.B.**  
at the  
**Gibraltar Castle**  
Lower Luton Road, Batford, Harpenden

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

"Mine doesn't."



## BREWERY NEWS

It doesn't seem long ago that Allied Breweries was splitting up into regional groups with their own beers (mostly brewed at Burton) to give them local appeal, remember Taylor Walker, Friar Meux, Ind Coope East Anglia, ABC, Halls, Benskins, Ansells, Plympton, Peter Walker, etc.? Well, slowly they are all disappearing; it was only two Newsletters ago we were reporting the demise of Halls. Now **Benskins** and **Friar Meux** are to go, to be replaced by a 1700 pub chain, **Ind Coope Retail**. Phillip Davies, the recently appointed MD of Benskins, will head the new group. In the shake-up 87 pubs are being bought by **Greene King** mostly in Kent, Surrey, Sussex and Oxfordshire. (See Pub News).

Early city comment suspects this may be the beginning of a major shake-up in Allied who have about 6,500 pubs possibly with a view to splitting the pubs from breweries, in the wake of the Monopolies and Mergers report.

Danish brewers Carlsberg are believed to be showing an interest in breweries.

The controversial pubs for breweries swap between **Elders** (Courage & Fosters) and **Grand Metropolitan** (Watney) that would give GM 8,500 pubs and Elders the **Websters** and **Ruddles** breweries has, to no ones' surprise except the boards of the two companies, been referred to the Monopolies and Mergers Commission by the Director General of Fair Trading. What will be surprising will be if they turn the deal down. The MMC has a long record of blind spots to public interest when it comes to brewery mergers and take-overs.

**Greenall Whitley** is the latest brewery rumoured to be planning to do a 'Boddies' by selling off their breweries and concentrating on their pub trade. The interested party is said to be Labatt's the Canadian brewery whose concoctions are currently manufactured under license by Greenalls.

## THE APPLE, THE WHOLE APPLE AND NOTHING BUT THE APPLE

**Camra** is not all about beer and pubs, we're pretty keen on cider too. David Kitton has just published a new edition of the **Good Cider Guide** — The definitive guide to real ciders (not the fizzy clear cideralades), their producers and where to get them. Did you know there are over 100 commercial cider makers some of them centuries old and over 2000 outlets where to try them. If you didn't then you need a copy of this invaluable guide that will take you to some lovely rural retreats, but you are advised to have a chauffer as many ciders are stronger than a lot of beers. Perrys (from pears) are also listed. The **Good Cider Guide** is available from all good bookshops or from **Camra** HQ, price £3.95.

## KIDS IN PUBS!

There are few more contentious issues than the one of whether children should be allowed in pubs or not. Well, **Camra**, recognising the age and responsibilities of many of its members, has produced a guide to pubs where children are welcomed. Jill Adam has detailed 450 hosteleries the length of the country in **The Best Pubs for Families** (by Alma Books) where the little darlings will be catered for. If you can afford kids and still drink, then £4.95 might be a good investment.

## CELLARMAN OF THE YEAR

Although this pub is just over the county boundry in Buckinghamshire, The Red Lion 'Chenies', retains a Hertfordshire postal address (just off the A404, Amersham Road.) Mike Norris the landlord is justly proud of his recent award by Benskins brewery in the 1990 Best Cellarman of the Year. Along with Benskins bitter are Tetleys and Draught Burton Ale with one other "guest" beer all served by handpump (Greene King I.P.A. at time of writing).

Freshly prepared food is now available at all sessions (including Sunday evenings). It is well-priced, with a varied menu and includes vegetarian items. The pub is located in idyllic countryside, with excellent "rambling" right at the back door.

## PUB VANDALISM AWARDS

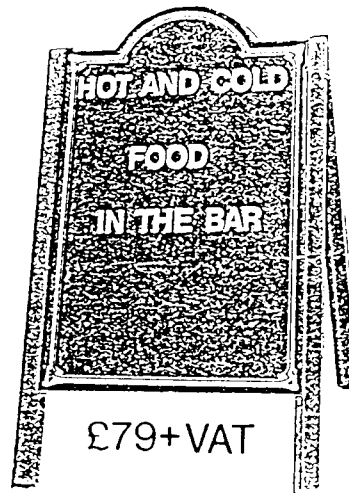
No, these are not intended for the lavatorial graffiti artists, or football supporters' post-match antics. They will be going to brewers, pub owners, landlords, interior/exterior designers or even local authorities. To qualify for an award you will have been found guilty of one or more of many crimes against the public house. These include: outrageous refurbishment totally out of keeping with the area or original pub, ludicrous attempts to theme a pub; pointless and gratuitous alterations — installation of fake beams will score highly here. Worst examples of pub closures for redevelopment such as the one in Manchester that was needed as a builders yard while a light railway was constructed, after which the site became vacant.

There will also be the Soup-in-a-Basket Award for the worst cases of locals converted into eateries.

The awards will be issued locally, as and when seems appropriate. Everyone is invited to submit nominations, ideally we should have before and after photographs to assist judging, so early warning of forthcoming alteration is very useful but not essential. The contacts listed on the back page will be delighted to hear of any serious nominations.



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## CHANGE FOR A £1

With the recent round of price increases the search is on for the last pub in the county to sell a pint of beer for less than a pound. Most landlords and breweries tagged on increases to the Chancellor's 2 pence a pint and then they wonder why inflation is over 9%. We still know of a few **McMullens** houses where Original AK is under a quid but who is going to be the last? Keep us posted if you know of any cheap brews and we will be round to drink it and we will hang a plaque on the wall of the last one. (Sorry clubs don't count).

## HAPPY PORKERS

In his company's annual report, chairman John Adnams notes that "in spite of all the efforts of the Brussels bureaucrats, the pigs made a profit". Adnams is in too remote a location to make it worth Marmite's while to collect their excess yeast. So Suffolk brewery feeds the yeast to their pigs. As they say "Adnams pigs are happy pigs", as are the shareholders.

# DIARY DATES

## HERTFORDSHIRE SOUTH BRANCH

Tuesday 12 June, Branch meeting and 10 years in the Good Beer Guide presentation, **Woodman**, Wormley West End, 8.30pm.  
Tuesday 26 June, Social with South Beds Branch, **Oddfellows Arms**, Harpenden 8.30pm.

Tuesday 10 July, Branch meeting, **Candlestick**, Essendon, 8.30pm.

Tuesday 24 July, Wheathampstead ramble, start at the **Nelson**, Marford Road 8.00pm.

Contact: Bob Norrish; 0582 763 133 x 2554 or 0582 769 923

## MID-CHILTERN BRANCH

Contact: Chris Pontin 0494 786 241 (w) 0494 775 409 (h).

## HERTS-ESSEX BORDERS BRANCH

Contact: Angie Wright 0277 225815

## NORTH HERTFORDSHIRE BRANCH

Wednesday 6 June, 8.30pm Branch meeting at the **Coach and Horses**, Kneesworth Street, Royston.

Wednesday 20 June, 8pm Stevenage Old Town Crawl, starting at the **Mallard**, Julians Road

Wednesday 4 July, 8.30pm Social at the **Moon and Stars**, Rushden, then from 9.30 at the **Jolly Waggoner**, Ardeley.

Wednesday 18 July, 8.30pm Whitwell Crawl, starting at the **Bull**.

Wednesday 1 August, 8.30 Two-pub social at the **Brewery Tap** then the **Star**, Furneaux Pelham.

Wednesday 15 August, 8.30pm Branch Meeting at the **Cricketers**, Bedford Road, Hitchin, followed by Social at the **Sir John Barleycorn**.

Wednesday 29 August, 8.30pm Woolmer Green Crawl, starting at the **Red Lion**.

## WATFORD & DISTRICT

Wednesday 13 June, 8pm Boules, **Western**, Rickmansworth.

Weekend 16, 17 June, Trip to **Donnington** land. See contact.

Sunday 24 June, 12 noon Aunt Sally v Slough, Windsor & Maidenhead Branch, Littlewick Green, near Maidenhead.

Sunday 1 July, 8.30pm Committee meeting, **West Herts Sports & Social Club**, Watford.

Wednesday 4 July Chorleywood crawl; **Rose & Crown** 8.30,

**Black Horse** 9.15, **Old Shepherd** 10.00.

Wednesday 11 July, 8.30pm Social, **Uncorn**, Abbots Langley.

Wednesday 18 July, Croxley Green crawl; **Red House** 8.30, **Fox & Hounds** 9.00 **Artichoke** 9.30, **Sportsman** 10.00.

Saturday 21 July, Minibus trip to Oxfordshire, see contact.

Saturday 28 July, 6pm Treasure hunt around Oxhey, see contact.

Contact: Martin Few, 0923 52412

## HERTS LIAISON MEETING

Monday 23 July, 8pm at the **Rising Sun**, High Wych (Sid's).

# GREAT BRITISH BEER FESTIVAL

## 1990

# BRIGHTON METROPOLE AUGUST 7-11

## WHITBREAD WELCOME YOU TO

# THE SPIRIT OF THE SIXTIES

*Relive those great years — and those great beers*

We've been closing breweries for donkey's years but as the sixties is back in style we're offering you the change to taste those wonderful and varied beers again from the companies we bulldozed. Remember:

The straw-colour and dry **Whitaker's** of Halifax — adored since 1849.

**Chester's Fighting Mild** — a Manchester must.

And what would a West Country holiday be without a pint of **Starkey's**?

## PLUS ALL THE REST OF YOUR 60's FAVOURITES\*

<b>John Fielder</b> , Titchfield	1744-1961	<b>Southams</b> , Shrewsbury	1866-1966
<b>Chesters</b> , Ardwick	1888-1961	<b>Salford Brewery</b>	1888-1966
<b>Norman &amp; Pring</b> , Exeter	1700-1962	<b>Rhymney Breweries</b> ,	
<b>Tennant Bros</b> , Sheffield	1820-1962	Cardiff	1929-1966
<b>Birkenhead Brewery</b>	1865-1962	<b>Isaac Tucker</b> , Gateshead	1796-1967
<b>Starkey, Knight &amp; Ford</b> ,		<b>Fremfins</b> , Maidstone	1861-1967
Bridgewater	1887-1962	<b>James Thompson</b> , Barrow	1871-1967
<b>J. Nimmo</b> , Castle Eden	1826-1963	<b>Richard Whitaker</b> , Halifax	1849-1968
<b>West Country</b> , Cheltenham	1888-1963	<b>J. W. Green</b> , Luton	1857-1969
<b>W. B. Mew</b> , Newport, IOW	1814-1965		

Of the 240 breweries which constituted the Whitbread empire, only six remain: Castle Eden, Cheltenham, Sheffield and Manchester; closures have been announced of Fremfins Brewery, Faversham and Higson's of Liverpool.

\*Should any of these beers not be available at your local Whitbread pub — get angry! Don't go there again! Boycott Whitbread pubs and products!

## SIGN THE WHITBREAD PLEDGE

Thanks to Derby Drinker for above.

# MEMBERSHIP

**Camra** membership fees go up from the 1 July for the first time in four years. Single membership goes to £10 and joint membership to £12; life membership goes up to £100. However, if you get in quick all the benefits of membership could be yours for £9 or £90 for life.

## 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. I am/We are over 18 years of age (AGE.....)\*

NAME(S) .....

DATE .....

ADDRESS .....

SIGNATURE .....

TELEPHONE NUMBER(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

\* Knowledge of the average age of our members would be helpful. The information need only be given if you wish ALL

MEMBERS MUST BE AT LEAST 18 YEARS OF AGE.

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  
OR WHY NOT TAKE ADVANTAGE OF DIRECT DEBIT?**

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