

THE HERTFORDSHIRE NEWSLETTER

FREE



The Campaign for Real Ale

October/November 1990

CIRCULATION 4000

NUMBER 123

ALLIED TO STAY IN BREWING

Greenall Whitley have decided to close their breweries at Warrington and Nottingham (**Shipstones**) adding another sorry chapter to **Greenall's** history of destroying Britain's brewing heritage. These two join **Simpkiss**, **Wem** and **Davenports** breweries as profitable concerns indiscriminately axed by **Greenalls** in recent years.

Greenalls have contracted Allied Breweries (Ind Coope/Benskins) to produce their brands for the next 5 years. This at least would appear for the time being to scotch rumours that Allied were themselves planning to get out of brewing in the near future, although the future of some of Allied's brands must still be in doubt.

The proposed closures, with the loss of about 700 jobs, come as a bit of surprise as it had been thought that **Greenall's** were trying to sell their breweries but it is understood that none of the prospective buyers (rumoured to include **Labatts** and **Bass**) came up with an offer remotely close to **Greenall's** valuation.

The main reason **Greenall's** gave for leaving brewing was that with their plants working at about 60% capacity it was cheaper and more profitable to buy in beer than brew it themselves. As well as brewing

Greenalls beers at their Warrington and Burton breweries, Allied will also be selling their own beers, including the ubiquitous **Tetleys**, to **Greenall** pubs. However, they won't be having it all their own way as Greenall will also be offering their landlords beers from **Bass** and **Whitbread**. In an associated deal Allied will also start brewing Labatts the Canadian lager, previously brewed by **Greenalls** under licence, and will also be supplying it to some of their own pubs.

Campaigning to get **Greenalls** to reconsider their decision is already underway, with **CAMRA**, trade unions and local councillors leading the protests.

If the deal goes ahead it seems extremely unlikely that all **Greenall's** current brands (including **Wem**, **Shipstones**, and **Davenports**) will survive. These beers may themselves be less distinctive than they once were but they will certainly be different again when produced by Allied, however much they try and tell us they can match the flavours (witness **Greene King** with **Rayments** and **Whitbreads** with **Higsons**). All in all it looks like another disaster for the consumer with a further reduction in choice and an increase in prices likely. (**Tetleys** sells at an average 6p a pint more than **Greenalls** bitter).

The Crooked Billet

Colney Heath Tel: Bowmansgreen 22128



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

Hot food available lunchtimes,
other times pot luck

Large selection of collectors Ales for sale.
Live music (Folk) nearly every Tuesday.



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

NOW GREENE KING WHACK UP THEIR PRICES

Greene King have followed the lead set by the big boys in the business by increasing their prices from the middle of September. The increases recommended by Greene King to allow their landlords to 'preserve profit margins' is 7p on a pint of IPA and 9p on Abbot, although it is known that some landlords have their own ideas...

How much of this increase is to help towards covering the £24 million loss Greene King incurred when their Big R leisure firm collapsed is not known. However the collapse certainly influenced their decision to sell their 25% interest in Harp to Guinness for a reported £6million.

Harp once known as the blonde in the bar is now a wholly owned subsidiary of Guinness. Harp lager has now bought a controlling share in the Crown Brewery, formerly known as the South Wales Clubs Brewery at Pontyclun, Mid Glamorgan, Harp already controlled the Buckley's Brewery in Llanelli in a joint venture with Crown. Follow that? Well I am sure it is all above board unlike the Distiller's affair. Yet again another independant brewery gets swallowed up by a big conglomerate.

And now the good news; Tollemache and Cobbold of Ipswich are brewing again a year after Brent Walker closed them down and brewed the beer at Camerons in Hartlepool. The brewery has been bought out by the old management lead by chairman Peter Strutt and M.D. Brian Cowie. One casualty of the deal is that Camerons Strongarm will no longer be travelling south.

BREWERY NEWS

The Higsons Brewery, Liverpool now owned by GB Breweries will produce real ale in the near future. An experienced management team including the former Higson's head brewer is currently being assembled. Since Whitbread moved production of Higsons to Sheffield sales on Merseyside have halved. Barry Clarke of Whitbread said there is no question of selling the Higsons brand name to GB breweries. Show we are in solidarity with Merseyside Camra; join the Whitbread boycott.

The Heritage brewery at Burton is to start brewing again following a deal with Lloyd Country Beers of Ingleby.

Fresh from his successful launch of his new pub in Hove, David Bruce is opening a second pub in Southampton. Formerly the Style, the new name had not been announced as we went to press.

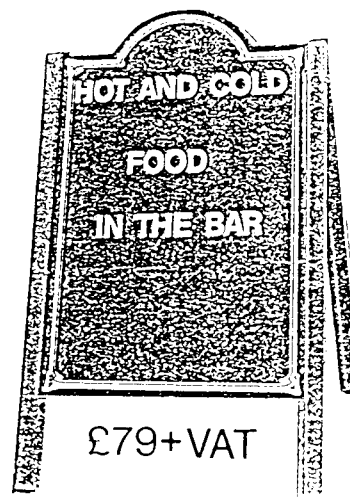
Bruce's old chain of Firkin pubs are up for sale at about £10million.

TEN YEARS AGO

Under the heading 'Lager's a rip-off — Official' the October 1980 Newsletter was reporting on a Consumers Association survey which found much canned and bottled lager not fresh enough or tasting bready, cardboardy or metallic; dating was suggested to overcome the age problem. The low strength and high relative price of the canned lagers were also criticised, enforcing the CAMRA viewpoint that lager was an overpriced, second rate drink.

Articles in both October and November took McMullens to task over their general policy of selling otherwise excellent ale under top pressure or blanket pressure. Where handpumped, usually in managed houses, they were not promoting. The main news in November 1980 was 'Prices up again'. An increase of 4p a pint had taken the average price of a pint of bitter in the county to over 50pence. Meanwhile in Manchester a pint of the late lamented Boddingtons Bitter could be had for as little as 37pence!

ALL TYPES OF SIGNS, LETTERS, NEON,
BANNERS, REPAIRS, MAINTENANCE



DISPLAY ENGINEERING

THE SIGN SPECIALISTS

Display Engineering Ltd., Unit 22, Marsworth Airfield Industrial Estate, Cheddington Lane,
Long Marston, Nr. Tong, Herts. HP23 4QP
Telephone: (0296) 668129 Fax: (0296) 642205

Gordon and Sorrell
invite you to try their award-winning
Fuller's London Pride & E.S.B.

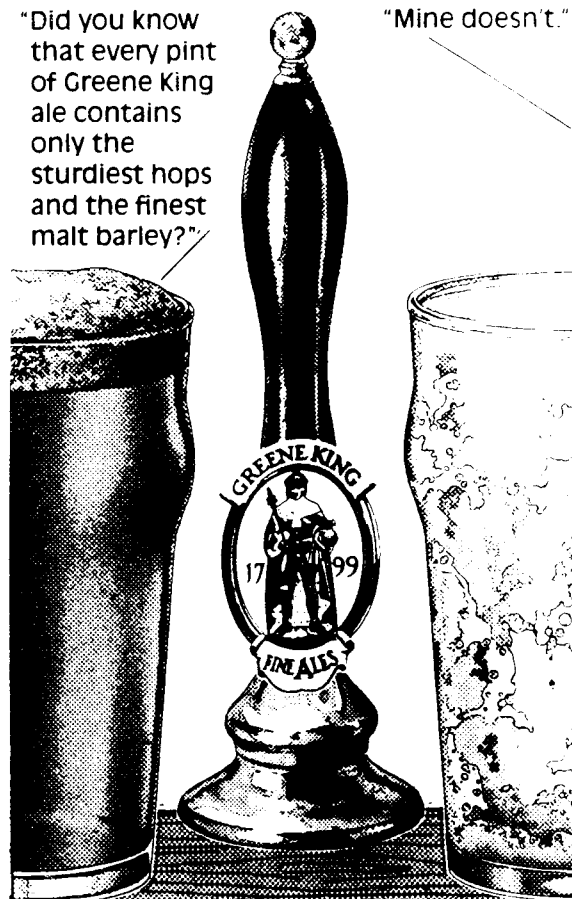
at the

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."



TOWN AND AROUND

After a quiet few months, there has been a small flurry of activity in the Northeast of the county.

July saw the retirement of Royston's (and possibly Hertfordshire's longest serving hosts; Stan and Margaret Wilson retired from the **White Bear** after 28 years, a span which took them from **J.W. Green** of Luton to **Flowers** then **Whitbread** and the keg revolution with the eventual re-installation of handpumps in the eighties. We wish the Wilsons well in their retirement.

Our best wishes and thanks also go to Peter and Lesley Reynolds who left the **Star**, Furneux Pelham in September after eight years. For most of those years the **Star** was an entry in the Good Beer Guide and in 1987 was North Herts Branch Pub of the Year. Peter and Lesley gave great support to the Campaign over the years, particularly during the **Rayments** closure campaign in 1987.

Charles Wells have bought the **Chequers** in Royston, for many years a free house. Although Wells also own the **Old Bull Inn** next door, they intend to continue to run the **Chequers** as a separate house. Previously unreported is the handpump on the bar of **McMullen's Black Bull** in Buntingford: all of the town's six pubs now have real ale. However, the handpump installed in the **Banyers Hotel**, Royston for Country bitter has now been removed having been little used: if real ale is not available then the customer cannot drink it.

Two McMullen pubs have recently been sold to become free houses. The **Beehive**, Hare Street near Buntingford was always considered too small by **McMullens** for the installation of handpumps. Now, as a free house, it has seen a variety of ales from major brewers on six handpumps. The **Heron** on the A120 at Standon was closed for a while but re-opened as a free house in August offering Greene King Abbot, IPA and McMullen AK. Ironically the Benskins pub, the **Bell**, nearby in the High Street was the first pub to receive AK from McMullens as a guest beer whilst the Heron was closed. The **Bell** is now a Greene King pub thus, with the **Star**, giving them a virtual monopoly of the village.

A new outlet for real ale is the **Adam and Eve** Hitchin, Wethered Bitter (sic) and Brakspears Bitter available. Also in Hitchin the **Angels Reply** has added AK to the Country. Another new outlet is the **White Lion**, Stevenage offering Greene King abbot and IPA on handpump.

The rebuilding of the **Kings Head**, Little Bushey Lane, Bushey, is well under way and the new owners **Charles Wells** hope the pub will be open by the end of November. The pub will be a managed house and is expected to be selling Eagle Bitter and Bombardier.

The **Bell and Crown**, Hertford, a Good Beer Guide entry for 14 years up to 1987 and the nearest pub to the brewery has been closed by McMullens and is unlikely to reopen. What does it say about the brewery when it can not keep it's own local going?

Plans have been submitted by Jarvis Aphorp Ltd. and Allied Breweries to develop the **George** and adjacent site, Harpenden into offices, retail units and public toilets. Last time such plans were submitted they were rejected, we hope they are again, **Camra** are apposed to the loss of any pub.

The **King Harry**, St. Albans is closed for major refurbishment by Benskins. The **Bell**, Harpenden also has plans in to extend the restaurant and toilets.

Of the 87 pubs bought by Greene King from Allied Breweries nine are in Hertfordshire, these are; the **Bell** at Cottered, near Buntingford, the **Fox and Hounds**, Hatfield Heath, near Bishop's Stortford, **Sir John Barleycorn**, Hitchin, the **Black Horse**, South Mimms, the **Falcon**, Park Street, St. Albans, the **Bell**, Standon, the **Anchor**, Tring and the **Old Maypole**, Water End, North Mymms. Some of these have already changed and are serving Greene King beers including XX their dark mild.

Fullers have also bought a parcel of around 40 pubs from Allied, rumours abound as to which they are, we will publish a list when they have been confirmed.

McMullens AK is starting to make inroads into the tied estate of the big brewers. It was recently spotted in the **Bunch of Cherries**, St. Albans (Whitbread) and the **Marquis of Granby**, Harpenden (Watney). But it is still cheapest at the **Woodman**, Wildhill (98 pence), let us know if there are any more pubs regularly selling a pint of real beer for less than a pound.

Plans to give a full licence to the **Inn on the Park** restaurant in Verulamium, St. Albans have been turned down by local magistrates.

Latest proposals by Regent Inns to convert **Moor Mill** at Park Street into a pub and restaurant have been refused by the planners because it would mean the loss of the ancient water wheel and other machinery.

The **Cherry Tree** Welwyn Garden City, once described as 'a fairy grotto' or 'a film set for a B movie' has closed. (The editor remembers seeing Led Zeppelin play there in 1968 for five shillings). And the **Huntsman** at Goose Green near Hertford is having an extension built that looks as though it is going to double in size.

BURTON IS THE CHAMP

Only one of the national brewers beers finished in the top three in any of the seven categories of beer in the **Champion Beer of Britain** awards announced at the successful **Great British Beer Festival** at Brighton in August. That beer was **Ind Coope Burton Ale** which, in blind tastings, went on to win the coveted **Champion Beer of Britain**.

Other beers often available in Herts which featured in the awards were **Greene King Abbot** and Adnams Broadside (runners up to Burton in the Special Bitter category); **Adnams Bitter** and **Youngs Bitter** (first and second in Standard Bitter class); **Fullers London Pride** and **Wadworths 6X** (second and third to **Tim Taylors Landlord** — Best Bitters); and **Fullers ESB** (third in Strong Ale category behind **Robinsons Old Tom**). The other category winners were **Harveys Pale Ale** (Mild and Light Bitters) and **Woodfordes Wherry Best Bitter** (New Breweries).

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

£65 complete

FAX 07072 66439

DOUBLE-SIDED FOLDING LIGHTWEIGHT PAVEMENT BOARDS WRITTEN WITH YOUR MESSAGE

BANNERS

DIARY DATES

NORTH HERTFORDSHIRE BRANCH

Wednesday 10 October, 8.30 Five Village Crawl, starting at the **Harrow**, Bendish, near Whitwell.

Wednesday 24 October, 8.30 Branch Meeting at the **Chequers**, Barley, near Royston.

Wednesday 7 November, 8.30 Two-pub social, at **Inn on the Green** and then the **Plough**, Datchworth.

Wednesday 21 November, 8.30 Buntingford Crawl, starting at the **Railway**.

Wednesday 5 December, 8.30 Branch Meeting at the **George and Dragon**, Graveley.

Wednesday 19 December 8pm Baldock Crawl, starting at the **Cock**.

Contact: Paul Coard 0462 437 249.

WATFORD & DISTRICT BRANCH

Wednesday 3 October Two pub social; 8.30 **Royal Oak** 9.15 **Load of Hay**, Watford Heath.

Wednesday 10 October Apsley (Hemel Hempstead) crawl; 8.23 train from Watford Junction, 8.30 **Albion**, 9.00 **Bell**, 9.30 **White Lion**, 10.00 **Fountain**.

Tuesday 16 October All members social, 8.30 **Feathers**, Rickmansworth.

Sunday 21 October Lunchtime social, noon **Cart and Horses**, Commonwood, 2pm **Plough**, Belsize.

Wednesday 24 October 1991 Good Beer Guide launch, 8.30 **Haydon Arms**, Oxhey Village.

Wednesday 7 November Breweriana Auction — see below.

Tuesday 13 November social for new and prospective members 8.30 **Wellington**, Watford.

Wednesday 21 November Social 8.30 **White Bear**, Rickmansworth.

Wednesday 28 November Social 8.30 in rebuilt **Kings Head**, Bushey Heath, if not open **Royal Oak**, Bushey.

Contact: Martin Few: 0923 52412.

HERTFORDSHIRE SOUTH BRANCH

Tuesday 9 October 8.30 Branch meeting, **Duncombe Arms**, Railway Street, Hertford.

Tuesday 30 October 8.30 Conkers Match, **Rose & Crown**, St. Michaels St., St. Albans.

Tuesday 13 November 8.30 Branch meeting, **Oddfellows Arms**, Leyton Green, Harpenden.

Tuesday 27 November 8.30 Welwyn ramble, start at the **Baron of Beef**, Mill Lane, Welwyn.

Contact: Bob Norrish 0582 763133 x2554 or 0582 769923.

MID-CHILTERN BRANCH (WEST HERTS)

Contact: Chris Pontin 0494 786241(w) 0494 775 409(H).

HERTS-ESSEX BORDERS

Contact: Angie Wright 0277 225815

ALL HERTS LIAISON MEETING

Monday 29 October 8pm **Bull** Barnet Road (by the bridge) London Colney.

HARVEYS WEEKEND

A weekend trip to Sussex taking in a visit to **Harvey's** brewery in Lewes is planned for the 26-28 October. Any intrepid drinkers wishing to join the fun should contact Jim Axford on: 0279 870708 x142 or 0440 730826 a.s.a.p.

BREWERIANA AUCTION

On **Wednesday November 7th, Watford & District** will be holding their annual breweriana auction. The number of people attending previous auctions has meant that we have had to move from the Wheatsheaf (thanks to them for their support in the past) in search of a larger room. As a consequence this year's event will be held at the **West Herts Sports Club**, Park Lane, Watford, starting at **8.00pm** with viewing from 7.30pm.

Amongst the items to be auctioned are trays from Ramsdens and Brickwoods, Simmonds ash trays, West Coast Brewery bottle labels, a Hartleys Brewery mirror and a Hawthorne Brewery bottle as well as the usual array of glasses, bar towels, books and pump clips.

REAL DRAUGHT BEER IN HERTFORDSHIRE... THE GUIDE

Eight years in the making, 800 pubs surveyed, many of them several times, it's now all come together through the dogged persistence of editor Roger Filler and will be launched in the next few weeks. Watch this space and local press for details.

MEMBERSHIP SOARS

Nearly 600 new members signed on at the Great British Beer Festival in Brighton taking the total membership up to 27,000 nearing the giddy heights it reached in the mid 1970's. More and more people are registering their disgust at the way many brewers are treating their customers and pubs. So don't be left out — sign up today!

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. £10**

Overseas £14

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?**

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: £3.00 for 12 issues. Send to: 10 Heron Way, Hatfield, Herts. AL10 8QL. Cheques payable: CAMRA Herts Campaigning Fund

Advertising: £9 per 2.5cm column. Artwork can be made up at extra cost. Contact **Eric Sim** ☎ **Hatfield 60647** for details.

COPY DATE for December/January Edition: 1st November 1990.

Composed by Welwyn Typographic Consultants on Macintosh DTP Quark Xpress Telephone 0438 840132