

# THE HERTFORDSHIRE NEWSLETTER

FREE



## The Campaign for Real Ale

April/May 1991

CIRCULATION 4000

NUMBER 126

## TENANTS IN TROUBLE

Since the government introduced a much watered down version of the original MMC report, the big brewers, including Allied Breweries which controls Benskins, have looked for loopholes so that they can deny customers a real choice and keep their local monopolies. The answer they've come up with seems to be: Get Rid Of Tenants!

Under the new regulations, the big brewers can keep 2000 of their pubs plus half of any above that figure. The remainder they must either sell or lease free of any tie. Although Benskins have sold a number of their country pubs to independent breweries, most have so far been retained, with the move being towards managed or leased pubs. The advantages of leasing out their pubs is that they retain ownership; get the leaseholder to pay for structural repairs and decoration; receive increased rents; and, with all these savings, can offer the leaseholder sufficient discounts on their produce to, in effect, retain the property as a tied house as the leaseholder will not be able to afford to go anywhere else! The advantage of having managers is that unlike tenants they don't have the right to stock a guest beer. Hardly the opening up of the market originally intended!

So what have the current Benskins tenants been offered? What they've told us is:

- some have been offered the option to buy their pubs at

inflated prices (despite a recent survey showing that freehold pub prices have dropped by nearly 9% over the last year)

- others have been offered employment as managers (and in the majority of cases the reply has been two-fingers in the direction of the brewery)

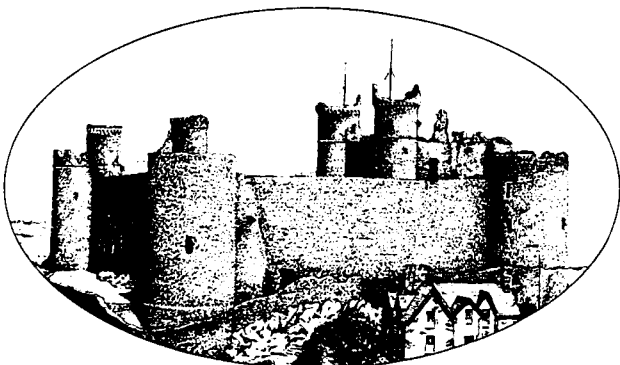
- and then there's the Vanguard lease, a long term lease but with the disadvantages to the leaseholder mentioned above (the same survey showed the capital value of leases fell by 17% over the year).

High interest rates and the present economic climate have made it unrealistic for existing tenants to take out large loans to buy their pubs, and some have received independent financial advice stating that they would soon become insolvent if they accepted the Vanguard lease they were offered.

Already we've seen successful tenants being replaced by inexperienced people with a resultant down turn in trade, and older tenants, who have run their pubs effectively for years, being pushed out. There is thus a lot of pressure on tenants to sign a lease that in the present economic climate they regard as totally unreasonable. Do Benskins, and the others, really want to get rid of their most experienced landlords, or will they reconsider their selling prices and the terms of their leases?

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



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

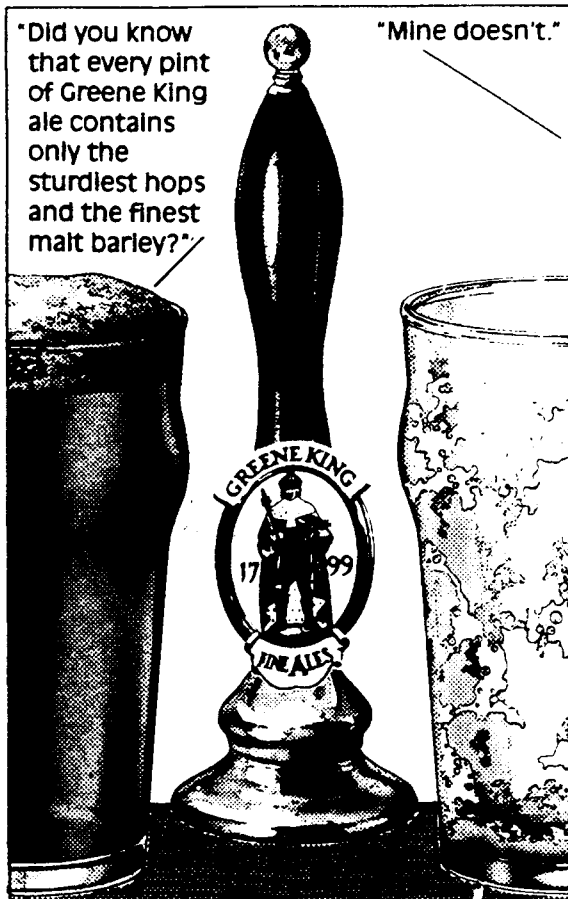
.....  
Home cooked food weekday lunchtimes

# LOCAL NEWS

Towards the end of April Fred and Pauline Dudman will be leaving the Bedford Arms, Watford, where Fred has been the tenant for the last 19 years. We wish them a long and happy retirement. Alan Freeman will be leaving the Golden Lion, Watford, to take over the Bedford once repair work and a possible rear extension have been completed. It is expected that the character of the pub will be radically changed. The Rose & Crown, Woodcock Hill, Rickmansworth has been reported as being boarded up. It is believed that this is only temporary while an extension is built. The Nascot Arms, Watford, has added Rayments SBA to its range of Greene King beers. The Beaver, Watford, is currently closed for refurbishment and alterations. Gales HSB has been on sale at the Wellington Arms, Watford. Apologies to Jeff Chiverton new landlord of the Railway Arms, Bushey, for spelling his name wrong. In Newsletter 125 we reported a rumour that the Anchor, Weston, was under threat of closure. However by the time we printed this news, new tenants had already taken up residence. We apologise for any inconvenience this item may have caused them and are pleased to note that real ale has been introduced, Greene King XX Mild, IPA and Abbot are on sale. In the same edition we noted that the Bedford Arms, Hitchin, had installed a handpump to sell Tetley Bitter. This beer has now been replaced by Youngers Scotch Bitter. This pub currently offers 4p off a pint-to pensioners before 5pm on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday. In Newsletter 124 the details of when food was available at the Fox, Willian were wrong. Meals are only served in the dining room and bar on weekdays at lunchtime, not in the evening. English Sunday dinners are served on Sunday lunchtimes (please book). The White Hart, Baldock, no longer applies a lower age limit to its special offer of 6p off a pint on weekday lunchtimes. The Found Inn, Hitchin, now sells Brakspears Bitter. The Lytton Arms, Knebworth, will be selling a varying range of traditional ciders during the summer. The Coach and Horses, Stevenage Old Town, has closed for renovation and is being turned into a family pub. The George IV, Baldock, is shortly due for extensive refurbishment. Latest

Greene King pub to be closed is the Bell, Cottered. This was one of a job lot Greene King purchased from Benskins in mid-1990 but since they already owned the Bull in the same village it was clearly one that was simply accepted as part of the package. The Bell is now boarded up and has a "For Sale" sign outside. News for club members - the ICL Sports Club, Letchworth has changed from selling only Whitbread beers to a "free trade" range of varying beers from other breweries. The Jolly Sailor, St Albans, now has Mansfield Riding Dark Mild alongside Charles Wells Eagle and Bombadier, and Adnams Broadside. It is the only outlet for these beers in St Albans and, moreover, sells the only regularly available handpulled dark mild in the city. The Goat. St Albans currently has Wadworths Old Timer as a guest beer. Also there is a different real ale each week on a £1 a pint promotion.

The Woodman, Watend, is now selling an own label Woodman's Bitter og 1039 could it be Courage Best? The Oddfellows Arms, Harpenden, has been sold by McMullens to Tim Needham and will be run as a free house. AK is expected to continue to be available, but there's no news about what other beers might be sold. A planning application for a single storey side extension has already been submitted. The Plough, Tyttenhanger is hoping to add a conservatory at the rear and to extend the car park. The Abbot John, Wheathampstead, closed at short notice by Benskins last year, is up for sale for £300,000. Congratulations to Bill Radley of the Green Man, Widford for winning the top award in McMullens recent master cellarmanship competition and to Stan Nichols of the GBG listed Candlestick at Essendon for achieving third place. Congratulations also to Ian Fennel of the Camp, St Albans for winning the top cellarmanship award among McMullens' managed houses. The Benskins run Old Red Lion in Park Street has Newquay Steam Bitter as its only real ale, adding still further to the range of beers along this stretch of Watling Street. The Falcon has Greene King IPA and Abbot and the Swan has Fullers London Pride and ESB. Both are former Benskins pubs. Belated recognition that the Castle in Bishops Stortford is selling Tetleys and Adnams bitters. This is a friendly, old-fashioned local, but the landlord of 18-years standing is leaving soon, and



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

£79+VAT

**DISPLAY ENGINEERING**  
THE SIGN SPECIALISTS

Display Engineering Ltd., Unit 22, Marsworth Airfield Industrial Estate, Cheddington Lane,  
Long Marston, Nr. Ting, Herts MK23 4QR  
Telephone: (0296) 668029 Fax: (0296) 662265

changes are likely. Also in Bishops Stortford, the Three Tuns and the Wheatsheaf are stocking Rayments SBA, as are the White Lion at Sawbridgeworth, the White Horse at Wareside and the Harvest Moon at Thorley. Just over the border in Essex, the Willow Beauty in Harlow is stocking Greene King XX alongside the other three Greene King beers. The Market House Hotel in Sawbridgeworth has also installed a mild due to popular demand. This time its Adnams which joins its stablemates Broadside, Bitter and Old (winter only). The Green Man at Thorley is boarded up and the Benskins livery removed. Better news from Widford where the Bell has reopened after 5 years and is selling Greene King Abbot and IPA and Youngers IPA. The Chequers at Wareside has four regular handpumped beers and a guest beer. These have recently included Nethergate Bitter and Old Growler with Timothy Taylors Landlord expected soon. And finally just to clarify things: in the Herts Beer Guide (still on sale!!) the Dusty Miller is at Gilston not Garston, The Moon and Stars is at Rushden not Royston, and The Plough is at Wallington not Walkern - a few town headings went walkabout.

## BREWERY NEWS

Cains Bitter, the new brew from the old Higsons brewery, was a sell-out on its first appearance. Agreement has been reached to supply the beer to 45 Boddingtons pubs and it will also be available through a national wholesaler. A new small brewery has started up at Thirsk, N.Yorks. Hambleton Ales are currently producing a single beer, Hambleton Best Bitter (og 1937). The Jolly Roger Brewery of Worcester have started brewing a 1038 beer, Jolly Roger Ale. Gales have bought 20 pubs on the Isle of Wight from Whitbreads.

## TIME FOR A PINT

In the last edition we commented that 10 years ago it was reckoned that it took the average worker 12 minutes to earn the price of a pint and asked if anybody knew how long it took now. Just after we went to press official statistics were published which now shows that it only takes 11 minutes.

## ABBEY REMAINS!

Pub regulars in St. Albans have pledged to throw a "human shield" round the threatened Abbey Tavern if Allied Breweries send in the bulldozers.

Allied's Benskins subsidiary wants to knock down the pub to turn it into an office block. But with 1.1 million square feet of unused office space already in St. Albans the request for "change of use" was turned down by St. Albans council last autumn. The company now plans to appeal to the Department of the Environment.

The pub's supporters say it offers a vital community meeting place being one of the few pubs in the city where working-class people and the local Irish community can feel at home, and a local councillor said:

"We have the support of the Civic Society and local residents. We are convinced we will win our case at the DoE but if it comes to it we will demand a judicial review and if we lose that we will put a human shield round the pub to stop Benskins knocking it down."

## TEN YEARS AGO

"Oh no — not again!" was the headline on the April 1981 issue of the Newsletter, bemoaning the budget increase of 4 pence on a pint which pushed the price of some stronger bitters to over 60p a pint.

Celebrated in April 1981 was the go-ahead given to North Hertfordshire's first real ale off-licence in Albert Street, Stevenage, which would sell beer directly from the cask.

The front page of the May 1981 Newsletter claimed that CAMRA was 'Halfway There!'. A Campaign survey showed that over 50% of pubs in the country offered traditional draught beer, after nearly 4,000 had changed over in the previous year. Locally McMullens were in the top five of smaller companies whose pubs had gained handpumps.

In Water End, near Hemel Hempstead, a successful experiment with a smoke-free bar in the Red Lion was reported. Does it still exist? Are there any others? Let us know!



**HATFIELD  
SCREENPRINT  
CENTRE**

**1-6 COLOUR PRINTING**




**COMPLETE RANGE OF COLOURS  
AND PRODUCTS**

RING US ON: 0707 271322 FAX: 0707 266439  
OR CALL IN TO: 30 BEACONSFIELD ROAD  
HATFIELD, HERTS.

**BANNERS**

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



DOUBLE-SIDED FOLDING LIGHTWEIGHT PAVEMENT BOARDS WRITTEN WITH YOUR MESSAGE

**BANNERS**

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

TEL (07072) 71322  
FAX 07072 66439

## DIARY DATES

### NORTH HERTFORDSHIRE BRANCH

Wednesday 10 April, 8.30 — Branch Meeting at the **George IV**, Baldock.

Wednesday 24 April, 8.30 — Minicrawl starting at **Chequers**, Bragbury End, then on to **Greenkeeper**, **Pig & Whistle** and **Rose & Crown**, Aston.

Wednesday 8 May, 8.30 — Countryside Crawl, starting at **Sword in Hand**, Westmill, then on to **Fox**, Aspenden and **Beehive**, Hare Street.

Wednesday 22 May, 8.30 — Stevenage New Town Crawl, starting at **Old Red Lion**, Shephall.

Wednesday 5 June — Brewery Visit, Charles Wells, Bedford.

Wednesday 19 June, 8.30 — Branch Meeting at the **Red Lion**, Preston.

Contact: Paul Coard 0462 437249

### HERTFORDSHIRE SOUTH BRANCH

Friday 5 April, Social with Mid Chilterns & Watford Branches, **Eagle**, Nash Mills, near Hemel Hempstead, 8.30 pm.

Tuesday 9 April, Two village crawl, **Duck**, 8.30 pm. **White Horse**, 9 pm. Burnham Green, **Plume of Feathers**, 9.45 pm. **Rose & Crown**, 10.30 pm. Tewin.

Tuesday 23 April, Branch meeting, **Brocket Arms**, Ayot St. Lawrence, 8.30 pm.

Tuesday 7 May, Presentation to **Great Eastern**, Hertford, for 10 consecutive years in the Good Beer Guide, 8.30 pm.

Tuesday 21 May, Branch meeting **Beehive**, Epping Green, 8.30 p.m.

Contact: Bob Norrish 0582 763133 x2554 or 0582 769923

### WATFORD & DISTRICT BRANCH

Friday 5 April — see above.

Saturday 6 April — Saturday social at the **Bedford Arms**, Langley Road, Watford at 8.30pm, Life begins for the chairman the following day, so he might buy a round!

Wednesday 10 April — Watford pub crawl: **Rose & Crown**, Market St 8.30pm then **One Bell**, High St 9.15pm and **Estcourt Tavern**, Estcourt Road, 10pm.

Wednesday 17 April — Branch Dart Competition at the **West Herts Sports Club**, Park Avenue, 8.30pm start.

Tuesday 30 April — Out of area social at Denham, **Green Man** 8.40pm; **Falcon** 9.20pm; **Swan** 10.00pm.

Tuesday 7 May — Joint mild social with N. London Branch at the **Nascot Arms**, Stamford Rd, Watford 8.30pm.

Saturday 11 May — Jazz/Blues evening at the **Rose & Crown**, High St, Kings Langley. Johnny Mars Blue Band playing (no admission charge).

Wednesday 15 May — Chorleywood Mild canter: **White Horse**, Rickmansworth Rd, 8.30pm; **Black Horse**, Dog Kennel Lane, 9.45pm.

Wednesday 22 May — Social at the **Swan**, Abbots Langley 8.30pm (mild available).

Contact: Martin Few 0923 52412

### MID-CHILTERN BRANCH (WEST HERTS)

Contact: Chris Pontin 0494 786241(w) 0494 775409(h)

### HERTS-ESSEX BORDERS

Contact: Angie Wright 0277 225815

### ALL HERTS LIAISON MEETING

Monday 22 April 8.30 at the **West Herts Sports Club**, Park Avenue, Watford.

## GBBF TICKETS TO BE WON!

As one or two of you noticed, there was an error in the last newsletter concerning the dates of the Great British Beer Festival (GBBF). This can be put down to either being a psychological ploy to get you to remember the festival or a case of the proofreader having had too much to drink again. Either way, we have on offer two pairs of tickets for entry into the festival on one of the first four sessions (ie Tuesday evening 13th August, either session on Wednesday 14th or lunchtime Thursday 15th). All you have to do is send your answers to the following question, with your name and address and the session for which you want the tickets, to Bill Austin, 21 Sussex Road, Watford, WD2 5HL by the 1st May, and the first two winners out of the hat will each receive a pair of tickets.

Who owns the following breweries or trade names?

- |                             |                |
|-----------------------------|----------------|
| 1. Ruddles                  | 2. Boddingtons |
| 3. Theakstons               | 4. Marstons    |
| 5. Mitchell & Butlers (M&B) | 6. Castle Eden |
| 7. Shipstones               | 8. Fremlins    |
| 9. Taylor Walker            | 10. Oldham     |

The festival, at the London Arena near Coldharbour station on the Docklands Light Railway, will be open Tuesday 13th August 5-10.30pm; Wednesday to Friday 11.30 to 3pm, 5 to 10.30pm, and on the last day, Saturday 17th August, opening hours are 11am to 10.30pm. Subject to police approval, a family room will be provided.

And remember the Cider & Perry Exhibition at Stratford Town Hall, April 25th-27th.

## 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 ☎ 0707 260647 for details.

**COPY DATE for June/July Edition: 1st May 1991.**

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