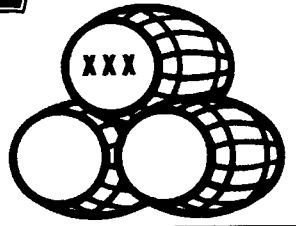


FREE



THE HERTFORDSHIRE NEWSLETTER



A bi-monthly publication for the discerning real ale drinker

June/July 1991

CIRCULATION 4000

NUMBER 127

BREWERY MANIA


Following hard on the heels of leaked reports that **Allied Breweries** were willing to sell their breweries to **Whitbread** in return for a large chunk of **Whitbread** pubs, comes news that Allied have also been talking to Brent Walker, owners of the **Camerons** brewery in Hartlepool. The proposed deal is that Allied would take over the brewing of Camerons beers and that they would swap 750 of their pubs with 950 Brent Walker pubs moving both companies into areas of the country where they are poorly represented. The benefit to Allied is that it increases production at their breweries. This either makes them more likely to be kept open by Allied or makes them more attractive to a prospective buyer. Whether or not the deal does go ahead there is the prospect that there would be a management buyout (which Camra is supporting) of **Camerons** as happened at Brent Walker's other brewery; **Tolly Cobbold**.

Boddingtons pub group have made a bid for **Devenish**. If the bid is successful, Devenish's Redruth brewery will be for the chop, Boddies having already got rid of their own brewery to Whitbread to

avoid any limitation on pub ownership. Again, a management buyout of the brewery is a possibility. In an attempt to reduce bank borrowing, **Burts** of Ventnor on the Isle of Wight, have sold one of their eleven pubs, the Star at Wroxall. There is the possibility that another five could be sold and that the brewery could be turned into a working museum.

Bass have also announced the closure of their **Springfield Brewery** at Wolverhampton and a Campaign is being launched to try to save it, starting with a march and rally on 1st June.

Bass have been selling off blocks of pubs in an attempt to meet the MMC requirements. 38, including 13 in London, went to **Charles Wells**, 18 to **Hoskins**, 10 to **Shepherd Neame**, 27 to **Thwaites**, 12 in London to the **Wiltshire Brewery**, 9 to **Burtonwood** and 36 to **Hardy and Hansons**. The latter batch surprisingly included the Coopers Tavern in Burton on Trent, the unofficial Bass brewery tap, which served Bass straight from the barrels racked behind what passed for a bar. Many people, including Bass's head brewer, reckoned it served the best Bass in the country.



castle street ... old hertford

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

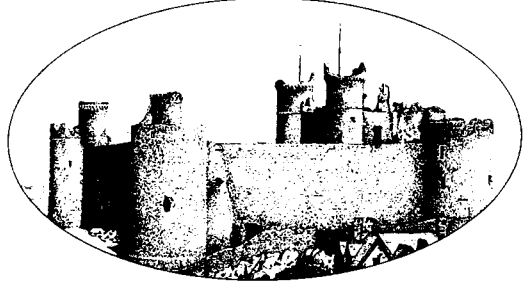
.....

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

....

Home cooked food weekday lunchtimes

Re-opening 11 July
Gordon and Sorrell
invite you to try their award-winning
**Fuller's Chiswick, London Pride
& E.S.B.**
at the



Gibraltar Castle
Lower Luton Road, Batford, Harpenden
Meals now available all opening times

LESS TAXES FROM THE PEASANTS!

1991 is going to go down in history as the last year a pint of beer could be bought for less than a pound. Even yawning Norman's tuppence a pint in the budget forced the **Woodman** at Wildhill to put it's Mac's AK up to a £1, while many places are charging 25% more and £1.50 seems to be no barrier at all for some establishments on their stronger brews. Many are trying to fob off all the increases on the taxman but our mole in the Customs and Excise has come up with an interesting report:

The system of levying excise duty on beer has remained the same since 1880, although there has been a tax on beer since 1643. The current rate of duty is 106 pence per hectolitre (approx. 22 gallons) per degree of original specific gravity (OG). The OG is an indicator of the sugars in the brew that can be turned into alcohol.

The table opposite shows some of the brews available locally, their OG and the excise duty per pint.

The overall proportion of duty and tax on a pint has fallen over the years but prices have risen above inflation.

	Average retail price £	Excise Duty (on 1037 OG) pence	VAT pence	Total pence	Total revenue as % of price
1981	0.46	12.6	6.0	18.6	40.4
1984	0.69	16.8	9.0	25.8	37.4
1987	0.82	18.1	10.7	28.8	35.1
1990	1.04	20.4	13.6	34.0	32.7
1991	1.25	22.3	18.6	40.9	32.7

As retailers increase prices excise duty does not increase but VAT does. The 32.7% total revenue does not compare badly with some other commodities. e.g.

Commodity	Excise duty + VAT* as % of price	Price in pence
Beer	32.7	104 per pint at og 1037
Lager	28.1	115 per pint at og 1034
Cider	21.9	120 per pint less than 8.5% by vol
Wine	49.7	300 per litre of still wine
Port/Sherry	56.9	375 per 75 cl bottle
Spirits	67.9	950 per 75 cl at 40% by vol
Cigarettes	73.9	175 per 20 king size filter
Petrol	59.7	220 per gallon 4 star leaded

* pre 1991 budget

Excise duty on cider was reintroduced in 1976 and the rate today is £20.40 per hectolitre, a flat rate below 8.5% by volume. This is equivalent to 11.6p per pint. A point to remember next time you're asked for £1.50.

Following the recent rise in excise duty and VAT to 17.5%, brewers and licencees have seen an opportunity to raise prices quite substantially, way above inflation. So come on brewers/licencees, don't you think its about time you came clean and stop this annual attempt to camouflage your own price increases behind those of the Chancellor.

Brewer	Beer	Original gravity	Excise duty pence
Adnams	Bitter	1033	19.9
	Extra	1043	25.9
Banks & Taylor	Shefford	1038	22.9
	Bass	1044	26.5
Benskins	Best Bitter	1037	22.3
Brakspears	Bitter	1035	21.1
	Special	1043	25.9
Courage	Best Bitter	1039	23.5
	Directors	1046	27.7
Fullers	John Smiths	1036	21.7
	Chiswick	1034	20.5
Greene King	London Pride	1040	24.1
	ESB	1054	32.5
	XX	1032	19.3
	IPA	1036	21.7
	Rayment Special	1040	24.1
	Abbot	1049	29.5
Ind Coope	Burton Ale	1048	28.9
Marstons	Pedigree	1043	25.9
McMullens	AK	1033	19.9
	Country	1041	24.7
Tetley	Bitter	1035.5	21.1
Watney	Ruddles Bitter	1037	22.3
	Ruddles County	1050	30.1
	Websters Yorkshire	1036	21.7



McMULLEN ORIGINAL

AK



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McMULLEN ORIGINAL AK IS FAMOUS FOR ITS?

Unique Hoppiness Maltiness Fruitiness

McMULLEN ORIGINAL AK HAS BEEN BREWED FOR?

50 years 100 years over 100 years

McMULLEN ORIGINAL AK IS FERMENTED IN?

Stainless Steel Copperlined Oak Glass Lined Steel

Show your Ale Knowledge by ticking the box you think has the correct answer; fill in your name and address and send this advert, to **D Rutledge, McMullen and Sons Ltd. The Hertford Brewery, Hertford, SG14 1RD.**

Name
 Address

 Post Code

All correct answers will receive an AK badge as proof of their Ale Knowledge.

TOWN AND AROUND

It is with regret we report the death at the end of April of John Blackwell the owner of the **Barley Mow**, Tyttenhanger from the mid 70's to the mid 80's.

During his stay at the Barley Mow, John did much to promote Real Ale in Hertfordshire as the comment in numerous Good Beer Guides bore out viz "More a beer exhibition than a pub". Our sympathies go to his wife Betty and family.

It is well rumoured and probably confirmed by the time you read this that the **Barley Mow**, Tyttenhanger is to re-open. It is believed that it will cease to be a Grand Met. "Freehouse" and revert to being a privately run pub offering a wide range of real ales and re-establish itself as a "Real Ale Mecca".

In our "bad news" department, we note that the **Six Bells**, Sandon, has been sold as a house, and Greene King have applied for planning permission to turn the **Bell**, Cottered (currently closed) into residential premises. We also note that the **Bedford Arms**, Hitchin, has removed the recently installed handpump, allegedly due to "lack of demand"!

Harpenden saw the end of an era in May, when Reg and Brenda Johnson retired after 30 years at the **Cross Keys** in the High Street.

The old world charm of this ancient inn has been meticulously maintained with masses of pewter, highly polished brass and many pictures of old Harpenden decorate the walls.

The pub has many sporting connections, especially with hockey and rugby; Reg was in instigator of the Cross Keys Pub Rugby Sevens that has grown into a national event.

They are both keen gardeners and had the only pub for miles around with a grape vine across the frontage which is also decorated with hanging baskets (different ones for summer and winter). They were vigilant custodians of the War Memorial across the road which was always immaculate for the Armistice Day service.

We wish them both a long and happy retirement.

It is no secret that the rent Whitbread are charging the incoming tenants is nearly thrice that before. There is great fear amongst regulars that the **Keys** will not remain the haven they know and love.

Also in Harpenden; Allied Breweries and Jarvis Builders have re-submitted plans to demolish the **George** in the High Street, the brick building to the rear and along with the vacant plot to the south build a block of shops, offices and public toilets.

The Herts South Branch of Camra registered objections with the council along with the Harpenden Society, the Victorian Society and English Heritage. Although the Town Council came out in favour of the scheme, the District Planning Committee said the plans were not an improvement on the present building and rejected them. We believe that if Allied are unable to make the **George** a paying concern we are sure that as a free house selling a good range of beers and food, and the hotel accommodation revived it could be a thriving hostelry and the red brick building to the rear could be converted to a restaurant or club that would be an asset to the town.

The **Punch Bowl**, Watling Street, half way between St. Albans and Redbourn, has been bought off Allied Breweries by the owner of the Sally Lunn restaurant in St. Albans. Much building work has been going on in recent weeks.

Hostelries up for sale at the moment include the **Pinks Hotel**, Shenley, the **Crooked Billet**, Colney Heath, the **Greyhound**, St. Ippollitts, the **Bell**, Bovingdon the **Stag**, Chorleywood and Whitbread's 'charming' **Beehive**, St. Albans.

A member of the Post Office Pub Liberation Front struck the recently (and expensively) refurbished **King Harry**, St. Albans with his car transporter. Fortunately no-one was hurt but the pub survived with a bit missing out of one

corner.

Mr James Johnson has written to us to say he has taken over the **Chieftain** in Cole Green Lane, Welwyn Garden City and he has now put the McMullens AK on handpump alongside the Country, which has resulted in a tremendous upsurge in sales. — Well done James! — saves all that nasty CO₂ as well.

That long time fizz — only pub; the **Chalkdrawers**, Colney Heath has seen the light and is now selling Theakstons Old Peculier alternating with Theakstons Bitter.

A new outlet for mild is always worth a mention; Ansells Mild is reported as being available in the **Three Tuns**, Hertford. Another ex-McMullens house is trading as a free house; the **Crown**, Hertford Heath is reported to be doing: Theakstons Old Peculier, Greene King, Abbot and IPA, Adnams Bitter and Youngers South Bitter.

The dust is now settling on the building work at the recently acquired by Fullers' **Portland Arms**, St. Albans and Allied's **Baton**, Marshalswick, St. Albans where the Public Bar has become the 'Sports Bar'.

While over at Hailey near Hoddesdon the **Galley Hall** has replaced its infrequent Burton Ale on gravity by three handpumps with Tetleys, Greene King Abbot as well as the Burton Ale on offer.

New licencees have been spotted in the **White Horse**, Shenley and the **Peacock**, St. Albans (more information please!)

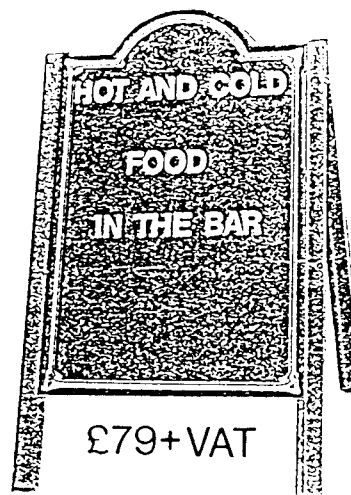
Stop press: The **Marchmont Arms** Piccotts End has been acquired by Whitbread and is being converted to a Beefeater.

The **Gibraltar Castle**, Harpenden is closing at the end of May for a six-week refit.

GBBF QUIZ

Congratulations to the two winners of our quiz Mr J.T. James of Watford and Mr C.J. Slann of Hitchin who both win a pair of tickets for a session at the Great British Beer Festival. For the record: Ruddles are owned by Grand Met; Boddingtons, Castle Eden, Fremains and Oldham by Whitbread; Theakstons by Scottish & Newcastle; Mitchell & Butler by Bass Charrington; Shipstones by Greenalls and Taylor Walker by Allied Breweries. Marstons are still independent although Whitbread Investments hold a 31.6% stake, and Whitbread themselves have 6% of the shares (as at December 1990).

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DIARY DATES

HERTFORDSHIRE SOUTH BRANCH

Tuesday 4 June, Hertford Heath crawl; **East India College Arms**, 8.30, **Goat**, 9.00, **Townshend Arms**, 9.30, **Crown**, 10.15

Tuesday 18 June, Branch meeting, Plough, tyttenhanger, near St. Albans, 8.30pm.

Tuesday 9 July, Pub crawl; **Long Arm and Short Arm**, 8.30, **Sun**, Lemsford, 9.15, **Crooked Chimney**, Cromer Hyde 10.00.

Tuesday 16 July, Branch meeting **Maypole**, Water End, North Mymms, 8.30pm.

Contact: Bob Norrish 0582 763133 x2554 or 0582 769923

MID-CHILTERNES BRANCH

Wednesday 5 June 8.30pm Social **Stag**, Mentmore Bucks, then **Rose and Crown** Ivinghoe, Bucks.

Monday 10 June 8.30pm Social **Bell** then **Travellers Rest**, Edlesborough, Bucks.

Monday 17 June 8.30pm Social **Greyhound** then **Valiant Trooper**, Aldbury.

Tuesday 25 June 8.30pm Social Joint meeting with Aylesbury Vale & Wycome branch at **Kings Arms**, Tring.

Friday 5 July 8.30pm Social **Gate** Swan Bottom then onto **Cock and Rabbit**. The Lee, Bucks.

Tuesday 9 July 8.30pm Social **Queens Head**, Chesham, Bucks.

Wednesday July 17 July **New Venture** then **Crabtree** Hemel Hempstead, Herts.

Wednesday 31 July 8.30pm Social **Chequers** then **Plough** Jockey End, Herts.

NORTH HERTFORDSHIRE BRANCH

Wednesday 5 June, **Charles Wells** Brewery Visit

Saturday 15 June (all day) Cambridge City Crawl

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

Wednesday 3 July, 8.30 Minicrawl, starting at **Rising Sun**, Halls Green, then **Anchor** and **White Horse**, Weston.

Saturday 13 July (all day) Minibus crawl of Mid Suffolk.

Wednesday 17 July, 8.30 Joint Social with North Bedfordshire Branch in Shefford, starting at **White Hart**.

Wednesday 31 July 8.30 village Crawl, starting at **Plough**, Great Munden, then **Rest & Welcome**, Haultwick; **Boot**, Dane End; and **Horse & Groom**, Levens Green.

Contact: Paul Coard 0462 437249

WATFORD & DISTRICT BRANCH

Wednesday 5 June, two pub social: 8.30pm **Unicorn**, Gallows Hill, 9.45pm **Royal Oak**, Kitters Green, Abbots Langley.

Wednesday 12 June, Oxhey crawl, 8.30pm **Villiers Arms**, 9.15pm **Rifle Volunteer**, 10.00pm **Victoria**.

Friday 21 June, Pre-Xmas London pub crawl round Marylebone area. Ring branch contact for details.

26-30 June, members only trip to Guernsey. Limited places, ring branch contact for details.

Wednesday 3 July, out of area crawl of Park Street. Ring branch contact for details.

Contact: Martin Few 0923 52412.

HERTS-ESSEX BORDERS

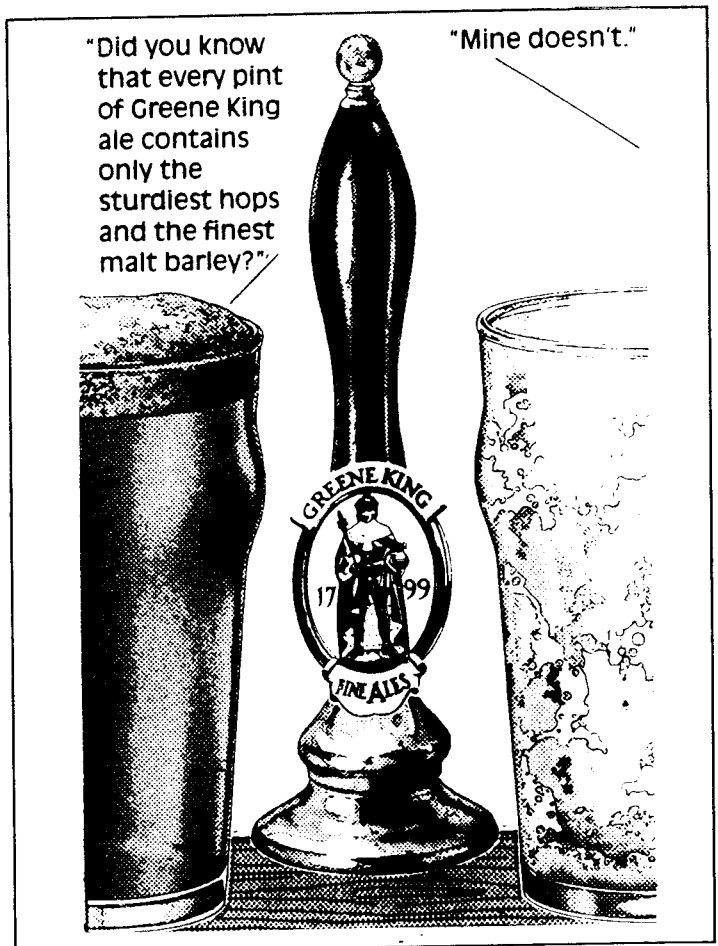
Contact: Angie Wright 0277 225815

ALL HERTS LIAISON MEETING

Monday 22 July, **Royal Oak** Chipperfield (Near Kings Langley) 8.30pm Mid-chilterns Branch hosting.

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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.

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