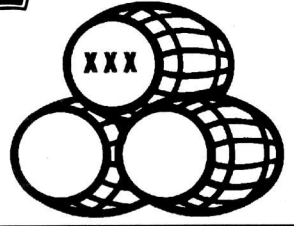


**FREE**



# THE HERTFORDSHIRE NEWSLETTER



A bi-monthly publication for the discerning real ale drinker

Aug/Sept 1991

CIRCULATION 4000

NUMBER 128

## HAVE TENANTS BEEN TELLING US PORKIES?

In the April/May edition of this newsletter we published an article describing some of the problems facing tenants of the big brewers, and Ind Coope Retail (ICR — who now run the Benskins estate) in particular. At that time we offered ICR the right to reply, and their response, printed below, has now been received via Infoplan, a London-based, international public relations company.

### IND COOPE REJECT CAMRA VIEW ... NOT BASED ON FACT

The Hertfordshire Newsletter article totally misrepresented Ind Coope Retail's attitude to its tenants and lessees. The company's success depends on its ability to create the conditions under which its tenants can grow and flourish. A tenant or lessee must be able to trade profitably. Pubs reflect the efficiency and character of the landlord and those who recognise the potential of what is offered will enjoy a prosperous future.

The industry is going through a period of significant change and Ind Coope Retail, part of Allied Breweries, is confident that those licensees who are able to adjust to change have the opportunity for a successful future with the Company. Some people may always be concerned by change — but today very often, what these people want to maintain is no longer available.

In common with other breweries, Ind Coope Retail has considered its estate in relation to the M & MC Report. As a result, it has been decided that some properties will become managed houses, selected properties will be long leased while others will be sold.

The new structure of Ind Coope Retail will provide licensees with the opportunity to build a developing and prosperous business.

#### DISPOSALS

Many Ind Coope tenants have been given the opportunity of purchasing their pubs at realistic prices and the Company has reacted fairly and responsibly to recent changes in the property market. The Company recognises that some tenants are unable to proceed with a purchase but this does not mean that the Company's requirements are unrealistic. It sold 250 Ind Coope Retail pubs (which includes Benskins) last year and has agreed sales of at least a further 70 pubs to existing tenants.

#### LEASING

The leasing of pubs is not a new concept. Benskins has granted several leases over recent years and other brewers have followed a similar policy. The Vanguard lease was introduced by Ind Coope Retail last year and is a

*continued on next page*



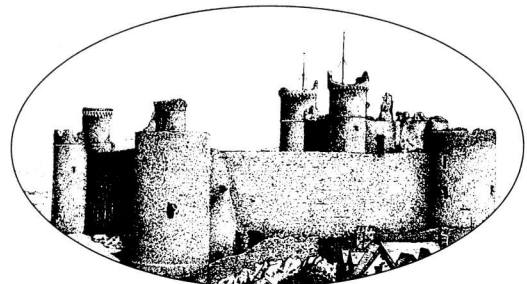
castle street ... old hertford

*Widest selection of real ales  
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.....  
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Gordon and Sorrell  
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& E.S.B.**  
at the



### Gibraltar Castle

Lower Luton Road, Batford, Harpenden

Meals now available all opening times

common form of lease used throughout Allied Breweries Ltd.

The major advantage of leasing is that lessees have an asset which can be sold for a capital sum after two years if they conduct the business efficiently. The lessees have security of occupation for at least 10 years.

When a lease is proposed, the Company will put forward a rent which it believes is appropriate for the business and reflects the term of the lease. Tenants can make counter-proposals and the Company will try to achieve an agreement on a realistic rent for the property. All lessees keep all profits from machines and have the benefits of the Company's volume incentive scheme and the business partnership provisions contained in the lease. Already 110 leases have been agreed for Ind Coope Retail pubs.

#### TRANSFER TO MANAGED HOUSES

When tenanted properties become managed houses, Ind Coope Retail pay compensation to the outgoing tenants. This payment is negotiated between the tenant and the Company and invariably has been more than a tenant would receive under the Landlord and Tenant Act.

Editor's comments: the original article was based on remarks made to us by Hertfordshire tenants of ICR. If, as claimed, the basic facts are untrue then they've obviously been telling us lies: ask your local ICR tenant for his views (the pub trade press continue to publish remarks from leading Licensed Victuallers Association leaders criticising the high price of leases and pub prices). At the time of going to press we know of few ICR tenants in Hertfordshire who have bought or leased their pubs: perhaps prices are more realistic in some other areas of the ICR estate. However, we do acknowledge that, for some, things might be improving: very recently we have been told by a couple of Herts tenants that, in their words, 'Benskins are no longer talking silly money'. Since the original article was published, ICR have issued letters giving notice to many of their tenants: the company says this is to allow easier transfer to leases; cynics (including many MPs) say it's to avoid the additional protection given to tenants under the amended Tenants and Landlord Act. Either way it will mean the end of tenancies, which was the main point of our article and which ICR's reply does not refute. We will be happy to publish any further comments from ICR or from local tenants (or ex-tenants) on this matter.

## NORTH HERTS BEER FESTIVAL

At the time that this edition of the Newsletter was going to press, a number of details had yet to be finalised. However, we can announce that, for the first time in many years, we intend to hold a Beer Festival in North Hertfordshire. Subject to confirmation, the Beer Festival will be at the Pliston Hall, Letchworth, on November 15th and 16th. Make a note in your diary and watch this space for further details.

## NORTH HERTS PUB OF THE YEAR

Congratulations to the Crown Inn, Buntingford, for being voted 1991 Pub of the Year by North Herts Branch. The Crown is a quiet free house, much appreciated by local residents who like good beer. Colin and Cherry Harrington have been hosts at the Crown since February 1989, when they moved there from another free house, the Crown at Dickleburgh, Norfolk.

The regular beers on sale are Banks and Taylor Shefford Bitter, Mauldons Squires Bitter, Ruddles Best Bitter and Ruddles County. The fifth handpump is used for a varying range of guest beers.

We will be presenting the Pub of the Year award to Colin and Cherry on Wednesday 11th September, and all readers are welcome to join us in celebrating with a few pints of well-kept good quality beer.

## TOWN AND AROUND

The **Two Chimneys**, Letchworth, has at last been converted to real ale, and now has handpumps serving Greene King IPA, Abbot, and Rayments Special.

The **George IV**, Baldock, will be closed for refurbishment until October.

The new landlord at the **Goldcrest**, Baldock, has installed Adnams Bitter, and hopes to be introducing more real ales very shortly.

Castle Eden Bitter is now available at the recently refurbished **Nightingale**, Hitchin.

The single underused and underadvertised handpump at the **Black Squirrel**, Letchworth, has been removed.

McMullens are allowing the new landlord at the **Coopers Arms**, Hitchin, to sell Courage Directors and Greene King Abbot alongside the McMullens beers.

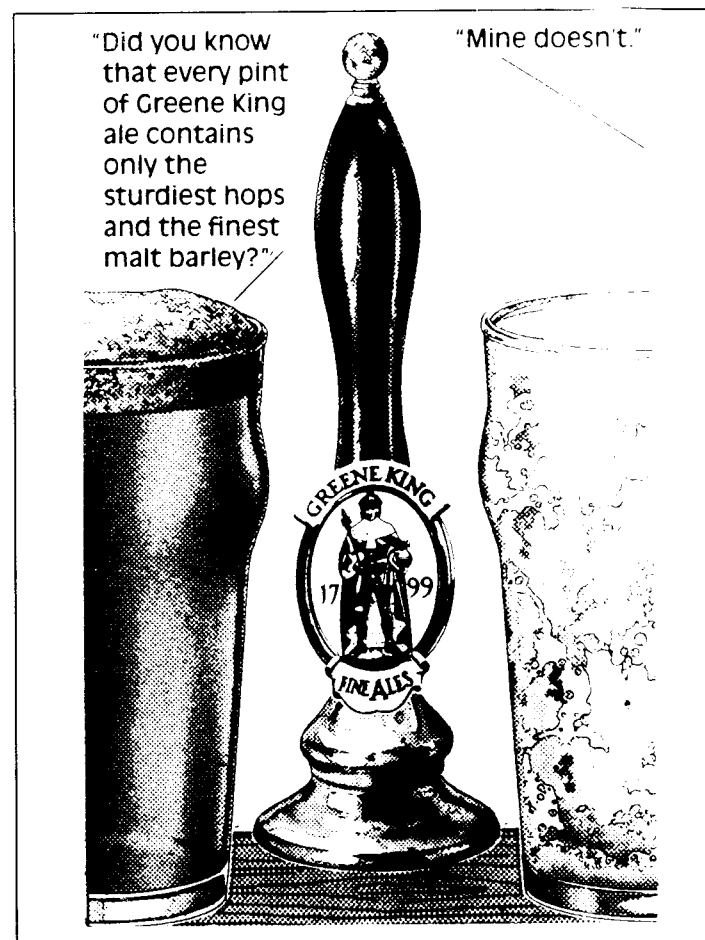
Subject to confirmation, the **Inn on the Green**, Datchworth, was expected to be changing ownership during July. The expected purchaser intends to offer two permanent real ales not usually available in the rest of the county, plus two guest bitters and one guest mild. Watch this space for further details.

Afficianados of real (northern)\* bowls will be delighted to learn that a Crown Green has been installed at the **Red Lion**, Preston. This may well be the only Crown Green in this part of the country. Derek and Mandy at the Red Lion would like to hear from any pubs or clubs interested in challenging them or forming a league.

The **Leviathan**, Watford, is selling Theakstons XB alongside Ruddles Best.

The completely refurbished and extended **Bedford Arms**, Watford, is expected to re-open in early August, and despite earlier plans, the dartboard has been retained. The new manager has reportedly said that Benskins, Tetleys, Adnams and a guest beer will be available.

The **George and Dragon**, Gravely, has re-opened after two major extensions. Greene King IPA, Rayments and Abbot are on sale together with what GK described as 'creative and inexpensive food'. Open all day Fridays and Saturdays.



The **Rising Sun**, Stevenage, has been converted into one large bar. Greene King have said that a 'full range of real ales' are available, hopefully that includes GK's 'forgotten' mild.

Greene King are spending about £300,000 in extending the **Anchor**, Hitchin. There will be a conservatory area leading to a patio and a large, family garden, and facilities for the disabled. Food will be available lunchtime and evenings, and the 'full range of Greene King's real ales' will be dispensed.

**Verulam Arms**, St. Albans — a deserving mention to landlord James Lennon for introducing a non-standard guest to his normal Allied range — namely Bateman's XB bitter. This is the first time in many years that Batemans has been available in St. Albans.

The **Gibraltar Castle**, Harpenden has re-opened after major refurbishment by Fullers. Chiswick is now available.

The **Queen Adelaide**, Shenley now has Fullers Chiswick Bitter as a regular guest beer.

The **Inn on the Green**, Harpenden has been closed for months, but Greene King have now applied for permission to demolish the front of the building and replace it with a conservatory.

Two recent conversions to Allied's 'Steak Inn' format are the **Townshend Arms**, Hertford Heath, and the **Baton**, Marshalswick, St. Albans.

**Pinks Hotel**, Shenley, currently has Brakspear's Mild as well as their Bitter alongside Youngs special and Wadworth 6X.

The **Marchmont Arms**, Hemel Hempstead, is to be converted to a Beefeater.

**Pré Hotel**, St. Ablans: Whitbread has applied for permission for alterations and an extension.

\* Some of the views expressed are DEFINITELY not those of the editor.

## BREWERY NEWS

During a recent visit to Charles Wells Brewery, members of North Herts branch were interested to learn that the brewery intend to re-introduce Fargo as a winter ale. For those readers who cannot remember, Wells Fargo was a dark, strong beer (o.g. 1050) which was axed about 11 years ago. Bombadier, Wells award winning 1042 o.g. beer, is soon to become the subject of a heavy advertising campaign in an attempt to boost sales.

Robinsons have announced they will be closing the Hartleys brewery in Ulverston, Cumbria in November.

A mild revival in parts: Elgoods are relaunching their mild in cask-conditioned form and Tolly Cobbolds mild has been so successful that they are expanding its trading area to Humberside. It appears that Greene King mild sales have stopped falling: unfortunately GK refuse to do anything to promote the beer and have rejected the idea of a joint campaign with CAMRA — despite that we'll go on urging you to try it: drinking it is the only way of saving it. The bad news is that it is rumoured that Marstons are to stop production of Mercian Mild to concentrate on promoting Border mild, and Morrells have axed their Light mild.

Grolsch have stated that they are looking to buy a regional brewery with a quality real ale that they could build up into a national brand.

Okells have introduced a new 1045 og beer called Okells 45 (obviously not too many imaginative marketing men at that brewery thank goodness!).

The small Oakhill brewery in Somerset is to start brewing Double Invalid Stout — for the historians amongst you, this brew was once one of this country's most famous brands with over 2500 barrels a week being produced. It ceased when the old Oakhill brewery burnt down in 1925.

The Boddingtons Pub groups bid for Devenish failed, but the Redruth brewery is scheduled for closure anyway, Devenish having flogged the rights to their beer brands to Whitbreads for £9.75 million, and that after Whitbread Investments had supported the takeover bid.

The Firkin brewpub chain is yet again for sale, the present

owners Stakis, need the money.

McMullens were due to start brewing Wethereds for Whitbread in mid-June, hopefully there will be an improvement in taste and quality. Macs have started allowing two guest beers in their estate: Greene King Abbot and Courage Directors.

The new independent Liverpool brewer, Robert Cains, has been taken over by Faxe Jykse, a Danish brewer. Cains who use the old Higsons brewery, already brew Faxe products such as Scania lager under contract. The takeover leaves the present management in place and is expected to allow increased investment in the brewery.

Advertising literature issued in the wake of the recent Courage — Grand Met tie up is noticeable for the absence of Johns Smith's bitter, Websters is featured, however. The tie up leaves Grand Met with an estate of over 7,000 pubs a gaping hole in the way the MMC report was implemented allows this monopoly. However they too have plenty of disgruntled landlords as a result of problems with leases.

Hydes have bought 10 pubs from Bass in the Bolton, Bury and Burnley area.

Greene King have announced pre-tax profits up 10 per cent to £22 million, with sales of IPA and Abbot up 6 percent. Over a £1 million was spent on advertising. Nearly 80 percent of the beer they sell, they brew themselves, being able to produce beer more cheaply than it can be bought on the open market — so what went wrong at Boddingtons, Greenalls and Devenish?

Morlands are buying 101 pubs from Courage for £16.4 million. The pubs stretch from Newbury and Guildford in the south to Witney and High Wycombe in the north.

Shipstones brewery is to be converted into a purification plant for bottled waters — we can suggest one or two places where this already seems to have occurred.

Finally, Miller Lite is being relaunched as Miller Pilsner with an advertising campaign that 'recognises the role that lager plays in people's real lives' — does that mean it will feature lager louts in action?


## BANK HOLIDAY

Over the August bank holiday there will be a small beer festival at the Huntsman, Goose Green near Hoddesdon. Opening times Friday 23rd and Saturday 24th 7-11.30pm, Sunday 12-10.30pm, and Monday 11am-11pm. CAMRA will be running a product stall, any members wishing to help contact Bob Norrish on 0582-763133 x2554 (work) or 0582 769923 (home).

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**BANNERS**

## DIARY DATES

### HERTFORDSHIRE SOUTH BRANCH

Tuesday 20 August, 8.30pm; Branch Meeting **Great Eastern**, Hertford.

Tuesday 3 September, Pub Crawl round St. Albans, 8.30pm **Rose and Crown**, St Michaels Street, 9.00pm **Blue Anchor**, 9.30pm **Lower Red Lion**, 10pm **Verulam Arms**, 10.30pm **Farriers Arms**.

Tuesday 17 September, 8.30pm; Branch Meeting, **Round Bush**, Aldenham.

Contact: Bob Norrish 0582 763133 x2554 or 0582 769923

### MID-CHILTERN BRANCH

Contact: Chris Pontin 0494 78624(w) 0494 775409(h).

### NORTH HERTFORDSHIRE BRANCH

Saturday 10 August; All-day crawl of mid-Suffolk by minibus.

Wednesday 14 August, 8.30; Branch Meeting at the **Victoria**, Hitchin.

Wednesday 28 August, 8.30; Minicrawl, starting at **Bright Star**, Peters Green, then on to **Boot**, Kimpton, and **Maidens Head**, Whitwell.

Wednesday 11 September, 8.30; Pub of the Year award presentation at the **Crown**, Buntingford.

Wednesday 25 September, 8.30; Countryside Crawl, starting at **Countryman**, Chipping, then on to **Chequers**, Sandon and **Fox & Duck**, Therfield.

Tuesday 1 October, 11am; Visting Elgoods Brewery, Wisbech, Cambs.

Wednesday 9 October, 8.30; Branch Meeting at **Coach & Horses**, Royston.

Wednesday 23 October, 8.30; Ickleford Crawl, starting at **Old George** then on to **Plume of Feathers** and **Cricketers**.

Contact: Paul Coard 0462 437249

### WATFORD & DISTRICT BRANCH

Tuesday 6 August, Social at the **Old Fox**, Old Bricket Wood, 8.30pm.

Saturday 10 August, Ramble in Brakspears country. Details from branch contact.

Friday 16 August, Social at GBBF. Meet on the hour by the membership stand.

Tuesday 20 August, Social at the **Old Shepherd**, Chorleywood, 8.30pm.

Wednesday 28 August, Social at the **Cricketers**, Sarratt, 8.30pm. Transport from Watford Junction at 8.15pm.

Tuesday 3 September, Games evening at the **Stag**, Bushey, 8.30pm.

Tuesday 10 September, Socials at the **Partridge**, Carpenders Park, 8.30pm, then by train to the **Pennant**, Watford, 10.00pm.

Tuesday 17 September, Two-pub social in Hunton Bridge: **Dog & Partridge**, 8.30pm, then **Kings Head**, 9.30pm.

Wednesday 25 September, two-pub social in Croxley Green: **Artichoke**, 8.30pm, **Sportsman**, 9.15pm.

Contact: Martin Few 0923 52412.

### HERTS-ESSEX BORDERS

Contact: Angie Wright 0277 225815.

## GREAT BRITISH BEER FESTIVAL

At the Arena, Docklands, August 13-17. Tuesday - Friday 5pm-10.30pm, admission £2.50, Wednesday - Friday 11.30am-3.00pm, £1.00, Saturday 11am-10.30pm, £2.50. No admittance after 10.00pm. Family room available lunchtimes and until 9.00pm (free admittance to children accompanied by adults).

## PINT SAVED

Peter Lilley, the Trade and Industry Secretary, has announced that pints of draught beer (and cider) have been exempted from the European 1989 Units of Measurement Directive, so we wont be forced to drink in 0.88pints (1/2 litre). However, from 2000, it will be illegal to sell beer in returnable containers labelled in pints or fluid ounces.

## HERTS BEER GUIDE

Real Draught Beer in Hertfordshire is a comprehensive listing of real ale outlets in the county. Even with the rapid change in the industry, there is still no better guide to Hertfordshire pubs. Copies are available, price £3.50 (including p.&p.) from Eric Sim, 10 Heron Way, Hatfield, Herts, AL10 8QL. Get your copy while stocks last!

## BY APPOINTMENT

At the Foreign office's request, CAMRA drew up a list of pubs worth visiting in the Whitehall area, for distribution to the world's press covering the recent GT conference.

### 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.

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