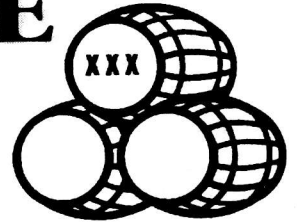


FREE



THE HERTFORDSHIRE NEWSLETTER



A bi-monthly publication for the discerning real ale drinker

FEBRUARY/MARCH 1992

CIRCULATION 4000

NUMBER 131

CAMRA COMES OF AGE

It is just 21 years ago that the idea for a Campaign for the Revitalisation of Ale was born when four journalists were on a drinking holiday in Ireland. When they returned to their Salford roots there was no shortage of people willing to sign up at 25 pence a time.

Early investigations into the brewing trade revealed a host of horrors; topping the list was how natural live beer, as brewed for hundreds of years, with the yeast still working in it, served straight from the barrel or through handpumps, was rapidly being replaced by sterilized brews that have to be served by carbon dioxide pressure to give them a pretence of life (keg in short). Soon the term 'Real Ale' was adopted which was later to find a definition in all the best dictionaries.

Secondly it was revealed that a large portion of beer production in the UK was tied up by 6 big breweries who were hell-bent on buying any available small brewery, taking over the pubs, closing the breweries and foisting their usually inferior brews on the defenceless customers.

Thirdly was the demise of the traditional English pub, once the envy of the world. Villages were being left with no pub at all; social centres where people of all ages were welcomed were being ripped apart made into theme pubs and discos for the young and deaf.

Well without Camra real ale would surely have all but disappeared, but without the real ale revival would the price of beer be any cheaper?

The big brewers still control far too much of the market and still prey on the independent brewers. But they themselves have fallen prey to foreign-based multinational companies.

As the 1990's start to roll by, many are doubting whether the 'British pub', 'the local', is going to survive into the 21st century.

If you're still worried about the state of British brewing and the British pub, add your weight to the 31,000 Camra members who are fighting for a better deal.

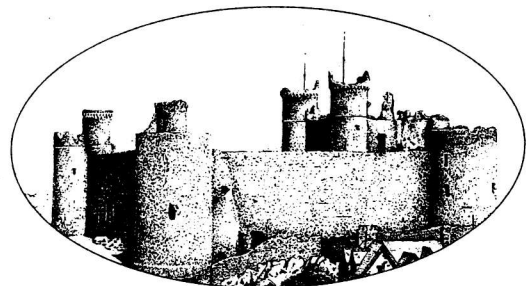
HELP MINISTER

Representatives of the St. Albans LVA called on Trade and Industry Secretary Peter Lilley M.P. to tell him of the poor way the brewers have been treating them. About 30 tenants in the St. Albans area have been served with notices to quit without any promise of compensation. Much of the problem stems from the way his department has implemented the recommendations made after the inquiry into beer supply in 1989.

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

TOWN AND AROUND

The **Three Tuns**, Great Hornead has been destroyed by fire. The landlord has moved to take over the **Black Horse** at Brent Pelham. McMullens have reclaimed the **Banyers Hotel**, Royston from the former leaseholder, the pub is now being run as a managed house, a set of handpumps has been installed serving McMullens AK, Country and Courage Director's.

Pubs which have recently acquired new landlords include the **Sailor Boy**, Hitchin, **New Inn**, Holwell, **Three Horseshoes**, Hinxworth, **White Horse**, Wareside and the **Harrow**, Ware.

The public inquiry into Allied Breweries plans to turn the **Abbey Tavern**, St. Albans into yet another office block was held recently; the outcome is still awaited.

The **Oak Tree** is the new name for the **Oddfellows Arms**, Harpenden. The first free house in the town since the **Engineer** sold out to Bass Charrington some years ago, has been transformed by Tim and Carolyn Needham from a McMullens tied house. Six handpumps have been installed for 'Macs' AK., Tetleys, Adnams, Boddington, Pedigree and Abbot with a regular guest beer. The drinking area has doubled in size while retaining a local flavour. Food is available every lunchtime and to order evenings.

Down the road the **Old Cock** has also been refurbished again; beers here are Ruddles Bitter, Country and Websters. Latest on the **Inn on the Green**, Harpenden, is the revised plans have been given the go-ahead and Greene King plan to spend £1/2 million and reopen in July.

The **Cross Keys**, Gustard Wood is up for sale from Ind Coope, and the **Beehive** St. Albans is believed to have been sold to one of the pub leisure groups. Ten tenanted Benskins pubs in the St. Albans area are likely to transfer to Brent Walker's Pubmaster chain. There will be a supply deal for Allied beers for seven years and others will also be available. We will let you know which pubs are involved in due course. This months imaginative vending award goes to the **Boot**, St. Albans which has Tetleys Bitter on all six handpumps.

And the £2 a pint is with us already; you can be ripped off at the **Moat House**, Borehamwood for a pint of Bass. (Keeps the riff-raff out – Ed).

New outlets for real ale are the **Gordon Craig Theatre**, Stevenage, the **Plume of Feathers**, Little Wymondley and the **Boot**, Baldock.

Late News: The **Fisheries Inn**, Elstree is now a free house, released from the Benskins tie.

FULL PINTS AT LAST

The government has come up with some good news for beer drinkers with its declaration that it is to act to ensure that they get a full pint in future. It is to implement Section 43 of the 1985 Weights and Measures Act under which the head on the beer will no longer be counted as part of a pint. This will almost certainly mean the introduction of oversize glasses with the pint measure marked by a line. However, no time is set for the changes.

Although earlier this year the government is reported to have dismissed any such plans because there had been "few public complaints", they have changed their minds following "growing complaints". No doubt the spate of Trading Standards reports showing that pints are regularly

served 2.5 to 6% short also helped.

Needless to say the Brewers Society response was to warn that prices would go up, as if they needed an excuse! It's not too surprising, as the Trading Standards Administration have estimated that the shortfall is worth £225 million, and no doubt some of that ended up in the Society's members' pockets. They also stated that bar staff would have difficulties in pouring beer into over sized glasses. And of course the taxman is keen to get his share of the shortfall.

NO MORE ON THE PINT, NORMAN

CAMRA has asked Chancellor Norman Lamont not to increase beer duty in 1992. A tax freeze would benefit not only millions of beer drinkers, but also the recession hit brewing trade.

Britain's beer drinkers pay more tax than most other EC countries. A third of the price of a pint is tax. Beer drinkers pay four billion pounds to the Exchequer every year, and enough is enough.

Last year's duty and VAT increase amounted to 5p a pint, twice the rate of inflation. Brewers of all sizes found sales slumping.

CAMRA dismisses the arguments of the health lobby, who want to see above-inflation increases for drink prices. Supermarkets and off-licences are cheaper than pubs. Penal tax increases will simply drive heavy drinkers out of pubs to drink at home. Why should sensible drinkers pay more, when problem drinkers will not be deterred?

Every beer drinker grumbles about the price of a pint. Norman Lamont has the chance to be that rare thing, a popular Chancellor, if he heeds our call.

Inn On the Green Datchworth

**Large selection of
cask conditioned ale including mild**

**Home made food available every
Lunchtime & Evening**

Opening Times:

11.00 – 3.00	5.00 – 11.00	Mon – Fri
11.00 – 3.00	6.00 – 11.00	Saturday
12.00 – 3.00	7.00 – 10.30	Sunday

*Brewery Trips organised periodically.
Current trip: Michells Brewery
– phone Ian Miller for details*

Telephone: 0438-812496

DIARY DATES

HERTFORDSHIRE SOUTH BRANCH

Tuesday 18 February, Branch meeting, **Oak Tree**, Leyton Green, Harpenden, 8.30pm.

Tuesday 17 March, Branch meeting, **Woodman**, Wildhill, near Essendon, 8.30pm.

Tuesday 24 March, Celebration of Ten Years in Good Beer Guide, **John Bunyan**, Coleman Green, near Wheathampstead, 8.30pm.

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

WATFORD & DISTRICT BRANCH

Wednesday 5 February, Rickmansworth social: **Fox and Hounds**, 8.30pm; **Coach and Horses**, 9.30pm.

Tuesday 11 February, Oxhey social: **Railway Arms**, 8.30pm; **Rifle Volunteer**, 9.15pm; **Haydon Arms**, 10.00pm.

Tuesday 18 February, **Pub of the Year** presentation, **Nascot Arms**, Watford, 8.30pm for 9.00pm.

Tuesday 25 February, Croxley Green crawl: **Red House** 8.00pm; **Fox and Hounds**, 8.45pm; **Duke of York** 9.30pm; **Sportsman** 10.00pm.

Wednesday 4 March, Bushey Heath social: **Three Crowns** 8.30pm; **Kings Head** 9.15pm; **Black Boy** 10.00pm.

Thursday 12 March, Evening social at **London Drinker Beer Festival**, London Centre, Bidborough Street, London WC1.

Wednesday 18 March, **AGM**, **Fox and Hounds**, Rickmansworth, 8.30pm.

Tuesday 24 March, **Swan**, Pimlico, 8.30pm; **Compasses**, Abbots Langley 9.30pm; **Swan**, Abbots Langley, 10.15pm.

Contact: Martin Few 0923 52412

NORTH HERTFORDSHIRE BRANCH

Wednesday 12 February, 8.30pm Branch Meeting at the **Cock**, Hitchin.

Wednesday 26 February, 8.30pm Branch AGM at the **White Hart**, Baldock.

Wednesday 11 March, 8.30pm Letchworth Crawl, starting at the **Wilbury**, Wilbury Hills Road, then **Two Chimneys**, **Broadway Hotel** and **Arena Tavern**.

Wednesday 25 March, 8.30pm Countryside Crawl, starting at the **Black Horse**, Brent Pelham, then **Chequers**, Anstey, and **Woodman**, Nuthampstead.

Wednesday 8 April, 8.30pm Branch Meeting at the **Crown**, Buntingford.

Contact: Paul Coard 0462 437249

MID-CHILTERN BRANCH

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

HERTS-ESSEX BORDERS

Contact: Angie Wright 0277 225815

ALL HERTS LIAISON MEETING

Monday 13 April Watford Branch hosting.

BEER FESTIVALS

February 19-22 **3rd Battersea Beerex**, Battersea Town Hall, London SW11.

March 11-13 **1992 London Drinker Beer Festival**, Camden Centre. London WC1.

WATFORD PUB OF THE YEAR

The Watford CAMRA branch has selected the **Nascot Arms**, Watford, as its Pub of the Year for 1991. The Nascot serves the full range of Greene King beers and does reasonably priced food lunchtimes Monday to Saturday.

This busy town pub dates from 1866 when it was built for John Dyson whose Cannon Brewery was taken over to become Benskins. It was one of six local pubs sold to Wells and Winch in 1960, Wells and Winch being taken over by Greene King the following year.

Our congratulations to tenants Bryan and Brenda Adlam who are ably supported by their daughter Sue and an efficient and friendly group of regular bar staff.

The branch will be celebrating at the Nascot on 18 February.

REAL DRAUGHT BEER IN HERTFORDSHIRE

The guide to the counties pubs for the discerning beer drinker; available from Eric Sim, 10 Heron Way, Hatfield AL10 8QL. £3.50.

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.

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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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INSIDE VIEW

Back at the start of CAMRA breweries with such names as Joules, Melbourns, Rayments, Grays and Yorkshire Clubs still produced fine ales; Ruddles was still a proud independent company and about 10 home brew pubs still carried on a long tradition of brewing. In total there were 93 companies operating 157 breweries.

In 1992 in CAMRA's 21st year there are about 166 brewery companies operating 196 breweries not to mention at least 54 home brew pubs; though a few more may have opened when I wasn't looking! Almost twice as many companies operating more breweries. Not to mention the massive explosion of home brew operations.

However the fact remains that more and more of the brewing capacity is in fewer and fewer hands. Although we are able to sample a very wide variety of beers if we are lucky enough to live near a free house or an enterprising tenant of a national brewery, in many areas of the UK all you will get are the bland brands of national brews.

Several notable and once proud members of the independent brewing fraternity such as Davenports, Boddingtons, Devenish and Simpkins no longer brew, either through their own choice or because of the greed of some rapacious brewer. It is notable that possibly the most destructive of the brewers, with the possible exception of Whitbread, Greenalls has, after swallowing Wem, Simpkins, Davenports and Shipstones, now decided to leave brewing themselves, after 228 years.

Other brewers are predicted to follow. Are we due to eventually reach the situation existing in the USA where 98% of all beer is produced by three or four major brewers whilst a hundred or so boutique brewers supply the few dedicated cask ale drinkers? I don't think so. But in this the 21st year of CAMRA what we as cask ale campaigners need to do is to support independent brewers enthusiastically and perhaps spend less time carping about such things as use of cask breathers, and the lack of real fires in their pubs.

Because if we the drinkers of cask ale do not support the likes of McMullens, Shepherd Neame, King and Barnes, Eldridge Pope, Hall & Woodhouse and other traditional family brewers, then by the time CAMRA reaches its thirtieth birthday we will have lost many more of our established independent brewers. Constructive criticism yes, blind boycott and bullshit no.

Ian Loe

BREWERY NEWS

Our very own **McMullens** of Hertford are making full use of their spare capacity by brewing Wethereds Bitter for Whitbread. Miles Templeman, managing director of Whitbread Brewing Company almost admitted, without actually saying so, that closing the Wethered's Brewery in Marlow, Buckinghamshire was a mistake. 'Macs' are also keeping their bottling lines busy, bottling (but not brewing) the dreaded Watneys Red Barrel; strictly for export we are assured.

Ruddles go Dutch. The Rutland brewery who sold out to Watney in 1986 and passed on to Courage in the Grand Metropolitan - Fosters carve up, is now to be sold to Grolsch of the Netherlands in an attempt to reduce the debts of the floundering Australian empire. Courage have already sold the Ushers brewery, Wiltshire and 433 pubs to a management buyout.

Wolverhampton and Dudley are to close the **Hansons** brewery in Dudley and are to switch production of the only beer currently brewed there, Hansons Mild, to **Banks** brewery. They have also spent a reported £18.7 million to take over the **Camerons** brewery from Brent Walker. They also get 51 pubs in the North East as part of the deal.

Bass are planning to close both the **Hope** brewery in Sheffield and the **Heriot** brewery in Edinburgh, although the **Hope** brewery will continue in production until 1994.

The breweryless **Boddington** Pub Company are selling a new beer, Old Shilling, at 89p a pint. The beer is brewed for them by **Mansfield**.

The **Pilgrim** Brewery in Surrey is producing a new beer, Crusader, a 1046 o.g. light-coloured bitter.

The 14 **Firkin** pubs, including the 10 in London that Dave Bruce used to own, have been bought by Allied Breweries and are to be run by Taylor Walker.

A new brewery has been started at Wortley, near Barnsley. Three beers; Best Bitter, Brewers Bitter and Porter are to be on sale at the **Wortley Arms**, all at less than £1 a pint.

Courage have announced that they have stopped public tours of their Halifax and Bristol breweries, leaving just Tadcaster and Reading; rumour has it that any ICI plant is more interesting than the latter.

CHEAP BEER

99 pence is all you will be asked for when ordering a pint of Courage Best at the **Tudor Tavern**, George St., St. Albans. Mike Walkern, the real ale fanatic manager of the Devenish owned tavern says he can still make a profit at that price but he has Glenny's Hobgoblin at £1.75 for the more affluent and a range of four other beers in between.

