



THE HERTFORDSHIRE NEWSLETTER

A bi-monthly publication for the discerning real ale drinker



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GUEST BEER LOTTERY

As drinkers in Hertfordshire have noticed there is very little choice when looking for guest beers in tied pubs.

When the Monopolies and Mergers Commission report was first introduced there were large portfolios of other brewers ales to choose from, but these have rapidly been whittled down. Whitbread and Allied, who still own the majority of Hertfordshire pubs, generally offer products from companies in which they have a shareholding or which are totally owned subsidiaries, such as Whitbread's Boddingtons and Castle Eden.

Allied Breweries are now brewing all Greenall Whitley's beer at their Burton-on-Trent plant and this is now having a knock-on effect on their remaining tenancies in Hertfordshire.

Greenalls have taken over 29 tenancies in the county from Allied Breweries, and Benskins Best Bitter has been replaced by Greenalls Bitter. In a number of pubs the general comment was "The only change was the pump clip as both beers are equally bland and disappointing". There is the Burton Ale but what of a guest beer? Greenalls would not clarify the situation before taking over the pubs, which lead to certain licensees, who relied on the guest beer trade, to move on. Greenalls have now decided the guest beer will be either Adnams Bitter or Fullers London Pride and the one the majority of landlords choose will be the one all their pubs will stock.

Hertfordshire
South Branch
Pub of the Year
1992

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



castle street ... old hertford

Over 200 GUEST REAL ALES per. year

.....
**Fullers; Hook Norton
& G.K.IPA.**

These HOUSE BEERS are direct from the Brewery
(NOT WHOLESALERS)

BEERS SERVED ON GRAVITY & HAND PUMP

.....
HOMEMADE BREAD & FOOD WEEKDAY LUNCHTIMES

.....
20% DISC. ON OFFSALE PINS/FIRKINS

BREWERY NEWS

Whitbread Investment Company (WIC) has been divesting itself recently of large portions of its interests in other breweries. It was the sale of their stake in Morlands that led to the ill-conceived and ultimately doomed takeover bid by Greene King.

WIC have now reduced their holding in Marstons of Burton-on-Trent from 31 to 12 per cent. It was feared these may be taken up by another predatory brewer such as Scottish and Newcastle or Wolverhampton and Dudley who would then launch a bid. It would appear a salutary lesson was learnt in the Greene King-Morlands debacle, as no such move was made.

WIC has also reduced its holding in the Boddingtons pub chain from 18.9 to 12.3 per cent and cut its share in Devenish from 14.4 to 11.1 per cent.

Meanwhile the repercussions of the failed Greene King bid goes on. It has been estimated the money borrowed to acquire the 29.3 per cent of Morlands will cost £3m to finance and guess who is going to be paying that?

After 169 years of brewing, Randalls Vautier of Jersey are to stop production due to "drinkers' demands for imported brands".

Brierley Investments have made a takeover bid for Gibbs Mew of Salisbury, more news awaited.

CAMRA CLUB OF THE YEAR

Does your club have a commitment to real ale, sufficient to win it CAMRA's Club of the Year Award?

Prestige, publicity and a plaque await the lucky winner. Last year's winner – the ICI Recreation Club in Huddersfield – even got a write-up in the national papers.

Although CAMRA branches will be making nominations, clubs or members of clubs can nominate entries through the

Branch contacts (see back page). Deadline for entries October 31st.

The Chairman of CAMRA's Clubs Committee John Holland said: "The image of clubs as bastions of keg beer has been slow to die. The truth is, real ale is growing in the club trade. We hope these awards will give more prominence to the clubs that sell an excellent pint of good beer."

The results of the awards will be announced in 1993.

BIGOT'S CORNER

So What is Wrong with British Beer?

We all know who is to blame for the current economic crisis don't we? It's not just the government, it's all these posers who think they are being clever by drinking foreign beers. (Usually sold at hypothermic temperatures to numb the taste buds).

Well they have done it now, all our foreign holidays are going to cost more as well as all these imported brews. What is that going to do to inflation?

And what about the environment? Think of all those fossil fuels being burnt just to bring products that are 95% water from places as far away as Mexico and even New Zealand.

With people like these around we are all doomed.

THE OXFORD YARD

In the dark distant past when stagecoaches were the only way to travel around the country, many an arduous journey at average speeds of twelve miles per hour was undertaken.

The horses had to be changed at regular intervals to keep up with the timetable; this was normally done at a Coaching Inn and the passengers driver and guard were not always allowed to disembark.

It was customary for the Coach Company to provide two pints of beer for the driver and guard at each stop. Handing these up without spilling them was not easy and in an effort to get around the problem a tall two pint glass was made.

The problem was that whoever the beer was handed to, drank both pints, the Inn would not provide more without payment and the arguments that followed seriously slowed the coaches progress.

In an effort to resolve this problem the licenced trade turned to that great seat of learning Oxford University and they produced a solution; a two pint glass that you could not drink more than one pint from without removing it from your lips. Those foolish enough to continue found that the remainder of the drink would rush out leaving them soaked.

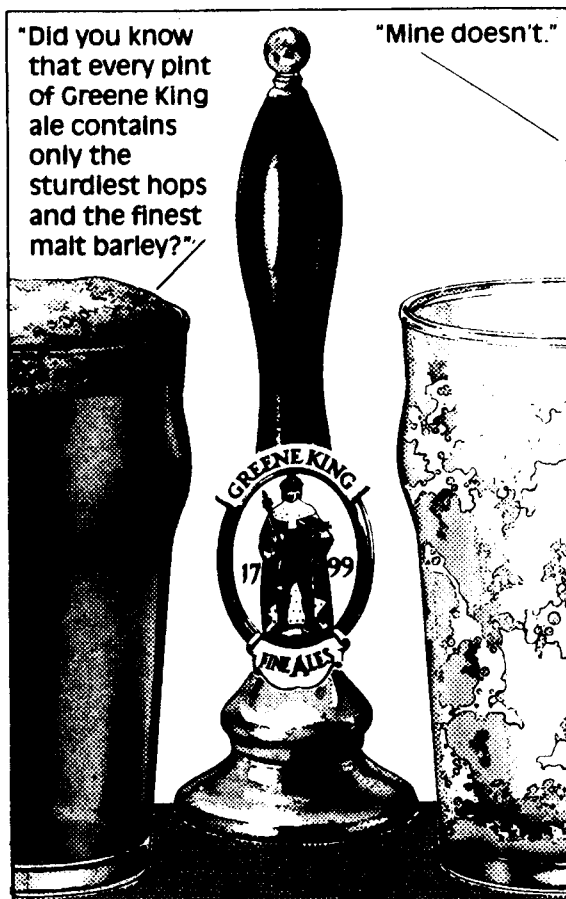
The glass was an odd looking thing a Yard in length, thin with a bubble on the end, it was easily passed up to our thirsty coachmen who soon found ways to beat the trick and get both pints as usual.

This is why the glasses ended up spending more time hanging over the bar gathering dust than being used.

Steve Bury

BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS

The South Hertfordshire Branch is celebrating twenty years of campaigning in the **Farriers Arms** on 20 November. The date is immortalized by a plaque on the wall of the pub which was unveiled on the tenth birthday of the Branch.



The Hertfordshire Branch (as it was then) was the first area branch of the Campaign for Real Ale to be formed and Camra itself is of course celebrating its twenty first birthday this year.

A reunion of all the past chairmen plus committee members and active branch members is being planned for the day.

The Farriers will also be receiving something to commemorate its listing in all twenty editions of the Good Beer Guide (1974-1993), one of only 34 pubs in England and Wales to achieve this.

TOWN AND AROUND

Despite being described in the Hertfordshire Guide as 'The most enterprising pub in town' the **Wheatsheaf**, Bishop's Stortford closed in July due to bankruptcy, we wait to hear what is to become of this Greene King pub.

McMullens can now boast of another two real ale pubs; the **Green Man**, Ickleford and the **Cricketers** Benington are both selling handpumped Country and AK; the latter pub though is up for sale.

Stevenage's newest pub the **Emperor's Head** at Chells Manor, is open for business offering Bass and Charrington IPA.

Berni Inns are giving up the lease on Greene King's **George & Dragon**, Baldock, the new lessee is Mr. Stewart Conway.

The **Gate** in Bricket Wood is now a free house (ex-Benskins) and is undergoing extension. The **Duncombe Arms**, Hertford and the **Brewery Tap**, Ware both Greene King houses are both reopen after major refurbishment. Nicholas Gardner of Lincoln is the new tenant at the Tap but it will be managed by Mark Ward. Greene King are also spending a lot of money renovating the old parts and rebuilding the extension to the **Inn on the Green**, Harpenden. The **Three Moorhens**, Hitchin is also currently closed for refurbishment while the **Red Hart** also in Hitchin has been recently refurbished with handpumped IPA and Abbot; another Greene King conversion is the **Woodmans Arms**, Stevenage now offering XX Mild, IPA and Abbot.

Still in Stevenage; what was described in the Hertfordshire Guide as the town's newest pub, the **Coopers Apprentice** is due to be refurbished later in the year; in the meantime there is Bass, Stones Bitter, Worthington Best and Adnams Bitter on offer.

Real ale has returned to the **Black Squirrel**, Letchworth, namely Fullers London Pride. Back in Hitchin plans are being unveiled to convert **Bluebells Restaurant** into a free house with a wide range of beers.

Down in Borehamwood what used to be known as the **Crown** is now the **Mousetrap** providing Tetleys Bitter and 'Mickey's Tipple'; our intrepid scout thought this was very similar to Wadworths 6X, he also reflected on the mirrored walls in the 'disco pit'. The **Woodcock** in Croxdale Road was earning a reputation for good beer until the landlord was replaced by a string of relief managers.

Major alterations are underway at the **Cuffley Hotel** and Fullers' **Holly Bush**, Potters Crouch has reopened after a re-dec that no doubt justifies the prices.

The take-over of the Allied Breweries pubs by Greenall Whitley did not go entirely smoothly; the **Rose and Crown**, St. Albans remained closed for over a week and the landlords at the **White Lion**, St. Albans and the **Three Tuns**, Hertford are shortly moving to pastures new. They have

wasted no time in seeking planning permission to extend the **White Lion** and add a conservatory to the **White Horse**, London Colney to make it into a family pub.

Plans to extend the **Chequers**, Redbourn have been approved.

The **White Hart Tap**, St. Albans has a new landlord, 'It Ain't Half Hot Mum' actor Melvyn Hayes. James Lennon currently at the **Verulam Arms** is moving to the **Tin Pot**, Gustard Wood later in the year. Paul Cowley took over the tenancy of Greene King's **Chequers**, Stevenage at the end of July. And we hear there are new landlords in the **Boot**, Kimpton and the **Chequers**, Woolmer Green. Mr G. Stokes left the **Farmers Boy**, Langley in July after 13 years as tenant; the new landlord is Geoffrey Mountfield.

It has been reported that the **Rose and Crown**, Northchurch previously an Allied Breweries pub is now a freehouse – any news please?

The **Royal Oak**, West Hyde recently featured in an advertising feature in the Publican, alas not because it is to reopen but to plug vandal-proof door and window guards for fitting 'during non-trading periods'.

A few issues ago it was noted that the **Boot**, St. Albans was only selling Tetleys Bitter on its six handpumps; we can report now there are five different ales on offer. Five beers are also proffered at the **Royal Oak**, Ware. The **Boars Head** Royston, a recent convert to real ale, has added a third handpump for Rayments Special. London Pride has joined the Courage beers at the **Fountain** Welwyn Garden City and Allied Breweries' Ansells Mild has been spotted at the **Cask and Stillage** and the **Stafford Arms**, Potters Bar.

ANOTHER COUNTRY IN THE COUNTY!

A recent visit to the **Crown and Falcon**, Puckeridge revealed they were selling Country Bitter as a guest beer. Not the McMullen's variety but Eldridge Pope's Thomas Hardy Country Bitter, is this a first for the county?

The 16th Century Crown and Falcon became a free house 18 months ago when sold by Benskins. Many of the original beams are being exposed during its current refurbishment which is due to be completed in November when the two existing handpumps will be increased to four for dispensing two regular and two guest beers.

The original coaching entrance has been exposed and through this portal the ubiquitous Samuel Pepys ventured clutching his diary where in he wrote that he exchanged shoes with the landlord!

PUB OF THE YEAR

The **Gibraltar Castle**, Lower Luton road, Batford has been voted **South Herts Pub of the Year**.

Gordon and Sorrell Cunningham took over the tenancy of this former Whitbread house in 1990 and have overseen its successful and imaginative re-furbishment under the Fuller's banner. They have transformed the pub into a well-run and welcoming hostelry. The "Gib" serves all three popular Fullers beers and food is always available.

On Tuesday 1st December the Branch is marking the occasion with a presentation to Gordon and Sorrell. Come along and join in the celebrations, any time after 8.30pm.

BRANCH DIARY

HERTFORDSHIRE SOUTH BRANCH

Friday 16 October, Trivia quiz, see Watford diary.

Tuesday 20 October, Branch meeting, **Carpenters Arms**, Cravells Road, Harpenden, 8pm.

Tuesday 27 October, Conkers match, **Jolly Sailor**, Sandridge Road, St. Albans, 8pm.

Tuesday 10 November, Branch meeting, **White Horse**, Mill Lane, Welwyn, 8pm.

Tuesday 1 December, **Pub of the Year, Gibraltar Castle**, Lower Luton Road, Harpenden. 8pm.

Contact: Bob Norrish: 0582 763133 x2554 or 0582 769923

NORTH HERTFORDSHIRE BRANCH

Wednesday 7 October, 8.30pm Branch Meeting at the **Highlander**, Hitchin.

Wednesday 21 October, 8.30pm Minicrawl, starting at the **Yew Tree**, Walkern, then on to the **Robin Hood**, Walkern, and the **Bell**, Benington.

Saturday 31 October, all day minibus pub crawl around Buckinghamshire.

Wednesday 4 November 8.30pm, Graveley Crawl, starting at the 19th Hole, Chesfield Downs Golf Centre, then on to the **Waggon & Horses** and **George & Dragon**.

Wednesday 18 November 8.30pm, Buntingford Crawl, starting at the **Railway Inn** and eventually finishing at the **Crown**.

Wednesday 2 December 8.30pm, Branch meeting at the **Goldcrest**, Baldock.

Contact: Paul Coard 0462 437249.

WATFORD & DISTRICT BRANCH

Tuesday 6 October, Social 8.30pm **Royal Oak**, Watford Heath, 9.15pm **Load of Hay**, Watford Heath, 10pm **Villiers Arms**, Oxhey.

Friday 16 October, Branches quiz at the **West Herts Sports Club**, 8.00pm.

Wednesday 21 October, Abbots Langley social: 8.30pm **Boys Home**, 9.15pm **Kings Head**, 10.00pm **Royal Oak**.

Tuesday 27 October, Sarratt social: 8.30pm **Cock**, 9.15pm **Cricketers**, 10.00pm **Boot**. Transport from Watford Junction leaves 8.15pm.

Wednesday 4 November. Local Good Beer Guide launch 8.30pm **Swan**, Bushey, join CAMRA there and get the GBG at a discount price.

Tuesday 10 November. Social at the **Croxley Community Centre**, 8.30pm

Wednesday 18 November, Breweriana auction at the **West Herts Sports Club**. Starts 8.00pm prompt, viewing from 7.30pm.

Tuesday 24 November, Recruitment evening at the **Estcourt Tavern**, Watford 8.30pm. Money off membership deal!

Contact: Martin Few 0923 252412.

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 12 October, **Royal Oak**, Chipperfield, 8.30pm Mid-Chilterns Branch hosting.

The Greyhound (Free House)

St. Ippollitts Nr. Hitchin

Tel: 0462 440989

Now Open Selling Real Ale & Real Food
EVERY DAY

Roast Beef Sunday Lunch – £4.95

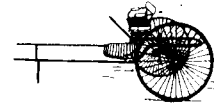
Boddingtons & Flowers IPA
Plus Guest Beer

BREWERIANA AUCTION

Watford & District's annual auction of breweriana will be held at the West Herts Sports Club, Park Avenue, Watford on the 18th November. The auction will start at 8.00pm with viewing of lots from 7.30pm.

Lots include brewery mirrors, commemorative bottles, brewery glasses and ash trays, pump clips and some Benskins memorabilia: a Benskins Centenary mug dated 1977, and a reproduced poster of the brewery as it was about 1925.

Inn On the Green



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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.
Coming Soon Hogsback Brewery
– phone Ian Miller for details

Almost Live Music some of the time

Telephone: 0438-812496

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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