

FREE



# THE HERTFORDSHIRE NEWSLETTER

A bi-monthly publication for the discerning real ale drinker



CHRISTMAS 1992/NEW YEAR 1993

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## CAMRA WINS GUEST BEER BATTLE

Following prolonged campaigning, CAMRA has at last prompted the Office of Fair Trading (OFT) to decide on what does and what does not constitute a 'guest beer', and their decision is good news for beer drinkers.

The OFT has agreed with the view that CAMRA has been putting forward since the 1989 Supply of Beer order was passed, namely that tenants of the national brewers are entitled to purchase a real ale from whomever they choose in addition to any beers or 'guest beers' they buy from their landlords. The OFT have written to the national brewers informing them of their decision, and the move will hopefully lead to a wider range of beers being available.

The Monopolies and Mergers Committee's (MMC's) recommendation in their report on the Supply of Beer was quite explicit. It stated that 'Tenants (of the national breweries) should be allowed to purchase a minimum of one brand of draught beer from a supplier other than their landlord or the landlord-nominated supplier'. Unfortunately, the order put before parliament did not explicitly define the difference between supplier and brewer. So, needless to say, some of the brewers, including Allied, decided to interpret this in their own inimitable way. If one of Allied's tenants were to take say, Adnams Bitter, from the list of beers Allied made available, the tenant was not allowed to buy a guest beer from anyone else.

The OFT has now agreed with CAMRA and stated that this interpretation 'does not meet the letter or the spirit of the post-MMC rules'. It thus opens the way for tenants to supplement their brewery supplied range with a genuine 'guest beer'. Hopefully this will lead more tenants to be a bit more adventurous in their choice of beers, something lamented in these columns recently. Although some of this trade will no doubt be picked up by the national brewers selling their beers at discount prices, it will hopefully open up the market to the smaller independents who have been frozen out of much of the local trade by the 'pseudo-tie' imposed on pubs by pub-owning chains - surely the next area the OFT should look at.

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

## LOCAL LINES

The **Baron of Beef**, Welwyn village, formerly a regular entry in the Good Beer Guide, has been put up for sale by McMullens, either as a pub or as a private residence. Macs are also selling the **Groom**, Levens Green.

The **Lower Red Lion**, St. Albans' only genuine free house has added two extra handpumps in order to offer additional guest beers, mainly from independent breweries. The regular beers are Adnams Bitter, Fullers London Pride and Greene King IPA and Abbot.

The **Green Man** Sandridge having transferred from Allied to Pubmaster (Brent Walker) is now selling Tetleys Bitter and Marstons Pedigree.

The public bar of the **Black Lion**, Shenley, has become a 'family drinking area'.

**Rose and Crown**, Southdown, Harpenden: Morrell's Bitter currently available as a guest beer in this Whitbread pub.

The **Chequers**, Redbourn is due to reopen in December after major alterations and refurbishment by Chef and Brewer.

**Inn on the Green**, Harpenden: Greene King hope to re-open this long-closed pub during December.

The **Three Compasses**, Patchetts Green is due to close in the new year for major refurbishment and building of an extension.

The **Southern Cross Hotel**, Watford is on the market.

The **Bull and Tiger**, Borehamwood has a new landlord, Steve Hayward.

The **Red Lion**, Borehamwood is up for sale for potential office development.

The **Midland Railway**, St. Albans is to let free of tie by Intrepeneur, Grand Met's pub owning chain.

Thomas Hardy Country Bitter is on sale at the **Saracens Head**, Kings Langley alongside Wadworths IPA, 6X and Fullers London Pride. This ex-Benskins pub is now a free house.

**Olivers**, Hitchin, has been reopened as the **King Vic**.

The **Three Moorhens**, Hithcin is due to reopen on November 9th, following extensive renovation.

**Raven**, Hexton, now sells Fullers Chiswick Bitter alongside Marstons Pedigree and Boddingtons Bitter.

**Cricketers**, Hitchin, has changed landlord again; currently only selling Tetley and Benskins Bitters, but plans to reintroduce Wadworth 6X.

The **Assizes**, Hitchin's newest pub, is selling Fullers London Pride and ESB, Youngs Special, Banks and Taylor Shefford Bitter, SOS, and a changing third Banks and Taylor beer, and up to six guest beers.

**Black Squirrel**, Letchworth, has gone real (again) and is selling Fullers London Pride.

**Victoria**, Baldock, is now offering Boddingtons Bitter instead of Morland Old Speckled Hen.

**Fox and Duck**, Buntingford, now sells Greene King XX Mild.

The **Pennant**, by Watford Junction station, should soon be selling Burton Ale alongside Benskins Bitter and Tetleys.

Sales of Greene King XX mild at the GBG listed **Nascot Arms**, Watford, have dropped so alarmingly, that the landlord is threatening to stop selling it as he's having to pour so much away. Drink it or lose it! (PS no mention of who was responsible for the strong arm tactics that led to a broken hand pump in the pub's 'saloon' bar).

## BREWERY NEWS

At long last Bathams have increased their pub estate: their ninth pub is the Royal Exchange at Stourbridge, West Midlands.

'Wethereds' Winter Royal is this year being brewed at Whitbread's Castle Eden brewery, which should also be regularly producing the highly regarded Porter from early next year.

The Isle of Wight's Island Brewery at Newport has started 'exporting' its beers to the South coast, and they expect their beers to be sold at 'just over' £1 a pint.

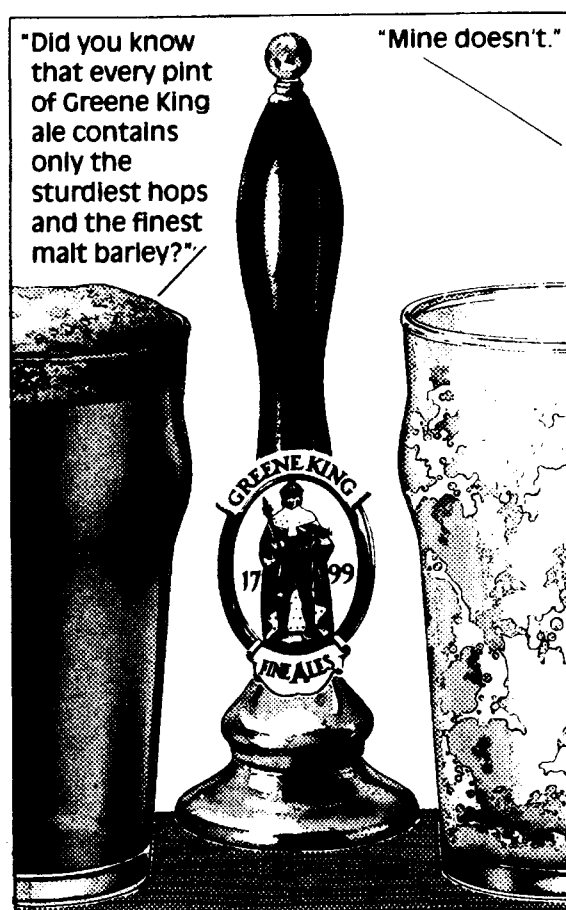
Batemans have scrapped their kegging plant because they 'did not want to be associated with a keg product' and needed the space for racking cask beer.

Woods of Wistanstow, Shropshire have introduced a new beer, Woods 99, selling at 99p a pint, and after a 30 year break, Maclays of Alloa have reintroduced Old Malt Stout, but the recipe has apparently been changed: it used to contain linseed and liquorice to produce a laxative effect (so that's what they put in ..... - fill in your own favourite!).

More new dark beers to help boost their revival: Shepherd Neame have introduced Original Porter (5.2% abv), Jennings are marketing an Oatmeal Stout (3.8% abv) currently brewed for them by the Broughton Brewery of Biggar, and Cains have started brewing a dark mild (3.2% abv).

Greenalls raised £86 million by putting more of its shares on the market and is said to be on the lookout to buy more pubs.

Brierley Investments takeover bid for Gibbs Mew failed miserably.



## PUB WALKS IN THE CHILTERN

This is the title of a recently produced book written by Alan Charles giving details of thirty walks based on pubs in the Chilterns. Only three of the walks are actually in Hertfordshire, but if you like a short walk and a drink after it then this is the book for you.

The longest walk is 5 miles, so the book is aimed at the walker who will start from the pub, do a circular walk and arrive back in opening time. It is also aimed at the family walkers as details of children's facilities are covered well and it also details whether you can take your pit bull terrier in the pub with you. Most of the pubs recommended do food and this seems to be another pre-requisite for inclusion. However Mr Charles does cover the beer available for the real Ale Drinker although his own preference seems to be cider (but not the real stuff).

Of the 30 pubs (walks) there are only 6 I do not know and I can say that they're all worth a visit. At £4.95 this book could be a good stocking filler for the coming festivities.

RAMBLER

## STOP PRESS

Guinness have announced that they are to axe bottle-conditioned Guinness Original in the pub trade next April. At a time when dark beers are experiencing a revival and Bass are heavily promoting bottle-conditioned White Shield, the decision seems ludicrous.

## MORRIS CRAWL

Not many people know this, as they say, but it's not unknown for Morris Men to be seen in relative proximity to a pub. In the course of twelve years with Standon Morris Men I have come to appreciate the charms of quite a few that, for whatever reason, do not feature in the new Good Beer Guide but which I think well worth a visit in the search for a good pint in the right surroundings.

Little Berkhamsted: The Five Horseshoes. A pleasant freehouse offering good beer and food.

In nearby Epping Green: The Beehive, an isolated pub of real character and a very good pint.

Hertingfordbury: The Prince of Wales. A free house that serves a better pint of AK than almost any Mac's pub and manages to sell plenty of it alongside Fullers' London Pride and Wadworth's 6X among others.

Ware: The Cannon Tavern. A recent renovation and extension by McMullen shows how well it can be done without ruining a good local's local.

High Wych: The Hand and Crown, a half mile or so east of the famous Rising Sun. More up-market maybe, with its carvery bar, but fine beer (including guest beer) and a very friendly atmosphere.

Puckeridge: The White Hart, McMullen. Has long been famous for its food, especially fish dishes but still remains a good local with an excellent pint of AK.

Barley: Fox and Hounds. A free house and occasional pub brewer. A find old pub, with an excellent selection of good beers.

The Good Beer Guide (see below) is an excellent start in the search for good beer in a good pub, none better, I use mine a lot, especially on holiday, but there is still scope for finding more to your taste.

Good hunting!

Ted Olvenden

## GOOD BEER GUIDE 1993

The 1993 CAMRA good Beer Guide is now on sale from all good book shops price £7.99.

As well as listing some 5,000 pubs serving the best of British traditional beers, it also features a comprehensive guide to all of Britain's real ale breweries and their beers.

This is the twentieth edition of the guide and, has been mentioned before, only one Hertfordshire pub has been in all editions. That accolade goes to the Farriers Arms, St. Albans, but mention should also be made of the 'runners-up': the Rising Sun, High Wych has been in all but the first edition, while the Swan at Bushey has scored 18 out of 20.



## SPECIAL OFFER

The guide to Red Draught Beer in Hertfordshire (cover price £3.50), which lists all the pubs in Herts, is now available at the special discount price of £2, including postage and packing, from Eric Sim, 10 Heron Way, Hatfield, Herts, AL10 8QL.

McMULLEN  
**STRONG HART**  
Specially brewed  
Fully Matured strong ale

McMULLEN  
**STRONG HART**  
TRADITIONAL STRONG ALE

TRADITIONAL HERTFORDSHIRE BOOT WARMER  
for more than 60 years  
finest quality from Mr McMullen

## BRANCH DIARY

### HERTFORDSHIRE SOUTH BRANCH

Tuesday 1 December. Pub of The Year award to the **Gibraltar Castle**, Lower Luton Road, Harpenden. 8.00pm.

Tuesday 8 December, 8.00pm Branch Meeting at the **Woodman**, Wildhill.

Tuesday 19 January, 8.00pm. AGM, **Lower Red Lion**, Fishpool Street, St. Albans.

Contact: Bob Norrish: 0582 763133 x2554 or 0582 769923

### NORTH HERTFORDSHIRE BRANCH

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

Wednesday 16 December, about 8.00pm. Mystery trip by minibus to S.E. Herts pubs.

Wednesday 30 December, 8.00pm. Arlesey Crawl, starting at **Prince of Wales**.

Wednesday 13 January, 7.30pm for 8.00pm. Post Xmas Meal at **Arena Tavern**, Letchworth.

Wednesday 27 January, 8.00pm. Stevenage High Street Crawl, starting at **Two Diamonds**.

Wednesday 10 February, 8.30pm. Branch Meeting at the **Assizes**, Hitchin.

Contact: Paul Coard 0462 437249.

### WATFORD & DISTRICT BRANCH

Wednesday 2 December, Watford crawl: 8.30pm **White Lion**, 9.15pm **Bedford Arms**, 10.00pm **Nascot Arms**.

Friday 11 December. Curry evening in London. Phone contact for details.

Wednesday 16 December, Oxhey crawl: 8.30pm **Railway Arms**, 9.15pm **Rifle Volunteer**, 10.00pm **Haydon Arms**.

Wednesday 6 January, St. Albans Road crawl: 8.30pm **Stag**, 9.15pm **Leviathan**, 9.45pm **Horns**.

Tuesday 12 January, 8.30pm **Fox and Hounds**, Rickmansworth, 9.15 **Rose & Crown**, Woodcock Hill (transport provided).

Friday 15 January, London pub crawl – phone contact for details.

Wednesday 20 January, Croxley Green crawl: 8.30pm **Coach and Horses**, 9.15pm **Artichoke**, 10pm **Sportsman**.

Thursday 26 January, two pub social, 8.30pm **Swan**, Abbots Langley, 9.15pm **Compasses**.

Contact: Martin Few 0923 252412.

### MID-CHILTERN'S 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

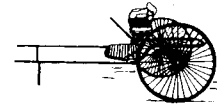
Boddingtons & Flowers IPA  
Plus Guest Beer

## SEASONAL GREETINGS

As this is the last issue of 1992, we'd like to thank all our advertisers for their support over the year, and a thank you also, to the many landlords who allow us to distribute the newsletter through their pubs. We wish them, and all our readers, a Merry Christmas and a Happy and Prosperous New Year.



## Inn On the Green



TILBURY

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.

Coming Soon Hogsback Brewery

– phone Ian Miller for details

Almost Live Music some of the time

Telephone: 0438-812496

## GBBF

Great British Beer Festival, 3-7 August: 5–10.30pm  
Tuesday – Friday; 11.30am–3pm Wednesday – Friday;  
11.30–1.30pm Saturday. Once more at the Grand Hall,  
Olympia. Over 185,000 pints are due to be ordered,  
about 300 different real ales.

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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