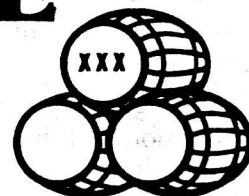


THE



HERTFORDSHIRE NEWSLETTER



A bi-monthly publication for the discerning real ale drinker

FEBRUARY/MARCH 1993

CIRCULATION 4200

NUMBER 137

TAX, CHOICE AND ACTION

It is perhaps unfortunate to have to talk about tax increases this early in the new year. There is a possibility however, that the chancellor may raise the duty on beer to add to the £4 billion that beer drinkers already 'contribute' to the treasury before the year is out.

At a time when publicans are struggling to get customers into their pubs the last thing anybody needs is price rises. We have seen some licensees in this county actually reducing the cost of a pint of ordinary bitter with the aim of tempting drinkers out of their living rooms.

While not all landlords may be willing to take such measures to increase trade we would all agree it's difficult to sell more beer to less customers. Although pubs are theoretically allowed to sell a beer from any source, it is not really surprising that many may feel unable to make a new or additional beer pay, particularly in the current recession.

It is up to the campaign's members and sympathisers to seek out and enjoy the local and not so local beers available in the county's pubs, you don't have to drink more! but at least encourage those pubs taking advantage of their freedom. Only then will publicans feel able to try something different and Norman Lamont feel less need to increase duty and VAT.

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New Brewery For Hertfordshire

December 1992 saw the launch of Hertfordshire's newest brewery with a sampling in the King's Arms, Tring, of the first commercial brew of Ridgeway Bitter.

Full story on page 2.....

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

The brewery is just around the corner from the King's Arms, in Akeman Street, an area that has a long history of brewing. It is being run by Kerr Hill who is in partnership with Richard Shardlow who has interests in about eight other small breweries. One of his current ventures is trying to set up a 300 barrel brewery in Russia to try and reintroduce beer there.

The **Tring brewery** is starting with a 15 barrel a week production and there is room to expand to 60 barrels as trade is established.

Ridgeway Bitter (named after the Roman road that passes through Tring) is a 1039.5 o.g. or 4% A.B.V. brew, clean tasting with a bitter after taste and slips down very easily. For the technically minded, the malt is from Maris Otter barley, the hops are a mixture of Goldings and Challenger, the water is the locally hard water without added minerals and the yeast is a 'Tring Brewery culture'.

Kerr plans to try and keep his trading area within 10 miles of Tring but may be persuaded to go a little further afield. He also hopes to be trying other brews in time, a stronger bitter is probably first on the list, to be named Old Icknield Way and be about 4.8% A.B.V.

We wish them well in this new venture, it cannot be an easy time to start up a new business but there should be an increasing number of outlets appearing as the position on guest beers becomes clearer. Keeping the beer 'local' should give them a competitive edge on pricing.

Hostelries currently offering Ridgeway Bitter are:

Hertfordshire		Buckinghamshire	
Greyhound	Wiggington	Black Horse	Chesham Vale
Greyhound	Aldbury	Old Swan	Swan Bottom
Red Lion	Marsworth	Fox	Dunsmore
Cock & Bottle	Great Gaddesden	Bedfordshire	
Bell	Bovingdon	Old Bell	Totternhoe
Kings Arms	Tring		

Bob Norrish

THE GOOD BEER GUIDE

The chances are that the pub where you picked up the Hertfordshire Newsletter is in the Good Beer Guide. There are various pub guides but only one CAMRA Good Beer Guide.

So what does inclusion in the beer drinker's bible tell us about a pub? Obviously, that it sells consistently high quality cask conditioned beer with no added carbon dioxide. That is only half the story however, for so much of our enjoyment of good ale comes from drinking it in a good pub.

CAMRA does not have a team of professional tasters on the road (imagine the flood of applications for the job!). Each year's recommendations come from local branches. At first sight this might seem to be a disadvantage, leading to varying standards but by this input of local tastes, both of beers, their presentation and of pubs, the Guide actually gains immensely.

The preservation of the diversity of British pubs, each the product of local conditions and history, is as important as the preservation of genuine regional beers. Not surprisingly, the major brewers are offenders on both counts. If they could sell the same keg fizz from Land's End to John O'

Groats they would, and equally have all their profit centres, or rather pubs, done up in the same house style.

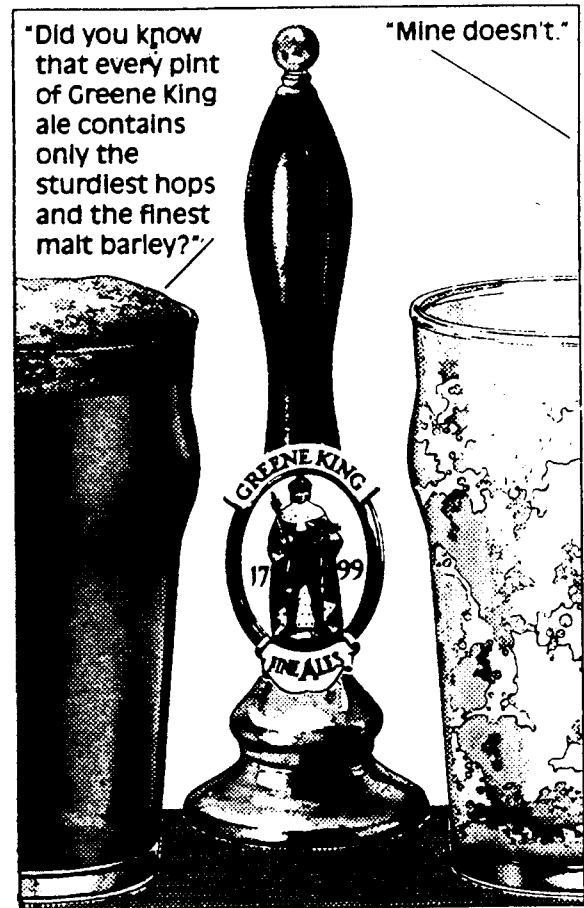
CAMRA branches look for good ale, at a fair price, in a pub which has a welcoming atmosphere and a character of it's own, fitting for it's locality. A town centre pub does not necessarily have to cater for everyone but a village pub, particularly if it is the only one, should really be for everyone, a true community centre.

Fifty years ago, most pubs had two separate bars, with prices a penny or two cheaper in the public bar. We have seen since then the inexorable advance of the one-bar pub, where purely social drinkers may have to contend with gaming machines and/or .. juke box. Where two bars are retained, one is often a restaurant, leaving only one real bar, which can often be used by diners or is full of 'bar snackers' There is a place for pub food, often it's essential for the pub's survival but taken to excess the result is a licensed restaurant and too much of the true pub ambience is lost.

CAMRA does not seek to resist natural change, King Canute demonstrated the folly of that a long time ago. The preservation of quality real ale and good pubs from the manipulations and even the outright vandalism of the brewers IS what CAMRA fights for.

The Good Beer Guide should point you to a good pub serving good real ale in a good local atmosphere in every part of the country. Can the real ale enthusiast survive without it?

Answers to this question and others are contained in the 1993 edition, available now from all good book shops, price £7.99.



WINTER WARMERS

During the long, cold dark nights of winter you may be tempted to try one of an increasing number of dark, warming ales that appear at this time of year. Up until only a few years ago this style of beer had almost disappeared but the real ale revival has seen an upturn in the fortune of these very traditional beers.

CAMRA has counted 144 winter ales appearing over the Advent to Easter period and 12 of these are new for 1992/93.

Ones to look out for in our area are McMullens Strongheart (7% A.B.V.), Greene King's Winter Ale (6% A.B.V.), Fuller's Mr. Harry (4.8% A.B.V.) Wethered's Winter Royal (5.5% A.B.V.) and Young's Winter Warmer (5% A.B.V.).

These beers are the perfect accompaniment to a roaring fire and a good remedy for chill evenings so try and enjoy them while you can.

TAVERN TO CLOSE

One renown St. Albans pub which will definitely not be serving the new **Ridgeway Bitter**, or any other for that matter, is the Abbey Tavern on Holywell Hill.

Despite council objections the High Court has given Allied Breweries the go ahead to demolish the local and build an office block in it's place. This is an interesting decision as St. Albans, in common with other towns in the South East, is not particularly short of existing office space with an estimated 1 million square feet already standing empty.

The closure is obviously a blow to the current patrons including many older people and the local Irish community. The council have spent £30,000 on the campaign to save the pub and were even praised by the High Court judge for putting forward a good case. They now feel, however, that they cannot justify any more tax payers money. Allied Breweries were adamant that the Tavern would have closed no matter which way the High Court decision went. It looks as if the brewery are more interested in making a quick buck from a pointless redevelopment than continuing to serve it's loyal customers and communities.

ACTION FOR GUINNESS

As reported in the last newsletter (No. 136) Guinness intend to axe the bottle conditioned version of it's famous stout. The brewery claims that the new 'pre-conditioned' ie. pasteurised and filtered, product will be more consistent in taste and quality. It went on to reveal that in organised blind tasting sessions 60% of drinkers could not tell the difference between the old and new versions.

Surely one of the delights of drinking a real beer is that no two brews are exactly alike so you are never exactly sure how each pint or bottle will taste. By standardising their stout Guinness are simply trying to please everybody which is a sure recipe for increasing lack-lustre and bland products.

The pre-conditioned product will have a longer shelf life of around 9 months as opposed to the current 3 months. This in turn should lead to less stock being wasted through going out of date so price decreases should result (ha ha!).

Scotland and Northern Ireland have already lost the true version of Guinness Original Stout but YOU can try and stop the same thing happening here. Send messages of

disapproval to: Rob MacNevin, Marketing Director, Guinness Brewing, Park Royal Brewery, London NW10 7RR.

DOWN YOUR WAY

The formerly Good Beer Guide listed **Bull Inn** at Much Hadham was closed in late December, another victim of the continuing recession and the crippling rent increases faced by many publicans. The Golden Lion, London Colney, closed on the 18 January and it's future is uncertain.

Also closing soon but only for refurbishment work are the **Yew Tree**, Walkern, and the **Robin Hood & Little John**, Rabley Heath. Plans for alterations to The **Pre Hotel**, St. Albans have been approved.

Various pubs have opened their doors again recently after a facelift. The **Three Moorhens** in Hitchin and the **Inn on the Green**, Harpenden, for example were formerly keg only but both have now 'gone real' and sell Greene King's beers. Additionally, the **Crown & Falcon**, Puckeridge, has refurbishment complete and now sells London Pride, Tetley's, Wadworth 6x and Thwaites Bitter.

If you are looking for something different among the beers in Hertfordshire then the **New Found Out** in Hitchin could soon be worth a visit. This pub has recently been bought by the new owners of the Wiltshire Brewery and Pitfield beers are expected to appear shortly.

Still in Hitchin, the **Found Inn**, exercises it's guest beer rights to the full and claims to have sold over 100 different ales in recent times. Particularly encouraging as this is a Whitbread house. The **Fountain** has added Wells' Bombardier alongside it's usual Eagle Bitter while the **Orange Tree** now sells McMullen's AK, Country and Courage Director's.

The **Baron of Beef** in Old Welwyn is still up for sale, and under new management until a buyer is found, meanwhile Michael and Caroline are still serving hot and cold food day and night including fresh battered cod on Fridays, and by the way the AK has gone DOWN 8p per pint. The **Cross Keys**, Gustard Wood, has been sold as a free house which was secured by Bob Andrews who also runs the **Nelson** in Wheathampsted.

The **Beehive** at Epping Green, once an Allied house, has been given the Greenalls' treatment and now dispenses Wadworth's 6X, Adnams' and Greenalls' bitter

The **Estcourt Arms**, Watford, is now selling Wadworth 6X (let's face it who isn't?). The **Swan**, Pimlico, has been offering Banks & Taylor's Shefford as a guest along with the Castle Eden brewed Wethered's Winter Royal.

The **Rising Sun** at Halls Green has been improved by the addition of a conservatory while **Scot's Wine Bar**, St. Albans, has been renamed the **Slug & Lettuce** by the new owners, Grovesnor Inns.

New landlords have recently taken over at **The Boot**, Dane End, **The Globe**, Codicote and the **Marquis of Granby**, Harpenden. John Wells, formelly in the **Harrow**, St. Albans has moved down the road to the **Spotted Bull** although this has involved a change in brewer as well, from Allied to Whitbread.

Finally, our congratulations go to Tony Szpak of the **Fox**, Kinsbourne Green for finishing runner up in Burton's Cellarman of the Year competition, such prizes are not gained easily.

BRANCH DIARY

HERTFORDSHIRE SOUTH BRANCH

Tuesday 16 February; Branch meeting, **White Horse**, Castle Street, Hertford, 8 p.m.

Tuesday 2 March; Social, **Tin Pot**, 8.30 p.m. **Cross Keys**, 9.30 p.m. Gustard Wood, north of Wheathampstead.

Tuesday 16 March; Branch meeting, **Old Maypole**, Water End, North Mymms, near Potters Bar, 8 p.m.

Contact: Bob Norrish: 0582 763133 x2554 (w) or 0582 769923 (h)

NORTH HERTFORDSHIRE BRANCH

Wednesday 3 February; Joint social with North Beds Branch at **The Stag**, Brook Street, Stotfold, 8.30 p.m.

Wednesday 10 February; Branch meeting at the **Assizes**, Hitchin, 8.30 p.m.

Saturday 13 February; All day crawl of outer West London pubs.

Wednesday 24 February; AGM at **The Bull**, Watton-at-Stone, 8.30 p.m.

Wednesday 10 March; Kimpton and Whitwell crawl, starting at **The Boot**, Kimpton, 8.30 p.m.

Wednesday 24 March; Outer Stevenage crawl, starting at **The Roebuck** 8.30 p.m. and then visiting the **Twin Foxes**, **Coopers Apprentice** and the **Emperors Head**.

Wednesday 7 April; Branch meeting - venue to be arranged.

Wednesday 14 April; Knebworth and Woolmer Green crawl starting at **The Station**, Knebworth, 8.30 p.m.

Contact: Paul Coard 0462 437249.

WATFORD & DISTRICT BRANCH

Wednesday 3 February; Bushey Heath crawl, 8.30 p.m. **Foresters Arms**; 9.00 p.m. **Devonshire Arms**; 9.45 p.m. **Black Boy**.

Tuesday 9 February; 8.30 p.m. **Unicorn**, Gallows Hill, Abbots Langley; 9.15 p.m. **Dog and Partridge** and 10 p.m. **Kings Head** both in Hunton bridge.

Pub Of The Year Award; **Black Horse** at Chorleywood - date to be confirmed so check with contact.

Wednesday 3 March; Watford crawl: 8.30 p.m. **New Victoria**; 9.15 p.m. **Wellington Arms**; 10 p.m. **Estcourt Arms**.

Tuesday 9 March; Rickmansworth area: 8.30 p.m. **Scots Bridge Mill**; 9.30 p.m. **Western**; 10.15 p.m. **Coach & Horses**.

Tuesday 16 March; Social at **The Plough**, Belsize 8.30 p.m. Transport from Watford Junction at 8.15 p.m.

Tuesday 23 March; Branch AGM at the **Fox and Hounds**, Rickmansworth, 8.30 p.m.

Contact: Marion Birch 0923 773913.

MID-CHILTERNNS BRANCH

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

HERTS-ESSEX BORDERS

Contact: Angie Wright 0277 225815

ALL HERTS LIAISON MEETING

Monday 26 April; Herts South 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

Traditional music sessions

Feb 3, Mar 24, Apr 21

YOUNG TRADITIONALISTS

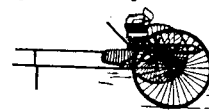
The established wisdom has been that the younger drinker was attracted to music orientated, theme bars. A recent Portman Group sponsored survey of 1000 18-25 year olds has revealed, however, that 70% prefer traditional style pubs to disco or American style bars.

They tended not to like smokey bars (16% were in favour of smoking restrictions) full of video games or that looked as if they might become too boisterous.

Nearly three quarters of those interviewed also recognised one of the major factors involved in a decent pub: the need to have a good landlord/landlady.

TILBURY

Inn off the Green



Datchworth

(formerly Inn on the Green)

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 next - Batemans, March 30th
Maximum 18 - overnight stay
- 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.

Subscriptions: £3.50 for 12 issues. Send to: 10 Heron Way, Hatfield, Herts. AL10 8QL. Cheques payable: CAMRA Herts Campaigning Fund

Advertising: £10 per 2.5cm column. Artwork can be made up at extra cost. Contact Eric Sim ☎ 0707 260647 for details.

COPY DATE for April/May Edition: 1st March 1993.

Composed by Swallowfield Associates on Macintosh DTP Quark Xpress Telephone 0707 390289.