

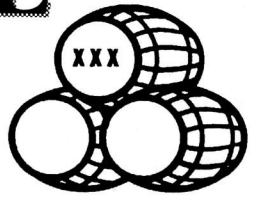
FREE



THE HERTFORDSHIRE NEWSLETTER

LINED GLASSES
GUARANTEE
FULL PINTS

A bi-monthly publication for the discerning real ale drinker



FEBRUARY/MARCH 1994 CIRCULATION 4500 NUMBER 143

PILE IT HIGH AND FLOG IT CHEAP

Well, 1994 is upon us and what better tonic to see us through the short Winter days than the prospect of a Summer holiday. The Chunnel is due to open this year and for the population of Hertfordshire the continent and particularly the channel ports of France will be closer than ever.

The ending of restrictions on drink importation, introduced by the EC just over a year ago, has prompted the upsurge of full scale smuggling of foreign beer into the UK and the repercussions are far reaching. Customs & Excise guide-lines allow an individual to bring 110 litres of beer into this country as long as it is for their own consumption but in reality there is nothing to stop people loading up vans and importing as much as the vehicles can carry.


Duty in this country adds 35p to the price of a bottle of beer, while in France only 5p is added which leads to British 'shoppers' being able to make substantial savings over and above the cost of the trip. Furthermore there is an obvious killing to be made by selling the beer on after it is brought into the UK and such a climate quickly leads to organised crime. One 'wholesaler' operating out of a fenced off piece of marshland outside a ferry port claims to have achieved an annual turnover of £14 million last year.

The Calais chamber of commerce estimated that in the run up to Christmas some 13 million gallons of beer were carried into Britain which represents, according to the Brewers' Society, around 10% of the take home market. Further increases in duty will push this total towards 20% and the impact is not restricted to the South-East, plenty of coaches start off from the North country and Scotland.

Britain's brewers and retailers are being left with a declining share of the market through no fault of their own and there is not a lot they can do about it. Fortunately, a cross party group of MP's, led by the Parliamentary Beer Club chairman Alan Meale, has attempted to bring pressure to bear on Kenneth Clarke to at least do something about the smuggling. However, since a duty cut is about as likely an event as a Hertford snowfall in August the message to all pub goers is clear - **Keep it British and Keep it Real!**

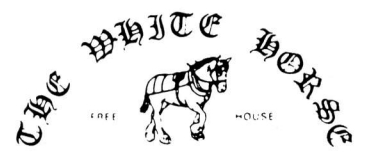
Hertfordshire South Branch Pub of the Year 1993

Enjoy a pint at
St. Albans' Oldest Freehouse



Lower Red Lion
Fishpool Street

Excellent range of regular ales
and unusual guest beers



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

NEW TAXATION SYSTEM?

In addition to the pressure on the price of a pint caused by high rates of duty compared to our continental neighbours, the Government are about to introduce an inflationary system of rating for pubs, restaurants and hotels. It will mean that the success of Organisations such as CAMRA will be penalised and poorly supported; fizzy, lights and music premises will benefit.

The new system will see the disappearance of the Uniform Business Rate and it's replacement with a tax on the turnover of the individual business. In the case of the Brewery owned pubs relating to barrelage and for free houses, restaurants etc., a percentage of their annual turnover. This is supposed to reflect their true rental value; no account of a good or bad landlord is to be taken.

What this means in practice is that someone with no contact with the actual business may assess how busy the pub should be and rate it accordingly. Should trade increase, then, at the next three yearly review period the rates will be increased. As rates are a very important and significant business cost this must affect the price charged over the bar.

Unfortunately, this automatically increases turnover in money terms so at the next review period the rates go up again and the whole thing causes inflation.

This year in the budget the Chancellor tried to protect small businesses from rate rises - this would be impossible under the proposed new system.

Pubs can be easily assessed as having a rateable value under the present system and could rate in the normal way being assessed on their situation etc. This is an example of a Government taking a percentage of a business in an area they still see as being a little gold mine.

It will most certainly threaten some of the more traditional outlets unwanted by the "majors" and sold off to independent traders as well as putting up the price of our already overtaxed British Pint.

Roy Pearce, The Greyhound, St. Ippollitts.

DOWN YOUR WAY

Well there was not much in the way of pub news for this issue (must be the Christmas break) but here is a rambling collection of items.

New landlords at the **White Lion, Harrow** and **Verulam Arms** all St. Albans, the **Sportsman**, Hertford, the **Townshend Arms**, Hertford Heath, **Plume of Feathers**, Tewin and the **Harrow** at Ware.

On the refurbishment front the **Fighting Cocks**, St. Albans has now reopened (initial reports favourable) and Ind Coope are planning to change the old library building in St. Albans into a pub. As a new one opens another closes! the **Fox**, Bishops Stortford, is awaiting demolition and site redevelopment.

Hall & Woodhouse's Tanglefoot has been on sale at the **Silver Cup**, Harpenden and Mauldon's Porter at the **Nelson**, Wheathampstead. The **Lower Red Lion**, St. Albans, can outshine them all though, they sold 308 different beers in 1993, can your pub do better?

The landlord at the **Saracens Head**, Redbourne, is set to quit after two years. In an entertaining article in the St. Albans Observer he blames many factors for his problems including the exorbitant rent set by the pub's owner. Inntrepeneur, sounds familiar?

The **Potters** in Potters Bar has installed a fourth handpump although it appears to be selling keg Whitbread Best through one of them.

Bass have awarded Kent brewer Shepherd Neame a contract to brew Charrington's IPA and have renamed their Highgate Mild as Highgate Dark. They hope to raise the Mild's profile and make it available anywhere that demand exists. Lancashire brewer Moorhouses has opened up a trading route with Russia. A firkin each of Owd Ale and Pendle Witches Brew were sent to Moscow after a delegation of business men visited the plant with a view to starting their own brewery.

Russell's

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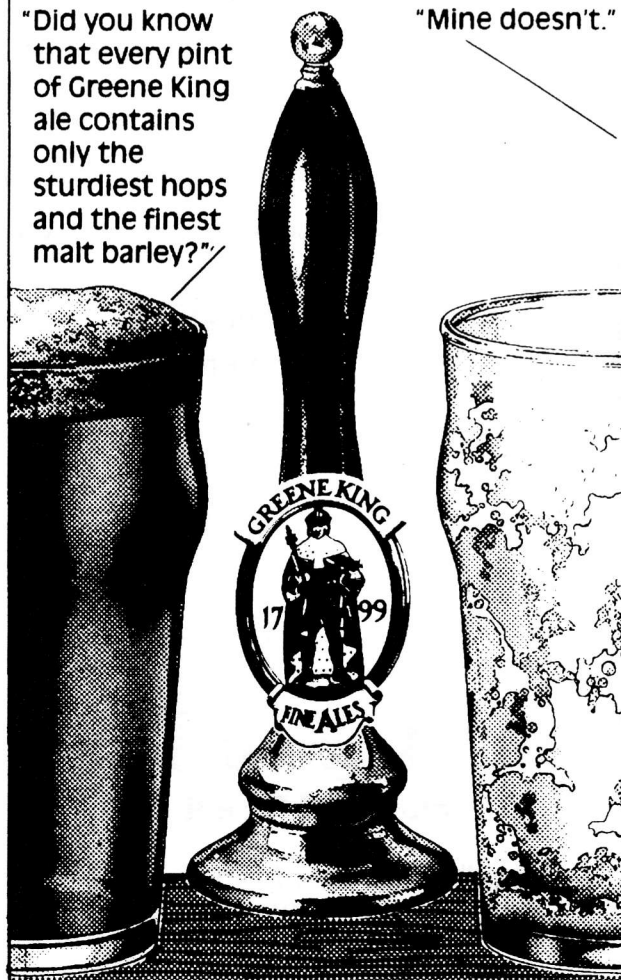
MEAT TO PLEASE YOU; PLEASED TO MEET YOU

TEL. ROYSTON 262559
45 WHITECROFT ROAD, MELDRETH
TEL. ROYSTON 260065

SEE THE EXPERTS, YOU DON'T GET
ADVICE FROM A SHELF!!

"Did you know
that every pint
of Greene King
ale contains
only the
sturdiest hops
and the finest
malt barley?"

"Mine doesn't."



THE "KING BILL"

Question: Why is it that so many pubs are named after King William IV?

Answer: He introduced the guinea Licence which allowed many private houses to be converted into pubs and brew on the premises. McMullen of Hertford started from the introduction of this statute.

Many of the pubs including the one in Shenley have been nicknamed the King Bill and this particular boozier has a publican named Bill which is another coincidence.

Shenley has four pubs, so competition is keen and "Pinks Hotel" is only half a mile outside the village.

The "King Bill" has much potential car parking, garden and land adjoining. It is surprising therefore that Whitbread can't see it. Nothing has been done by the way of decoration or structural upkeep for seven years, the place is a joke and the customers and the customers use it in spite of the decor.

The redecoration and refurbishment is always going to take place next month, but like February 30th it never comes.

Just before Christmas, due to complaints from the customers about draughts from the rotted front windows, secondary double glazing was fitted. This has been quite successful but the polythene secured by masking tape does block out a lot of the light.

The locals do not sit too close together, not because they do not get on but because the seating has so many holes in the upholstery that intimacy is out of the question.

The saving grace is that the beer is good, keep it up Bill you are fighting against the odds.

Steve Bury

MURIELS HOMEMADE MUSTARDS

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Range of 10 Mustards
Mild – Medium – Hot including real ale
currently Abbot-specialities to order

No artificial colour flavourings
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TRADING STANDARDS

The Government U-turn on forcing pubs to sell a full pint of beer has prompted a warning from consumer chiefs in Hertfordshire that they will be extra vigilant in ensuring people are not short changed.

Bosses at Hertfordshire Trading Standards - the county council department which ensures consumer protection - have admitted that they are disappointed at Westminster's decision not to implement Section 43 of the Weights and Measures Act 1985 which would have forced publicans not to count the frothy head of beer as part of the pint measure. Director Nicholas Cull said the decision not to invoke Section 43 was bad news for consumers.

He said: "We had hoped that the change in law would have brought about change for the better for beer drinkers. Had it come in, by law landlords would not have been able to sell pints with froth which, after all, is not pure beer. It would have meant drinkers were getting the true pint they were paying for."

The plan to bring in Section 43 had been objected to by brewers who claimed it would add to the cost of a pint of beer if they were unable to include the froth in the pint measure. But, said Mr. Cull, this proved that pubs and breweries were already making profit out of the inclusion of a head on their pints.

"The claim that it would push up prices is an admission that they are saving money by not giving a full pint."

The Government, in rejecting a change in the law, argued that customers could always ask for a top up if they were unhappy with their measure of beer.

Mr. Cull said: "Why should they have to? it really isn't that easy to do, especially in a pub you are not familiar with."

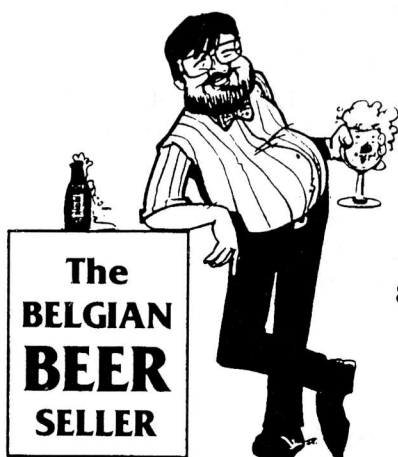
Hertfordshire Trading Standards regularly visits licensed premises in the county to check that measures are correct and a whole range of legal requirements are being met. This ranges from ensuring price lists are displayed to ensuring Optics are giving correct measure. Pints served in pubs would get extra scrutiny from now on, said Mr. Cull.

He said: "We have to accept the Government's decision but we will not accept our consumers being short changed in any way. Brewers' guide-lines make it clear that if a pint is pulled and the quantity is one fluid ounce or five percent short then it could result in a prosecution. We will be looking closely at what the people in Hertfordshire are being served and act accordingly."

Chris Lawrence
Herts. Trading Standards Public Relations Officer.

MAIL ORDER BELGIAN BEER

- Over 80 Belgian bottled beers in stock
- Free delivery within 40 mile radius
- Trade enquiries welcome



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write to:

Eric Watson
8 Watercress Close
Stevenage,
Herts SG2 9TN
Telephone:
0438 354239

WATFORD'S PUB OF THE YEAR

The Watford & District branch's pub of the year award will be presented to the **Nascot Arms**, Stamford Road, Watford on Monday 7th March. This is the second time in three years that this street corner pub has won the award.

The Full range of Greene king beers are available in this friendly, well-run pub. Our congratulations to Bryan, Brenda, sue and all their bar staff.

BRANCH DIARY

HERTFORDSHIRE SOUTH BRANCH

Wednesday February 2 Fullers trip.

Tuesday 15 February, 8.00pm, Branch meeting, **Oak Tree**, Harpenden.

Tuesday 22 February, 8.30pm, social with South Bedfordshire branch at the **Gibraltar Castle**, Harpenden.

Saturday 26 February, **Trip to Bedfordshire**. Visit pub and brewery at Turvey, **3 Fishes** then **3 Cranes** then **White Hart**, Shefford (Brewery Tap), onto Stotfold. Finish at **Lower Red Lion**, St. Albans by 5.00pm.

Tuesday 15 March, 8.00pm, Branch meeting, **Woodman**, Wildhill.

Tuesday 22 March, McMullens trip, details at branch meeting.

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

NORTH HERTFORDSHIRE BRANCH

Contact: Paul Coard 0462 437249

WATFORD & DISTRICT BRANCH

Wednesday 2 February, 8.30pm, social at **Rickmansworth Sports Club** (bottom of Scots Hill).

Tuesday 8 February, 8.30pm, social at **Brookdene Arms**, Green Lane, Oxhey. 9.45pm **Happy Hour**, Eastbury Rd. Oxhey.

Wednesday 16 February, trip to **King & Barnes** brewery, phone contact for details.

Wednesday 23 February, 8.30pm, social at the **Sportsman**, Croxley Green.

Wednesday 2 March, 8.30pm **Royal Oak**, 9.15pm **Load of Hay** (both at Watford Heath), 10.00pm **Villiers Arms**, Oxhey.

Monday 7 March, 8.30pm, Watford and District Branch Pub of the Year award to the **Nascot Arms**, Watford.

Wednesday 16 March, 8.30pm, **Branch AGM** at the **Eastcourt Tavern**, Watford.

Wednesday 23 March, Watford crawl, 8.30pm **Brank**, 9.15pm **Southern Cross**, 10.00pm **Nascot Arms**.

Tuesday 29 March, Rickmansworth crawl, 8.30pm **Feathers**, 9.15pm **Coach and Horses**, 10.00pm **Fox and Hounds**.

Contact: Michael Birch 0923 773913

HERTS-ESSEX BORDERS

Contacts: Brendan Sothcott, Social Secretary, 0279 429389(h) or Derek Wisdom, Chairman, 0279 414200(h).

MID-CHILTERNERS BRANCH

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

ALL HERTS LIAISON MEETING

Friday 21 January, **Royal Oak**, Chipperfield. Fat lot of good putting it in this newsletter. Well organised boys and what's it doing on Friday?

HOW MANY BEERS?

In response to the Lower Red Lions claim the **TILBURY** at Datchworth has sold 580 different beers from 194 breweries in 2½ years.

Furthermore during February weekday lunchtimes the Tilbury's head cellarman is to select beers for sale at £1 per pint so watch his blackboard

The Greyhound (Free House)

St. Ippollitts Nr. Hitchin Tel: 0462 440989

St. Ippollitts No1 Freehouse for
REAL ALE & REAL FOOD EVERY DAY

Dining Room – Bar Snacks

Handcarved Roast Beef Sunday Lunch £5.95

Boddingtons Mild & Bitter,

Morlands Old Speckled Hen – Plus Guest Beer

Traditional music sessions. Feb 23, Mar 23, Apr 20

BLOWING OUR TRUMPET

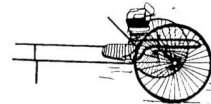
CAMRA's membership now stands at over 41,000 individuals - 14% up on this time last year. The total has doubled in five years and is now higher than at any time in the Campaign's history.

The organisation relies entirely on it's members and their fundraising for it's cash: it is not funded by brewers, pubs or the Government.

The growing numbers that join show that people are concerned about the future of regional brewers, pint prices, beer duty and the future of the British pub.

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 — Cheriton 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, Herts-Essex Borders 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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