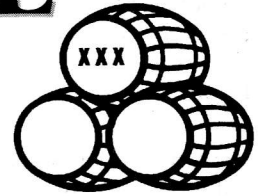


FREE



# THE HERTFORDSHIRE NEWSLETTER

LINED GLASSES  
GUARANTEE  
FULL PINTS



A bi-monthly publication for the discerning real ale drinker

APRIL/MAY 1995

CIRCULATION 5000

NUMBER 150

## OFT PROBES PRICES

Following a large number of complaints from tied tenants and lessees, the Office of Fair Trading (OFT) has launched an investigation into beer prices. The complaints, mainly from Innpreneur lessees running what were formerly Grand Metropolitan and Courage pubs, concern high rents and the high wholesale prices for beer charged by their brewery landlords at the same time as the brewery were dumping beer on the market, offering large discounts to free trade outlets.

The complaints have already led to the OFT telling Courage that their policy on guest beers contravened the Supply of Beer Orders 1989 and has led to Courage amending their policy. Previously, Courage were alleged to be offering discounts if the landlord took a 'guest beer' supplied by Courage, but removing the discount if the guest beer was obtained from elsewhere. The director general of OFT, Sir Bryan Carlsberg, has said that no further action would be taken against Courage now that the discounts no longer depended on the source of the beers. He was, however, ready to investigate any transgressions by any other breweries. Small independent brewers were delighted with the news, and are hoping to win back accounts that they reckon to have lost due to the discounting policy.

The OFT's investigation into prices follow examples of rents increasing fourfold over the last couple of years, while rival free trade outlets were getting discounts of up to £80 a barrel. The information gathered will include the discounts offered to each customer, how the rate was decided, and more importantly, who is benefiting and losing from differential pricing and the affect it has on the price of a pint. From this the OFT will decide whether any action is required 'to ensure competition and choice develop as effectively as possible'.

CAMRA and trade groups have basically welcomed the inquiry, while the brewers have complained about 'further needless meddling' in the industry. Perhaps the best summing up comes from the Licensed Victuallers Trade Association director who was quoted as saying that if all brewers treated their tenants in the same way as 90% of the family brewers, then the inquiry would probably not be taking place. Amen.

Hertfordshire  
South Branch  
Pub of the Year  
1995

Enjoy a pint at  
St. Albans' Oldest Freehouse

**Lower Red Lion**  
Fishpool Street

Excellent range of regular ales  
and unusual guest beers

Hertfordshire  
South Branch  
Pub of the Year  
1994



**THE WHITE HORSE**

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**UNICORN ALE: 4.1%**

**LIGHT BRIGADE: 3.6%**

(AS SERVED IN THE HOUSE OF COMMONS BARS!!)

LONDON PRIDE & HOOK NORTON  
AND EVER CHANGING SELECTION OF REAL ALES

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UPSTAIRS SMOKE FREE ROOMS PLUS BAR

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## NEW BEERS

Greene King have introduced a new seasonal beer, The Sorcerer. A 4.5% abv bitter, the brewer has described it as having 'a fruity, fresh and tangy flavour'. Meanwhile, Courage have introduced a new beer, Trumans IPA, to compete against Greene King IPA, in East Anglia. The beer is being brewed at the Websters Brewery in Halifax, is a 3.5%abv beer and is liable to sell at about £1.20 a pint. Fullers have also introduced an IPA (4.8%abv) as their seasonal beer, as have Tolly Cobbold. Cobbold's IPA has a strength of 4.2%abv and is described as having a light golden colour apparently designed to attract young lager drinkers. McMullens new seasonal beer is Oatmeal Stout. A 5%abv, 'rosewood coloured' beer, made from malted oatmeal and pale and crystal malts. For those of you heading up to Blackpool for a quick break, try visiting the Saddle Inn where you might find Catterall & Swarbrick's XL Bitter available. The beer has been brewed at Bass's micro brewery at the Bass museum in Burton to the original recipe. Catterall & Swarbrick's were taken over in 1961 by Northern Breweries, which later become part of the Bass group.

## ALLIED TAXES MANAGERS

Allied Domecq's local retailing company, Ind Coope Retail, has upset their managers, not to mention their customers, by whacking up prices in their managed houses. Standard bitters such as Benskins and Tetleys go up 4p a pint, while stronger beers such as Burton and guest beers from other breweries such as Marstons Pedigree increase by 6p a pint. Given the brewery's arguments when trying to persuade Kenneth Clark to reduce duty, these large increases do seem somewhat hypocritical.

## HOME AND AWAY

CAMRA branches all over Britain have just completed surveying pubs for inclusion in the 1996 Good Beer Guide. Everybody has their favourite watering holes locally, but what about further afield? My recent jaunts up and down the country following my chosen football team have lead me to some pubs from the 1995 edition. **The Brunswick Inn** in Derby must come high on the list. Not only do they brew their own, but this very spacious pub near the railway station also features a dozen or so unusual guest beers and decent lunch time food. An honourable mention must go to **The Mechanics** in Burnley (which is actually in an Arts Centre) where both local and not so local brews can be found together with large lunches. **The Great Western** in Wolverhampton offers Holden's beers with the customary creamy head (which masks some of the flavour especially of the M11d). It gets very busy on match days when the staff are overworked. The food arrives quicker than you might expect but be prepared for a lengthy wait for the beer and ask for a top up at your peril! **The Round Table** in London (near to Leicester Square) is always worth a visit as is **Fellows, Morton & Clayton** in Nottingham. The most disappointing has got to be **The Bristol Brewhouse** whose house beers tasted tart due to Smiles' supplying their stout yeast for the bitter! If you have visited any pubs in the guide and you would like to pass on any comments, write to the editor. If only my football team were as good as the pubs!

Potter

## THE LORDSHIP ARMS

THE INN IN THE STICKS  
Benington Nr Stevenage.  
formerly The Cricketers

REAL ALE OASIS for the DISCERNING  
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Youngs Special, Fullers ESB  
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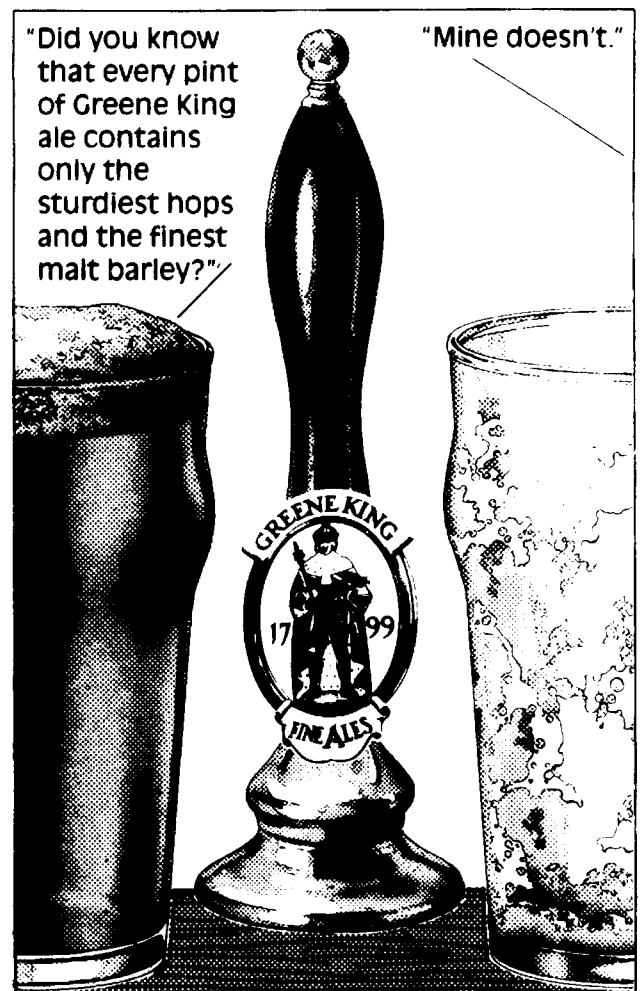
## Nene Valley Brewery

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Does *your* local have some?

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## LOCAL NEWS

### Reopenings

After laying derelict for 5 years the **Barley Mow**, Tyttenhanger is to re-open at the end of April as an untied free house. The pub is to be run by Katie Coyle and George Thompson. They are expected to start with 6 real ales and hope to bring the pub back to its former glory of the late 70's and early 80's. We hope they succeed as the pub was always a favourite of the CAMRA South Herts branch.

The **Cock** at Sarratt is expected to have reopened by the time you read this. Some internal work has been carried out, but it is not currently known how drastic it has been. And for London commuters into Euston, **Rails** outside the station by the bus station has reopened as part of a chain set up by Tony Brookes who used to own the Legendary Yorkshire Heroes wholesalers. 5 permanent and 4 guest real ales (mainly from small independents and a real cider are available.

### Refurbishments

Latest refurbishments in Stevenage are the **Yorkshire Grey** and the **Twin Foxes**, the latter having been renamed the **Twin Foxes Beer Engine** and is advertising an increased range of real ales.

A possible subject of refurbishment is the **Rose & Crown** at Kings Langley where many of the pub's users are up in arms about the prospect of turning it into a 'steak house'.

A separate room is being added to the rear of the **Old Guinea**, Ridge. This will give access to the garden and will be perfect for family room as it does not have a bar. Darts are being re-introduced in a space made by opening up the fireplace. Nice to see new facilities being provided in these austere times for the licensed trade. Charringtons IPA, Flowers IPA and Burton Ale are available.

Look out for further changes as Ind Coope Retail are reportedly spending £25million on 100 developments.

### New Outlets

Following the recent conversion of the **Hen and Chickens**, we are pleased to announce that all the pubs in Baldock now sell real ale.

### Pub Changes

The latest rumours concerning the **Bank** in Watford High Street is that it is not to be turned into a Firkin pub, rather it is to become a '**Scruffy Murphy's**' part of an expanding chain of pubs with a distinctly Irish flavour.

### Beer Changes

The Camelot Inns pub group, whose houses include the **Red Lion** at Woolmer Green, are currently stocking a house beer called 'Camelot Bitter', which is allegedly produced by Burton Bridge Brewery.

There has been a welcome widening of the range of guest beers appearing at the **Estcourt Arms**, Watford: Adnams Old, Riddleys ESX and Brains SA have been available.

The **Stag**, St Albans Road, Watford has been advertising Twelve Bore Bitter (brewed by King & Barnes) at £1.10 a pint.

Don't expect too many changes at the Wetherspoon chain of pubs, the company has renegotiated five year supply agreements with Scottish & Newcastle and Courage.

### Landlord Changes

Recent licensee changes include those at the **New Found**

# THE WOODMAN

CHAPMORE END

Our motto is Quality not Quantity

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traditional pubs in Herts

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**Out**, Hitchin, the **Three Horseshoes**, Willian, the **New Inn**, Holwell, the **Pig & Whistle**, Aston, the **Waggon & Horses**, Watton at Stone, the **Plume of Feathers**, Ickleford, and the **Almond Tree**, Stevenage.

Following all the fun over planning applications for the **Abbey Tavern**, it's interesting to note that Ind Coope Retail have been advertising the pub on a three year lease.

### Staff News

Congratulations to Angela Maclean of the **Black Horse**, Chorleywood, on reaching the final of the Publican's Bar Person of the Year award.

Congratulations also to Mike Jones of the **Maiden's Head**, Whitwell, who has won McMullen's tenanted houses master cellarman competition for the third year running.

### Cider News

Bulmers have introduced Symonds Old Hazy, a real version of Scruppy Jack's.

A Bass district manager in South East Essex has ordered that all the fake handpumps used to sell the keg Taunton Cidermaster be replaced by keg taps. Other managers please note.

## QUANTITY QUALITY

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PEPPERED BEEF JERKY

ROASTED SALTED  
PEANUTS

BOMBAY MIX

CAJUN  
PEANUTS

HOT BOMBAY  
MIX

CHILLI  
PEANUTS

DELUXE  
BOMBAY MIX

ROASTED SALTED  
CHASHEWS

MIXED NUTS AND  
RAISINS

ROASTED SALTED ALMONDS

GARLIC STICKS

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## BRANCH DIARY

### HERTS & ESSEX BORDERS BRANCH

Monday 10th April, 8.30pm, Branch Meeting at the **Prince of Wales**, Green Tye.

Saturday 22nd April, Spring Social at the **Sultan** (Hop Back pub), Wimbledon.

Friday 5th to Sunday 7th May, Ongar Festival of Real Ale 1995.

Monday 22nd May, 8.30pm Branch Meeting, **Anne of Cleves**, Broxbourne.

Contact: Graham Darby 01279 680233(w), 01279 415895(h)

### HERTFORDSHIRE SOUTH BRANCH

Tuesday 11th April, 8.00pm Branch Meeting **White Hart**, South Mimms.

Tuesday 25th April, 8.00pm Pub of the Year Runner Up presentation to the **Lower Red Lion**, St Albans.

Tuesday 23rd May, 8.00pm Branch Meeting at the **Hope & Anchor**, Welham Green plus presentation in recognition of 10 consecutive entries in the Good Beer Guide.

Contact: Bob Norrish 01582 763133 x2554(w), 01582 769923(w)

### NORTH HERTFORDSHIRE BRANCH

Wednesday 5th April, 8.30pm, Branch Meeting at the **Crown**, Buntingford.

Wednesday 19th April, 8.30pm, Countryside crawl starting at the **Bright Star**, Peters Green, then on to the **Boot** and **White Horse**, Kimpton, and **Maidens Head**, Whitwell.

Wednesday 3rd May, 8.30pm, Watton crawl, starting at the **Boot**, Dane End, then on to all the Watton-at-Stone pubs.

Wednesday 17th May, 8.30pm, Countryside crawl, starting at the **Moon and Stars**, Rushden, then on to **Bull**, Cottered, **Jolly Waggoner**, Ardeley, and **Rising Sun**, Halls Green.

Wednesday 31 May, 8.30pm, Offley and Charlton crawl, starting at **Red Lion**, Great Offley, then via all the other Great Offley pubs to **Windmill**, Charlton.

Contact: Paul Coard 01462 437249 h

### WATFORD & DISTRICT BRANCH

Wednesday 5th April, Branch darts tournament at the **West Herts Sports Club**, 8.30pm.

Wednesday 12th April, Darts match v. Mt Vernon Hospital at **Croxley Community Centre**, 8.30pm (prov.)

Sunday 23rd April, Lunchtime social at the **Clarendon Arms**, Chandlers Cross.

Wednesday 26th April, Social at **Sarratt**: 8.30pm **Cock**; 9.15pm **Cricketers**; 10.00 **Boot**. Transport from Watford Junction 8.15pm.

Saturday 13th May, Aunt Sally match against Herefordshire branch phone contact for details.

Saturday 27th - Monday 29th May, CAMRA stall at the **Croxley Community Centre** beer festival.

Contact: Tony Smith 01923 221155 (h & w)

### MID-CHILTERNES BRANCH

Contact: Chris Pontin 01494 78624(w), 01494 775409(h)

### ALL HERTS LIAISON MEETING

Wednesday 26th April, 8.30pm **Royal Oak**, Chipperfield.

## The Greyhound (Free House)

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REAL ALE & REAL FOOD

Snacks and Meals

ROAST BEEF SUNDAY LUNCH

- worth travelling for

3 Beers + Boddingtons Mild

BED & BREAKFAST (ensuite)

Traditional English Music Apr 26, May 24 & June 21

## CAMRA BEER FESTIVALS

Apr 7-8 Dunstable Sports & Social Club, Creasey Park, Brewers Hill, Dunstable. Fri 12-3, 5-11; Sat 11-11.

Apr 20-22 Ealing Town Hall, New Broadway, London, W5. Thurs 5-11; Fri, Sat 11-11.

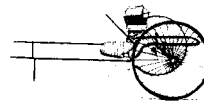
May 4-6 Wilton Hall, Wilton Road, Bletchley. Thurs, Fri 11.30-11 ;Sat 11.30-9.

May 5-7 Budworth Hall, High St, Ongar. Fri 6-11; Sat 11-4,5-11; Sun 12-3; 7-10.30.

May 22-27 Cambridge City Football Ground, Milton Road, Cambridge. 11-3, 5-10 (10.30 on Fri & Sat). Facilities for the disabled available; one of the country's largest local beer festivals.

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11.00 - 11.00 Thurs, Fri & Sat

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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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