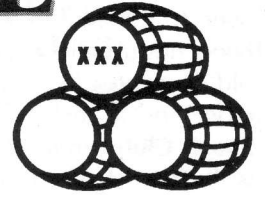


FREE



THE HERTFORDSHIRE NEWSLETTER

LINED GLASSES
GUARANTEE
FULL PINTS



A bi-monthly publication for the discerning real ale drinker

AUGUST/SEPTEMBER 1996

CIRCULATION 4000

NUMBER 158

LONGER HOURS UNDER THREAT

There is a distinct possibility that the planned changes to allow pubs to open until midnight on Friday and Saturday nights may not now go ahead.

The hour long extensions, which have been reported in many newspapers as though they were certain to be implemented, are actually currently subject to a consultation exercise by the Home Office. The Home Office have reported that, so far, they have received more letters opposing the licensing hour extensions than letters in favour.

The Home Office has outlined three options:

1. Granting the extra hour to all pubs across the board but giving magistrates the right to revoke in individual cases.
2. Making pubs apply for the extra hour individually and giving magistrates full discretion.
3. Making pubs apply individually but limiting the magistrates' discretion to public order concerns.

However, the deadline for the Home Office to receive letters is the end of August. So if you want longer hours, you still have a chance to do your bit and get your views heard.

Please write to:

*Mr Dennis Wilmer, Home Office, LGDP Unit Room 1183,
50 Queen Anne's Gate, London, SW1H 9AT*

and if you've got the time, write to your MP as well.

Don't lose these changes due to apathy!

If the changes do go through they are unlikely to come into force before the spring of 1997.

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

THE WHITE HORSE
CASTLE STREET
HERTFORD

A True Freehouse - 01992 501950



DARK HORSE BREWING CO.

OUR BREWERY MOVE IS NEARLY OVER!
WE SHALL HAVE OUR FULL SELECTION
OF BEERS HERE AT THE BREWERY TAP.
IN ADDITION TO 100'S OF GUEST BEERS.

we also supply draft beer for parties etc.

HERTS BEER FESTIVALS

The Second Watford CAMRA Beer Festival will be held at the **West Herts Sports Club**, Park Avenue, Watford, on Friday 20th and Saturday 21st September. Opening times are 5-11pm on Friday, 12-11pm on Saturday. Food is expected to be available lunchtime and evenings. We expect to have over 30 different real ales on sale and hope to have several beers not usually available in this area, as well as supplying old favourites like Summer Lightning and Cheriton Pots. A cider and a perry will also be available. The **West Herts Sports Club** is not far from the Town Hall, about 15 minutes walk from Watford Junction, 10 minutes from Watford Met Line station. Entry is free to CAMRA and West Herts Sports Club members. Contact Tony Smith on 01923 221155 for further details.

If you can't get to Watford, then you might be interested to know that there is also a beer festival in North Herts the same weekend at the **Plinton Hall**, Letchworth. Opening times are Thursday 5-11pm, Friday and Saturday 11am-11pm. Ring Colleen Holiday 01438 730975 for further details of that event.

This year is CAMRA's 25th Anniversary, and to mark the event there will be a beer festival in CAMRA's 'home city' of St Albans between the 10th and 12th of October. The venue is the **Alban Arena**, and over 150 beers are expected to be on sale including all the Champion Beer of Britain winners from 1976. Opening times are Thurs: 12-3pm and 5-10.30pm; Fri and Sat: 11-3pm and 5-10.30pm. Entry is £1.50 Thurs lunch, £2.50 Fri and Sat lunch, £3.50 evenings (£1 less for CAMRA members). Incidentally, on the previous Saturday, the 5th, there will be a parade of brewery drays around St Albans.

GREENE KING'S MAGIC

Greene King have bought the 277 pubs of the Magic Pub Company for £197.5million, which values the pubs at a whopping £713,000 each. This brings the total number of pubs in the Greene King estate to 1139, which they reckon makes them number 5 in the industry. Benefits of scale? Apparently not, one of the first things to happen at the newly acquired pubs is liable to be an increase in food prices. Tim Bridge, Greene King's chief executive was quoted as saying 'There is room to increase food prices a little'. The pubs will not become 'Greened' overnight, the pseudo free-house style is expected to remain, and the existing trading agreements with the large breweries means that Greene King's products are expected to rise from 1% of the sales to only about 15% in the short term.

Greene King have tried guest beers in a few of their pubs, and this seems the ideal opportunity for them to properly try out a free house chain. The range of beers at most Magic Pub Company outlets have generally been unadventurous, by introducing a few more local beers, they could be on a winner.

BREWERIANA AUCTION

CAMRA's National Breweriana Auction will be held at the Corn Exchange, Bedford on Saturday 5th October. The Bedford Beer Festival will be going on in the same building at the same time so thirst won't be a problem!

BEER FESTIVAL

THE FOX

KINSBOURNE GREEN

SAT 24th AUGUST to
SAT 31ST AUGUST
OPEN 11am to 11pm

NO ADMISSION CHARGE

24 REAL ALES PLUS 2 CIDERS
24 DIFFERENT SAUSAGE DISHES

On the last day there will be
Jazz bands from 12 to 11
A Grand Charity Auction
A Car Boot Sale
Craft Stalls and plenty of
childrens entertainment.

*For more information phone Phil on
01582 713817*

IN 200
YEARS
WE'VE
NEVER
SOLD
OUT.



Since 1799 the name Greene King has been synonymous with fine ales. Over all those years, we've fiercely defended our independence and our brewing traditions. It means we've been able to consistently produce some of the finest ales in the country. We haven't sold out. But our beers often do.

LOCAL NEWS

ABBOTS LANGLEY: The Oasis Bar at the **Kings Head** is liable to be a bit noisier now that a new sound and light system has been installed 'to give a more club-like ambience'.

CUFFLEY: The **Cuffley Hotel** is closed for conversion into a Harvester restaurant/pub and is due to reopen in October. Local objections to the loss of the function rooms fell on deaf ears.

HERTFORD: The **Old Barge** has closed following a major fire. The extent of the damage to the fine 17th Century building is not yet known.

ST ALBANS: The **Pineapple** in Catherine Street has had a £120,000 refurbishment and is now the **Merry Minstrel**, complete with a new stage area, and a new look using "traditional wooden finishes".

The **Abbey Tavern** has been demolished.

The Grade 1 listed **Fleur de Lys** has had a £68,000 refit

WARE: The **Bridgehouse** is now open selling Bass at £1.85, and London Pride at £1.90. The Taunton Cidermaster is served through a handpump using gas. A planning application has been submitted to turn the currently closed **French Horn** into flats.

FLEDGLING & FIRKIN

As part of the Firkinisation of the western world, Allied Domecq opened the **Fledgling and Firkin** in Hertford at the end of May. The pub occupies the former Blackbirds premises in Parliament Square. The Fledgling looks remarkably like other recent Firkin pubs (notably the Fedora in Luton) but benefits from a patio which is only visible once you enter the pub.

The pub is managed by Karen Kirk and Craig Smith with brewing activities being handled by Andy Miln. Its regular brews are Warbler (3.5%), Fledgling (4.3%), Golden Glory (5%) and Dogbolter (5.6%). It is also brewing Hatcher (3%) at the moment which sells at £1.40 per pint. One other beer from a Firkin pub will usually be available.

CAMRA objects to the use of cellar tanks where the beer is kept under a gas blanket, however due to current demand, the tanks are supplemented by casks to which no gas is applied. Addlestons cider is served on handpump but this is served with gas contrary to CAMRA policy.

The pub host quizzes on Wednesday evenings and live music on Thursday and Sunday evenings. It gets very busy most evenings. The Fledgling is a welcome addition to the Hertford pub scene.

Paul Ruane

20 YEARS OF THE NEWSLETTER

Continuing our run through the 20 years of the Hertfordshire Newsletter:

1977

Jan: McMullens celebrate 150 years of brewing... The Newsletter headline bemoaned "How Long to the 50p pint" when some Ind Coope pubs sold Burton Ale at 39p a pint... Mac's Country Bitter could be found at 26p a pint ... News that many breweries will be producing special ale to commemorate the Queen's Silver Jubilee.

May: Trumans launch Tap Bitter.

July: The Herts Beer Festival, at Hatfield Polytechnic, offers

THE LORDSHIP ARMS

THE INN IN THE STICKS

Benington Nr Stevenage.

formerly The Cricketers

REAL ALE OASIS for the
DISCERNING DRINKER

Youngs Special, Fullers ESB
everchanging guest beers from
independent

and Micro Breweries also Traditional
Cider

Homemade Bar Food served Daily
Two Course Sunday Roast £5.95

A Pub worth finding

Telephone 01438-869665

2 dozen real ales. The new local guide shows that 200 pubs now offer a decent brew, though only 25% of Mac's pubs are included.

Oct: Ind Coope, Courage and Bass embark on a spate of pub swapping – 25 in Herts... still only 13 pubs in Watford offer real ale.

Dec: Almost 30% of Herts pubs now offer at least one real ale... Rayments sales are up by 20% but parent company Greene King refuses to allow it to expand into South Herts.

1978

Apr: Marstons and Everards now regularly available in Herts.

June: Frustration at Greene King's reticence in installing handpumps... another beer festival at Hatfield Polytechnic.

Oct: McMullen's axe Castle Keg.

Dec: The Ind Coope industrial dispute sees gleeful landlords racing to obtain beer supplies from other sources – great choice for drinkers with beers from all over Britain.

1979

Mar: Price rises take on a new dimension – Ind Coope bitter costs 40p a pint!

Jun: 450 pubs now in the local guide... three cheers for the death of Watney's Red (Barrel). Keg is on the way out!

Sept: CAMRA pressure saves Greene King XX Mild but GK continue to close rural pubs – now the Chequers, Wood End.

Nov: More price rises – the third in 9 months. A pint of Courage goes up 26p in a year. Mac's brew a Christmas Ale.

1980

Jan: Ind Coope launch 3 new subsidiaries, including Benskins – and a new Benskins bitter brewed at Burton-on-Trent.

Apr: Average cost of a pint of bitter is 40-45p.

May: Mac's close the classic Goose at Moor Green. Still only 16% of Mac's pubs serve AK on handpump... Ashwell gains its first real ale pub, the Bushel and Strike.

Sept: Still only 4 pubs in WGC sell real ale.

Nov: More price rises. Bitter now costs over 50p per pint.

To Be Continued.....

BRANCH DIARY

HERTFORDSHIRE SOUTH BRANCH

Tuesday 20th August, Branch Meeting at **CAMRA HQ**, 230 Hatfield Road, St Albans, 8.00pm

Tuesday 17th September, Branch Meeting, **White Horse**, Castle Street, Hertford, 8.00pm.

Friday/Saturday 20th-21 st September, trip to **Elgoods and Batemans**.

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

WATFORD & DISTRICT BRANCH

Friday 9th August, social at the **Great British Beer Festival**, meet hourly from 6.00pm at the Membership Stand.

Tuesday 13th August, Oxhey social: 8.30pm **Rifle Volunteer**, 9.15pm **Haydon Arms**, 10.00pm **Victoria**.

Wednesday 28th August, Ricky social, 8.30pm **Halfway House**, 9.30pm **Feathers**.

Wednesday 4th September, Good Beer Guide social, 8.30pm **Land of Liberty**, Heronsgate.

Tuesday 17th September, pre-beer festival working social at the **West Herts Sports Club**, 8.00pm onwards.

Friday 20th-Saturday 21 st September, Second CAMRA Watford Beer Festival, **West Herts Sports Club**, Park Avenue, Watford. See full details elsewhere.

Tuesday 24th September, post beer festival social at the **West Herts Sports Club**.

Contact: Tony Smith 01923 221155

NORTH HERTFORDSHIRE BRANCH

Tuesday 20 August, Joint Branch Social with South Herts, **White Horse** Burnham Green 8.30pm, **Duck** Burnham Green, **Plough** Datchworth, **Tilbury** Datchworth.

Thursday 22 August, trip to Burton to Brew Festival Beer, details from Andy Rawnsley.

Wednesday 4 September, Poster Distribution, Stevenage Old Town (8pm start) **Mallard**.

Wednesday 11 September, Poster Distribution, Hitchin town centre (8pm) **Victoria**, **Tut n' Shive**.

Saturday 14 September, Leaflet Distribution, Hitchin town centre. Meet 10am Market Square distribute until 1pm then social at **Assizes**.

Tuesday 17 September, Beer Fest Set-up, **Plinston Hall** 8.30am.

Wednesday 18 September, Beer Fest Promotion, Letchworth area (8pm start) **Wilbury**.

Thursday 19 – Saturday 21 September, North Herts Beer Festival.

Saturday 28 September, Mini-Bus Trip, Southwest/North Herts.

Contact: Colleen Holiday 01462 730975 (h)
01438 314333x 5512 (w)

HERTS-ESSEX BORDERS

Contact: Graham Darby, 01279 415895 (h) or Derek Wisdom, 01279 414200 (h)

MID-CHILTERNES BRANCH

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

PRICES SURVEY

CAMRA's Prices Survey, carried out earlier this year, showed that for the first time the price of a pint of real ale 'only' rose by the rate of inflation, 3.2%. The average cost of a pint of real ale in a pub is now £1.60, with the lowest prices being Youngers Scotch in Wetherspoon pubs and Holts Mild (94p), and the highest being Marstons Owd Roger and Linfi Enoch's Hammer, both weighing in at a hefty £2.40. This average is 19p less than the average pint of lager and the so called nitrokeg 'smooth' brands.

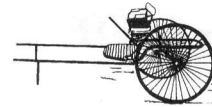
However, since the survey was done there have been many reports of increased prices: Bass up 4p a pint; Pedigree up 5p, and Mansfield Old Bailey by 14p a pint. And it's not only real ales, Pubmaster have apparently put up the price of Holsten Pils by 45p a bottle.

STOP PRESS

Hertfordshire Beer Guide is now available priced £4.25 including P&P from Paul Ruane, 15 Turpins Close, Hertford, Herts SG14 2EH.

TILBURY

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11.00 – 11.00 Thurs, Fri & Sat
12.00 – 10.30 Sunday

Almost Live Music some of the time

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The Hertfordshire Newsletter is produced by the Hertfordshire South, Watford & District, Herts-Essex Borders and Mid-Chilternes 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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